

**DRAMA EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND SCHOOLS: THE  
PRACTICE OF SIX EXPERIENCED DRAMA TEACHERS**

**Tracey-Lynne Cody**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy in Education**

---

**UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY**

**2013**



Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for the thesis to be downloaded or copied by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.



## **Abstract**

This research investigates drama teaching practice in New Zealand primary and secondary schools, through a case-based qualitative inquiry into the practice of six experienced drama teachers. The study reveals that whilst drama education is couched within the Arts learning area of the national curriculum, the educational philosophy enacted by participants encompasses a broad vision for drama education, which extends learning beyond a technical knowledge of theatre and theatre-making towards the domains of social and personal meaning-making and emancipatory knowledge. Explored through the lenses of Artist and Co-artist, the study identifies the socio-cultural nature of the practice of these teachers. Teachers' artistry is revealed through creative use of drama tools and processes to create aesthetically-rich learning experiences. The significance of relational pedagogy to teaching and learning in these drama classrooms is also examined within the study. Teachers' accounts reveal the ways they seek to develop interpersonal relationships with and between students, and establish ensemble-based approaches to learning in drama. As co-artists, participants employ pedagogies that empower students to actively participate in a community of drama practice, intentionally developing students' capacities for collaboration, creativity and critical thinking, while discovering and developing their artistic-aesthetic capabilities. These teachers share power with students through acts of negotiation, creating dialogic learning opportunities in order to develop student agency as artists and citizens. Attempts to navigate tensions that arise due to increased performativity pressures on teachers and to avoid prescriptive and technocratic delivery of drama curriculum are also explored. In-depth interviews were conducted with participants to discover the complexities of their teaching practice, the philosophy of drama education they hold, and the decisions they make in curriculum content and pedagogy. Observations of classroom practice were also undertaken, along with an analysis of planning documents and an interview with their students. The study provides six rich case studies of drama practice in New Zealand schools, contributing to local and international understandings of enacted drama education within school settings. Implications for educational policy, curriculum design, classroom practice and teacher education arise from this investigation.



## Acknowledgements

Firstly, I wish to acknowledge the courageous and inspirational teachers who have allowed me to look closely into their professional lives. I hope that, in articulating their practice throughout this study, they might catch a glimpse of themselves and appreciate their own scholarship and artistry. ***Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi:*** *With your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive.*

I would like to acknowledge my high school drama teacher, Mr Robert Hurley, who sparked in me a life-long passion for drama and the belief that I had something to contribute. I am grateful to my supervisors, Professor Janinka Greenwood and Dr. Patrick Shepherd, who have continued to support and guide me despite facing enormous challenges. Since I have undertaken this study, both have endured unrelenting earthquakes, laid dear mothers to rest, faced personal health challenges and have loved, supported and grieved with colleagues, family and neighbours as Christchurch rebuilds itself.

I am certain I would never have managed doctoral study without the support of dear friend and colleague, Adele J. Scott and our numerous escapes to Waikawa. I am grateful for conversations with Philippa Butler, Dr Jenny Boyack, Dr Brian Finch, Dr Judith Donaldson, Dr Rowena Taylor and Dr Zoe Brooks; for writing retreats to Pekapeka and even beautiful Kiama with Dr Ally Sewell. I am grateful for my Drama New Zealand colleagues, who continue to empower each other to realise the potential of drama education in schools, and for the inspirational work of Dr Viv Aitken and Dr Peter O'Connor.

Finally, I acknowledge my long-suffering friends and family – particularly my lovely Liam, Ben and the pookies, who have loved me through all the self-doubt, small steps and ultimate triumph!





# Table of Contents

<b>Chapter One: Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Context for the study .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Origins of the study .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3 The study .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.4 Outline of the thesis .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Chapter Two: The field of drama education .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.1 Drama as artistic-aesthetic learning.....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1.1 Art and the aesthetic .....	11
2.1.2 Understanding the art form of drama .....	12
2.1.3 Drama in the classroom .....	13
2.1.4 Embodied knowing.....	14
2.1.5 Creativity and imagination .....	15
<b>2.2 Drama as social and cultural learning.....</b>	<b>18</b>
2.2.1 Drama as a way of knowing .....	19
2.2.2 Theatre, learning and the influence of theatre practitioners .....	20
<b>2.3 Teaching drama - education and pedagogy .....</b>	<b>25</b>
2.3.1 Approaching drama in the classroom: socio-cultural connections .....	25
2.3.2 Dialogic learning .....	27
2.3.3 Building a community of learners .....	28
2.3.4 Relational pedagogy .....	30
2.3.5 Effective teaching for creative achievement.....	34
2.3.6 Artistry in the teaching of drama.....	38
<b>2.4 Educational policy and drama education .....</b>	<b>41</b>
2.4.1 Knowledge, education and curriculum .....	41
2.4.2 Drama education in the curriculum .....	43
2.4.3 Creativity and the curriculum .....	46
2.4.4 Drama teachers as professionals .....	49
2.4.5 Challenges arising from school environment.....	51
<b>Chapter summary .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Chapter Three: Methodology .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>3.1 The research questions .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>3.2 Qualitative research .....</b>	<b>58</b>

3.2.1 Drama education research.....	59
3.2.2 Case study .....	60
3.2.3 The collective case study – participant selection.....	61
3.2.4 Ethical research practice .....	62
3.2.5 The role of the researcher.....	63
<b>3.3 Methodology enacted .....</b>	<b>64</b>
3.3.1 Data collection and methods .....	64
3.3.2 The interviews with teachers.....	65
3.3.3 Observations of teaching practice .....	67
3.3.4 Interviews with student groups .....	68
<b>3.4 Data analysis.....</b>	<b>70</b>
3.4.1 Thematic analysis of interview transcripts.....	70
3.4.2 Analysis of teaching observations .....	71
3.4.3 Document analysis .....	71
3.4.4 Case summary – narratives.....	72
<b>3.5 Presentation .....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Chapter Four: Cast and context – An introduction to six New Zealand drama teachers .....</b>	<b>77</b>
4.1 Drama education in the New Zealand context .....	78
4.2 The cases.....	84
4.2.1 James: Character, time and place.....	85
4.2.2 David: Character, time and place .....	87
4.2.3 Aroha: Character, time and place.....	89
4.2.4 Grace: Character, time and place .....	90
4.2.5 Julia: Character, time and place .....	93
4.2.6 Phillip: Character, time and place.....	94
<b>Chapter summary .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Chapter Five: Dramatic action – The enactment of curriculum .....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Framing curriculum content.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>5.1 James: enacting the curriculum .....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>5.2 Julia: enacting the curriculum .....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>5.3 Phillip: enacting the curriculum .....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>5.4 David: enacting the curriculum.....</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>5.5 Aroha: enacting the curriculum .....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>5.6 Grace: enacting the curriculum.....</b>	<b>128</b>

<b>5.7 Reflections on enacted curriculum.....</b>	<b>133</b>
5.7.1 Prescription versus flexibility.....	134
5.7.2 Improvisational drama.....	135
5.7.3 Narrative, meaning-making and critical consciousness.....	136
5.7.4 Personal aesthetic and the impact of context.....	139
<b>5.8 Evaluating teaching practice.....</b>	<b>141</b>
5.8.1 Teacher observation of student engagement and motivation.....	141
5.8.2 Ownership and independence.....	141
5.8.3 Learning conversations.....	142
5.8.4 Artistic-aesthetic achievement.....	144
5.8.5 Performance outcomes.....	144
<b>Chapter summary.....</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Chapter Six: Focus – Curriculum and assessment in drama education .....</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>6.1 Participants’ philosophy of drama education.....</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>6.2 Drama education and the impact of the NZ Curriculum.....</b>	<b>153</b>
6.2.1 Embodied practice.....	153
6.2.2 Developing professional discourse.....	155
6.2.3 Developing an ensemble culture.....	155
6.2.4 Tensions with an outcomes-based curriculum.....	159
<b>6.3 Assessment of learning in drama.....</b>	<b>161</b>
6.3.1 Learning and assessment in the primary school context.....	162
6.3.2 Assessment of junior drama at secondary level.....	165
6.3.3 Assessment of senior drama through NCEA.....	166
<b>6.4 Putting assessment ‘in its place’ .....</b>	<b>173</b>
6.4.1 Rich contexts versus atomisation of learning.....	174
6.4.2 Journeys in assessment: aligning and returning.....	176
6.4.3 Creating space in drama programmes.....	178
6.4.4 ‘Credit-chasing’ across the curriculum.....	180
6.4.5 Formative assessment and reflection.....	181
<b>Chapter summary.....</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>Chapter Seven: Role – The drama teacher as artist and co-artist.....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>7.1 Aesthetic leadership: the drama teacher as an artist.....</b>	<b>188</b>
7.1.1 Drama teachers as practicing artists.....	190
7.1.2 Artistic achievement and professional credibility.....	192
7.1.3 Willingness to work in role.....	194

7.1.4 Keeping in the creative flow .....	196
7.1.5 Utilising the power of tension to engage students.....	197
7.1.6 Allowing creative space .....	201
<b>7.2 Sharing status: the drama teacher as a co-artist .....</b>	<b>204</b>
7.2.1 Being led by students' curiosity and discoveries.....	206
7.2.2 Negotiation and ownership.....	208
7.2.3 Developing the 'outside eye' .....	215
7.2.4 Students as leaders .....	217
<b>Chapter summary .....</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Chapter Eight: Relationship in the drama classroom .....</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>8.1 Establishing community: trust and participation.....</b>	<b>223</b>
8.1.1 The interpersonal dimension of the teacher-student relationship.....	226
8.1.2 Establishing values and ways of working .....	237
8.1.3 Content selection and task design .....	240
<b>8.2 Encouraging agency: expectations and accountability .....</b>	<b>244</b>
8.2.1 Fostering achievement through high expectations .....	245
8.2.2 Fostering interpersonal accountability.....	249
<b>Chapter summary .....</b>	<b>256</b>
<b>Chapter Nine: Conclusions .....</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>9.1 Revisiting purpose and approach .....</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>9.2 The main findings of the study .....</b>	<b>261</b>
9.2.1 How do these teachers conceptualise the drama curriculum in their particular school context?.....	261
9.2.2 What do these teachers believe constitutes effective drama teaching and learning? .....	265
9.2.3 What pedagogical decisions do these teachers make to achieve effective teaching and learning in drama?.....	269
9.2.4 How do these teachers navigate tensions that arise? .....	273
<b>9.3 Contributions to knowledge.....</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>9.4 Implications for practice .....</b>	<b>278</b>
<b>9.5 Implications for policy .....</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>9.6 Suggestions for further research.....</b>	<b>282</b>
<b>9.7 Final thoughts .....</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>285</b>

<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>303</b>
<b>Appendix A: Participant information.....</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>Appendix B: Participant consent form .....</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>Appendix C: Authority for release of transcript.....</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>Appendix D: Information for children (up to Year 6).....</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Appendix E: Information for students (Years 7-13) .....</b>	<b>310</b>
<b>Appendix F: Information for parents/caregivers .....</b>	<b>311</b>
<b>Appendix G: Parent/caregiver consent form .....</b>	<b>312</b>
<b>Appendix H: Student consent form .....</b>	<b>313</b>
<b>Appendix I: Drama Curriculum Achievement Objectives .....</b>	<b>314</b>
<b>Appendix J: NCEA Drama Matrix 2012.....</b>	<b>316</b>
<b>Appendix K: NCEA Drama Matrix 2005 .....</b>	<b>317</b>
<b>Appendix L: Prescribed texts for NCEA Level 3 Drama .....</b>	<b>318</b>



# Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Context for the study

1.2 Origins of the study

1.3 The study

1.4 Outline of the thesis

## 1.1 Context for the study

This study investigates the work of New Zealand drama teachers in public school settings between 2008-2012. The findings contribute to an understanding of the work drama teachers undertake in a New Zealand context and policy environment. This policy environment is characterised by a new national curriculum, implemented in 2007, and the development of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement, through which drama has become a legitimate subject for secondary school study. The study contributes to other New Zealand-based research into the nature and experience of drama education such as Greenwood (Greenwood, 2009, 2010), O'Connor (2009b), V. Aitken (2011), Z. Brooks (2010), Luton (2010), and Wallis (2010), as well as contributing to international research into arts education.

In 2012, Drama as a subject in New Zealand schools could be said to be flourishing. The implementation of *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* in 2000 has resulted in more students gaining experience of drama in their primary schooling, as a performance art and in some instances, as a way of learning. In secondary schools, student numbers have grown steadily since the implementation of the standards-based assessment, the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), which made drama a 'serious' subject that can be taken to Scholarship level. Subsequently the demand for drama teachers has also grown. The government-funded professional development initiatives that supported these developments fostered greater networking amongst drama teachers in local communities. There has been considerable consolidation of central concepts, principles, language, processes and skills considered to be at the heart of drama

education as a result and there is a real sense that more drama educators are working at increasing depth and level of expertise in this specialist area than ever before.

Secondary school drama has been shaped considerably by the introduction of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) and the specific Achievement Standards and assessment activities created for drama across the senior school levels. The NCEA Drama Matrix outlines five key areas of study across the three years, including Use of Drama Techniques (voice and body), Elements and Conventions, Theatre Study, Production Roles and Review and Evaluation of Performance (see *Appendices*). As a result of this framing of drama practice, many secondary drama teachers are developing expertise in areas such as devised theatre and in producing school productions – including musical theatre, a variety of play texts and bicultural/multicultural performance.

Despite this apparent progress, several tensions exist for drama education in New Zealand. The drama curriculum at primary level requires teachers to develop students' abilities to work in role, to create dramatic spaces and use dramatic structures and to respond to drama with understanding. According to the curriculum strands, this learning should occur in relevant cultural, historical and social contexts – whether fictional or real (Ministry of Education, 2007). In the primary school classroom, it appears that drama work is undertaken by a 'brave' few and most often appears in the form of a school production or assembly performances. A closer investigation of drama teachers' networks might yield small numbers of teachers who are using drama across the curriculum – in inquiry-based integrated curriculum contexts, as a way of learning about other curriculum areas or as part of literacy programmes.

The New Zealand Curriculum's Arts-as-a-Learning-Area model means that drama, at primary school level, competes with dance, visual art and music for course time and funding. Many would-be secondary drama teachers enrol in initial teacher education programmes having had experience in performance of play texts or basic understandings of theatre forms and key practitioners but lack an



understanding of the way drama might function as education in the classroom context. Based on my experience as a teacher educator and on discussions with colleagues in other institutions, it seems primary pre-service teachers receive a generalist education with few New Zealand providers offering enough time to build content knowledge in the art-form as well as pedagogy needed to teach it.

This challenge for pre-service teacher education programmes is exacerbated by the struggles many drama teacher educators face in retaining adequate hours, spaces and opportunity to practice practical arts pedagogies while competing in newly-merged university contexts; contexts which may include teacher education by distance. Given the range of knowledge that a drama teacher must possess, there is growing unrest as government initiatives and the in-service advisory services are no longer being funded.

Several years on, New Zealand drama educators are now able to reflect on the impact of the policy developments of the last decade. While NCEA was initially viewed as an improved form of assessment of student learning in drama (when compared to external examinations), some drama educators are now increasingly critical of the limits of the current system. Although the curriculum itself makes statements about the nature of learning in drama that reach beyond the art form into cultural and social learning, there are concerns that many teachers implementing NCEA Drama are very focused on teaching theatre arts and theatre forms. Depending on the personal philosophy, experiences and choices of the drama teacher, richer contexts that might allow students to “gain a deeper appreciation of their rich cultural heritage and language and new power to examine attitudes, behaviours, and values” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 21) may or may not be present in the classroom experience.

## **1.2 Origins of the study**

Z. Brooks (2010) investigated drama teachers’ perceptions of the National Certificate in Educational Achievement and the impact they saw this having on teaching and learning in drama. She explains:

By its nature, drama education is student-centred, collaborative and subjective. For drama practitioners in New Zealand the challenge is to define and maintain their own principles of education while working within an educational structure that requires adherence to *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007) and to the achievement objectives and assessable outcomes demanded by the NCEA assessment model. (p. 82)

Challenge has come as drama has moved into the curriculum and gained greater status. There has been increased pressure for drama to offer the kind of measurable outcomes that have become the currency of school life. As a researcher and an academic involved in pre-service teacher education, I wanted to further my understanding of the complex nature of successful classroom drama practice so I might assist beginning teachers to identify and master this in their own classrooms. Having gone through a season of growth with drama in schools, I was disturbed by the mounting concern I heard from academics and drama teachers as they attempted to manage the demands of full programmes in drama and the assessment and moderation demands from NCEA. It seemed as though we had won such a victory – and yet there were concerns that we were losing something of the richness of drama education in the outworking of classroom delivery. I wanted to learn more about what experienced drama teachers knew and practiced. How do they attempt to negotiate the pitfalls of burdensome assessment and maintain creative, authentic and effective classroom practice? What is in their practice that beginning teachers and pre-service educators need to grapple with?

### **1.3 The study**

Jonathon Neelands (1996) explores the tensions between research and the practice of teachers in classrooms and emphasises the importance of close collaboration between teachers and academics in order that research might make an authentic contribution to the classroom. Anderson (2003) explains that despite the challenges of theorising practice to the experiential and transient nature of drama teaching, it is vital that drama teachers are aware of the praxis of their field

and are able to contribute to this field of research through their own practice. Such research should also be valuable to participants, who have the opportunity to reflect and refine their practice – and therefore, grow professionally.

Given this context, the current study investigates the practice and experience of seasoned drama teachers to reveal the nature of drama in the classroom and the journeys they have taken as drama has moved into a legitimate space in the curriculum. This study offers the drama education community a deeper understanding of the current practice and salient issues facing drama teachers in New Zealand schools. Analysis of teachers' practice and their own professional development history may have implications for training and professional development of drama teachers as well as heightening our understanding of the impact of the new curriculum on drama education. Furthermore, this investigation, with its thick description, enables the complex dimensions of the work of drama teachers to be seen – to allow further reflection and dialogue amongst drama educators.

The central research question of the study has been framed as: *How do experienced drama teachers facilitate learning in drama in New Zealand schools?*

From this overarching question, a number of further questions arise:

- How do these teachers conceptualise the drama curriculum in their particular school context?
- What pedagogical decisions do these teachers make to achieve effective teaching and learning in drama?
- What do these teachers believe constitutes effective drama teaching and learning?
- How do these teachers navigate tensions that arise?

Key concepts relevant to arts education philosophy and practice are explored – specifically those that inform the context of drama Education. The nature of learning in dramatic art-making, its functions and purpose, and the place of aesthetic learning and knowing will be informed by the work of theorists such as

Dewey, Eisner, Robinson, Bolton, Schonmann and their critics. The role of creativity and imagination, relational pedagogy, power relationships in the art-making process in the classroom and the nature co-constructed learning are all relevant to this study. Issues in assessment and evaluation of learning, the conceptualisation of drama education and the impact of accountability pressures on drama education and the practice of teachers are also explored in order to understand the practice of drama in the New Zealand context.

## **1.4 Outline of the thesis**

I have chosen to present the findings of this study through an exploration of several essential drama elements. Drama elements provide us with a lens and a language with which to deconstruct and interrogate dimensions of the complex, embodied and three-dimensional art form of drama. Whilst we might commonly use them to deconstruct fictional, dramatic worlds, in an investigation of the practice of drama teachers these elements offer a rich way to interrogate the narratives within the data; to bring into focus the complex layers that exist within the act of teaching – and more specifically in the act of teaching drama. Their work is framed by several dramatic elements, which enable a descriptive snapshot of practice and orientate the reader/viewer to observe certain dimensions in this complex act of classroom drama teaching. In this sense, these element frames become an interpretive tool that enables a closer interrogation of practice to occur.

The decision to use the element frames of Time and Place, Action, Tension, Focus and Role came after the data had been coded as I grappled with the challenge of finding a way to tell the stories of these six cases in a thesis.

*Chapter Two* presents the key literature to background the kinds of educational thought that informs the artistic, creative and collaborative practice which drama education entails.

In *Chapter Three* the methodology of the study is explained. This includes the research design, ethical considerations and participant selection along with the sources, collection, analysis and presentation of data.

*Chapter Four: Cast and context* provides an introduction to the New Zealand educational context and to the six participants, within their school settings. It also backgrounds the most relevant and recent developments in educational policy in New Zealand.

*Chapter Five: Dramatic action* details the enactment of curriculum in the classroom setting of each participant. It describes the decisions participants make about the kinds of topics, intentions and skills they wish to explore as part of their teaching programme and gives insight into the sequencing and scaffolding teachers use for artistic-aesthetic learning in drama.

*Chapter Six: Focus* explores the perceptions participants have of the policy environment they work in and the impact the New Zealand curriculum and its assessment has had on their practice. A number of tensions are identified here, arising from both the curriculum framework and the assessment of learning.

*Chapter Seven: Role* investigates the roles these teachers take in facilitating creative drama work. In particular, the roles of artist and co-artist are explored in order to identify the pedagogical decisions these teachers make.

*Chapter Eight: Relationship in the drama classroom* examines the nature of the relationships in the drama classroom. The ways teachers use power, build trust and safety and inspire excellence are investigated. The implications for the development of learning communities are also explored.

*Chapter Nine: Conclusions* presents the outcomes of this investigation in response to the key research questions. Contributions to knowledge, suggestions for further research and implications for practice and policy are also addressed.



## **Chapter Two: The field of drama education**

### **2.1 Drama as artistic-aesthetic learning**

- 2.1.1 Art and the aesthetic*
- 2.1.2 Understanding the art form of drama*
- 2.1.3 Drama in the classroom*
- 2.1.4 Embodied knowing*
- 2.1.5 Creativity and imagination*

### **2.2 Drama as social and cultural learning**

- 2.2.1 Drama as a way of knowing*
- 2.2.2 Theatre, learning and the influence of theatre practitioners*

### **2.3 Teaching drama – education and pedagogy**

- 2.3.1 Approaching drama in the classroom: socio-cultural connections*
- 2.3.2 Dialogic learning*
- 2.3.3 Building a community of learners*
- 2.3.4 Relational pedagogy*
- 2.3.5 Effective teaching for creative achievement*
- 2.3.6 Artistry in the teaching of drama*

### **2.4 Educational policy and drama education**

- 2.4.1 Knowledge, education and curriculum*
- 2.4.2 Drama education in the curriculum*
- 2.4.3 Creativity and the curriculum*
- 2.4.4 Drama teachers as professionals*
- 2.4.5 Challenges arising from school environment*

This study concerns the current practice of drama education in New Zealand schools. Accordingly, the following review of scholarly literature intends to contextualise drama education by providing a critical examination of the founding philosophies of its theorists and practitioners, and of the nature of artistic-aesthetic learning. The present study builds on the historical foundations of drama education by making connections between sociocultural views of teaching and learning, theory and research into creative teaching and teaching for creativity, and the current policy environment in New Zealand education. Through an in-

depth investigation into the practice, pedagogy and philosophies of New Zealand drama teachers, this research makes a contribution to the ongoing debate concerning the place of arts education in schools within, and beyond, New Zealand.

Contemporary literature in the field of drama education draws on two distinct bodies of knowledge – theories of practice that emphasise drama as an art form and make close connections to theatre, and those that emphasise drama as an educational pedagogy. The terms ‘drama in education’ and ‘process drama’ are used to describe classroom drama work which has educational goals that reach beyond the art form and across the curriculum (Cusworth & Simons, 1997). Historically, these forms have been the source of much heated debate, particularly in the United Kingdom, where proponents of ‘drama as theatre arts’ saw educational drama as undermining the integrity of the art form (Hornbrook, 1998). While this dichotomy has been a source of tension and dissension in some educational contexts over the last thirty years (particularly in the United Kingdom), contemporary theoretical discourse in drama education has found ways to resolve, or hold, these tensions, through a conceptualisation of drama education which places the artistic-aesthetic nature of drama at the heart of both approaches. Schonmann (2005) suggests that there are three “inter-related orientations” in the field of drama education: pedagogical-educational, sociological-cultural and artistic-aesthetic, but insists that the first two orientations arise from the artistic-aesthetic. In order to provide the broad context that informs the work of drama teachers, the following review of literature addresses current theory and research into drama education across these three dimensions.

## **2.1 Drama as artistic-aesthetic learning**

At the heart of drama education is the artistic-aesthetic. Drama is closely connected to theatre and is considered to be an art form. As such, it involves both artistic processes and aesthetic experience. Understanding the nature of the art form and of aesthetic experience is therefore central to teaching and learning in drama.



### **2.1.1 Art and the aesthetic**

Art (including dance, drama, visual art and literature) and the experience of art works have long been of interest to philosophers and educationalists from Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau to Dewey and Eisner. Building on the notions of Plato and Aristotle, the aesthetic is conceived of as a kind of knowing, one that is connected to the feelings, senses and emotions. Derived from the Greek words *aisthetika* and *aisthanesthai*, aesthetics refers to feeling and/or perceiving through the senses. While anaesthetic deadens the senses, the aesthetic heightens them. The current study investigates how drama teachers work to enable students to generate their own artistic-aesthetic experiences, and also explores the place of aesthetic experiences within the classroom setting.

An examination of literature reveals a number of pertinent features in the theorising of the aesthetic. 'Aesthetic learning' is a notion that is problematic to define despite its common usage in the arts in education. Greenwood (2011) provides a complexity theorising of the concept of aesthetics as a way of engaging with the notion. Some writers distinguish the aesthetic process from the artistic, explaining that the elements, intentions and presentation of drama make it 'artistic' but the aesthetic is realised in the *experience* of the work (Jackson, 2005). Aesthetic experience includes all sensuous experience (Abbs, 1993), such as the beauty of a sunset or the pleasure of a delicious meal, and is therefore a broader category than art. Bundy (2005), in researching children's aesthetic engagement, defined this as the experience of emotional response, physical animation, heightened awareness and connection. Chambers (1989) talks about being 'seized' by aesthetic experiences and grapples with defining an aesthetic experience, recognising a range of dimensions could be emphasised: the intrinsic value of the experience, its disinterestedness (that is watching without a further goal), aesthetic distance (from other concerns of life) or contemplative nature. We commonly use terms such as being overwhelmed, in awe, or 'blown away'. Aesthetic learning, therefore, includes learning how to create aesthetic experiences from artistic dramatic explorations. In theatrical contexts, the aesthetic may have more to do with the dynamic relationship that develops between the audience and artwork, than with the artwork itself. This is because even though the artist

creates the artwork and invests it with significance, it is the percipient that completes the circle by becoming an active maker of meaning, a co-author in the work of art.

### **2.1.2 Understanding the art form of drama**

According to Eisner's (1985) model, aesthetic learning moves from perception to conception to (symbolic) representation through the 'language' of the arts: the language being the symbol system employed by the particular artistic medium. Drama, as an art form, has a particular symbol system – one that is reliant on the use of role, visual and aural imagery and narrative. Ostern (2006) presents an overview of drama education theory and research that suggests a 'poetics' of drama education exists which informs the work of drama teachers – drawing on dramaturgy, ritual, theatrical forms, development of sign systems and methods of representation, all of which are the modes of knowing the drama teacher must engage with. Investigating the elements of this symbol system has led to various definitions of what the elements of drama might be. Styan's (1960) work identifies the elements of drama in terms of the literary elements within play texts and those which are necessary to the production of these texts. This exploration includes the elements involved in the staged event (The Dramatic Score), the 'orchestration' of these dramatic events and the audience response. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle identified the elements such as plot, character, spectacle, diction, thought and melody along with notions of contrast (Neelands & Dobson, 2000, p. 15). The theorising of drama elements by Australian educators, Brad Haseman and John O'Toole (1986) identified focus, tension, space, mood, contrast, symbol and role as central to the art form. The *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* document identifies a similar range of elements (Ministry of Education, 2000). Leading drama educationalist, Dorothy Heathcote worked with the theatrical elements of 'the spectra', identified as contrasts in light and darkness, sound and silence, stillness and movement (Wagner, 1979, p. 154). An understanding of drama elements empowers students to make their own drama works (O'Toole, 1998).

In addition to the elements of drama, an understanding of various theatre forms and conventions is seen as foundational to work in drama:

Theatre is understood through its conventions, which are the indications of the ways in which time, space and presence can interact and be imaginatively shaped to create different kinds of meanings. (Neelands, 1998, p. 10)

Conventions for both theatre and educational drama have been explored by a number of writers and provide tools for structuring dramatic narratives and dramatic teaching experiences (Bowell & Heap, 2001; Neelands & Goode, 1990; Owens & Barber, 2001). Conventions include theatrical devices such as chorus, soliloquy, narration and tableaux. Identifying the conventions utilised by various theatre forms and genres provides the means to replicate these forms. There are also dramatic conventions utilised particularly in process drama experiences – such as mapping, ‘overheard conversations’ and ‘voices in the head’. Conventions may function to develop narrative action, build the context of the drama or poeticise the action (Neelands & Goode, 1990). Knowing and experiencing the forms, conventions and elements of the dramatic art form is essential to the making of drama, and both the exploratory phase of art-making and the presentation/production phase are important. Bowell and Heap (2001) state:

Teachers need to provide children with the opportunity to engage in a range of challenging, exciting and stimulating drama experiences, grounded in a range of genres which enable them to understand and manipulate the art form of drama and to use it to develop an understanding of themselves within the work and to comment on their experiences of it. (p. 2)

### ***2.1.3 Drama in the classroom***

Within the international field of Drama Education there is a broad range of classroom drama practice. Drama programmes may focus on theatre arts and play texts – with a focus on building skills and understandings about the art form of drama; they may use drama as a learning medium/pedagogy for personal and social development, or fall somewhere in between. The most common approach to teaching the arts in the school curriculum – and the approach employed in the New

Zealand curriculum – is through an aesthetic process. Work in arts classrooms encompasses the artistic processes of making, presenting and evaluating dramatic work (Abbs, 1993, 1994; Dewey, 1934). Making and appreciating drama is seen as an interactive process where students move between the roles of artist and audience (Anderson, 2012). The complexities of art and the aesthetic, the embodied nature of aesthetic knowing and the dialogic nature of meaning-making outlined in the previous sections provide some indication of the vast educative potential of arts education and the pedagogical challenges teachers face in attempting to harness this potential within a school setting.

#### **2.1.4 Embodied knowing**

Of course, the element that delineates drama from literature is enactment – the physical enactment of role – and therefore, there is an obvious connection between drama and the body. Theoretical conceptualisations of the body in drama education identify several frames – Osmond (2007) identifies the body as knower, as doer and as a medium of aesthetic expression. Franks (1996) theorises that the body is first a site of knowledge, knowledge that is specific to the lived experience of each individual. While philosophers such as Descartes saw the mind and body as having distinct natures, today the connection between body and mind is well recognised by clinical psychologists, sports psychologists, dancers and athletes. Shusterman (2006, p. 2) argues that body, mind, and culture are “deeply co-dependent”. There is an ongoing interplay between mental life and somatic experience. Shusterman states,

The body-mind connection is so pervasively intimate that it seems misleading to speak of body and mind as two different, independent entities. The term body-mind would more aptly express their essential union. (p. 2)

Drama utilises the capacity of the body to convey meaning through action and semiotics. Such notions are embedded in the theories of theatre practitioners such as Artaud (1982) who valued provocative physical expression over rational forms, and Stanislavsky (1948) whose work emphasised authentic physical

representation of real-life experience. Socio-culturalist, Lev Vygotsky, also emphasised the importance of 'lived emotional experience' or *perezhivanie*, and is said to have been influenced by Stanislavsky's method (John-Steiner, Connery, & Marjanovic-Shane, 2010). Both the development of embodied understandings (knowing through the body) and the use of the body as a means of physical expression are important dimensions in the work of drama teachers.

### *Aesthetic learning is cognitive learning*

Art and its aesthetic are complex, culturally-situated and difficult to articulate. Although definitions of the aesthetic often emphasise the affective domain, aesthetic learning is also cognitive and social. Eisner (1985) argues that the arts are both cognitive and socially-situated because they involve systems of representations made to consolidate and explore understandings and then communicate these understandings to others. An aesthetic experience is one bounded in space and time, where senses and reason combine to form structured and organised groups of 'sense impressions'. An aesthetic experience can contribute to how we learn new things by disrupting our expectations and provoking cognitive dissonance (McLean, 1996). Both Gardner and Eisner argue that some dimensions of experience are better expressed through forms of representation other than verbal or numerical, and that the more choice students have in these forms, the wider their intellectual capacity (Efland, 2004).

### **2.1.5 Creativity and imagination**

The previous sections have identified the 'ingredients' of drama as an art form but have not touched on the creative process by which drama and theatre is made. Creativity is a core component of artistic-aesthetic learning and is therefore a central concern for arts educators. Creativity has been extensively researched and theorised in the literature, particularly within the field of educational psychology. Creativity involves spontaneity and the generation of novelty – where the ends are not conceived beforehand (Balin, 1993). It is associated with a range of cognitive skills – such as thinking conceptually, independently, originally, divergently, convergently, laterally, 'outside the box', critically and reflectively. It involves cognitive processes such as imagination, visualisation, deconstruction,

reconstruction, and problem-solving. Creativity is also seen as a life-skill manifest in daily living (NACCCE, 1999), an innate characteristic within all people (Gardner, 1993), but not always associated with a product outcome (Craft, 2000). Whether drama is truly creative has been a contention in the literature. Some theorists have argued that dramatic art is in fact interpretive, rather than creative (Wallach & Wing, 1969). Such contentions rest on the notion that acting is essentially interpretive – however, given that contemporary classroom drama often includes the use of an extensive range of dramatic forms and activities, the prominence of devising and improvising new works, and the novel use of technologies, these contentions are now difficult to uphold.

While closely associated with art-making, creativity is not solely found in the domain of the arts. Furthermore, the belief that creativity belongs to a gifted few is extremely limiting for both arts educators and their students. Conceptualisations of creativity as something that occurs within an individual ignore the fact that much creativity arises as a result of interactions in a social context (Anderson, 2012; Fischer, Giaccardi, Eden, Sugimoto, & Ye, 2005). Significantly for educators, research supports the notion that creativity is something that can be nurtured and developed (Craft, Jeffrey, & Leibling, 2001; NACCCE, 1999). Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 1998) argues that instead of asking, ‘What is creativity?’ the more productive question to ask is, ‘Where is creativity?’ in order to build an understanding of the conditions that give rise to creative acts.

Closely associated with creativity is the imagination. Imagination, according to Vygotsky (1930/2004), draws on existing knowledges, skills, ideas and images to generate something new, and is the means by which experience is broadened. The ability to imagine alternative ways of being is an essential precursor to enacting change. Maxine Greene writes that the arts release the imagination to “cultivate multiple ways of seeing and multiple dialogues in a world where nothing stays the same” (Greene, 1995, p. 16). Wenger (1998, p. 217) agrees, adding that imagination enables us to “visit ‘otherness’ and let it speak its own language”. Greene argues it is the imagination, not reason, which makes empathy possible as we come to imagine the alternative realities of others.

Drama harnesses the imagination through the creation of imagined worlds and characters – a process which arises naturally in children in the form of play. Play has a significant place in drama theory and practice. Courtney (1974) writes that drama education is ‘paedocentric’ and evolutionary, “It begins with the child. It recognises him for who he is. It does not, as in the eighteenth century, see him as a miniature adult ... it recognises that the child’s play is an entity in itself, of its own value” (pp. 56-57). Dramatic play in young children has been examined in detail by numerous authors, including Piaget (1954) and Vygotsky (1930/2004). Vygotsky saw play as imagination embodied. Slade (1954) identifies children’s socio-dramatic play as an art form, due to the manipulation of elements and symbolic abstraction that occurs. Roles, narrative, tension, symbolic use of costumes and objects are all featured in children’s play. The role of play in learning is widely recognised in early childhood education, with fewer studies done on the role of play in pre-adolescents and adolescents. Research into the dramatic play of adolescent girls found that, as they created dramatic worlds and characters, students explored themes of identity, ‘otherness’ and other aspects of their inner lives through this external and aesthetic form (Gallagher, 2001). Dunn (2006) explored the play of pre-adolescent girls and found that “the connected notions of fun, danger and a search for realness” characterised their dramatic play (p. 11). Through play, theorists argue, children can overcome the powerlessness of their daily lives (Egan, 1991).

Drama produces numerous opportunities for spontaneity, making new connections, for divergent thinking and new ways of seeing. Creativity is not confined to improvisation but is also possible in script work, where students might use improvisation and process conventions to explore the dramatic world of the play, and create symbols (visual and aural) to represent and develop dramatic meaning. Not only this, but learning in arts education is also about what we can know, about ourselves, our lives, our histories and our possible futures, through the creation and reception of art works. In this sense, art processes are inquiry processes. These inquiries maybe framed by Big Ideas and Questions, draw on intuition and spontaneity alongside empirical research, and involve role, narrative and action. Put another way, in these classroom qualitative inquiries, meaning is

generated through interpretive methodologies, drawing on the 'thick description' created by the multiple sources (methods) of the senses and the (embodied) intellect.

While there is recognition from government sectors that creativity is essential for our future, there is still a sense that an investment in developing creative individuals serves the ends of a market economy agenda. Creativity is essentially value-free and, like imagination, can be utilised for destructive or constructive ends (Craft, 2005; Copley, 2011). Without attention to social and ethical development throughout the curriculum, creativity may serve questionable social and political agendas (Neelands & Choe, 2010). Bruner (2002) reminds us that without a sense of responsibility to others, a commitment to the self is equal to sociopathy.

## **2.2 Drama as social and cultural learning**

Drama education is not only concerned with the art form and aesthetic power of drama work but also functions as a medium for social and cultural learning. Educational drama practitioners include those who are concerned with the development of the personal/self (Slade, 1954; Way, 1967) and those who are concerned with the development of social and political relationships (Boal, 1979; Bolton, 1985; Heathcote, 1984). Despite these differing concerns, practitioners share an emphasis on learning through imaginative experience and in their use of various elements of drama.

Drama is closely linked with cultural acts of ritual and ceremony (Courtney, 1974; Schechner, 1994). It has been a vehicle through which societies have marked important transitions, using symbolic acts of meaning-making: rites of passage and religious rites (Turner, 1982, 1987). Vygotsky (1978) defines meaning-making as the construction of knowledge into understanding, growing out of our need to organise our experience of life – and ritual, ceremony, carnival and pageantry are some of the universal ways societies have achieved this – all of which utilise the elements of drama.



### **2.2.1 Drama as a way of knowing**

Given the capacity for meaning-making and storying of experience that drama provides, it has also been conceptualised as a way of knowing. Bruner (cited in Wagner, 1998) theorises three ways in which humans know and interpret the world. These are: 'iconic knowing' – through symbols; 'enactive knowing' – through doing; and 'symbolic knowing' – through translation into language. Through the drama/theatre-making process, understandings about human experience are constructed and reconstructed – drawing on all three of Bruner's ways of knowing. Stories can make the complexities of human experience accessible. Oral cultures have traditionally utilised the power of stories to address universal human concerns, drawing on archetypal and metaphorical forms. Throughout history, drama has drawn on these same modes and served similar functions.

Bruner (2002) writes that a culture's stories and folk tales – its 'evolving literature' – provide the means to 'contain' the conflicts and inequalities that occur in any community. Neuropathologies such as Alzheimer's and Korsakov Syndrome include dysnarrativia – an inability to tell or understand stories. Bruner cites this as evidence to support the notion that without the capacity to make stories we have no sense of self – no 'selfhood'. He states, "The construction of selfhood cannot proceed without a capacity to narrate" (Bruner, 2002, p. 86). The significance of narrative meaning-making is also reflected in the domains of qualitative research where it is now a recognised methodology, and as a therapeutic modality in psychology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; White & Epston, 1990). Klein (2005) boasts that while psychology has recently discovered the power of narrative structures, dramatic theorists have known this ever since Aristotle published his *Poetics*.

Egan (1986) challenges the view that myth exists due to the absence of science, which assumes Western rationality is superior. Such views have fuelled a sense of righteousness about colonisation for centuries. Egan argues that rationality "did not displace myth but rather grew out of it and on it", emphasising the "intellectual

coherence and security and a sense of participation in the natural world” achieved by these oral cultures (Egan, 1986, p. 12).

Most arts educators are of the belief that aesthetic experiences can transform us – individually, socially, culturally and politically – through the process of creating artistic forms and through experiences as an audience. Drama investigates human issues, often using open forms of narrative (Winston, 2005). It is concerned with personal and moral education, and encourages an appreciation of ‘otherness’ (Kempe & Ashwell, 2001; Østern, 2006). Nicholson (1999, p. 81) describes the arts as having “special powers” to “illuminate, move and excite”. It is these characteristics that enable drama to be a medium for cultural and social learning – as the work of many drama educationalists and theatre practitioners attests.

### **2.2.2 Theatre, learning and the influence of theatre practitioners**

Drama allows expression of culture but also gives rise to construction, deconstruction and critique of culture (Østern, 2006). That theatre can be influential, even dangerous or subversive, has been widely assumed by many governments and religious institutions throughout history, resulting in censorship or banning of theatrical events. Stalin banned *Hamlet* during the second world war, Brecht’s theatre was banned in Nazi Germany, and public theatres were closed by the Puritans in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in England (Ackroyd, 2000). Theatre and its capacity to challenge and provoke ideologies make it a potential medium for stimulating and supporting social and political change.

The transformative potential of drama has given rise to an array of theatre forms that have personal, social and political development as their intention. Applied theatre, forum theatre, theatre-in-education, theatre for development, and drama-in-education are some of the forms used in the field, all of which ask for active participation from their audience. A number of these forms, and the practitioners who developed them, have significantly influenced the work of drama teachers and the development of a drama curriculum. To further illustrate the social and cultural learning embedded in drama education, a brief examination of the work of

Augusto Boal and Bertolt Brecht is provided. Both practitioners utilise drama as a means of social learning and transformation.

Augusto Boal developed an emancipatory approach to theatre known as *Theatre of the Oppressed*, which has the express intention of liberating oppressed people through dialogue (Boal, 1979). Dialogue is intentionally activated through a theatre scene that features an incidence of oppression. This dialogue is facilitated through a discussion forum at the scene's end, where the audience engages with the actors about the resolutions they have posed in the work. This involves subsequent enactments informed by the ideas spectators have contributed, and featuring spectators as actors. Boal (1996) explains:

... to say 'OK, that's the way things are but not the way things should be, and now I'm going to create an image of how I want the world to be.' ... This is empowering. We have changed the image in the fiction of a theatre but we are not fiction. We are in rehearsal for the real world, when the aesthetic space disappears and people go home. (Boal, 1996, p. 49)

Boal's theatre has been influential in many *Theatre for Development* projects throughout Asia and Africa as well as in classroom drama, often appearing in the form of Forum Theatre (B. Burton & O'Toole, 2005). It has been explored and adapted by a number of practitioners in educational settings and continues to influence educational drama work – perhaps most notably in the recent Australian project, *Cooling Conflict* (O'Toole, Burton, & Plunkett, 2005). Adaptations of Boal's methods have included the addition of artistic forms and conventions, participatory process drama conventions, and extended scenes to enhance the aesthetic impact and to extend on the depth of engagement with the content (B. Burton & O'Toole, 2005; Jackson, 2011). Participation in drama work may take various formats, depending on the theatre forms employed. O'Toole (1976) identifies three main formats: peripheral, extrinsic and integral. These differ in terms of whether students participate from an audience position (peripheral),

engage in workshops to explore issues more deeply (extrinsic), or take a role and influence the direction of the drama (integral).

Another theatre practitioner whose work has influenced drama education and who frequently features in classroom drama courses is Bertolt Brecht. As a Marxist, Brecht's Epic Theatre was intended to be both educational and political. Brecht's methodology rejected theatre as entertainment and strove to reveal social and political 'realities' of life to the audience (Brecht, 1987). Brecht achieved this through the use of alienation, or *verfremdung*. Rather than encouraging the audience, or the actors, to identify with the characters and plots on stage, he alienates both from these characters, in order to raise awareness that alternative behaviours and perspectives on the social 'reality' of characters are possible. He attempts to develop a critical consciousness in the audience by 'making the familiar, strange' – an idea found in Russian Formalism (Shklovsky, 1991). Brecht's approach has had much to offer to drama education – both in terms of influencing and informing pedagogical approaches to constructing learning experiences, but also to students who, in studying Brecht's approach to theatre, learn something of the socially and culturally constructed nature of social and political life, and the potential of art to collude or confront these realities (B. Burton, 1991).

Way (1967) conceptualised drama as being for all and theatre being for few. However, current theorists would tend to disagree. Rather than considering drama education to be in opposition to theatre, theorists now place drama education on a continuum with theatre, arguing that the aesthetic learning *process* is the same in both contexts despite differences in intention and technique (Ackroyd, 2000; Anderson, 2012; Bolton, 1985; Bowell & Heap, 2001; B. Burton, 1991; Schechner, 1994). B. Burton (1991) provides an insightful model for this process, which he sees as characterised by a complex interplay of the elements of imagination, creativity, identification, transformation and discovery. He describes drama as an act of imagination (both cognitive and affective) involving a process of creativity where perceptions of reality are constructed and restructured. This generates *metaxis*, a balance between fictitious and real (Boal, 1979). Through these experiences in role, participants experience *identification* and *transformation*

resulting in *discovery* – that is, a qualitative change in understanding as a result of experiential learning.

Theatre for social and educational purposes is not without its critics. Jackson (2005) cites several opposing voices, including playwright David Mamet who argues that drama is not useful for anything but telling a story, and that is value enough. Mamet argues that trying to change the world through drama does not serve the art form well, emphasising that a ‘genuine’ work of art cannot be didactic or instrumental. There is a view that either teaching or art suffer when the two are combined. Conversely, Winston (2005) argues,

That one of the key contributions theatre has to offer the field of moral education is its ability to problematise moral positions, to raise questions rather than offer answers, to provoke rather than resolve debate. (p. 321)

Whilst both theatre and drama draw on the aesthetics of the art form, their processes are not the same. Some drama theorists argue that, given the difference in their intentions and agendas, this is as it should be (Anderson, 2012). There are a number of pedagogical challenges to participation – activity and experience is not necessarily educational (Dewey, 1938). Jackson (2011) identifies a number of tensions in participatory forms of drama, including the possibility that these events (despite the best intentions) can reinforce existing power relations and give opportunity to already-confident factions to dominate.

Schonmann (2005) warns that without careful attention to the artistic-aesthetic orientation, drama education will be cut off from teaching artistic and aesthetic ways of knowing and its teachers are at risk of becoming “like social workers or communication therapists” (p. 35). Boal reassures that all theatre is therapeutic (Lyngstad & Eriksson, 2003) and Taylor (2006b) also asserts that students must also gain an awareness of the transformative aesthetic power of the arts. He states:

Our goal as educators should be to facilitate understanding of how arts operate as live encounters between artist and audience. We must not lose sight of the power to transform, to move and shift us. (p. 128)

One of the ongoing challenges arts education faces is to provide strong research evidence that this is more than inspiring rhetoric to nurture the spirit. Furthermore, the notion of transformation is itself problematic. Nicholson (2005) asks:

If applied drama is socially transformative, is it explicit what kind of society is envisioned? If the motive is individual or personal transformation, is this something which is done to the participants, with them, or by them? Whose values and interests does the transformation serve? (p. 12f)

As with Brecht and Boal, behind these constructed dramatic explorations and communications lies the values, intentions and philosophies of the practitioner or teacher. Neelands (2004) challenges the rhetoric that pro-social outcomes naturally arise through drama work. He asserts that it is, in fact, what is done *through* drama by those who practice it, that determines the outcomes achieved:

Drama is not, of course, natural. It does not take a natural form, nor does it naturally have certain kinds of purposes and effects. What is hidden in the claim that 'drama is powerful' are the distinctive and preferred values, ethics and aesthetics of the author and how these socially constructed subjectivities have shaped pedagogical actions, intentions and the interpretation and presentation of the efficacy of the 'results' or effects of drama. (p. 47)

The foundations of drama education draw, not only on artistic-aesthetic knowledge, forms, processes and traditions, but also on critical pedagogies. As the work of Boal, Brecht and the many other forms of educational drama reveal, drama seeks to educate in an emancipatory sense, in line with the critical pedagogies of Paulo Freire (1973, 1985, 1998, 2004). Freire's work emphasises the need for

education to be more than a “domesticating and dehumanizing task” that relies on mere transmission of knowledge into empty receptacles, but rather calls for education to be a “humanistic and liberating task” that empowers students to act with intention on the world (Freire, 1985, p. 114). These educational intentions increase the complexity of the work of drama teachers within school settings – particularly where other, even contrasting, philosophical agendas are at play.

## **2.3 Teaching drama – education and pedagogy**

Understandings of the artistic-aesthetic dimensions of drama education outlined in *Section 2.1*, and of the social and cultural dimensions outlined in *Section 2.2* inform the pedagogies of teachers in this study and shape their practice. In this section, theory and research into effective teaching practice is examined. This discussion draws on research from the New Zealand context as well as international research into effective teaching for creativity and for drama itself. Connections are also made between drama teaching and pertinent aspects of socio-cultural theory, in order to illuminate the nature of drama classroom practice.

### **2.3.1 Approaching drama in the classroom: socio-cultural connections**

Drama education has strong connections to the socio-cultural educational paradigm. An examination of this theory illuminates a number of significant features of the pedagogies employed by drama teachers. Socio-cultural theory views learning as a social, cultural and historical process, where understandings are co-constructed. Students are active participants in the construction of knowledge rather than recipients of transmitted knowledge, and knowledge construction is seen as a social phenomenon, rather than an individual one. Dewey (1916) also emphasises the importance of experience in knowledge construction, seeing experience as a form of transaction, rather than an interior psychological process. In Vygotsky’s terms, an individual’s zone of proximal development (ZPD) is shifted through an embodied realisation of the experience and perspectives of others (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002). There has been an assumption that aesthetic appreciation is inherent within a person and needs only opportunity and an artefact to invoke it. For example, Abbs (1989) argues that this kind of aesthetic

knowing can be conceived of as a form of intelligence. However, while the capacity to respond aesthetically may occur naturally, the characteristics of that aesthetic which is pleasing to an individual are culturally constructed (Greene, 1988, 1995; Jackson, 2005).

An examination of the work of leading drama educationalist, Dorothy Heathcote, and that of her colleague, Gavin Bolton, highlights a number of socio-cultural features in their approach to drama. Heathcote trained as an actor and was influenced by the theatre practice of the time – particularly Stanislavsky. However, her work in drama was most concerned about social knowing – what it is to be human and to be in relationship. Teaching episodes typically involved an open-ended, creative process that involved students working in role, and being active in determining dramatic action and in reflecting on this action. The pedagogies of Heathcote and Bolton have been described as “purposeful, dialogic, emancipatory and metaphoric” (O'Neill, 1995a, p. vii). Heathcote emphasises the place of affective thinking in drama work. Her approach to drama was to use improvisation to explore the notion of “Man in a mess”, that is, to walk in another’s shoes and to experience a range of social and political situations in order to build empathy; a ‘living through’ drama. This focus on the collective was a departure from the earlier emphasis placed on personal development through drama (Way, 1967).

Heathcote’s aesthetic requires that students operate in two worlds – the fictional and the real, reflecting across these realms, so each is informed by the other (Bolton, 2003; Wagner, 1979). Through this state of *metaxis*, drama allows affective and cognitive states outside a participant’s experience to be generated and explored. This offers opportunities for emergent, dialogic spaces that encourage different ways of knowing (Greenwood, 2003). Furthermore, meanings and understandings are co-constructed between students and the teacher – and this is a central feature in socio-cultural approaches (Sewell, 2006).



### **2.3.2 Dialogic learning**

Heathcote's practice highlights the fact that learning in drama involves dialogic processes occurring within a social setting. The notion of dialogic learning is central to socio-cultural views of learning and to the educational impact of theatre and drama. Dialogic learning emphasises the role of communication in learning, recognising that the ways language is used by groups shapes intellectual development and knowledge creation. It encourages the investigation of the relationship between language and thinking and between psychological and social processes, seeing language as a fundamental tool in the act of meaning-making (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). In a learning situation, dialogic acts include the dialogue that occurs in the learning exchange as well as the 'dialogue of ideas' stimulated through engagement with the content. Bakhtin (1986) sees dialogue as a means to exchange, explore and refine meaning. He makes connections between dialogic learning and the arts, using the term, 'heteroglossia' to describe works of art and literature that contain multiple viewpoints/discourses – and as a result, provide rich potential for learning. Indeed, Boal and Brecht (as explored in *Section 2.2*) also rely heavily on dialogic learning within their methodologies (Jackson, 2005). It is important to note that to be truly 'dialogic' in drama means focusing on the conflict between discourses, not on conflict between people – which may sit within a singular or 'monologic' discourse (Bakhtin, 1986; Edmiston & Enciso, 2003).

There are differing models of dialogic learning. Alexander's (2004) model of 'dialogic teaching' promotes pedagogies that place talk as a central aspect of the learning process and emphasises collective participation in the act of learning – where ideas build cumulatively in a supportive, reciprocal social environment. Mortimer and Scott (2003) identify an interactive/dialogic dimension to classroom dialogue, where teachers engage students in dialogue through the use of questions, enabling students to express their own ideas, which the teacher accepts without critical judgement. In this model, 'dialogic' dialogue in the classroom refers to the ways the emergent discussion influences the direction of the learning episode. The teacher actively resists being positioned as the authoritative expert. These ideas commonly feature in drama education – particularly in process drama work. For

example, the use of questioning in drama work has been extensively explored by Morgan and Saxton (1987) and Heathcote's *Mantle of Expert* actively seeks to reposition students as experts (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995).

Klein (2005) contends that viewing theatre alone does not cause social changes in behaviours because distinguishing moral from immoral behaviours does not necessarily mean that children will transfer such learning to their own future behaviours. To be effective, theatre that aims to educate must have dialogic processes at its core – because the power of these episodes comes from the aesthetic quality of the experience, rather than its intended messages. The centrality of dialogic processes to learning in drama has a number of pedagogical implications. There is a need to foster dialogue within the classroom and to allow space for discussion and reflection, for experiences to be shared, and for understandings and meanings to develop and consolidate as a result.

### **2.3.3 Building a community of learners**

Heathcote's work also emphasises the social nature of learning and requires active participation from children. Schechner (1994) argues that active participation is essential for transformation to occur in drama and is also signalled in the investigation of educative forms of drama and theatre, addressed in the previous *Section 2.2*. Jackson (2005) states:

Evidence of the actual responses of audiences suggests there is more, much more, to a successful interventionist performance than “messages” or measurable outcomes – that there is a quality of experience that is to do with the “liveness” of the event, the emotional resonances it can offer, the dialogues that can be generated, and the complexity of texture that defies easy closure. (pp. 116-117)

The importance of active participation is also found in the learning theory of Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave. Wenger and Lave developed a ‘situated learning’ model and propose that learning happens as the result of a process of engagement within a ‘community of practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). These communities are defined as, “groups of people who share a concern or passion for

something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Smith, 2003/2009, p. 1).

An effective learning community is one where learning is a central focus and there is an understanding of the interdependence between academic achievement and the social environment (Alton-Lee, 2003). This is more than a group interacting in socially-positive ways – rather learning is strengthened and validated through the intertwining of cognitive and social dimensions (G. Aitken & Sinnema, 2008; Peterson, 1992). As Rogoff (1994) notes:

In a community of learners, both mature members of the community and less mature members are conceived as active; no role has all the responsibility for knowing or directing, and no role is by definition passive. Children and adults together are active in structuring shared endeavors. (p. 213)

Participation in drama within a school context – including curricula and extra-curricula drama – can be conceived of as participation in a community of practice. The notion of community also suggests the potential for collaboration, caring and democratic process (Sewell, 2006). In a learning *community*, one might expect there to be shared decision-making, consultation over learning directions and cooperative and collaborative task designs. Engagement in learning communities happens over a period of time and involves learning, not only skills and explicit knowledge of the domain, but also how to participate in the community, in its particular socio-cultural context. What’s more, learning in this conceptualisation is not the outcome of knowledge transference or skill acquisition but happens as a result of active participation in the community of practice. This is a relational view of learning where ‘achievement’ is shown by a student’s increased participation in the community – a holistic view that sees a “whole person acting in the world” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 49). Sewell (2006) provides a valuable overview of socio-cultural principles underpinning various models of learning communities. A socio-cultural curriculum is one where learning and understandings are negotiated and co-constructed with children. It builds on children’s interests and validates

children's cultural and social lives. A socio-cultural pedagogy involves teacher and student collaboration in a variety of forms, including sharing of roles and expertise, reflecting together on the learning process and developing shared meanings. Accordingly, Sewell concludes that a socio-cultural approach to learning values active participation, shared dialogue, diversity, individual and collective agency and the creation of new knowledge (Sewell, 2006).

These principles are consistent with drama education theory although the terminology may differ at times. For example, Neelands (2009, 2010) describes drama as a 'social art' and explores the notion of 'ensemble-based' learning. Characteristics of ensemble-based learning include: the uncrowning of power of the director/teacher; mutual respect amongst players; a shared commitment to truth; a sense of the intrinsic value of theatre-making; a shared absorption in the artistic process of dialogic; and social meaning-making (Neelands, 2009). In a similar way, Wenger (1998) asserts that involvement in these communities of practice leads to particular kinds of knowing, that of "being together, living meaningfully, developing a satisfying identity, and altogether being human" (p. 134). Ensemble-based learning emphasises quality relationships as an essential context for learning and is addressed in more depth the following section.

#### ***2.3.4 Relational pedagogy***

The experiential, social and participatory nature of educational drama has important implications for the classroom drama teacher designing and implementing effective teaching and learning. Contemporary research into effective teaching conducted in a New Zealand context also places significant emphasis on the importance of the learning community and on the relationships that occur within these communities. This emphasis on relational pedagogy is found in research conducted by Alton-Lee (2003), who identified several pedagogical practices that foster the development of caring, inclusive and cohesive communities. Some of these practices pertain to the design of learning experiences. For example, structuring tasks and teaching to support students' active learning orientations, and designing tasks that address and value diversity and ensuring socio-cultural dimensions of the learning experience are managed in

a responsive way to enable cognitive outcomes. Promoting dialogue and providing students with models, guidance and encouragement in how to use language to enable reasoning and collaborative learning are important facets of effective teaching (Mercer & Littleton, 2007) .

Other practices identified by Alton-Lee (2003) impact both task design and relational dimensions of teaching practice. These include being responsive to students by valuing their diversities and optimising their motivation; maintaining caring and supportive teacher-student interactions; enabling collaborative group work and peer assistance; and having mechanisms for student accountability.

Research from G. Aitken and Sinnema (2008) complements this. They present a Best Evidence Synthesis into effective teaching for Social Sciences which identifies four 'mechanisms' to guide effective practice: community, interest, alignment and connection. 'Community' includes the establishment of productive teacher-student relationships in order to create a sense of community, to encourage participation and to establish a strong focus on learning. This mechanism also emphasises sharing power with students in order to increase participation and independence. 'Interest' refers to the capacity to design tasks that will maximise student interest and increase their motivation. 'Connection' refers to the ways teachers can draw on relevant content in order to make diversity visible, and to enable students to draw on their own cultural knowledge, in order to provide a point of departure from which new discoveries can be made. Finally, the mechanism of 'alignment' refers to attending to individual learning needs by identifying students' prior knowledge, aligning activities to intended outcomes, and providing opportunities to revisit concepts and learning processes (G. Aitken & Sinnema, 2008, pp. 54-55). Each of these mechanisms resonates with effective drama teaching, however there are some qualifications to the 'alignment' mechanism in order for this to be a good fit with drama pedagogy. Specifically, the emphasis on determining and identifying for students the endpoint of learning experiences is an area of contention for drama teachers, who at times prefer to arouse curiosity and to use an element of mystery in their lessons in order to develop the aesthetic dimension

within their teaching episodes. This will be addressed more fully in *Section 2.4 Educational policy and drama education*.

A number of key theorists within the field of drama education (as outlined in *Section 2.2*) are strongly influenced by critical pedagogy and the desire to address inequalities and oppression of minority groups within societies. In the New Zealand context, the impact of colonisation is reflected in dire statistics for educational achievement, employment, incarceration and health for Māori. Research into what might support and improve education for Māori learners reveals a number of significant factors New Zealand drama teachers need to be mindful of. The work of Russell Bishop has also been significant in building understanding of what characterises a ‘culturally appropriate and responsive context for learning’ for Māori learners in New Zealand schools (Bishop, 2012; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2001, 2003; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). This research identifies six behaviours of the effective teacher, which make up ‘Te Kotahitanga Effective Teaching Profile’: they care for students as culturally-located beings above all else (manaakitanga); they care for the performance of their students (mana motuhake); they are able to create a secure and well-managed learning environment by incorporating routine pedagogical knowledge with pedagogical imagination (whakapiringatanga); they are able to engage in effective teaching interactions with Māori students as Māori (wānanga); they can use strategies that promote effective teaching interactions and relationships with their learners (ako); and they promote, monitor and reflect on outcomes that lead to improvements in achievement for Māori (kotahitanga) (Bishop & Berryman, 2006).

Bishop (2012) also emphasises the significance of relationships and classroom interactions in fostering the achievement for Māori. This includes reducing the reliance on transmission models of teaching in order to facilitate more discursive learning interactions in the classroom, having high expectations of students, and maintaining a commitment to creating a learning environment that allows students to “bring who they are to the classroom in complete safety” (p. 200). Such findings endorse the relevance of socio-cultural approaches to teaching and

learning across the curriculum in the New Zealand context, and also suggest drama education has much to offer schools wishing to improve outcomes for Māori.

### *Relational pedagogy and drama*

Research into the creation of inclusive and caring learning communities, such as outlined above, places significant emphasis on the importance of the teacher-student relationship and also on the way knowledge is constructed in a shared human space. Contemporary literature refers to this as 'relational pedagogy' (V. Aitken, Fraser, & Price, 2007; Bergum, 2003; Fraser, Price, & Aitken, 2007; Wallis, 2010). V. Aitken et al. (2007, p. 2) argue that relational pedagogy has particular resonance in the teaching of drama, maintaining that, "concerns with embodiment, use of space, passion, emotion, empathy and modelling that are core to relational pedagogy have also long been central to teaching in drama". The importance of the relationship between teacher *and subject* is also asserted by hooks (2003, p. 127), who adds both relationships must be "charged with emotion" in order to "excite, enthuse and inspire students".

V. Aitken et al. (2007) contend that the drama teacher's role is to create an emotional environment that is safe enough so children can risk exposure, self-expression and depth of emotional engagement. P. Wright and Gerber's (2004) research into the conceptions of drama teaching competency held by Australian drama teachers also highlighted the significance of relational qualities – such as the ability to inspire and to listen to students as well as the importance of being a considerate reflective practitioner. Drama teachers must also have the ability to perceive what is happening when children are undertaking drama, both in terms of the drama work and the impact the work has on the person. Starko (2005) notes that:

a teacher's willingness to discover enough about a student to see the world through their eyes may provide the key to fostering both the creativity and achievement in content for that student. (p. 361)

The importance of establishing an emotionally safe relationship between teacher and students is not a new idea in drama education. Slade (1954, p. 106) says, "a

bond of friendship and trust is built with adults. This aids all learning and civilisation needs this trust". Bolton suggests that a teacher of drama must know how to build trust with students so that there is a high level of honesty in their mutual sharing of 'feelings, enthusiasms, and interests' (D. Davis & Lawrence, 1986). There are, understandably, a number of challenges for teachers who attempt to create effective, caring communities of learning and who wish to develop the artistic-aesthetic skills and creativity of their students. These tensions will be addressed in *Section 2.4 Educational policy and drama education*.

### **2.3.5 Effective teaching for creative achievement**

*Section 2.3* has explored literature and research pertaining to the socio-cultural nature of learning and teaching in drama education and the implications for building effective learning communities in New Zealand schools. A further body of knowledge that informs the practice of drama education is theory and research into the ways teachers can foster creativity in their students. If teachers are to create an environment in which creativity can be nurtured, it is important to identify those conditions under which creativity can emerge and be enhanced. Considerable research has been conducted into teaching for creativity over the last 20 years (Beetlestone, 1998; Craft, 2000; Fryer, 1996; Halliwell, 1993; Hubbard, 1996; Shallcross, 1981).

The British National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) report, *All our futures*, calls for a systematic approach to developing creativity education within the school curriculum and makes close connections between creative and cultural education (NACCCE, 1999). Within this report, creativity is defined as involving the imagination, being original, pursuing purposeful ends, and involving evaluation along with generation. The NACCCE (1999) makes a distinction between creative teaching and teaching *for* creativity, which enables methods that enhance student creativity to be brought into focus. However, critics argue that this is a 'false construction of pedagogic reality', in effect, and they suggest that a focus on both teacher and learner may prove a more useful approach (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004). For the purposes of this analysis, teaching



for creativity will be discussed first and creative teaching will feature in *Section 2.3.6 Artistry in the teaching of drama*.

While acknowledging that teaching for creativity is “a demanding process that cannot be made routine”, the NACCCE (1999) maintain that it is possible to identify general principles (NACCCE, 1999, p. 106). Three related tasks of encouraging, identifying and fostering creativity are given as a frame for the teacher. The aims of teaching for creativity are stated within the following principles: autonomy on both sides: a feeling of ownership and control over the ideas that are being offered; authenticity in initiatives and responses; deciding for oneself on the basis of one’s own judgment; openness to new and unusual ideas, and to a variety of methods and approaches; respect for each other and for the ideas that emerge; and fulfilment: a feeling of anticipation, satisfaction, involvement and enjoyment of the creative relationship. The NACCCE report stresses that a relationship of trust is the most vital principle of all. Within the safety of trusting relationships, self-confidence and independence (in both thought and action) can develop.

#### *Building confidence – the development of identity*

These principles again echo the centrality of relational pedagogy to teaching for creativity and emphasise qualities of the creative experience, rather than concrete outputs. Jeffrey and Craft (2004) report that teachers implement the NACCCE’s (1999) ‘teaching for creativity’ principles by encouraging students’ creative identity, identifying their creative abilities, fostering curiosity, and by providing opportunities to be creative. This includes a focus on learner empowerment. In an Australian study into competence in drama teaching, the empowerment process was seen to result in collaborative learning experiences between students and teacher (P. Wright & Gerber, 2004). When teamwork and collaboration characterised the learning environment, positive outcomes for learning in drama are indicated. P. Wright and Gerber (2004) offer the following definition of empowerment:

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. (p. 61)

The notion of empowerment here refers to empowering students to open up to their own creativity and self-expression, rather than social or political empowerment – however it could be argued that this creative empowerment is a dimension of social and political empowerment. While students must be empowered in order to initially participate and co-construct alongside teachers, research suggests that co-construction with students, the incorporation of imaginative approaches and interesting tasks, and the provision of choice are further factors that work to empower creativity in learners (Craft, 2005; Fryer, 1996).

Confidence grows when success is built into the learning process. This might include allowing students to master initial tasks and to develop independence in their problem-solving (McCammon, Berggraf Sæbø, & O'Farrell, 2011). The work of Eisner (1991/1998) reinforced the vital importance of teacher scaffolding in order that students can discover “what powers an aesthetic sensibility”. ‘Scaffolding’ is a metaphor used to describe how teachers can support learners in accomplishing tasks initially beyond their ability to do alone, by focusing on attaining success in incremental stages (Mercer & Littleton, 2007). Arts educators need to assist students to discover their own imagination and evolving aesthetic, and to value the intrapersonal and subjective processes of art making.

Although creativity in drama may involve playful exploration, improvisation and spontaneous expression, this freedom of expression and experimentation is not the sole source of creativity. Knowledge, skills and structures are also vital to the creative process. Providing structure and clear expectations as a frame to experimentation is important to ensure work is purposeful (McCammon, et al., 2011). This has pedagogical implications for the teacher, who must provide space for experimentation, time for trialling, failing, discarding and selecting, as well as

developing teaching episodes that will equip students with knowledge and skills that will result in creative achievement (Claxton, 1999).

Reflection on creative work and aesthetic experiences is also a significant dimension of learning in the arts. This phase encourages self-monitoring and awareness of both the creative process and the decisions made along the way. Structured reflection, through writing or class discussion, encourages metacognition and can enhance young people's control over creative activity and the development of their best practice (NACCCE, 1999). Catterall (2009) maintains that such personal and social reflection provides opportunities for the 'substantive communication' referred to in quality teaching and learning frameworks.

### *Partnerships with artists*

Drama teachers seek to generate and harness the power of aesthetic experience within their teaching programmes, and often this includes working in partnership with professionals. Effective drama teachers share skills and network with other artists, as well as advocate for drama and the arts within their communities (P. Wright & Gerber, 2004).

The scope, aesthetic forms and pedagogies arts educationalists employ are not always understood by industry professionals, who value the creation of artistic products as an end point. O'Toole (2009, p. 133) notes that when the perceived purpose of drama education is limited to training students in theatre arts, drama teachers are even seen by some as "second-rate or failed artists". Preparing actors is frequently seen as matter of 'training' rather than 'education' and thus employs a different epistemological approach. As a consequence, children's own art-making can be undervalued, in favour of performing and appreciating the works of established professionals (O'Toole, 2009). Wenger (1998, p. 263) argues that, while vocational training is concerned with the development of competence in a chosen field, education is essentially concerned with the "opening of identities"; in this way it is transformative as well as formative.

### **2.3.6 Artistry in the teaching of drama**

Research into effective teaching for creativity emphasises the need for teachers to have knowledge of their field and to be actively involved in art-making (Craft, 2005; Fryer, 1996). Having sound subject knowledge is also vital to effective teaching, although pedagogical content knowledge is also important, in order that teachers can share their knowledge of the subject (Fraser & Spiller, 2001). The range of knowledges required by the drama teacher is extensive. Greenwood (2006, p. 10) contends that the practice of teaching involves “real scholarship” where “considerable fields of knowledge, derived from written, oral and experiential sources, that are consciously and unconsciously drawn on”. This scholarship of teaching is also referred to as artistry in the literature. Eisner (2002a) clarifies this connection:

Artistry requires sensibility, imagination, technique and the ability to make good judgements about the feel and significance of the particular. ... Good teaching depends on artistry and aesthetic considerations. ... Artistry is most likely when we acknowledge its relevance to teaching and create the conditions in schools in which teachers can learn to think like artists. (pp. 382-384)

In line with this notion of ‘thinking like an artist’ is the need for teachers to generate aesthetically powerful work. Having commitment and passion for both the art form of drama and for the students themselves was found to be an important characteristic of effective drama teachers (McLauchlan, 2011). Bolton believes a drama teacher must be able to extend the quality of the drama work in an educationally-rich direction, in accordance with the particular needs of the children (D. Davis & Lawrence, 1986, p. 11) – something P. Wright and Gerber (2004, p. 58) refer to as, “being ‘tuned in and turned on’ and adding value”. Effective teachers also worked to become more knowledgeable about creative processes, made learning relevant and shared ownership and control with students (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004).

McLauchlan (2011) notes this is a challenge for drama teachers who must establish their expertise in artistic-aesthetic work and in curriculum knowledge on

one hand, but actively position themselves as co-artists who learn alongside students on the other. Not only are drama teachers deepening their own understandings of aesthetic forms, elements and technologies to create art works – they are developing their pedagogic repertoire in order to deepen and broaden the educational value of these experiences in a classroom setting. There is artistry in this work. Wagner (1991) emphasised the need for drama teachers to be committed to the artistry of teaching, in order to be effective at challenging and inspiring students to:

... call into existence something new in the world, to draw out of their kinaesthetic knowing, their sensory experience and these memories of authentic expressions wrought into symbols. (p. 800)

### *Improvisation, flexibility and planning*

Risk-taking and experimentation feature in a conceptualisation of competence in Australian drama teaching (P. Wright & Gerber, 2004). This includes being flexible and responsive to the needs of different groups and adapting accordingly. Participants believed it was important to teachers to find new ways and new meanings in the work. Sawyer (2004) argues that creative teaching can best be compared to improvisational performance. Improvisational performance involves interaction and responsiveness rather than delivery and enactment to a captured audience. Furthermore, creative teaching is likened to disciplined improvisation because there are structures and frameworks teachers use to guide creative activity in the classroom. These structures might include routines, curriculum pedagogical strands, and reflection. Taylor (2006a) emphasises the need for drama teachers to be clear about what they want students ‘to know/do’ in order that an aesthetic imperative is scaffolded through the work. Teachers also need to be enthusiastic, confident and willing to take risks themselves (Fryer, 1996).

J. Simons (2002) maintains that there is development of artistry within the teacher when knowledge evolves from explicit to ‘embodied, tacit or unconscious knowledge’ because with this comes the ability for the teacher to respond in the moment; as Sinclair, Jeanneret, and O’Toole (2009, p. 49) put it: “to shape, divert,

nurture, or remain silent, in a seemingly intuitive understanding of what is necessary to harness the artistic opportunity” Sinclair et al. (2009, p. 49) go on to highlight the teacher’s ability to manage the “dynamic and multiple dialogues of the classroom” as another feature of a teacher’s artistry. The task of the effective drama teacher is therefore a complex one: they are charged with providing enough structure and predictability in order to engender a sense of safety in their classrooms while also encouraging risk-taking, spontaneity and introducing an element of surprise (McLauchlan, 2011).

Research into effective teaching practice across the curriculum suggests effective teachers need to have an underpinning rationale and intention for their teaching - a vision that transcends the outcomes of curriculum. Within a New Zealand context, effective teachers must be able to enact the Crown’s commitment to Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi. While there is a growing body of research that describes and theorises arts education in New Zealand schools, there have been few studies into the impact of arts education in the New Zealand context. International research-based evidence for the impact of arts in schools has identified a range of positive outcomes for students. The United States report, *Champions of change* (Fiske, 1999), found the arts engaged students who were not otherwise reached, transformed the environment for learning, and provided challenges for gifted and talented students. One study within the report found students who had engaged in ‘rich’ in-schools arts programmes (in a number of arts areas across a number of years):

... performed better than those in “low-arts” groups on measures of creativity, fluency, originality, elaboration and resistance to closure – capacities central to arts learning. Pupils in arts-intensive settings were also strong in their abilities to express thoughts and ideas, exercise their imaginations and take risks in learning. In addition, they were described by their teachers as more cooperative and willing to display their learning publicly. (J. Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 1999, p. 3)

## **2.4 Educational policy and drama education**

In order to contextualise this study, previous sections have outlined the salient issues drawn from theory and research into the artistic-aesthetic nature of drama education, the sociological-cultural dimensions of drama, and the pedagogical-educational capacities of the field. This final section investigates the impact of the educational policy environment on the way drama education is conceptualised within the curriculum and on the practice of drama teachers. A number of tensions, challenges and barriers to practice are identified throughout the discussion.

### **2.4.1 Knowledge, education and curriculum**

A useful frame for this discussion of educational policy and its impact on the practice of drama education comes from Habermas (1972) and his theory of knowledge. Habermas theorises that there are three basic areas of human 'interest' – the pursuit of technical knowledge, practical knowledge, and emancipatory (or critical) knowledge. These areas of human endeavour also inform our conceptualisation of education. This includes both the design and content of school curriculum, as well as pedagogy – the manner in which this knowledge might be attained. This discussion begins by unpacking Habermas' categories and making connections to the field of drama education.

*Technical knowledge* draws on empirical observation and the laws governing the natural world. This form of knowledge is also known as 'positivism' – where scientific theory informs predictions, which can be positively affirmed by observation and experience in the world. In this sense, technical knowledge is concerned with control over environments – with predictability, cause and effect and reliability. While there are aspects within the study of drama education that might draw on technical knowledge, drama education predominantly falls within Habermas' other two domains. Technical knowledge informs the use of technologies (such as lighting, sound, set design, and so on) in drama and also informs the fictional worlds explored through drama work – but in these instances, this knowledge serves the pursuit of discoveries that lie predominantly in the practical and emancipatory domains. Factual knowledge about theatre forms, genres and the like also falls under this category, as does the technical skill of

acting. Technical knowledge refers to what can be empirically validated and reproduced. Therefore, when applied to the school curriculum, it concerns the transmission of laws, rules and facts in order for students to be able to reproduce knowledge and attain predicted outcomes (Grundy, 1987).

*Practical knowledge* concerns meaning-making and interpretation – that is, developing understandings of how to *interact* with the world and make meaning of human experience in a more holistic sense. This is also referred to as hermeneutic study. Hermeneutics acknowledges meaning-making as an act of interpretation, and draws on the complexities of social, cultural and political domains. Previous sections of this literature review illustrate the extent to which drama education is embedded in this ‘practical knowledge’ domain. Aesthetic inquiry is not as concerned with the ‘truth’ or as reliant on empirical measures, but rather, it investigates the interpreted, constructed meaning of things, as hermeneutic research does (Kincheloe, 2004; Schonmann, 2009). Therefore aesthetic inquiries will often lead to explorations of cultural and political significance. Art works are, in this sense, also cultural and political texts – and therefore may also provide important opportunities for democratic (or critical/emancipatory) education – the third domain in Habermas’ theory.

*Emancipatory knowledge* concerns the kinds of knowledge that enable people to think critically, in order to be autonomous, responsible and self-reflective. This criticality enables individuals and groups to gain freedom from the ‘possible deceit’ of dogmatism, fundamentalism and prejudice that can exist as a result of interpretation and meaning-making in the hermeneutic domain. It also challenges the place and value of technical knowledge by contextualising this in terms of the implications for wider human society – thus it is found in the fields of ethics, justice and political governance (Grundy, 1987). As outlined in *Section 2.2*, many theorists and practitioners within the field of drama education have been influenced by the work of Paulo Freire. Freire (Freire, 2004) calls for a ‘pedagogy of hope’ – where education addresses *emancipatory knowledge*, creating critical consciousness and the capacity for transformative action in society. In this conceptualisation, education becomes a site to critique and dialogue with



dominant society, as well as to create new possibilities. Freire is described as “standing between” the opposing political discourses of traditional education – which sees education as the means to serve the market economy and the demands of capitalist society, and left-wing socialist discourses – which oppose the use of public education for the purposes of “economic and cultural reproduction” and the maintenance of inequalities and oppression of groups within society (Freire, 1985, p. xi).

Viewed through the lens of Habermas’ theory, drama education is predominantly concerned with practical and emancipatory knowledge forms. The methodologies it employs involve dialogic and embodied learning, improvisation, experimentation and critical reflection, and also give credence to subjectivities such as emotional response, personal and cultural identities and beliefs. The role of the teacher is not that of the expert who transmits knowledge to awaiting vessels. However, as the next section reveals, this poses a number of challenges for drama teachers who must implement a mandated curriculum.

#### ***2.4.2 Drama education in the curriculum***

The development of educational policy and national curricula is a highly political matter, shaping and reflecting the ideologies of societies. Curricula are *constructed*, that is, selections and omissions are made when determining what is deemed appropriate or essential for young people to know. These decisions are based on the priorities and objectives of governments, and accordingly, some forms of knowledge are traditionally privileged over others.

The dominance of technical knowledge – positivism, empiricism, rationalism, and scientism – within educational policy is seen to a major barrier to arts education in the curriculum (Z. Brooks, 2010; Greene, 1977, 1995; Grumet, 2007; O’Connor, 2009b; Taylor, 1998, 2006b). Theorists, such as Elliot Eisner and John Dewey, have extensively outlined the complex benefits for individuals and communities who engage in arts education; however arts education continues to be marginalised within the school curriculum. Eisner (1985, p. 30) explains that aesthetic forms – if we can perceive the rewards and insights these afford –

'modulate' our own experience and shape our internal life. He argues that the aesthetic is vital to satisfy the human need for stimulation and to have a sense of order in the world. Unfortunately, the positivist belief that knowledge is something 'out there' that we search for – rather than something we construct – undermines the perceived relevance of aesthetic education in western culture.

### *Square pegs and round holes*

Drama theorists argue that it is difficult for arts education to achieve its “artistic-aesthetic mandate within a climate of scientism” (Taylor, 1998, p. 4) when the education system itself is embedded in a positivist ideology. Bernstein's work into the classification, codification and framing of knowledge within educational policy explains the ways educational institutions can inhibit emerging pedagogies due to their commitment to traditional definitions of 'worthwhile knowledge' (Bernstein, 1996). Across international and local contexts, theory and research evidence into the conditions that promote creativity and quality arts education identifies the predominance of technocratic, traditional approaches to education as a barrier. These approaches do not foster the pedagogical scope creative teaching and learning requires (Bernstein, 1996; Grundy, 1987; Habermas, 1972; Kohn, 1999). This is because traditional approaches to curriculum (informed by technical knowledge principles) is concerned with outcomes – clearly defined and measurable. If conditions are appropriately controlled, the act of teaching results in students meeting these outcomes. Such results can be assessed, recorded and replicated. In contrast, aesthetic learning is difficult to measure – it is often embodied, non-linear and process-oriented. Anderson (2012) explains:

The nature of the 'unfolding logic' of creativity is a process of trial and error, and in many cases does not present a product or an artefact that is easily measured against an outcome, an objective or an aim. (p. 84)

As a result, there is a misperception that arts disciplines fall solely within the subjective/expressive/affective domains and are therefore 'non-academic' subjects. Such judgments limit the perceived value of arts education and the subsequent status afforded to arts subjects within schools. To the contrary, drama

education requires that students engage in a number of ways that resemble acts of academic scholarship. These include research; application of theory; representations of various perspectives; critical reflection; and the use of abstract and non-linear thinking, processes and forms.

Commentators observe that in order for drama education to compete as a viable subject within the school curriculum, certain areas within the field have been emphasised – perhaps at the expense of other more important dimensions. In discussions around the development of drama within the Australian curriculum, Donelan (2009) describes this as ‘a central dilemma’ for drama education, resulting in pressure to define the outcomes of drama education in terms of progressive skills across all years of the curriculum. This extends into preparation of drama teachers who:

are able to develop and implement programmes with clearly articulated objectives, that relate to perceived essential skills – the sort of skills that schools now regard as priorities. (Donelan, 2009, p. 48)

These tensions are also raised by O’Connor (2009a, 2009b) in reference to drama in the New Zealand curriculum. The extent of this awkward fit is captured in a tongue-in-cheek simile by Kredell (2006), who explores the tensions for drama assessment and the barriers of current assessment practice. She observes that, when compared to the assessment initiatives mandated by American education policy, the use of arts-relevant terms such as embodied, holistic and liminal, “stand out like sixties drug paraphernalia in a church rummage sale” (p. 154). Despite reservations about the ways this might impede drama education, drama educationalists and curriculum developers have developed models for progression in drama and these feature as Achievement Objectives within curriculum and assessment documents in the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States (Kempe & Ashwell, 2001; Ministry of Education, 2007).

### *Justifying drama in the curriculum*

Given these competing discourses in educational policy, it is not surprising that advocates for drama education have struggled. It is common to see the value of

drama education justified in terms of educational outcomes that lie outside the art form itself. A growing body of research supports the notion that drama has considerable impact on achievement in literacy (Chizhik, 2009; Hetland & Winner, 2001; Kempe, 2001; Podlozny, 2000) and on student motivation and engagement in schooling (Bolstad, 2010; Deasy, 2002; Matarasso, 1997). As part of their advocacy for drama in schools, practitioners also emphasise the opportunity drama affords educators to develop, “those other elements of social literacy ... empathy, values, identity, diversity, inclusion, intentionalities, understanding, enthusiasm, good humour and a sense of responsibility” (Saxton & Miller, 2008, p. 3). However, while many drama teachers value and applaud gains in literacy, some also experience frustration that drama advocates for its inclusion in the curriculum by highlighting outcomes outside of the subject discipline. O’Toole (2009) points out that, although research shows studying music can have a positive impact on mathematical skills, music teachers do not often tout this to justify their inclusion in the curriculum. Drama must advocate for what it offers students that no other subject does – yet also needs to do so in a manner that will be listened to by those who control developments in educational policy (Anderson, 2004a; Donelan, 2009). This is a further barrier to advocacy for drama education in New Zealand (and beyond) due to the lack of systematic research into the impact of arts education, including studies that could provide the kinds of quantified data that influences government policy (Anderson, 2004a, 2012; Bolstad, 2010; J. Catterall & Waldorf, 1999; Ewing, 2010).

### **2.4.3 Creativity and the curriculum**

Contemporary discussions around school curriculum and educational reforms assert the need for education to be preparing students for a changing and uncertain future (Bolstad & Gilbert, 2008; Bolstad et al., 2012; NACCCE, 1999; World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Accordingly, creativity, innovation and environmental sustainability have become ‘hot topics’ (Delors, 1998; Rychen & Salganik, 2003).

The rising status of creativity as a desirable outcome in recipients of public education gives some reason for optimism. For instance, Sheridan-Rabideau (2010,

p. 54) claims that creativity is “the cultural capital of the twenty-first century”, and Robinson (2001) asserts that creativity is a dimension of education that is as important to the future of society as the tools of numeracy and literacy. Closer to home, creativity has been signalled as a significant dimension within the Australian national curriculum. An Australian government press release makes the connection between creativity and the role of arts education:

Creativity, interpretation, innovation and cultural understanding are all sought after skills for new and emerging industries in the 21st century. Arts education provides students with the tools to develop these skills. (Garrett, 2009)

Similarly, the vision statement of the New Zealand curriculum expresses the intention to produce young people who will be “confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners” as well as “creative, energetic, and enterprising” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8). Recognition of the need to address creativity and innovation within education offers hope that arts education might be given greater status. However, due to the dominance of traditional education models in the policy environment, closer investigations reveal barriers that exist for teachers hoping to nurture creativity in their students (Z. Brooks, 2010; Craft, 2005; Taylor, 1998). This intention alone does not empower schools and teachers to *deliver* effective arts education, nor to realise the breadth and depth of the pro-social agenda informing drama education.

This contention is raised in the British policy environment by Neelands and Choe (2010). These authors assert that the English model of creativity in policy discourse is not informed by psychological and sociological research and literature into creativity, but is constructed to serve an economic and political agenda. They argue that, as a result, the model lacks criticality – for example it assumes that creativity is always positive and fails to address “culture, criticality, pro-social inclusion and recognition agendas needed for a knowledge economy”. Instead, the model supports an agenda that may result in “privatising cultural experience ... and legitimising the excessive risk-taking of the ‘wealth-creators’” (Neelands &

Choe, 2010, p. 300) – intentions which run counter to the emancipatory aims of critical pedagogy (Grundy, 1987).

Some drama educationalists challenge whether young people need a ‘future focused’ curriculum at all – especially if this means education is reduced to preparation for the workforce. O’Connor (2009a) argues that young people need an education that helps them to make sense of their present – not their future; to address the things that matter now: “If you never or rarely get what you need in the present, then the future always feels a long way away” (O’Connor, 2009a, p. 24). Making meaning and engaging in dialogic learning around lived experiences in the present is seen as just as vital for young people as the need to acquire skills and tools for the future.

The NACCCE report identifies “unusually high levels of prescription in relation to content and teaching methods” as a major barrier to creativity. The authors emphasise that this level of prescription can result in the “de-skilling” of teachers and encourage “conformity and passivity” (NACCCE, 1999, p. 111). They call for approaches to curriculum and assessment that will promote higher levels of teacher autonomy and encourage creativity in teaching and learning at both the national level and within school communities. As seen in *Section 2.3*, creative teaching requires co-artistry, improvisation and flexibility. The requirement to deliver the mandated curriculum impacts the ability to establish a negotiated classroom curriculum co-constructed with students – one of the key features of effective teaching for drama and creativity explored in *Section 2.3.3* (Z. Brooks, 2010; Sewell, 2006). While it appears that arts education could benefit from the emphasis on creativity as education for the future, barriers within the broader policy environment undermine the philosophies, purpose and pedagogies informing the field. Educational policy – in the form of curriculum and assessment – needs to encourage greater flexibility in pedagogical approaches in order to remove barriers to creative teaching and to encourage creative activity in schools. Not only this, but critics argue there needs to be a shift from favouring knowledge outcomes that are easily measured over the more complex, intrinsic outcomes socio-cultural approaches to education are addressing.

Z. Brooks (2010) and Donaldson (2012) also identify barriers for arts education resulting from the classification and framing of New Zealand's curriculum and its assessment. These include the problematic emphasis on measurable outcomes but also identify increasing workload pressures due to administration and accountability requirements. Furthermore, within a New Zealand context, discourses in government policy currently threaten to place increasing emphasis on performativity and the measurement of teacher/school quality through children's attainment of educational standards in literacy and numeracy (Thrupp & Easter, 2012). These competing discourses and the high stakes are likely to inhibit teachers from engaging in the kinds of pedagogies that are needed to deliver effective, creative arts education. Tensions arising from the educational policy environment that impact on the practice of teachers in this study are further explored within *Chapter Six: Focus*.

#### ***2.4.4 Drama teachers as professionals***

This study concerns the practice of drama teachers in New Zealand schools, including an investigation of the philosophies of teaching and drama education each holds, the pedagogies they employ, and the ways they enact curriculum within their school settings. While the government provides a mandated curriculum that teachers must address in their classrooms, the approaches selected by the classroom teacher bring the curriculum to life. Challenges centre around the impact of educational policy on the professional development of teachers. In order to contribute to the professional development of future drama educators, this study offers insight into the rich practice six experienced drama teachers have developed over the course of their professional lives. However, several potential barriers for new drama teachers present themselves in the literature.

#### ***Developing professionalism***

Pre-service and in-service teacher education are important to the professional development of quality teachers and inadequate provision of both is a barrier to developing effective drama teachers (Ewing, 2010). The development of teachers' professional identities is complex and happens with time and experience, yet there

is often little provision made for teachers once they have completed initial teacher education (Anderson, 2002). International trends show professional support is often afforded to literacy and numeracy but other areas of the curriculum, such as art education and science, are given less support. O'Toole (2011) explains the demise of pre-service drama education in Australia, as reflected in dwindling hours and status afforded to specialist courses in drama education, as the result of:

... the simultaneously intellectualising of teacher-education, the crowding in of new generic imperatives such as inclusive education and research, and the savage cost-cutting that has been a feature of Australian education since 1990. (p. 16)

Teacher education within New Zealand tertiary institutions has suffered a similar fate. For example, in some institutions primary teacher education has moved to graduate one-year courses only. Subject disciplines at primary level have suffered reductions in allocated course time or are being addressed through integrated curriculum approaches, rather than as subject specialties in their own right. Unfortunately government policy often determines length and funding of programmes, and courses face further restrictions due to university approval processes, often implemented by those who lack adequate understanding of teacher education (Eraut, 2000). Given the depth and breadth of subject and pedagogical knowledge identified as foundational for drama teaching, it is not surprising that there are concerns about the adequacy of preparation provided for New Zealand teachers. O'Connor (2011, p. 1), commenting on the impact of the lack of pre-service training in drama in New Zealand, says, "teachers can't imagine how to work with drama as a subject, let alone a powerful pedagogy".

Other authors express similar concerns (Gibson & Anderson, 2008; Greenwood, 2010; O'Toole, 2011). Teachers who are new to drama may lack appropriate training and have little understanding of drama pedagogy – interpreting the subject as a course in theatre history or as training in theatre arts. Furthermore, without appropriate training these courses may be highly prescriptive and lack the sociocultural pedagogical approaches that foster creativity, criticality, and address



pro-social objectives of a broad school curriculum (Ewing, 2010; O'Connor, 2009b) Studies into quality arts education recognise the importance of active partnerships – between teachers, artists and communities. This requires flexible school structures that encourage and facilitate interaction between teachers and artists, and facilitate ongoing professional learning (Bamford, 2006). Even more alarming for New Zealand teacher education is the debate surrounding charter schools and whether it is even essential that teachers have received professional, academic qualifications before they can be employed in a school setting (Thrupp & Easter, 2012).

The development of expertise as a teacher is arguably far more than the development of a set of behaviours or skills – however directions in teacher education suggest this technicist view of the profession is driving policy decisions about what is essential in teacher education. Such a narrow view of teacher development ignores the complex nature of acts of teaching – much of which has been outlined in *Section 2.3 Teaching drama – education and pedagogy* (Greenwood, 2006; A Hargreaves & Fulton, 1992; Timperley, 2008). Greenwood (2010) identifies a range of important areas of knowledge required by drama teachers, including an awareness of the impact of socio-economic conditions, the ability to teach in an inclusive and culturally-responsive manner, an understanding of social justice, a ‘working knowledge’ of the psycho-social development of young people, understandings of group processes, and knowledge of how and when to take the lead in teaching episodes. On top of this, drama teachers need knowledge of artistic forms, processes and technologies and knowledge of how to utilise drama pedagogically. She concludes:

It takes a strong knowledge base to be a powerful drama teacher, and it calls for a comprehensive and a rigorous pre-service programme to develop one. (Greenwood, 2010, p. 72)

#### **2.4.5 Challenges arising from school environment**

The status afforded a subject within a school clearly impacts on whether the subject leaders can negotiate the appropriate conditions to ensure high

achievement. When school management lacks a strong understanding of the kinds of teaching practice and pedagogies appropriate to drama education in the classroom, drama teachers can encounter barriers and struggle to grow in their professional identities (Anderson, 2003). Fraser, Henderson, and Price (2004) found that the culture of the school, the philosophy of the teacher, and the pedagogical content knowledge they had developed were the main factors influencing the way in which the arts were taught (Fraser, et al., 2004). Drama is frequently offered as an extra-curricular activity in schools and used to promote the public image of the school, and its status within a school is often raised as a result of inter-school competitions and festivals (O'Toole, 2009). This, of course, is a focus on drama as a product but does not mean classroom drama will be similarly favoured. While resourcing may be provided for school productions, classroom drama also relies on physical resourcing. The classroom space and equipment provided within a school impacts on what can be taught and how it can be taught (Anderson, 2003).

Further challenges arise from the demands of relational pedagogy, which requires a level of emotional engagement from teachers and investment in relationships with large numbers of children – who often are encountered in large groups and for short timeframes. Research into teachers' professional identities reveals that this ethic of care is often a potent source of guilt for teachers and can impact their ability to give informative and critical feedback on achievement to their students (Alexander, Rose, & Woodhead, 1992; L. Brooks & Scott, 2000). This is particularly challenging for New Zealand secondary teachers who implement the standards-based assessment programme, the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), which also requires teachers to act as examiners of internally-assessed achievement standards. Teachers who are attempting to negotiate curriculum and build strong relations within groups may find themselves struggling and unsupported in a school context where relational pedagogy is not the norm, where traditional 'chalk and talk' pedagogies are favoured, or where the school culture is overly-competitive or fails to value and nurture the social and emotional dispositions that enable 'communities of learners' to thrive. Furthermore, pressure to impress through artistic achievement in school productions and extra-

curricula competitions can also create a greater emphasis on product outcomes, and encourage more authoritarian approaches to theatre-making which can undermine co-artistry and relational pedagogies that enable rich learning in classroom drama education.

Tensions can also arise from competing factions within the school environment. In the current framing and classification of the New Zealand curriculum there have certainly been gains for drama and dance – subjects that were not acknowledged in previous iterations of the national curriculum. However, grouping four diverse arts disciplines into one ‘learning area’ has also resulted in competition for resourcing amongst these subject areas – a concern raised when the arts curriculum was drafted (Boyask, 1999). Hargreaves (1994) refers to the notion of ‘balkanisation’ that can occur with schools – where subgroups (such as faculties and subject departments) are insulated from one another and multiple group membership is uncommon. Balkanisation within schools can lead to divisions and competitiveness across groups as well as determining the scope, nature and direction of professional development of individual teachers (L. Brooks & Scott, 2000).

## **Chapter summary**

This chapter presents a review of the literature and theory informing drama education and the practice of New Zealand drama teachers. The review has framed the field of drama education using Schonmann’s (2005) three ‘inter-related orientations’: the artistic-aesthetic, the sociological-cultural, and the pedagogical-educational orientation. Drama education concerns the art form of drama. This art form involves the manipulation of dramatic elements, conventions and technologies to convey meanings and to create aesthetic experiences. Consequently, drama education involves learning ‘in’ and ‘through’ artistic-aesthetic processes and is informed by theory and research in artistic-aesthetic learning, arts education and creativity. Drama work involves physicality and the creation of ‘living’ images, and therefore draws on somatic modes of knowing as well as cognitive modes.

Drama education is also social and cultural in nature. Associated with cultural ritual, ceremony and similar acts of meaning-making, drama has been conceptualised as a way of knowing; a way of inquiring into the experience of 'otherness'; a way to make meaning of personal and cultural experience through the construction of narratives and aesthetic works. Drama education draws on the theory and practice of theatre practitioners, such as Heathcote, Brecht and Boal, who use artistic works and processes to encourage personal and social transformation and the development of critical consciousness.

Finally, drama education concerns the use of artistic-aesthetic processes as a vehicle for learning within a classroom setting. Drama teaching is informed by research into effective teaching *for* creativity and also theories and research into creative teaching. This research reveals the significance of socio-cultural theory and pedagogies, including the establishment of learning communities through relational pedagogy, co-construction of curriculum with learners, and the use of dialogic learning processes. Research and theory also suggests that personal artistic practice and partnerships with professional artists can play a significant role in nurturing and extending effective pedagogical practice in drama education.

The theoretical work of Habermas (1972) into the nature of knowledge provides a useful model for examining drama education and its place in the school curriculum. This model, and the work of Grundy (1987), helps to illuminate the barriers to practice reported in the literature. In particular, drama educators face challenges in facilitating practical and emancipatory learning experiences within a policy environment that tends to privilege technical knowledge. The development of drama teachers' professional identity and practice is also influenced by their experience in initial teacher education, the provision of in-service professional development and the support they receive in their school environment. Commentators cite the marginalisation of the arts in education and the dominance of traditional education as the cause of a number of challenges to the field, including teacher education.

The present study into the work of six experienced New Zealand drama teachers closely investigates their pedagogical practice, as well as their perceptions and experience as drama educators within the New Zealand educational policy environment. A detailed explanation of the methodological approach to this study is now presented in *Chapter Three: Methodology*.



## Chapter Three: Methodology

### *3.1 The research questions*

### *3.2 Qualitative research*

### *3.3 Methodology enacted*

### *3.4 Data analysis*

### *3.5 Presentation*

This chapter defines the methodological approaches to this study. Accordingly, it includes an explanation of the research paradigms which frame the study, and the specific methods and processes used in the selection of participants, the collection of data, the analysis of findings and the choices for their presentation.

### **3.1 The research questions**

This study investigates the complex practices of teaching, in order to identify the current nature and focus of drama education in New Zealand, and the pedagogical approaches employed. This research identifies and documents the ways teachers provide rich pedagogical experiences in drama education that address both the demands of assessment and the wider learning needs of students.

Thus the key question is:

***How do experienced drama teachers facilitate learning in drama in New Zealand schools?***

From this overarching question, a number of further questions arise:

- How do these teachers conceptualise the drama curriculum in their particular school context?
- What pedagogical decisions do these teachers make to achieve effective teaching and learning in drama?

- What do these teachers believe constitutes effective drama teaching and learning?
- How do these teachers navigate tensions that arise?

## **3.2 Qualitative research**

*3.2.1 Drama education research*

*3.2.2 Case study*

*3.2.3 The collective case study – participant selection*

*3.2.4 Ethical research practice*

*3.2.5 The role of the researcher*

### *The nature of knowledge*

There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the world of the observer and the observed. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 12)

In order to capture something of the complex nature of teaching practice, this study employs an interpretivist theoretical perspective within a qualitative research domain. A positivist paradigm holds that objective truth is 'out there', meaningfully existing independently from observers, and thus is able to be measured, quantified and replicated. In contrast, the interpretive paradigm is informed by constructionism, an epistemology that holds that 'reality' is a set of socially constructed, culturally transmitted meanings. In other words, there is no meaning without humans making it (Crotty, 1998).

Given the socially-constructed and contextually-dependant nature of knowledge, qualitative research does not present evidence for objective truths, rather it acknowledges that 'knowledge' and meanings are constructed, influenced by a particular time and space and by researchers and participants who bring their own preconceptions, meanings and lived experience to the inquiry process. Multiple perspectives on events are therefore both possible and potentially valid. Quantitative methods are often concerned with isolating variables and establishing



'facts' – and therefore were not deemed to be as useful in gathering evidence of the complexities of enacted drama practice. Given the complex nature of teaching and the dynamic nature of the classroom, qualitative research methodologies offered the means to document something of this complexity. Thus theory arises from the 'thick description' of the phenomenon being studied (Geertz, 1973). Denzin (1989) defines this as

... description that goes beyond the mere or bare reporting of an act (thin description), but describes and probes the intentions, motives, meanings, contexts, situations and circumstances of action. (p. 39)

### **3.2.1 Drama education research**

The purpose of this research is to investigate the way in which drama teachers in New Zealand are implementing drama education in classrooms in the current policy environment. Drama education is now widely taught in New Zealand schools. Teachers undertake drama practice, deliver curriculum and assess learning. There is both an artistic and educative learning process happening, which involves shifting power relationships between teacher and student and between students themselves.

In documenting the practice of drama education, research literature has often focused on the work of specific practitioners and emphasised the connections between their unique histories and their drama teaching. The work of these theorists and practitioners (such as Dorothy Heathcote, Jonothan Neelands, and Phillip Taylor) has contributed to the ways in which drama education is conceptualised at theoretical/curriculum levels and, accordingly, to the way it commonly has been operationalised in classroom settings. Drama education is also informed by the work of theatre practitioners such as Peter Brook, Augusto Boal, and Bertolt Brecht, who explore the aesthetic and dialogic opportunities between theatrical art and the audience.

Each of these practitioners has a different aesthetic, a different process and intention for the kind of experience they hope to provide. Jonothan Neelands emphasises bringing theatre processes and products in the classroom to serve

educational and democratic ends (O'Connor, 2010); Heathcote's work emphasises an open-ended process, the empowerment of student ideas and curiosities, and use of drama as pedagogy for learning across (and beyond) the curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on the social construction of meanings through action and shared reflection on action (Heathcote, 1984). Given that the work of individuals within the drama education field has been influenced by an array of theorists and artistic processes, the methods chosen needed to be sensitive to potential variations in intention and artistic-aesthetic process. The chosen methods also need to provide evidence for 'thick description' of drama teaching and learning, and of the context in which this occurs.

### **3.2.2 Case study**

Case study is a fitting choice to investigate the field of drama teaching because it allows for rich description of individual drama teaching practice and the bounded context in which this practice occurs. Qualitative inquiry recognises that real-life phenomena are contextually bound and does not attempt to discard this influence (Stake, 2003). In order to capture the complexity of a case, evidence is gathered using multiple methods to create a holistic view of the phenomenon, rather than deconstructing it (Yin, 2003).

Given that the focus of the study concerns practice of drama teachers in New Zealand, a single-case design was considered insufficient. Although researchers in case study may generalise, "the purpose of a case report is not to represent the world, but to represent the case" (Stake, 2003, p. 156). Despite a shared national curriculum and assessment framework for drama in New Zealand, the practice of individual teachers varies. Variance may occur according to the school environment, the programmes of study developed in specific schools, the teacher's personality, background, experience, and the philosophical positions they hold in drama education. This study attempts to describe and contextualise variance in practice with the intention of providing rich description of the field. In order to provide richness and variety of description of drama education in New Zealand classrooms, multiple cases were investigated and presented, thus allowing a developing picture of 'the world' of New Zealand drama education practice to

emerge. Stake refers to this as “collective case study” (2003, p. 156). In this way, knowledge grows as holistic images of drama practice are juxtaposed with one another, allowing certain resonances and patterns to emerge.

### ***3.2.3 The collective case study – participant selection***

This collective case study consists of the work of six experienced drama teachers – in effect, six nested cases forming a collective case. Because the study aims to get at the impact of the recent curriculum and assessment developments in the New Zealand context, it is important that these participants have been practicing teachers prior to these policy developments. Each participant is a member of Drama New Zealand, the national subject association for Drama Education, and has taken professional leadership roles within this context. Each is the Head of Drama in their school and has gained peer esteem in their field. This peer esteem is due to aspects such as their experience in theatre, in teaching and learning, their professional knowledge, artistic achievement and student achievement. In the absence of any objective measure of ability in drama teaching, characteristics such as peer esteem, middle management status in schools, professional leadership, and years of teaching experience provide a means to identify participants who are established in this field.

In order to capture a range of drama teaching practice, the teachers selected have varied interests and strengths within the field of drama education, come from a variety of school settings, and are willing to engage in the research within the given timeframe. I found five teachers working at secondary level and one working at primary level who were willing to participate. Although I approached two other drama specialists working at the primary school level, I did not hear back from them. Because of the rich practice I saw in the work of the one primary teacher who did reply, I chose to include the case despite the imbalance. The difficulty obtaining drama specialists at primary level reflects the fact that there are fewer teachers specialising in drama at this level and fewer numbers participating in professional networks. The final decision to focus on six cases was made to allow both depth and breadth of practice to be investigated, while ensuring the scope of the study met the requirements of doctoral research.

### **3.2.4 Ethical research practice**

Approval to undertake the research was obtained from the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee in 2008. In line with requirements from the institution and the objectives of the research, the ethical issues arising from the research design were addressed as follows.

Potential participants were initially approached via email to gauge interest, and once they had indicated they were interested to know more, I sent an information sheet regarding the study (see *Appendices*). This information sheet outlined the nature of the study, participant involvement and the rights of participants. They were informed they could withdraw at any time prior to data analysis and could pass on any question they did not care to answer during interviews. Once the teacher had given informed consent to participate, information about the study was provided to each school principal, and permission to proceed was gained.

Information sheets were then distributed to every student who attended the particular drama class during the teacher observation and to those students who were willing to speak to the researcher after class. Permission was obtained from each student and, in one instance, permission from the parents/caregivers of students was also obtained (where students were under 13 years old). Video and audio recordings were obtained during the teaching episode and interviews and participants were informed that all data would be destroyed at the conclusion of the research period.

Students who participated in the group interviews were informed that their opinions would be kept confidential in the thesis through the use of pseudonyms. They were also assured that media recordings of classroom work or interviews would not be included in any presentation of the research without further permission being sought.

While the teacher participants gave permission for their real names to be used in the research, I decided to employ pseudonyms to protect individuals (and their schools) from any unforeseen harm resulting from the dissemination of the research.

There were a number of consultation points in the research process after the initial data collection period in order to ensure I hadn't fallen into developing narratives from my own world view or distorted explanations of participants' experience (Bourdieu, 1996). Participants were sent a copy of their verbatim transcript and invited to add, delete or clarify their responses, so that the document reflected their views as closely as possible. Several participants did minor edits to these documents to clarify their ideas. Participants were later sent a 'Case Summary' of their individual case. This narrative summary drew together findings from the interview, teacher observation, document analysis, and student interviews, providing a more coherent narrative of their teaching practice. Again, participants were invited to confirm that this narrative was a fair and appropriate record of their views and practice, and to make any changes they deemed important.

### ***3.2.5 The role of the researcher***

In Lave and Wenger's terms, I am a member of the drama education 'community of practice' (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As a drama educator and former classroom drama teacher myself, I had the advantage of knowing the conventions of drama education, including the central concepts, processes and policy structures participants were grappling with. I am also a member of the professional drama education community, Drama New Zealand, where I had met most participants before and had gained some insight into their work in schools. Furthermore, as a teacher educator, I had an understanding of the competing agendas arising from government, school, and parent communities facing the classroom teacher. It is important to note that this research looks to document the practice of drama education rather than to critique or evaluate the work of participants. I positioned myself as a curious colleague rather than an expert, a stance intended to encourage authenticity and openness in reflection and subsequent reporting of practice by participants (Glesne, 2006, p. 94).

As mentioned above, I took care throughout the data collection process and analysis to share my developing conceptualisations of each case with the participant concerned – in order to ensure my interpretations of their practice were consistent with their own understandings. Qualitative research makes no

assumption that the researcher/observer can be neutral or that the accounts of practice emerging could be free from the interpretive influence of the researcher (Bourdieu, 1996). Therefore the description of practice occurring in the field relies on the co-constructed understandings (interpretations) of the researcher and participants.

### **3.3 Methodology enacted**

#### *3.3.1 Data collection and methods*

#### *3.3.2 The interviews with teachers*

#### *3.3.3 Observation of teaching practice*

#### *3.3.4 Interviews with student groups*

#### **3.3.1 Data collection and methods**

The central source of evidence in this study comes from semi-structured interviews with individual participants. Interviews and teaching observations were held in 2008 over a four-month period. Participants were invited to describe their practice by responding to several questions framed in order to direct the broad focus of these conversations. These accounts of their practice are further illustrated by a classroom observation of practice, a discussion with a focus group of students and their planning documents. These methods were employed to enable 'thick description' (Geertz, 1988). The layering of data from these various methods and the process of confirming accounts of practice with participants also allows for crystallisation of themes (Richardson, 1994) in order to mitigate the assumption that teacher knowledge, as stated in oral accounts of practice, will in fact be reflected in their enacted practice.

As I entered the data collection phase, I kept the intention of the study foremost in my mind. I wanted to know how teachers approach drama teaching, to complete a descriptive analysis of what is done. In short, this analysis would be based on the following:

- What they say they do and why

- What they plan to do as reflected in documents
- What students say they do
- What I observed them doing

It was, however, important to place the stories of practice and the meanings held by participants in the centre, rather than focus on isolated observations of enacted teaching practice. Observations of teaching may provide accurate behavioural description but lack valid interpretation of these behaviours, if this interpretation is not co-constructed with the teacher (Kincheloe, 1991). Accordingly, interviewing was chosen as a central method in the research.

### ***3.3.2 The interviews with teachers***

The interviews with participants investigated and co-constructed teacher knowledge of practice – their ability to talk about their work and the evidence of mutual understandings reveals something of the community discourse of drama educators. The interview was held before any observation or contact with students occurred. This was important so participants might gain a deeper understanding of the study and my intentions, as well as enabling me to develop greater rapport with each participant (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006). Although this was not a teaching appraisal per se, having an outsider (and a teacher educator at that) come into your classroom to record your practice and speak with your students places teachers in a potentially vulnerable position.

#### ***A semi-structured interview format***

I chose to use a semi-structured interview format with several open-ended questions. This form of interviewing allowed me to direct the focus to the areas of interest but also allowed new material to be acknowledged and developed through the discussion. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) suggest that the semi-structured interview is

... the one which tends to be most favoured by educational researchers since it allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity for the interviewer to probe and expand the respondent's responses. (p. 157)

Such an approach allows participants increased freedom to address certain topics that they consider to be important and to elaborate and digress (Douglas, 1985). The openness of the semi-structured interview also avoids positioning the participant as an object to be studied (Fontana & Frey, 1994, 2005). It was made clear to participants that our conversation could deviate from this structure if they felt that was appropriate – and this did happen during the course of the interviewing.

The specific interview questions were informed by drama education literature – that is, by understandings of the educational, democratic and artistic-aesthetic dimensions that constitute the field of drama education, my own experience and recent professional dialogue between drama educators regarding the impact of the current policy environment on drama teaching. From the main research questions, I formulated nine open-ended questions, which formed the basis of the interviews. These were:

- How do you approach learning and teaching in drama? What do you do and why do you do it?
- How do you come to be there? What has been your pathway into drama teaching? What do you consider to be your formative experiences in developing expertise in drama teaching?
- Who/what has influenced your understanding of creative processes in the drama classroom? What informs your work?
- Do you consider the social dynamic in your classroom important to achievement in drama? What rituals, attitudes, behaviours and practices do you employ to create a positive learning environment?
- How much is your work influenced by the current policy environment? The principles and values of the curriculum statement? What does the new curriculum and key competencies offer to teaching and learning in your classroom? How much of what you do is driven by NCEA requirements?



- What do you consider to be your strengths as a drama teacher?
- To what extent do you feel in charge of what you do? Are you bound by scheme, school? Describe your role and position in terms of your school setting.
- What challenges do you think Drama teachers face in order to facilitate artistic-aesthetic development for students as a result of Drama's incorporation in the NZ Curriculum and the introduction of an outcomes-based, measured assessment framework such as NCEA?
- What do you want from your future professional development? What would you like to learn more about?

In order to provide a sense of context from which to examine the practice of teachers, the first questions concerned their experience, training and a description of their school community context, which may impact the nature of their practice (O'Toole, 1992). Teachers were also asked to describe their teaching and learning foci, in terms of both content and pedagogical process. Arguably, it is the routines of teaching that show us what teachers value, and therefore an examination of enacted practice contributes to an understanding of the 'culture' of drama education in New Zealand at this time. Questions regarding their perceptions around the impact of recent developments in the policy environment – such as NCEA Drama or the 2007 iteration of the New Zealand Curriculum were also included in order to gauge teachers' perceptions of the nature of learning and teaching in drama and the ability of these curriculum and assessment practices to enable this. Furthermore these questions provide more contextual background to their current practice, their responses to NCEA Drama, and the impact of school and community attitudes to their subject.

### **3.3.3 Observations of teaching practice**

Kincheloe (1991) notes that one of the most important aspects of qualitative research is a concern with context, explaining that research methods that involve 'context-stripping' can result in presenting a distorted reality. Accordingly, it is

appropriate that observations of teaching practice occurred in the authentic classroom context. Observing participants as they work with students provides a 'lived experience' dimension to the accounts of their practice. Due to the number of cases in the study and the potentially intrusive nature of observations, it was deemed sufficient to observe one teaching episode per case. I encouraged teachers to select a class they felt would demonstrate something of their artistic-aesthetic teaching practice but otherwise placed no specific demands regarding the class.

### **3.3.4 Interviews with student groups**

The work of drama theorists/practitioners includes a strong improvisational dimension where teachers invite student ideas and build on students' interests (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). Because of the collaborative and relational nature of this approach, it is appropriate to include student voices in this investigation of drama teaching practice. After the classroom observation, I met with groups of students to talk about their experiences in Drama. Students were aware of my presence during their lesson and also had the opportunity to see me interact (albeit briefly) with their teacher. I felt this was a positive way into the group sessions as we had, in a sense, already shared a drama experience. Although I did not actively engage in the lessons, I naturally responded to work students presented as an audience member. This provided some opportunity to build rapport with students during the observation before I became the 'interviewer'.

I allowed teachers to decide which students I would speak to. They knew their students and could identify the ones they considered would make a useful contribution to the study. I felt giving this control to teachers was also a way to increase the participants' sense of professional safety. As it happened, these teachers appeared unfazed by the prospect of students talking about their experiences in Drama and in three cases the teacher issued an open invitation to all students and selected three or four volunteers. In the remaining three cases the teachers decided to hold discussion with the whole class and remained present. Although it could be argued that the teacher's presence may have constrained the responses from students, the warm rapport that each of these teachers had with their students meant that there was genuine openness and good humour about the

topic. A number of participants were fascinated to hear the views of their students and I suspect such discussions gave teacher and students a renewed sense of the value of what they were engaged in together in Drama.

Utilising group interviews had the advantage of allowing students to co-construct their perceptions with their peers. These sessions were semi-structured, using several questions as a way of framing the discussion. Student groups ranged in age from 12 year olds to 17 year olds and I often asked clarifying questions to increase the detail and depth of responses. None of the student interviews followed a set pattern, however each interview did feature these questions:

- What do you like about drama? Why are you doing it?
- What are you learning about in Drama? What is this subject about? What are you learning from it?
- What's the most challenging thing about Drama?
- How do you think you actually do build confidence? What is it about what happens in the drama room that helps you feel more confident?
- How is learning in drama different to learning in other areas?
- Is the teacher different (to teachers in other subjects)? Is the way the teacher is with you and the way the teacher participates with you in the learning experience different?
- If the school said, "we've got all these curriculum areas, it's all a mess – something's got to go" and they wanted to take Drama out, what case would you make to keep drama?
- What advice might you give to a teacher who is new to Drama?
- What sort of qualities do you think would really not work in a drama teacher?
- What advice might you give to a student who has just started taking drama?

## **3.4 Data analysis**

### *3.4.1 Thematic analysis of interview transcripts*

### *3.4.2 Analysis of teaching observations*

### *3.4.3 Document analysis*

### *3.4.4 Case summary – narratives*

#### **3.4.1 Thematic analysis of interview transcripts**

Once the data collection episodes were complete, I began to transcribe the interview accounts. Familiarising myself with the discussion in this way enabled me to begin to identify the broad, holistic themes emerging. These included thematic codes such as ‘trust’ and ‘high expectations’, as well as codes for areas of key teaching content such as ‘improvisation’ and ‘devising’. I also took notes and recorded my thinking throughout this process.

Once the interview transcripts were complete and confirmed by participants, I began to undertake a closer analysis of the content, in order to approach ‘thick description’. I began to work with the transcripts using NVivo<sup>1</sup> software for qualitative data coding. Initial (open) coding involved taking an individual transcript and coding the emergent themes found in the discussion (Saldana, 2009). As this coding progressed, I became concerned that this process of analysis might actually result in a deconstructed (and potentially weakened) account of collective practice; one that may not capture the deeper nuances of the work of participants. I was also concerned that coding across the cases in this way might conflate the emergent meanings and, in turn, destroy a sense of the unique nature of each case. My intention in this research was to provide rich images of six New Zealand drama teachers – and from these, gain greater understanding of the collective case. Therefore it was important to maintain a holistic view of each case.

At this point, I decided to keep codes broad and moved to develop a narrative summary of each case. Accordingly, codes were revisited and reworked. My thematic analysis of the transcripts then focused on identifying the salient themes

---

<sup>1</sup> A computer software programme for analysis of qualitative data

and patterns within the accounts. Significant concepts, key words, points strongly emphasised, categories, groupings, links and relationships were all considered during this analysis (Mutch, 2005). I then focused on drawing together the information gathered from the observation, the student interviews and the documents of practice for each case. I looked for examples that illustrated and affirmed the teachers' accounts, as well as any evidence of contrasting themes or new themes not identified in the interview.

### ***3.4.2 Analysis of teaching observations***

The observations of teaching episodes were recorded on video and in field notes. These records were analysed to discover more about the motivational and relational dimensions of each teacher's practice. The nature of the teacher's role (in terms of facilitation, power and demeanour) during the lesson, the teaching strategies employed to engage students, and the nature of student participation and contribution were of particular interest. Teacher and student talk, the nature and scaffolding of activities, and the incidences where teachers and students collaborated and co-constructed knowledge were also noted. These observations contributed to the crystallisation of themes emerging in the interview transcripts. The student interviews provided further insight into the practice of teachers as individuals, as well as revealing a sample of views from New Zealand drama students, when viewed across cases.

### ***3.4.3 Document analysis***

As the narrative summaries developed, I viewed the administrative documents obtained from each teacher. These documents provided information about their drama programmes and schemes across year levels, gave information on the kinds of contexts chosen, the sequencing of teaching episodes within and across year levels, and the assessment emphasis each held. They often included information provided to parents and students about events and requirements for involvement in Drama. These documents were viewed in terms of their connection to or departure from the emergent themes in the interviews and provided another opportunity to triangulate the data.

As a result of weaving the document analysis and the interview accounts together, I decided I needed to know more about the delivery of certain text-based units of work, the thinking behind choosing particular texts, and the ways teachers framed these explorations for students. I emailed participants a list of their chosen texts (as indicated in the administrative documents) and asked for the main ideas or questions they posed for students through these teaching episodes, in order to bring to life the kind of aesthetic content and discussion happening in these classrooms.

#### **3.4.4 Case summary – narratives**

Case study summaries (narratives) and transcripts were returned to participants to ensure these were clear and accurate, and to allow participants to review and reflect on our conversations and my summary of their practice. These written summaries employed ‘third person’ and were written in the researcher’s voice, thus distancing the accounts from the participants. It was important that participants verified these accounts due to their interpreted nature and to ensure the meanings made hadn’t moved beyond what participants felt was a fair reflection.

After the initial data were analysed, I conducted a brief follow-up interview with participants through email, this time with three questions aimed to provide further detail regarding the ways teachers evaluate their practice, specific characteristics of the drama teacher and more about their professional development across their teaching experience. These questions were:

- How do you assess your own work? What are the indicators that a unit of work has been successful? What are the things you look for? What are the signs a unit has not been successful? Do you have any illustrative anecdotes?
- I would also like to be able to highlight what it is about effective teaching in drama that may be different to effectiveness in general teaching situations. For example, we all know teachers in other disciplines who we consider to be effective teachers – if they moved into teaching drama, what might they have to develop in still, in order to be effective?

- What has been your journey in developing your effectiveness as a drama teacher? Can you think of any signposts along the way? Things you did then but wouldn't do now? Things you do now but didn't do then? What has been your progression?

### **3.5 Presentation**

The presentation of the study posed something of a dilemma. Six individual cases, ordered sequentially, may not have provided enough opportunity to address the broader themes arising across the cases without the addition of a lengthy discussion chapter. Some of these emergent themes and issues were more readily conveyed when drawing from examples across a range of cases. Furthermore, six discrete cases may be demanding on the reader unless the writer regularly provided the means to synthesise material. Conversely, I was concerned that structuring the thesis in terms of topics could be at the cost of a holistic sense of each case. The challenge here has been to capture something of the unique practice of each teacher, as well as interpreting the implications of their collective experience for drama education in New Zealand. While each teacher has their own practice, they do belong to the collective case that is 'experienced New Zealand drama teachers'. A balance was needed.

I decided to explore the use of narrative drama elements as a means to frame the work. Narrative drama elements provide a means to analyse the lived experience of characters within the context of a dramatic world. Given that the practice of drama teachers was also enacted – a complex, lived experience, I was interested to discover if certain drama elements might provide a useful lens through which to tell these stories. Because these elements are non-linear, they enabled me to focus on a number of important layers arising from the analysis.

The presentation begins with a contextual introduction to each case using the frame of 'Time and Place' (context). In a sense, this provides the 'back-story' needed in order to understand an individual's journey of practice and informs the discussion in subsequent chapters. This chapter is followed by *Dramatic Action* –

*The enactment of curriculum*, a descriptive account of how each participant enacts the drama curriculum in their school setting. Descriptions of practice are presented in a case-by-case manner within this chapter, in order to convey something of the individual nature of drama teaching - the varied and unique approach of each case.

An investigation of the influence of educational policy on the work of these teachers follows these concrete accounts of teaching and learning in the drama classroom. Using the element of *Focus* (intention/ purpose/ theme) as a frame, this chapter investigates the ways these teachers negotiate curriculum, assessment and their personal philosophy of drama education.

The last two chapters of the thesis look more deeply into the impact of the relational context on teaching and learning in drama. *Chapter Seven: Role* explores the roles enacted by teachers as they facilitate teaching and learning. In particular, the pedagogical decisions each teacher makes in order to foster artistic-aesthetic achievement in drama are examined. The final chapter shifts emphasis from the roles teachers undertake to focus on the social nature of learning and teaching in drama and the ways teachers attempt to utilise and maximise the educational, personal and social learning opportunities afforded by creative collaboration in drama.

Although the research question did identify 'tensions' as a key area of study, 'Tension' as a chapter frame became problematic because tensions in practice arose from several sources. In the end, I decided to integrate discussion of the tensions associated with various dimensions of practice into the respective chapters. In this way, I hoped to increase the coherence of the discussion for the reader.

Throughout the thesis, the term 'participants' refers to the six teachers. When referencing the voices of students interviewed as part of the data collection, a code denotes the students' teacher. For example, "(Student Interview: Year 13 Ar)" references the interview with Aroha's students.



Finally, the presentation of this study also attempts to remain true to an interpretivist paradigm in the language used to convey the outcomes of the study. Qualitative theses often feature discourse more suited to a positivist stance (such as talk of obtaining 'data' and having 'results'), which affirms the perception that a study has discovered objective truths. It is more in keeping with a constructivist epistemology to present an analysis of participant 'accounts' and at times, 'co-constructed perceptions' – in this way knowledge is couched as interpreted rather than existing 'out there' as facts rather than beliefs, and no apology for this is needed. In line with this intention, connections to literature and discussion of implications arising from the findings are woven into the chapters themselves, rather than being left until the end. In this way, findings are contextualised and there is greater visibility of the influences on interpretation than if the findings were presented as stand-alone 'results', with increased connotations of objectivity.



## **Chapter Four: Cast and context – An introduction to six New Zealand drama teachers**

### ***4.1 Drama education in the New Zealand context***

#### ***4.2 The cases***

*4.2.1 James: Character, time and place*

*4.2.2 David: Character, time and place*

*4.2.3 Aroha: Character, time and place*

*4.2.4 Grace: Character, time and place*

*4.2.5 Julia: Character, time and place*

*4.2.6 Phillip: Character, time and place*

This study presents the work of six experienced drama teachers in order to provide insight into the drama practice occurring in New Zealand schools. In this chapter the background to the development of drama within New Zealand schools is provided to contextualise drama education in this setting. Each participant is then introduced according to his or her particular school context and professional history. This professional history provides an account of participants' development as drama teachers, including their current position, their training and the historical/formative influence of theatre practitioners and educational theorists.

#### ***Context matters***

Australian drama educator, John O'Toole, believes one of the major hindrances to the growth of drama in education in schools is a lack of understanding about how influential the setting can be on the possible outcomes (O'Toole, 1992). He theorises that when drama occurs, multiple contexts are in play. He identifies four specific contextual dimensions that impact and influence drama work: the real world context; the context of the medium – that is, the event of enacting drama and what it means for participants; the social/cultural/physical context of the setting in which drama takes place; and the context of the fictional worlds explored during the drama. These contextual dimensions shape the work of teachers and may

constrain or encourage particular forms and purposes for drama. New Zealand drama educator, Janinka Greenwood (2003) says:

The context of the world *outside* the drama, the world that operates beyond our schools and inside our classroom, also has implications for our teaching. It is our understanding of this world that shapes our choices of what drama we will do in our classrooms and how we will approach it. The students' understanding of this world shapes their reactions to what they meet in the drama. (p. 123)

The kinds of drama enacted, the characteristics of the audience and the meaning these events have for those who participate in the event shape the artistic direction, choice of curriculum and the processes employed (Greenwood, 2003, 2010; O'Toole, 1992). For example, if drama occurs in a school or community context where it is only seen as light entertainment, those who participate in it and those who view it bring expectations to the event that potentially stifle the range of expression and engagement possible. Students who are unfamiliar with dramatic experiences need to be persuaded to go beyond the surface when working in role into the deeper realms of social exploration, artistic expression and dramatic forms. Disbelief must be suspended. Therefore the kind of experiences, fictional worlds and social issues explored through drama will be influenced, in part, by the socio-cultural setting in which drama work takes place.

Training, personal interests, formative experiences and professional strengths also shape the work of teachers and the choices they make about the kind of drama experiences, themes, forms and texts to include in a drama programme. Accordingly this chapter begins with the wider educational context and narrows to provide a personal context for each research participant.

## **4.1 Drama education in the New Zealand context**

### *A brief history*

Several recent New Zealand research publications have provided an in-depth overview of the history of drama education in New Zealand (Z. Brooks, 2010;

Greenwood, 2010; Luton, 2010; Wallis, 2010). A synthesis of the material which contextualises the current study is provided here.

Initial attempts to introduce drama into New Zealand schools met with some resistance. Margaret Walker, a drama practitioner from London who had studied under Brian Way, was encouraged to come to New Zealand in 1949 to introduce drama methods to teachers. Unfortunately for Walker, resistance from educationalists resulted in the Department of Education withdrawing its support for her work and drama education floundered (Z. Brooks, 2010). The first *New Zealand Handbook for Drama* by John Osbourn (published by the New Zealand Department of Education in 1966) emphasised the use of drama as both a “creative activity” and as “a way of teaching and learning in any subject” (New Zealand Department of Education & Osborn, 1973, p. 2). In 1975, Sunny Amey, a professional theatre practitioner and educator, became the National Curriculum advisor (Battye, 2005). In light of the resistance to Walker’s work, Amey’s appointment was a sign that the arts were to be seen as a significant area of the curriculum. More teachers began to explore drama education approaches and methods during this time, specialist rooms for drama were constructed in many schools, and using drama as a learning tool was encouraged (Luton, 2010).

Dorothy Heathcote’s visits in 1978 and 1984 boosted the interest in drama education in New Zealand and led to the development of a network of drama teachers. In time, this network would become the national subject association for drama education. Opportunities for New Zealand teachers to train with Heathcote also arose, cementing an ongoing relationship between drama educators from New Zealand, Australia and United Kingdom (Battye, 2005, p. 16). This also meant that the professional discourse developing around drama education was firmly rooted in the traditions of Heathcote and Way, with an emphasis on process and citizenship.

Drama featured in many schools as an option subject for junior students, and as a dimension of the English Curriculum during the 1980s and 1990s. Z. Brooks (2010) explains that most Drama teachers were also English teachers. This was

both positive, in that drama was actually taking place in schools, and problematic, in that many teachers of drama had a background in amateur theatre but no specialist degree in drama education. They were also more likely to be the sole teacher delivering their course, making it difficult to share and develop their drama teaching practice (Bushnell, 1992; Luton, 2010).

In 1986, drama appeared in the school curriculum as a Sixth Form Certificate subject, and by 1996, more than a third of all secondary schools offered it (Bushnell, 1992). Sixth Form Certificate was a non-university entrance qualification made up of internally-assessed, standards-based assessment tasks (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2009). A group of educationalists met to define the important dimensions of a Sixth Form Certificate drama course and identified the following areas: Self-expression, Performance art (focused on the performer – voice, movement), Technical skill, Knowledge, Analysis and appreciation, and Use of Language in its receptive and expressive forms.

Drama teachers welcomed the shift to grade-related assessment criteria found in Sixth Form Certificate. Many felt forcing marks to conform to the Bell Curve was inappropriate and unfair. Bushnell (1992, p. 41) contended that grade-related criteria would provide “benchmarks” for achievement in drama and help drama to compete as a legitimate discipline in the curriculum. While these objectives reflect a strong theatre arts emphasis, Bushnell’s examples of draft course statements in Sixth Form Certificate included objectives that reflected “learning through drama” outcomes related to citizenship and pro-social development. These included:

- show growth in self-confidence, independence, adaptability and self-discipline in a range of situations;
- show cultural awareness and tolerance and an ability to work cooperatively, imaginatively and constructively with others;
- show understanding of and sensitivity towards the contribution of both Maori and Pakeha to the culture of Aotearoa and
- explore and develop non-racist and non-sexist attitudes and behaviours. (Bushnell, 1992, p. 39)

### *From English into the Arts*

Drama gained recognition in the New Zealand curriculum framework as a discrete subject in 1999, where it appeared as one of four arts in the Arts learning area – alongside music, visual art and dance (Ministry of Education, 2000). The move from English into the Arts learning area allowed Drama departments to gain autonomy in regards to budget and resourcing, and to establish the subject's own identity and direction. The majority of participants in Z. Brooks' (2010) study agreed that this curriculum document allowed for creativity in drama teaching and learning and provided clear direction for teachers.

### *Conceptualising the Arts learning area*

Guided by the question, 'what do people do when they engage in the arts?' three key dimensions of arts education have been conceived of by international curriculum developers (O'Toole & O'Mara, 2007). These dimensions feature as the organising principles of Arts Education in the school curriculum throughout Australia and the United Kingdom, and are reflected in the *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* document. These are: making/forming/creating; performing/presenting/communicating; and responding/reflecting/appraising.

As with England's curriculum, objectives concerning the development of pro-social behaviour<sup>2</sup> in young people have been positioned as part of the broader curriculum, rather than being located within the subject of drama itself (Kempe & Ashwell, 2001). Whilst the current New Zealand curriculum document (Ministry of Education, 2007) locates these pro-social competencies and objectives in the 'front end' of the curriculum, participants see pro-social learning as being at the heart of their work in drama education – inseparable from learning about the art form itself. Critics of Drama within the New Zealand curriculum raise this issue and contend that provision for pro-social competencies needs to sit within the discipline to more accurately reflect the pertinent dimension of drama education (O'Connor, 2009b).

---

<sup>2</sup> A term used in the Psychology domain, pro-social behaviour is used as an antonym to anti-social behaviour.

### *The New Zealand context at the time of the study*

At the time of the data collection (2009-2010), the New Zealand context for drama education was characterised by professional gains and impending losses. Greenwood (2010) provides an extensive description of this period in New Zealand drama and the impact on drama teachers. Drama has been recognised as a legitimate academic subject, now taken at senior levels to Year 13. The growth of Drama as an NCEA subject has been significant and many drama departments have grown and added more staff accordingly. The *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* document paved the way for consolidation of classroom drama and its objectives (Ministry of Education, 2000). Many departments developed schemes of work in drama for the first time. School support advisors and professional development days for the implementation of NCEA were a source of inspiration and direction – informing many drama teachers’ practice and encouraging local networks of drama teachers to flourish. Each participant in this study has been a beneficiary of this development and the opportunity it afforded teachers to deepen and extend their drama practice within the classroom.

### *Assessment programmes*

The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA)<sup>3</sup> is New Zealand’s national qualification for senior secondary students and employs standards-based assessment. The NCEA provides pathways to tertiary education and industry qualifications and is part of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)<sup>4</sup>. Students can gain credits across a range of traditional and alternative school curriculum areas through external and internal assessment of Achievement and Unit Standards. Students can achieve these standards at ‘Achieved’, ‘Merit’ or ‘Excellence’ levels. There is considerable flexibility for schools to design programmes to suit the needs of their students and communities and qualifications in all Arts disciplines at three NCEA levels, corresponding to Years 11–13, and Scholarship.

---

<sup>3</sup> NCEA: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> NQF: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/framework/index.html>



The New Zealand Qualifications Authority manages NCEA assessment and the Ministry of Education is responsible for the design of Achievement Standards, resource development, professional development for teachers, and implementation. A national external moderator moderates the assessment of internal assessment activities.

Drama Achievement Standards and NZQA Drama Unit Standards were the two standards-based programmes of assessment utilised by participants for senior level Drama at the time of data collection. Since then Unit Standards and NCEA standards have been 'aligned' to the current curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) and many schools choose not to offer Unit Standards. Both assessment programmes focus predominantly on theatre arts skills and knowledge and use criterion-referenced assessment standards, rather than norm-referenced assessment. Achievement Standards in Drama cover four key areas – use of drama techniques, use of drama elements and conventions, theatre production, and understandings of theatre performance and processes.

Studies into the impact of the change in qualification system for teachers have found the process was challenging intellectually, emotionally and physically (Alison, 2005; Z. Brooks, 2010; Fastier, 2001, 2009) – and the participants in this study echoed these findings. Recent scholarly articles from New Zealand practitioners reflect a kind of reconciling between the philosophies of drama as pedagogy and dramatic art as performance in education. Luton (2010) investigated the links between professional theatre and the curricula and co-curricula work of New Zealand schools. The potential impact of the 'front end' of the curriculum – its values, principles and effective pedagogies – on the practice and pedagogy of drama teachers assessing through NCEA was also explored by Greenwood (2010). Greenwood argues that the curriculum offers every opportunity to pursue rich learning in drama education, but she suggests that New Zealand drama teachers need to clarify what it is they want to achieve through teaching the craft of drama. Other scholars are not as confident that New Zealand drama teachers will be able to deepen their artistic-aesthetic practice in this way without specific direction from policy documents (O'Connor, 2009b).

At the time of data collection, professional support was dwindling for drama teachers as a new centre-right government and the threat of global recession led to funding cuts to school support services, and increased pressure on schools to deliver literacy and numeracy outcomes measured by National Standards. According to professional conversations within the national Drama subject association, Drama New Zealand, and the Dramanet listserve<sup>5</sup>, tensions and cracks were appearing as Drama teachers worked to implement the new standards-based system. Initiatives to redevelop qualifications in New Zealand meant a realignment of qualification frameworks and the workload pressure from NCEA was also overwhelming some teachers. This realignment, and the realities of offering a full programme of curriculum drama, as well as extra-curricula performance for schools, caused many peer networks to fold or flounder. In order to manage the growing workload, many Drama teachers appeared to be withdrawing from professional development networks, trying to preserve time for their personal lives.

## 4.2 The cases

Within this broader context, six case studies of experienced drama teaching practice were selected. The rationale and process of this selection has been outlined in *Chapter Three: Methodology*. A teacher's practice is informed and influenced by a range of contextual factors beyond the national education setting. These may include school characteristics, the interests and values of the community, personal arts experience and training, teaching experience, and personal intentions and interests. Introducing participants through this contextual lens provides an awareness of the temporal nature of a teacher's practice, the diverse roots of participants' drama teaching practice, and an appreciation of the specific school context that shapes their current practice in the classroom. The quotations within each section come from the specific participant in focus and are therefore not tagged in every instance. Table 4.1 summarises the characteristics of each participant and their school, and is included at the end of this chapter.

---

<sup>5</sup> Dramanet is an email listserve providing a professional support network for NZ drama teachers, accessed at <http://www.artsonline.tki.org.nz>

#### **4.2.1 James: Character, time and place**

##### *School context*

James is in his early fifties and teaches Extension Drama, Music, Extension English and option Drama classes in a Decile 10<sup>6</sup>, inner city, Normal primary school<sup>7</sup>. Extension classes provide rich learning experiences for children identified as being able to move beyond the standard school curriculum. A full-time performing arts specialist, James also has a role as curriculum adviser within the school. James teaches Year 7-8 students<sup>8</sup> in the extension Drama Club. Drama Club participants are auditioned due to the high level of interest it attracts from students and they undertake regular performance projects, each lasting around three to four weeks.

Articulate and quick-witted, James has an easy rapport with his students. He is generous, warm and full of energy in the classroom. There is a quality in the rich discussion his students had that suggests his work encourages them to reflect deeply on both their social world and on the processes involved in producing drama work. At the time of our interview, James' Year 7-8 Extension English class had just completed a highly successful season of Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

There is a strong connection between drama and learning in English (literature and literacy) in James' approach within his present school context. James regularly writes plays and stories – often for the children he teaches. He is enthusiastic about the arts and language, literacy and story – and the way these combine in drama.

*My main philosophy at this school is that literacy as it is commonly done in schools is functional and rather dull and it really is leading the kids to either a fairly abstract model of what language is and what words are –*

---

<sup>6</sup> Decile rating refers to the socio-economic status of the community from which the school draws its clientele – 1 being low status, 10 being the highest status.

<sup>7</sup> 'Normal' primary schools contribute to initial teacher education by fostering a closer relationship with pre-service teacher education and providing opportunities such as mentoring for pre-service teachers.

<sup>8</sup> Year 7-8 students are commonly aged 11-12 years. Compulsory schooling in New Zealand is from age 5 to 16yrs, beginning with primary schooling from Years 1 to 8 and secondary schooling from Years 9 to 13. Some variations exist with some schools catering for all year levels and others offering a selection (Years 7 to 8; Years 7 to 10 or even Years 7 to 13).

*which is less and less interactive – or it's dominated by learning through language, that inquiry-learning model, in which case it becomes about information.*

In contrast to this functional conception of literacy and language, James sees drama as a way of getting children involved in language, in culture and in their world. He explains he has a dialogic view of learning in drama, where his focus is on the enrichment of the social and participatory worlds of children, rather than on individual development. There is a sense of James using drama – language, story and role – as a vehicle to allow children to investigate and articulate their (shared) human experience.

As a curriculum adviser in the school and the specialist performing arts teacher, James has autonomy over his work with children. There is a history of performance in the school that now serves his work in the Drama Club and he has the freedom to stage performances of his own plays and devised works with children.

### *Professional journey: James*

Trained in theatre under New Zealand theatre practitioner, Mervyn Thompson, James went on to complete a Masters degree in literature. He subsequently qualified as a primary teacher and has worked as both a principal and a classroom teacher. James mentions the following theorists, playwrights and practitioners as having influenced his practice over the years: Brian Way, Dorothy Heathcote, Peter Slade, Bertolt Brecht, Anton Chekov, William Shakespeare, Lev Vygotsky, Mikhail Bakhtin, Guy Claxton, and Maria Montessori. Another major influence on his practice happened when James discovered the power of community-based theatre during his time in rural communities.

*I still try to hold on to that a bit. That was a very strong thing for me early on. To see how, if you drew on children's life worlds and their community ... you'd have very powerful dramas.*

As an experienced theatre practitioner, teacher and senior manager in the primary school setting, James is decidedly autonomous, determined to sift through the jargon and rhetoric of the latest educational theories and models to find that which might inform and extend his work with children, and to discard the rest. This strength, borne out of his years in education, means James brings a wealth of understanding to our discussions around drama in the primary school. His understanding of practice is articulated in light of wider school curriculum development, learning theories and aesthetic traditions in both drama education and contemporary theatre contexts.

#### ***4.2.2 David: Character, time and place***

##### ***School context***

David is also in his fifties and teaches in a Decile 9, public, all-boys' school characterised by a strong sense of tradition. He is the Head of Drama and also teaches English to Year 13 students. A 'bloke's bloke' on the surface of things, he is as comfortable on the farm as he is delivering a Shakespeare lesson – and this characteristic works to his advantage within this school setting, providing a counter to the often-feminised perception of drama. Drama has grown as a subject in the school over the last ten years after a gradual introduction from Year 9 and 10, to a full NCEA option. David has created a strong legacy for his school in producing ambitious school productions and offers professional development and guidance to drama teachers across New Zealand tackling school productions.

David's colleagues experience him as being perceptive, diligent and humble. He is warm, good-humoured and quick with a laugh. He has high expectations of himself and these high standards drive him in all aspects of his working life; his colleagues often say he works too hard.

David feels strongly supported by his senior management team and has a sense of being totally in control of the running of his subject. He describes his principal as being "outstanding" in supporting his work in drama. The school has recently changed to a ten-day timetable and dropped the "craft" modules for music, woodwork and visual art. Drama has been retained however, as a compulsory

module for Year 9, because the principal believes the students are “getting so much out of drama”. In addition, the “accelerated” students will now be getting a half-year of Drama at Year 10. These timetabling decisions endorse Drama and demonstrate the positive perception senior management has of the place of the drama curriculum and the work of this department.

*Professional journey: David*

David trained as an English teacher primarily and came into drama “by default”, he says. He explains that the previous drama teacher unexpectedly left the profession and, as he was known to have performed in recent community musical productions, the principal at the time suggested he “had better take over”. He brought with him considerable experience in performance within amateur theatre settings and, through his English-teaching background, had a rich understanding of dramatic literature and theatre history. At the time, David was unaware that the professional association Drama New Zealand existed and did not know of any other professional support.

David describes a sense of struggle in his initial drama teaching to find an approach to drama education that felt right for him. He found some of the early professional development was “woolly” and he feared the expressive, free exploration approach that might be associated with Peter Slade’s notions of child drama (Slade, 1954).

*My great fear ... was that drama had to be airy-fairy, “right let’s make a flower” sort of thing.*

Other drama teachers, particularly those in the national subject association network of Drama New Zealand, have also influenced David. Thrust mid-year into teaching a group of combative and hostile boys, David struggled to find a pedagogical approach to drama teaching that would facilitate an effective learning environment. The experience killed his desire to teach drama for a time.

*It was only when I went to a professional development course run by [another secondary drama teacher/Drama NZ member] and she said, “A*

*drama classroom, in some ways, has to be the most disciplined classroom in the school”, that I suddenly thought, “Holy shit, I can do this after all”. That it’s okay to have clear guidelines and things, within which obviously you have a lot of room for expansion.*

In addition to the influence of Drama New Zealand and in-service professional development like this, local professional theatre practitioners continue to influence his approach to text, performance and character in the classroom.

#### **4.2.3 Aroha: Character, time and place**

##### *School context*

Aroha is in her late thirties and works as Head of Performing Arts in a Decile 6 co-educational school in a rural area. The school has both boarding and day students and offers drama from Year 9-13; one term at Year 9, two terms at Year 10 and full NCEA programme in years 11-13. Year 9 Drama is an option subject. Aroha believes a lot of students choose it to avoid music, which they may perceive to be more challenging. She now has two other staff working in the Drama department: one teaches four classes, the other is in charge of Year 11 Drama and teaches one class.

Aroha is a dedicated, loyal colleague and a generous peer. She appears to be singly focused on the work she wants to achieve and on discovering what is needed to achieve it – while side-stepping unnecessary fuss. She has an air of integrity and participants are drawn in to her workshops by her direct yet understated manner – that quiet confidence that the work will speak for itself so she has no need to sell it to you. She continues to challenge herself and to extend her achievements in her field, yet seems to have that solid sense of her self so she has no need to wear these successes as a badge of honour. There is a real sense that she is in her element and has a strong aesthetic practice that is constantly developing through her work in schools and in the community.

Aroha feels completely in charge of what she does. She speaks highly of her principal, who she feels trusts and supports her. Some of this she attributes to the successes she has had in drama, which have been recognised by her senior

management and rewarded through increased resourcing and greater autonomy. Her principal acknowledges that the public performance work her department undertakes becomes a front-window to the school and a draw card for prospective students.

### *Professional journey: Aroha*

Aroha was actively involved in drama and theatre during her own schooling years where she explains she had “a pretty high-powered drama teacher” whom she now considers to have been “ahead of her time”. Aroha went on to train in secondary teacher education in New Zealand with a focus on drama curriculum.

Aroha’s work as a drama teacher is influenced by her own performance experience. Other influences on her practice include her tertiary pre-service teacher education lecturer, local drama advisor and professional practitioners encountered at professional development courses and Drama New Zealand conferences. Being in relationship with other professional theatre practitioners and drama teachers has been a source of support and affirmation for Aroha’s practice. She describes an example of this when Toi Whakaari<sup>9</sup> opened up Master classes for teachers:

*That was just huge. Not only seeing what they did but getting the validation down there. They’re saying we really understand what you are doing is really important in high schools and you are feeding in to what we are doing here.*

#### **4.2.4 Grace: Character, time and place**

##### *School context*

Grace is a South African New Zealander in her late fifties who teaches drama in a Decile 9, all-girls’ Catholic school. Drama is taught as a Year 10 option subject – students can choose to take this as a full year or a half-year option. At Year 11-13 it is an option subject. In Years 7-8, drama is taught by another teacher as part of “Drama and Dance” and there is no drama offered at Year 9.

---

<sup>9</sup> Toi Whakaari is the New Zealand Drama School for professional theatre and television training.



Grace is strong, fun and open, while always having her finger on the pulse. Grace has undertaken leadership roles in Drama New Zealand<sup>10</sup> and represented the interests of drama teachers in several Ministry of Education initiatives. She leads easily and does so without the need to assert her authority in an obvious way. There is a sense that Grace is determined to live a full and rich life and she makes others want to go along for the ride.

As Head of Faculty and the only drama teacher, Grace is completely in charge of what she does. She has the trust of her principal and extensive experience in the industry and in the classroom, which adds to her confidence.

### *Professional journey: Grace*

Grace studied drama and theatre at a university in South Africa. She worked in professional theatre and film for three years, before going back to university to do an Honour's year in drama, including drama-in-education papers. She then was employed as a teacher and completed a teaching diploma part-time while teaching.

When asked to identify the influences on her practice, Grace explains that her classroom experience of almost thirty years has been hugely influential but she also sees her training and work in professional theatre and film as a significant influence:

*Look lots of it was the fact that I did a three-year university course and then one full year of honours in drama concentrating only on that and all the aspects of it. There was obviously working in professional theatre and film for three years which informed a lot of my practice and then having taught in high school and in community education and as a lecturer in Teachers' College and moving two countries and also working in voter education and AIDS education in South Africa and using theatre for those.*

Grace's experience in community-based adult education would later influence the kinds of experiences she exposes her drama students to. Grace's approach has

---

<sup>10</sup> Drama New Zealand is New Zealand's national subject association for Drama.

been influenced by the work of theorists and practitioners such as Brian Way, Dorothy Heathcote, Jerzy Grotowski, Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal, and Stanislavski. She describes the development of her praxis:

*When you have been teaching for a quite a long time and also where you encounter people along your journey, their thinking is integrated into your thinking and way of doing things and you might, for a little while – if you have discovered somebody new, find that you are really strongly influenced by that person. Then in a ‘hidden curriculum’ kind of way, it becomes a part of your practice without you even really knowing. And then you discover the next enthusiasm, which takes things over.*

During our conversation, Grace explained how she has taken ideas from theorists and adapted them to suit the curriculum concerns of her context. For example, she uses Brian Way’s sensory exercises to develop students’ kinaesthetic awareness and then builds this into Stanislavski’s ideas of character creation. The following description of the influence of Paolo Freire and Augusto Boal’s pedagogies on her work provides an insight into the process of developing praxis in relation to contexts of *time* and *place*:

*Paolo Freire and [Augusto] Boal I discovered later in my teaching. I was teaching in rural areas with black adults, going into using drama for education in terms of voter education and AIDs education and looking at how do you empower people through drama to look at their situation and make their own decisions about what they need to change in their lives and what they need in order to make things better for themselves.*

This impact of these experiences with drama in the South African context has stayed with her, although the social context of her students is vastly different now.

*So that was a powerful influence then but now, of course it has always remained with me because I have always felt strongly that having a social conscience and awareness is really important for drama; that it shouldn’t*

*just be fluffy, entertaining performance. There should be something behind that.*

As a consequence, Grace does ask students to do work that is “socially aware” alongside their exploration of theatre forms and genres. She provokes students to consider questions such as “what are the issues for teenagers?” and “What could we do in terms of performance to make the audience see things differently or to think more deeply?”

#### **4.2.5 Julia: Character, time and place**

##### *School context*

Julia is a vibrant Scottish woman in her early fifties. She is the Head of Drama in a single-sex, integrated, Anglican school (Decile 10). Drama is offered at Year 9 and 10 as an option subject and at NCEA Levels 1-3. Timetabling drama as an option at junior level is the source of some concern for Julia who believes that all juniors should have a chance to experience it.

Julia has a real sense of style and femininity. There is a youthful energy about her and a sense of the archetypal Artist in both her bohemian-styled dress-sense and her exuberance. She is friendly, generous, playful and enthusiastic.

Recently her school has invested in a purpose-built performance space, which has allowed greater versatility and flexibility for Julia and her students – a sense of “our space”. Julia feels very much in charge of what she does in the classroom and within the drama department.

##### *Professional journey: Julia*

Julia trained as a secondary school drama teacher in Scotland. This four-year course involved performing a huge variety of plays and staging a self-funded production. During her training she was involved in a mobile Theatre in Education project, which she found very formative. Practitioners such as Brian Way, Peter Brook, Dorothy Heathcote, and Augusto Boal have influenced Julia’s work. Way and Heathcote were amongst the many early practitioners in her prescribed reading in her training during the seventies.

[Brian] Way talked about setting up a space where anything can happen. Obviously we looked into Heathcote's Mantle work but didn't hold her in any higher regard than any of the other practitioners such as Bolton and O'Neill at the time, acknowledging that her work was particular to her personality and the students she was working with.

Julia explains that before the work of drama theorists like Heathcote and Bolton, drama in the classroom involved reading a script around the class whilst seated at desks. She also notes the influence of Peter Brook (1968), who emphasised that theatre could be practised anywhere (even in small classrooms where desks have to be cleared), as well as the work of Augusto Boal and Forum theatre, "where the students learn to deal with being spect-actors and move from audience to actor's perspective easily". She also adds influences that are closer to home – through drama networks, colleagues and students:

*Often the students themselves are a big influence to be honest. You get a lot from them. They 'give as good as they get' almost. ... [Another] good example is my colleague – her enthusiasm for devising and physical theatre has re-ignited stuff in me, which has in the past couple of years been a bit dormant! ... Often it's the people around you; we go to [Drama NZ] conference and you meet up with colleagues and fire ideas off each other.*

#### **4.2.6 Phillip: Character, time and place**

##### **School context**

Phillip is in his late forties, mild-mannered and passionate about his work in drama and the wider field of New Zealand drama education. Phillip teaches in the largest Decile 1 school in New Zealand, where students are predominantly from the Pacific Island community. As the Head of Performing Arts, Phillip offers Drama and Dance from Year 9-13. All Year 9 students do a term of drama and Year 10 students may choose one arts subject as an option to study for the full year. At the time of the interview, the school was operating a 6-day timetable, where Year 9 and Year 10 Drama was timetabled on three of the six days and Senior Drama was

timetabled over five days. There were two full-time drama teachers working in the school.

Further to the work Phillip does in the school drama programme, he has developed an academy Performing Arts programme for Year 11 students called 'Aiga<sup>11</sup> *Performing Arts*. Phillip is also a published playwright.

Phillip has a lot of freedom and support in his work. His service of nearly 20 years means he has built up a large amount of trust with senior management. In relation to the place of performing arts in the school, Phillip says:

*Because we are a Decile One school, our strengths have been in sports and in the arts – it's a fact that we are not getting students achieving at consistently high academic levels in Maths, English and the Sciences. So it didn't take the school too many years, after I began in 1991, to realise that the work of the students in performing arts can be of a really high calibre that it can bring pride to the school. The main restraints faced by my Department therefore do not come from anything internally within the school but more from assessment, compiling evidence for moderation and obviously our time and energy.*

#### ***Professional journey: Phillip***

Phillip trained as a primary school teacher and taught for two years in a primary school setting before deciding he wanted to specialise in drama teaching.

*I set myself up as a free-lance drama teacher, even though I didn't know much about drama greatly. My view was if you want to learn about something, teach it. I was often just a step ahead of the community groups I was teaching. I ran community drama classes after school and I did prison work teaching drama also.*

This led to an offer of a full time position at the Auckland Youth Theatre (AYT) where Phillip directed, taught and ran the administration for the school of about

---

<sup>11</sup> 'Aiga is Samoan for 'family'.

350 students, ranging from five-year old children through to adults. After two years at the AYT he travelled overseas for a year, which included significant study time in Canada. He then returned to complete one last year at the AYT before the theatre went into liquidation. Phillip took this as an opportunity to move into secondary teaching; a move he describes as “the best and perhaps only option” given his life circumstances at the time – a new family and a mortgage.

Phillip’s experience with professional theatre companies has been an influence on his own understandings of theatre as an art form. The practitioners he has worked alongside have influenced him but also a lot of what has influenced his practice has been a process of trialling and refining ideas for himself.

*Obviously I have been influenced by the people I have worked alongside. ... Sam Scott was a real influence with physical theatre – and there were many classes during [the 1980s and 1990s] being run by Theatre Corporate and Limbs and others. I think a lot of the process as a developing drama teacher was just trial and error. That’s really it, where I am digging up some books and reading through it. Making sense of it, trialling out these exercises in classes. So I think that has been my most influential process. Using what is out there in terms of workshops and texts but shaping it into my own, meaningful way.*

One point Phillip does make strongly is that he considers his local pre-service teacher education programme has had little impact on his practice. He believes this programme (and perhaps others in the country) fails to prepare teachers for the realities of secondary school drama teaching, due to a significant emphasis being placed on process drama approaches and insufficient focus given to preparing teachers to manage the artistic-aesthetic learning and assessment required in by the curriculum and NCEA assessment:

*My experience with P.R.Ts [Provisionally Registered Teachers] is that we Heads of Drama are their Teachers’ College! They are extremely reliant on the guidance that we give them.*

Phillip regularly contributes to the professional development of other drama teachers through Drama New Zealand networks and conferences, providing leadership in devising and playwriting. He is highly respected by his peers for his artistic accomplishments in one of the more challenging school environments in New Zealand, and in the wider context of youth arts in New Zealand. Phillip's teaching is informed by the curriculum, its concepts and strands, and these are 'building blocks' he is happy to work with. Additionally, he is guided by his own artistic-aesthetic philosophy and practice.

## **Chapter summary**

Within the New Zealand setting, the six drama teachers in this study draw from a variety of school contexts. These include single sex, co-educational, rural and inner city, special character schools, with decile ratings ranging from 1-10. At the time of data collection, each participant was working in middle management - with the exception of James who is a senior manager – and all had participated in a time of expansion in New Zealand drama – in terms of national curriculum development, growth of students in the subject, professional development, and peer-networking activity. Indicators of this time of expansion in Drama can also be seen in the investment a number of these schools have made in terms of the physical space and resources available to drama departments; in particular both David and Julia have recently acquired purpose-built performing arts facilities in their schools.

Each participant experiences a sense of autonomy over their work within their school setting – especially in regard to choices of curriculum content and course design – and has the respect and trust of senior managers in their settings. For some participants, such as Phillip, the nature of their school (and its community) affords greater opportunities for successful students to gain recognition and for Drama to be valued. Moreover, Drama as a subject has made gains in timetabling and staffing and several participants experience greater permissions to explore their own artistic works within their school community.

The participants come from varied backgrounds. Aroha, David, Phillip and Julia's pathway into drama has taken them from teacher education into sojourns in professional and amateur theatre, performance experiences and professional development in a variety of artistic forms and processes. Grace and James trained professionally in the arts industry before moving into education. Several participants (particularly those who have trained overseas) note the influence of drama education practitioners such as Heathcote, Way, Slade and Bolton. Drama practitioners such as Boal, Brecht, Grotowski and Stanislavski are also seen as influential to the development of their drama practice.

All participants acknowledged the influence of Drama New Zealand, peer networks and professional development courses offered through these contexts. Grace's account of how the theory and pedagogy of leaders in the field impacts her teaching practice gives some insight into the active, exploratory and embodied process that is involved in developing drama praxis. Julia's valuing and acknowledgement of what she learns from her students reveals the student-centred, experiential nature of this professional development process also.

With the scene set, the next chapter presents an account of the practice of each participant in terms of what it is that *happens* in their classrooms. What action takes place? How do these teachers enact and negotiate the curriculum within their setting?



**TABLE 4.1 SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT AND SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS**

<b>Participant, Age &amp; ethnicity</b>	<b>Training &amp; Experience</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>School type/ Decile rating</b>	<b>Drama in the school</b>	<b>Professional Interests</b>
James 50+ English NZ	Trained in theatre, MA Lit, playwright, writer, musician, ex-principal, experience with rural communities and inner-city communities.	Specialist performing arts teacher, English specialist, curriculum advisor.	Normal Primary, City school not integrated. Years 1-8. Decile 10 School roll 2010: 330 Predominantly European	Extension English & Drama classes with strong language/literacy focus. Drama option classes.	Interested in language and literacy. Holds a dialogic view of drama
David 50+ NZ European	Studied English Literature, Trained as an English teacher before moving into drama teaching.	Head of Drama – leading a team of three drama teachers English Teacher	Single sex boys' secondary school. Years 9-13 Decile 9. State: not integrated. School roll 2010: 1650. Predominantly European Strong conservative tradition – sports & academia.	Junior Drama at Yr 9, NCEA Option at Yr 10. NCEA Drama Levels 1-3 in senior school.	A strong interest in directing and participating in musical theatre. Has offered professional development for teachers in approaches to school production.
Aroha 30+ NZ European	Studied Drama at university before training as a secondary teacher. A vocalist and musician.	Head of Performing Arts – leading a team of three drama teachers	Rural Co-educational secondary school. Years 9-13. Decile 6. State: Not integrated School roll 2010: 1333. Predominantly European	Junior Drama at Yr 9, NCEA Option at Yr 10. NCEA Drama Levels 1-3 in senior school.	Strong interest in devising & directing. Has offered professional development for teachers in devising approaches.
Grace 50+ South African NZ	Studied theatre at university in South Africa before training as a secondary teacher. Professional theatre and film experience.	Head of Performing Arts. Sole drama teacher	Single sex Catholic girls' secondary school Years 9-13. State integrated Decile 9 School roll 2009: 1003 Predominantly European.	Drama Option at Yr 10. NCEA Drama Levels 1-3 in senior school.	Considerable involvement in developing resources for NCEA Drama and professional drama networks. Committed to
Julia 50+ Scottish NZ	Studied theatre in Scotland training as a secondary teacher. Theatre-in-Education work.	Head of Drama Leading one other drama teacher	Single sex Anglican girls' secondary school Years 9-13. Integrated. Decile 10. School roll 2010: 643 Predominantly European.	Drama Option at Yr 9 & 10. NCEA Drama Levels 1-3 in senior school.	Strong focus on stories and a variety of theatre forms. Has offered professional development for teachers in devising site-based drama.
Phillip 40+ NZ European	Trained as a primary teacher before moving into freelance drama teaching. Became a secondary drama teacher.	Head of Performing Arts – leading a team of three other drama/dance teachers	Co-educational secondary, City school. Decile 1. School Roll 2010: 1462 Predominantly Pacific Island & Maori students Years 9-13. Strong tradition of sporting & artistic achievement in school.	Junior Drama at Yr 9, NCEA Option at Yr 10. NCEA Drama Levels 1-3 in Senior school.	Strong interest in devising & physical theatre. Community drama work. Developed a drama academy for students. Has offered professional development for teachers in devising, physical theatre and movement



## Chapter Five: Dramatic action – The enactment of curriculum

5.1 James

5.2 Julia

5.3 Phillip

5.4 David

5.5 Aroha

5.6 Grace

5.7 Reflections on enacted curriculum

5.8 Evaluating teaching practice

This chapter presents an overview of the course content currently offered by the six participants in their various school contexts. In this presentation, the element of *Dramatic action* is applied as the lens through which classroom practice is viewed. *Dramatic action* is that which takes place before the audience, playing out on the ‘stage’ of the classroom. What situations do our characters find themselves in? What is the unfolding plot, the sequence of events? What kinds of activities and tasks are drama students and teachers engaged in when they enter the drama classroom?

*Chapter Four: Cast and context* situated participants in terms of their personal context (personal experience, interests, professional development), and the context of the school setting in which their drama practice occurs. These contextual factors are influential in the subsequent forming of drama programmes – informing the selection of curriculum content, the development of learning experiences and the roles teachers take. This chapter reveals the decisions these teachers have made about the content of their classroom drama programmes, the dramatic worlds and the dramatic processes their students engage with.

Course content is frequently revisited and adapted, so the programmes presented here provide a snapshot of participants’ practice at the point of data collection. At

times pedagogical matters relevant to the delivery of this content arise and are woven through the description. However, a deeper investigation of pedagogical practice is presented in *Chapters 7 and 8*.

## **Framing curriculum content**

This chapter aims to provide detailed images of the work occurring in these classrooms, before *Chapter Six: Focus* explores more deeply the impact of the policy environment on the work of teachers. As outlined in *Chapter Two, Section 2.4*, the policy environment has a significant influence on the nature of learning and teaching in drama. Both the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) and the Drama Matrix for NCEA assessment (see *Appendices*) identify art-making, presentation and reflection cycles as central to learning and teaching in drama. For secondary teachers, the NCEA Achievement Standards have a strong influence in the selection of content, because it is the means by which learning in senior courses is assessed. Prior to NCEA, many schools offered NZQA Unit Standards in Drama, however unit standards have now been largely subsumed through an alignment process with NCEA. Primary teachers have the Achievement Objectives of the New Zealand Curriculum as a guiding influence and the boundaries of time and school-wide learning agendas to negotiate.

The current New Zealand Curriculum objectives for Drama encompass learning across artistic-aesthetic, social, cultural and educational domains. The curriculum strands focus on:

- developing students' practical knowledge of drama – the 'how to' of the art form and the actor;
- developing ideas in drama – suggesting original drama work is created by students;
- communicating and interpreting meaning in drama through informal and formal performance; and
- understanding drama in society – learning about the functions and purposes of drama in everyday lives, cultural and historical contexts, and communities.

Given these Achievement Objectives and pedagogical strands, the intent of the curriculum is for students to work through an artistic/aesthetic learning process whilst making personal, cultural and social discoveries afforded by the content (the stories, characters, issues and events explored). Students will also learn about the function and forms of drama as an art form. This policy environment provides a frame for teaching and learning although it is not the only factor informing teachers' decisions over what to teach in drama.

As with *Chapter Four: Cast and context*, Section 5.1-5.6 focus on a single participant and therefore the excerpts quoted from transcripts are not tagged in every instance. While there are many similarities in the participants' approach to the curriculum, this section presents the practice of each case individually in an attempt to communicate something of the unique focus each has as a drama practitioner. The topics and tasks students are asked to create, present and appreciate reveal how these teachers are negotiating the curriculum and, in turn, have developed their own personal artistic-aesthetic in drama education. While the presentation may imply a linear, fixed programme of teaching and learning, these accounts should be read as dynamic examples of practice. These examples arise in contexts that demand active participation from students, and where teachers work to refine, adapt, discard and extend the work as they proceed.

Within the literature and across locales, various terms are used to denote drama activity. In this presentation, the term 'process drama' is used to denote drama experiences that use drama structures pedagogically, to explore issues and 'big questions' that may connect to other areas of the curriculum. Drawn from the work of Dorothy Heathcote, Gavin Bolton and Brian Way, these process-focused drama experiences are highly collaborative, improvised and are not intended for formal presentation to an audience (Heathcote, 1984; Wagner, 1979; Way, 1967). 'Devised drama' refers to student-generated drama work that is shaped and rehearsed – although not necessarily scripted in a formal sense. It is acknowledged that these activities may often overlap.

## 5.1 James: enacting the curriculum

### *Approaching the drama curriculum*

James works in a high-decile, inner-city primary school where children's literacy levels are high. His drama teaching occurs in extension English classes, as an option across all primary levels in the school, and in Drama Club. Exploring and performing scripts, participating in process drama work, devised drama and improvisation all feature in the work James offers. Unlike those participants teaching at the secondary level, he does not have a pre-planned programme for the co-curricular Drama Club; instead he works with pre-texts that arise from his students – from their social worlds or out of their response to the preliminary drama work he exposes them to.

This responsive practice is central to James' teaching and is an approach he attributes to the influence of Dorothy Heathcote and to his experience as a playwright and director. James has a role in assisting other teachers within his school to use process drama approaches within interdisciplinary contexts, however James' Drama Club tends to focus on performance-based projects. In this context, children learn more about drama as an art form alongside the 'learning through' drama that occurs.

### *Preparing the ground*

When facilitating a drama lesson, James regularly uses circle games and exercises to establish a productive learning environment. Drama warm-ups, meditation, Tai Chi exercises, chanting, Brian Way's listening games, concentration games and singing are some of the ways he begins to focus and prepare children for drama work. James finds the use of these rituals particularly helpful for younger children. He chooses to begin this way in order to heighten children's attunement to the group dynamic and to generate "a nice quietness within them". This thoughtful scaffolding is a way he brings his students into a receptive state for the creative, collaborative work ahead, believing that shifting children's inner states through the teaching and learning sequence is more effective than merely demanding they behave in particular ways from the outset of a lesson.

### *Allowing the plot to emerge: negotiating curriculum*

James uses improvisation as a starting point for both devised and scripted work. Aspects of what students are finding engaging within improvisation activities provide an indication of what they may wish to pursue more deeply in future work. James works carefully to position himself as both a guide and mutual learner more than he positions himself as the authoritarian expert, in order to achieve the ends he believes are possible when using drama. In this way, James' teaching approach reflects the creative process – where he practices openness to the content and curriculum emerging from within the group and responds to these leads.

The work James and his students were undertaking at the time of data collection provides a rich example. The group was working on a devised piece entitled *Echo*, the origins of which began when James noticed the children were interested in status games. He extended this further into role-playing around pretexts related to their family lives and explored interpersonal power dynamics. He discovered this was a focus his students really enjoyed and found highly relevant to their world. Events in the school community at this time also sparked debate that had resonance with what this group had been exploring. James explains:

*There were a couple of incidents in the playground, which we also investigated where the teachers had told children (in relationship to conflict) about things that they could do to solve the problem. And the kids thought they were lame or dumb and they didn't work.*

Accordingly, the focus on status and power moved to an exploration of adult advice to children and the barriers that language can present to understanding. James' interest in language was also considered in the shaping of this project. The way in which children misunderstand language appealed to him. Issues of power, authority and behaviour were also present in the topic, a focus that provided the added dimension of giving children a chance to comment on (and through shared performance, to dialogue about) this aspect of their childhood.

James and the students then worked collaboratively to create a performance text using improvisation and script writing. In this instance, James opted to write a

script for their consideration, building on ideas from the children's own scripts. Although he was exercising artistic leadership in doing so, James still negotiated with the students. His script was shared and discussed with the students, who were invited to give critical feedback. As the teacher, James holds a position of power and authority, yet he is certain the relationship students have with him, and the processes he has established with them, mean they are comfortable to voice objections and to respond openly to his dramatic 'offers'. His only insistence is that they justify their viewpoint, a process that develops their critical understandings of drama.

### *Shaping the action: choosing dramatic worlds*

While the previous example of work focuses on devised and improvising drama, James often works with scripts in his extension English classes and also with the Drama Club. Due to his own love of literature, and as a result of the interests of this particular school community, James introduces his students to significant works of literature, including Shakespeare, and the likes of Samuel Beckett and Anton Chekhov. He prefers to work with texts that will address broader outcomes for children, outcomes that move learning beyond theatre arts. He looks for texts with "rich content" that will stimulate children "to make those vital connections to their own lives and also come to see difference, alternative and strange perspectives", citing examples such as Robert Lord's *Joyful and Triumphant* and Toa Fraser's *No. 2*. This approach enables dialogic learning to occur as children discuss and develop understandings of the text, its language and its themes, making connections to their own experience of the world and co-constructing meaning together.

Children in the extension English class and Drama Club explore Elizabethan theatre as part of their work on the regular productions of Shakespeare. Other theatre forms (such as Forum theatre) are often used without explicit reference, because James is more interested in facilitating creative work than teaching the historical facts of theatre forms.



*In English, theatre forms emerge as a way of extending the language experience and thinking around our unit of study. Beckett is good for looking at dialogue, Chekhov at inference. Of course the key is the play gets the text off the page.*

The exploration of challenging literature is a choice James makes in this current context, because of the richness he believes these texts offer to children. Furthermore, James finds quality texts written for children difficult to source. He sees real limitations with the theatre on offer for children, observing that this work is often condescending, didactic, instructional or moralising. He experiences children as engaging more readily with complex texts and getting far more from doing so. Performing Shakespeare is a tradition at the school and James finds the children are highly motivated to have their turn. Advocates for the use of age-related texts suggest that exposing younger children to Shakespeare merely results in confusion or a superficial understanding of complex works. In contrast, James argues that exploring these complex texts leads to greater reaching, wondering and reflecting, no matter the level of insight or engagement of individuals – thus stimulating greater creativity, imagination and encouraging ongoing engagement with literature as a tool for making meaning.

An illustrative example of how James utilises classic dramatic literature in his drama teaching comes from the production of Shakespeare's *King Lear* by his Year 7-8 students, just prior to data collection. James approached the project in a way that gave students choice and connected the text to real world themes in order to increase the sense of ownership children had over this work. Before deciding on a text to produce, James explored a range of provocations. He explains:

*I introduced contemporary pretexts that were parallel to several of Shakespeare's plays. The students really warmed to the family power struggle. Then we read excerpts from some plays and Lear got the nod. I admit I was keen on King Lear and pushed in that direction. Having to bring that language into the round definitely boosts students' literacy.*

James also acknowledges the importance of the physical, embodied dimension of the aesthetic work in drama and pursues this learning alongside the literacy focus Shakespeare provides. He notes that this kind of “embodied knowing” is often misunderstood and undervalued in the school curriculum, despite it being highly relevant to children and a significant dimension of aesthetic knowledge. The physical dimension of drama is something he finds children love to explore.

Whilst James, confident in his own knowledge, could have made an executive decision about his approach to *King Lear*, instead he provides children with further aesthetic experience and discussion in order to build their understandings of the decisions he was hoping they would stay open to. Children viewed *King Lear* on film and recorded their personal feeling response to the performance from an audience perspective and were invited to give their opinions.

James provides an example of how the experience of working with aesthetic considerations around physicality in portraying *King Lear* led to cognitive understandings for his students. In this instance, James wanted children to discover more about the power of stillness and silence, which they were initially reluctant to do. James explains the process that occurred:

*So we talked about all of these things and how we might do it and all that I said to them was ... about the fact that stillness and silence are tremendously powerful and that you can create a role and be very still and silent in that role and that will affect the audience strongly and communicate things to them. Of course at the beginning the children didn't believe me and were very resistant to it but later on they derived great power and strength from finding out what that was ... and they realised that could have immense power.*

The reflection process James has students engage in also ensures that these cognitive outcomes are articulated and retained. The discussion during the student interview provides support for this approach. When asked to reflect on what they had learned through their work with *King Lear*, their discussion centred on aesthetic learning. This learning included understandings about how to use

space to create impact, the use of voice skills and technologies to enhance meaning, and around the points of tension mentioned by James above. Two students commented:

*We also learned how to make the scene more ... tense. So we didn't do any big movements across the stage. The people at the bottom, even the chorus, they still have to be acting otherwise they spoil the moment.*

*We had stillness. Like when we were saying our lines, we didn't use gestures because King Lear is quite a full-on play so we didn't want to confuse the lines too much. ... We just used the emotion, to express with our voice. Not our body movements.*

(Student Interview: Year 7 & 8 Ja)

It is clear from James' account that collaboration does not end with the selection of contexts or scripts but continues throughout the action and reflection phases of these artistic-aesthetic learning processes. James sees in-the-moment feedback between himself and the students, and between the students as being essential to the learning process in drama. It is here that students become more discerning "especially about the complex ways you create meaning", and the negotiation about what is to be conveyed continues throughout the process.

In this way, James works to develop children's aesthetic control and their aesthetic understanding. Aesthetic learning happens as James and the students work to solve the 'problem' of the text, rather than the learning being prescribed because of an outside agenda (such as needing to meet particular curriculum achievement objectives). James explains the difference in the learning process with an example from a performance of *King Lear*:

*There was an aesthetic outcome to do with the relationship of sound to silence, movement to stillness and it was very powerful but it wasn't just related to: "We are going to perform something about sound and silence"; it was about how that was also about what King Lear was about. Which is*

*the cognitive side entering in. There's the two parts to it – we experienced it in an embodied way and then we understood the experience.*

In this instance, James uses the curriculum to provide guidance about the kinds of learning experiences and outcomes considered to be valuable and fitting rather than prescribing specific outcomes beforehand; the learning emerges rather than being solely driven from a teacher's plan. Furthermore, the learning occurs as a result of embodied experiences rather than as a detached observer (D. Wright, 2004). Anderson (2012, p. 63) goes as far as to say that aesthetic understandings cannot fully be gained without the engagement of both body and mind.

James clearly has high expectations of what children can achieve aesthetically, as evidenced by their work with Shakespeare's *King Lear* and their devised work with *Echo*. The children demonstrated an enduring connection to their production of *King Lear* when, inspired by our discussion, they spontaneously launched into a performance of *King Lear* – the season now three weeks past – and played it out for me until the bell rang.

## **5.2 Julia: enacting the curriculum**

### *Approaching drama curriculum*

As a teacher of secondary drama, Julia's drama programme is more extensive than James' Drama Club context allows. Her content is shaped by her own interest, experience and fit with the school character, as well as being driven by the requirements of NCEA Achievement Standards and the school timetable. In discussion around her approach to drama teaching, Julia explains she begins with planning in response to the group she has in front of her – with the broad goal of stretching their imaginations, engaging and empowering them to “have a go” and discovering what it is drama has to offer them. It is from this student-centred starting point that she moves to making decisions about the particular contexts (topics, genres and texts) she might invite student groups to participate in.

### *Beginnings: stories, roles and imagined worlds*

When working with a class, Julia explains she will often begin by presenting a storied context from which drama work can arise. Starting with familiar story contexts assists students to engage with the work. Known stories also provide a ready narrative structure which allows the artistic focus to move to inventive characterisation and exploration of dramatic structures to retell or re-shape the story. In this way, students discover the creative potential of particular conventions and elements, and can reflect on the artistry and aesthetic impact of this work.

*I think a lot of the introductory stuff we do works on your imagination – the movement pieces that we do, talking about techniques – but it's all within a construct.*

The comment above: “but it’s all within a construct”, is an important emphasis. Julia believes that students’ understanding of dramatic structures and techniques is enriched when they encounter them in an artistic context, rather than a theoretical one. Furthermore, the artistic context with its dramatic processes, serves to facilitate greater engagement with the content due to the purposefulness of the task and relevance of theory to the context. This echoes James’ stance that aesthetic control and understanding comes from action and experience. Their approach aligns with an experiential approach to pedagogy, summed up by Dewey’s (1916, p. 144) statement: “An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory”.

Exercises feature in Julia’s programme as a way to explore role, the use of drama techniques, to develop improvisation skills, and to build the dramatic world of the scripts students are working with or devising. These exercises might involve taking the character they are playing and looking at them from a different perspective. Hot-seating exercises, where members of the class interview characters in-role, and writing in role are some of the strategies Julia commonly uses. While she doesn’t use many games, she finds games that build up tension can be very useful.

Drawing on her experience in theatre-in-education in her classroom work and the influence of process drama approaches, Julia may also use teacher-in-role to engage and surprise students. She admits she would love to use more process drama in her teaching but feels constrained by time.

*I would do that all the time if I could (laughs). ... Often I will say or do things in role just for the hell of it – to see how they react – but not as much as I used to.*

Here Julia uses the convention of teacher-in-role as a way of gauging a groups' openness to and interest in the creation of drama worlds and as a way to observe their initial capacity for imaginative work. This kind of exploratory work is something she says has been harder to include due to the demands of programme development and the implementation of NCEA Achievement Standards.

#### *Preparation for creativity in drama*

More structure and ritual is provided in Julia's lessons with juniors, in order to establish the culture of her drama classroom. Although learning in drama involves the openness and spontaneity of creativity and play, she emphasises the need for students to come to understand the disciplines and rituals of the drama classroom. She is able to relax this for seniors who have gained an understanding of the processes, self-management and focus required in drama and who will initiate group work in class independently.

#### *Creating and performing drama*

When working with beginning drama students, Julia develops a context that will allow development of performance skills, an awareness of how drama communicates meaning, and how movement, text and technologies can be layered to impact an audience. She offers an example from her current Year 10 course:

*I have been doing the sort of thing where they listen to a bit of music, they [each] write a piece of haiku that will match it and then they choose in their groups which haiku they are going to use and they add movement.*

*So they've got music, movement and the words all in together and they build this up and have a little mini-performance piece before they know it!*

These kinds of units help to expand students' awareness of dramatic structures and the process of creating dramatic meaning through combination of text and moving image. The work also increases their aesthetic awareness through the experience of both being an audience and performing to an audience.

Julia frequently tells stories in the classroom and encourages students do the same. She believes it is important to encourage students to explore personal stories while also exploring their own local, historical and cultural stories. Julia and her colleague have been working on site-based drama utilising community gardens designed to celebrate gardens from a range of cultures, in order to enhance students' imaginative engagement with stories and to explore different spaces.

Devising work is a feature of Julia's drama programme at every year level as she works to equip students to devise dramas that have more complexity in both form and meaning. Initial work with Year 10 focuses on the use of dramatic conventions and elements to tell myths and legends and moves into topics that explore narratives of hardship and strength in *Evacuees* (Year 12) and strong female role models in *Famous Females* (Year 13).

This work has a strong focus on exploring and reflecting on real life struggles, community values and the challenges of the past, as well as a focus on empowerment and human spirit. Such topics fit with the vision and ethos of Julia's Anglican all-girl school context and provide rich material for dramatic investigation.

#### *Deepening work with senior students*

As students move into senior drama, Julia includes a variety of texts and theatre forms in her programme and her selection is influenced by the requirements of assessment in NCEA – something she states she “can never get away from, ... whether you like it or not”. Julia has a planned framework to address the key skills

and knowledge students need to engage in the art form of drama and to achieve in NCEA assessment:

*Basically I try to keep the programme very similar from year to year so at some point they will look at the way the body moves, at other points they will look at how they use their voice, at other points they will be devising, at other points they will be performing.*

Within this structure, students have some choice in the particular themes, forms, roles and issues they will explore. For example, devising around *Famous Females* at Year 13 involves the students choosing any famous female character, researching them in detail and creating an entire solo performance. In 2010 girls performed a huge variety of different characters such as Elizabeth I, Janis Joplin, Elizabeth van Lew and Joan Jett. Within the prescribed form and frame, students have choice and scope for creative exploration of material they find personally engaging. Julia says this a fun and successful unit.

Julia's programme also involves students exploring New Zealand theatre scripts and at Year 13, she draws from the NCEA prescribed texts. Julia looks for work that will engage students, at times drawing on texts that relate to other disciplines (such as social studies) to support students in their work. Due to the requirements of NCEA Achievement Standards, choosing plays can be a challenge. She explains:

*I have to match each cohort to the play that best suits [them]. It is very difficult to source plays with predominantly female casts which have enough 'meat' in them for all the students to get their teeth into (as it were!).*

Production work is predominantly teacher-directed, however students may be given directing opportunities. Julia believes it is important for students to see that others are ready to direct. Students are also able to develop understanding and skills in several production technologies – such as costume, sound and lighting. Julia has traditionally approached this by designing projects that involve performers and production teams across classes. Exposing students to both



performance and production roles provides students with an understanding of both facets of theatre and gives opportunity for large-scale collaborations. As a result, Julia states, students are aware exactly how much is involved in the technological side of a performance:

*... each class works together as a cooperative entity supporting and enabling the show to be performed whether they have chosen to be marked on the backstage aspect or not.*

Julia's classroom programme focuses on providing an environment that encourages imagination and playful participation. From here, structured artistic-aesthetic experiences provide students with opportunities to explore stories that engage their interest as well as exploring political, social and feminist themes through scripts and devised contexts. Julia works to build students' agency in drama and encourages greater independence and leadership at senior levels, with a view to developing a drama community within the school that is increasingly self-supporting.

### **5.3 Phillip: enacting the curriculum**

*Story, for me, is at the heart of drama. **Phillip***

#### *Approaching drama curriculum*

When asked to describe his approach to teaching drama, Phillip positions himself as someone who teaches the power of story. One of the key things he wishes to instil in students is a love of story, a sense of valuing their own experiences and also the experiences of others. Phillip believes that human beings have a "deep innate need for story" right from the beginning of our lives, "because, from our earliest age, we are starting to use narrative to try to understand how we fit into this rather complex universe". This passion for story has contributed to a clear aesthetic running through Phillip's work and his creative life.

### *Beginnings: games and improvisation exercises*

Improvisation exercises are the first thing Phillip's Drama students encounter at Year 9 and improvisation is revisited at Year 10 for three weeks, with an emphasis on creativity and energy to work together positively. These improvisations tend to be relatively short in duration but Phillip describes them as being highly varied. Improvisation games are used to build group skills at Year 9 and are revisited throughout the drama year levels. Phillip enjoys using games that help to establish the environment and values that support learning and risk taking. The games must be inclusive, fun and give pupils the opportunity to express their personalities.

Phillip does some extended improvisation and teacher-in-role work, although he explains this is not a significant feature of his work. He touches upon this area when he teaches *Status and Role* work with juniors. An example of this is 'Endowments' where two pupils come into the room in role and present an opportunity for the rest of the class to go into role and to solve a problem, endowing them with the expert status to do so.

### *Devising: using the art form to present powerful stories*

As stated, Phillip's approach to drama is to help equip his students with a love of story, and an appreciation of the stories of their own lives. Phillip sees devising as "the meat and two veg" of being a drama teacher. His drama programme gives many opportunities for students to devise from personal stories, New Zealand stories and stories which strongly reflect characters from the community represented in the school. Phillip shares the belief that story enables people to develop a deeper understanding of ourselves and to make sense of the world we live in. Phillip reveals his personal connection to this approach and the connections the work makes to personal identity:

*I have always found the world a bit baffling myself and it's only when I've tried to make sense of my own experiences that I've realised how important stories are. I know that when I was a teenager, even as someone in my early 20s, I belittled my experiences and stories and I'm trying to get that process underway where pupils realise that stories are*

*the essence, in many respects, of what it means to be human. That's my main pedagogy.*

Accordingly Phillip has a preference for working with stories that arise from the real lives of students and for teaching students how to shape and present these stories dramatically. While students learn about themselves through this process, there is always a strong focus on theatre-making in this work – which Phillip sees as most relevant for Secondary drama.

At Year 10, students share a story based on the theme of disappointment and develop a small group performance using conventions and elements. At Year 11 the students have a major unit of work called *Family Stories* where they research a family story. In small groups, students then select one story from those in the group to further research and shape into a performance. Phillip's task design and the medium in which these dramas are performed encourages deep engagement with, and ownership of, these texts:

*For example if I was a pupil and I got the story from my grandfather, I will end up playing the role of my grandfather. We put a great deal of emphasis on this. ... And not only do those students perform that work to many Year 10s as a marketing ploy for next year's class, but they also perform to their own family in an evening performance.*

In having a strong focus on the real lives and experiences of students, Phillip provides an opportunity to value these stories. At Year 12, students devise *Southside Stories* and at Year 13 their final performance piece is a devised drama piece for Level 3 NCEA and is based on their five years at the college. He sees this context as a chance for students to make sense of their high school experience as they move on to a new chapter in their lives. Through the work a greater sense of identity and community is created. From his interview and the classroom observation it was clear that Phillip embodied these values in the enactment of curriculum in his classroom. This is also evident in the number of units across his drama programme that focus on work with stories.

Phillip's work is also characterised by the expectation that students *actually have* stories (personal, family and cultural) and understandings that will contribute to powerful drama work. His students also perceive his intention to make theatre work relevant to their lives and to make sense of their experiences. When asked if drama had any impact on their life outside of the classroom, students responded:

*Sometimes because it reflects the real world.*

*Some characters will have illnesses so when you see them in real life you kinda know what to do. You don't react to them in a harsh way or hurt their feelings or something.*

*You're not closed minded – you're open to everything and not already concluded and stuff.*

(Student interview: Year 10 Ph)

### ***Preparation for complications ahead***

In approaching devising with students, Phillip begins with work being quite structured for juniors. Students are asked to work with certain conventions and build a clear dramatic structure through the scene breakdown and attention to elements. In order to keep the story-telling manageable, Phillip will restrict the number of scenes they can work with – for example in the *Disappointment* unit, students are to tell the story in three scenes plus a flash-forward scene.

*We have done one piece of devising earlier in the year where we adapted a short story by Witi Ihimaera but I will basically build this work using elements. I'll say, "What are you going to do early on in your story to establish a sense of time and space? Let's focus on that", "What are you going to do in that opening scene that establishes role?" So I'd be trying to keep it pretty structured with their work and using those three important elements as the starting place.*

Prior to this devising task, students have worked for a term exploring different dramatic conventions so they are familiar with the terminology and the concept of

conventions. Phillip gives an example of the way he scaffolds students into this work:

*We played around with a short story just to use the convention of speaking through the fourth wall and we used Antigone to do movement chorus. We've done mime, we had a week of singing and so they know that these are tools, narrative tools that they can use to make their storytelling more interesting.*

Phillip approaches this work with thoughtful layering, in order to develop the aesthetic dimensions of the work. In developing the *Disappointment* stories, Phillip allows students to shape their story for some time before introducing a new scene that works to increase both the artistic dimensions of the drama work and the enjoyment in the task:

*One thing I'll enjoy about this work is when I give them the task of creating a flash-forward. And the flash-forward is going to be a fantasy scene where the hope of the central character is performed. And in a way that helps to develop a number of things – like it develops more empathy for the character when they experience their disappointment later on.*

### ***Moving into senior drama***

Phillip explains that the progression he sees for senior students is in the development of theatre literacy, where students come to understand and develop their ability to 'read' different styles of dramatic performance. As part developing theatre literacy, Phillip chooses to explore physical theatre and non-naturalistic theatre with students, along with the study of New Zealand play texts. Phillip chooses texts driven firstly by the needs of his students. He explains:

*You've got to be very careful about the texts you choose with our pupils. You just can't expose them to any *Waiting for Godot's*<sup>12</sup> or anything like*

---

<sup>12</sup> *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett.

*this. It's got to usually be New Zealand-based or have Pacific Island or Maori characters in the plays.*

New Zealand theatre texts are studied because Phillip believes his pupils relate better to this vernacular and his department has a commitment to fostering New Zealand writers. Choices of genre and technologies are also made on the basis of his teaching strengths and those of his staff. Although most of these theatre forms are text based, they also have a very strong physical dimension that he considers pupils find both challenging and rewarding. Costume has been taught as a very basic design area up until 2009 due to the equitable workload and manageability it offers students. Lighting design is introduced at Year 11 in the *Family Stories* work as a formative experience that is not assessed.

Phillip's choices around curriculum are strongly student-centred and reflect the ways he endeavours to provide rich and relevant learning for the community he serves. Phillip works to develop students' appreciation for the 'heart' in stories being told through dramatic performance and to give them an increasing range of aesthetic tools to use in shaping their own stories.

## **5.4 David: enacting the curriculum**

### *Approaching drama curriculum*

David's drama programme exposes students to a range of dramatic forms and scripted contexts. He believes boys learn by doing and so the learning is very practical but also includes "sideways processes" of exploration/experimentation, viewing/observation and reflection. David uses games and exercises to develop trust and to build skills. Initial work with juniors involves participation in games and reflection on what was learned as a result. David ensures there are opportunities to become aware of the roles students play in cooperative tasks and to reflect on personal contribution.

### *Improvisation and devising*

David's students explore improvisation and devising before they do script work in order to understand the ways elements, techniques and conventions can be used

to communicate meaning. This focus includes having students explore conventions of realism and non-naturalistic conventions. David restricts students in the range of conventions and/or techniques they can draw on, in order to strengthen weaker dimensions of their work:

*I think that one of the things I have learned, particularly with boys, is that they have a natural tendency to retreat into dialogue and that is a thing that we are consciously trying to block out, and one of the processes we are using is where they cannot use dialogue. They have got to get the meaning across without dialogue and that makes them think a bit.*

Improvisation work is included in the junior courses as well as at senior level. Year 12 students explore improvisation as part of NCEA assessment. David focuses on teaching students the skills of accepting verbal offers, following “the right thread” and creating and sustaining a physical environment. He gives students a variety of scenarios to work around under time pressure. David reflects on the challenges of both this dramatic form and the contextual factors students encounter:

*... the big thing in this Year 12 [group], as several of them are new to the class, is the confidence to offer and accept and extend offers and to avoid blocking. Which if you've been doing a lot of improv all the way through the year would be easier but I don't have the time to do that.*

Across David's drama programme, students devise using poetry, choral conventions within Greek theatre genre and work with Shadow puppetry. David finds that boys particularly enjoy the hands-on aspects of certain theatre forms and technologies, such as mask-making and Shadow puppetry. Introducing junior secondary students to Shadow puppetry also enables students to develop voice skills, and an awareness of narrative structures and of the visual imaging involved in communicating dramatic stories.

### ***Scripted texts***

David's Year 10 students encounter scripts and explore script annotation along with Stanislavski's approach to character. Staging and dramatic structure are also

explored to extend students' awareness of audience impact. Shakespeare is studied in the fourth term at Year 10 – either *The Tempest* or *Romeo and Juliet*. Scripts are performed as part of the NCEA programme and provide a focus for character development and design work. In order to deepen students' understandings within the course time available, David will return to material in later years.

David has selected a number of New Zealand texts for students to explore in senior drama. In recent years David has moved from Elizabethan to a greater focus on New Zealand theatre at Levels 2 and 3, as he finds students relate to it and engage with it more readily. He also wants them to be learning about important social contexts and events in their own country. Explorations of plays are often focused by social inquiry questions. For instance, relationships between Maori, Pakeha and Pasifika peoples are examined through *Niu Sila* and issues around the function of humour and the nature of racism are also explored. Another useful text that David sees as providing a 'social mirror' to New Zealand society (prior to 1981) is *Foreskin's Lament* by Greg McGhee. Through this text, David and his students investigate the nature of male chauvinism in rugby and rugby's role in shaping New Zealand's identity. Further exploration of New Zealand's national identity occurs when David works with *Shuriken* by Vincent O'Sullivan and *Once on Chunuk Bair* by Maurice Shadbolt. The latter also investigates the historical relationship New Zealand has with 'mother' England and reveals something about the status of Maori in New Zealand society in the early 20th Century. Artistic-aesthetic questions may also be incorporated into these units of study. For example, students might investigate the dynamics of working in role as young children or explore cross-gender acting when working with *Niu Sila*.

David perceives that a lot of boys connect with drama through scripted performance more so than through improvisation and devising work. David believes that the selection of texts can be crucial for some students. He maintains engagement quickly suffers when the material is not right and conversely, the right choice of material can have a transformative impact on students. He provides the following example of one student's response to working with the play, *Niu Sila*:



[One boy] *I've really worked on this year. He loves his drama but he is very wooden and I've just been saying all year he's got to get through his comfort zone, ... and he's really just starting to make that happen. ... He played Mrs Tafioka and he was fabulous. He [had] just 'participated' all year and then he got hold of this role. He was the first one to learn his lines. ... And he will probably never be on stage again in his life – well he might – but what that has done for him; it did a huge amount for his confidence. It's fascinating.*

David sees exposing his students to live performances – especially professional theatre – as having a significant impact on the students' learning and engagement. David finds the subsequent discussion provides rich learning for all, and experiencing the aesthetic delight and power that many professional theatre productions achieve is an enriching community experience for the class.

## **5.5 Aroha: enacting the curriculum**

### *Approaching drama curriculum*

Aroha describes her approach to drama teaching and learning as beginning with valuing the experience students will have. She recognises that students choose Drama as a subject for varied reasons and, whether students go on to study drama at senior school or not, she wants them to “get something from it”.

### *Games and exercises*

Early work with groups includes purposeful drama games that require full participation, self-discipline and cooperation with the insistence and expectation of compliance. The skills these games employ are also overtly identified to students in order to increase their awareness of what is valued and expected in the drama classroom. Aroha encourages playfulness and humour, but also stresses that learning how to participate constructively in drama is a serious matter. She describes how she begins with Year 9 junior drama students:

*To start with I always focus on a really strong sense of “I'm the leader” so if I say something goes, then something goes. We have some non-*

*negotiables in our class – it's as straightforward as that. This is the rule so if it is broken, it's not negotiable, I'm not going to discuss it with you.*

Aroha ensures that students have a clear sense of purpose when engaging in drama games and exercises and insists that students fully engage with these tasks – tasks she considers to be the basics of work in drama:

*I'm pretty strong in terms of basic stuff – okay so we are going to 'do neutral' we are going to stand nice and strong and we will wait until everyone has got the neutral; if we do the clap in, we've all got to clap at exactly the same time and we will wait until everyone is doing that. So there is a real expectation here that you are working as part of this team.*

Aroha aims to build students' understandings of the discipline involved in ensemble work and therefore builds in reflection time so these connections can be made. She gives an example from work with a new group:

*So they'll be having fun and I'll stop them and say, "Right, based on the games we just played, what do you think is going to be important in drama this term?" So we are linking the games all the time to "what skills are we getting you to use" and one of the kids did say quite rightly last week, "You're the boss" and I said, "Yes I am. I like you."*

### ***Improvisation and devising***

Building an understanding of storying – how to build story – is one of the first goals Aroha has for junior students, once the classroom culture has been established. This provides a foundation that Aroha believes enables students to develop skills in devising and improvising as well as providing the basis for understanding the elements of drama. Aroha returns to this focus again in Year 10, when students undertake “real devising with lots of conventions and technologies”, which she believes prepares students for “good, strong Year 11 work”.

### *Pedagogical approaches to devising*

Aroha emphasises the importance of creativity in the process in devising – so she uses a range of approaches, a variety of sensory stimulus, images and texts to increase the range of novel possibilities for students.

*We start all our devising in such varied ways so like the Year 10 we use Te Rauparaha because that relates to the iwi<sup>13</sup> of this area. And we start with stories and images and things like that. In Year 11 we do shared story type things; they share stories with each other.*

Aroha focuses on the use of drama elements and conventions across each level, which she often pairs with devising or improvisation work. While the entry points into devised work are varied, Aroha encourages students to be creative with the conventions and the process of developing their creative ideas – rather than relying only on the development of characters or dialogue. To assist students to construct coherent work, Aroha initially provides a basic narrative structure, in a similar manner to Phillip:

*So we tend to teach the students a four-step storyline – establish the scene, hook, climax, resolution. And we use that in Year 9 and we don't use any scripts so they are creating their scripts within that storyline structure and we use television and movies to look at that very basic storyline.*

She also begins devising from a physical theatre base. For example, at Year 12, students explore site-specific drama. Here they begin with a site and explore physical motifs generated from research into the place, the significant people, symbols and emotions suggested by this physical context. Devising work then proceeds from these physical motifs – these physical moments of action – which drive the creation of the narrative and the staged action.

---

<sup>13</sup> Iwi – Maori term for tribal affiliation.

### *Utilising drama processes*

Aroha has used process drama with juniors in the past, drawing on Heathcote methodologies. In recent years, this work has been replaced with units that allow students to be scaffolded into the theory and practical approaches that prepare them for the NCEA assessments in drama. She does however use process conventions within devising work and in order to explore the dramatic worlds of plays students intend to perform. The material that arises from these experiences provides direction for devised work:

*If we see images or ideas evolving we hook into this and collect more research on that topic – women in New Zealand during WWII or children overseas during the war.*

Through these drama processes, Aroha provides greater opportunity for dialogic work as students experiment, discuss and reflect on matters concerning character development, tension and the dramatic context and use these discussions to inform their artistic decisions.

### *Scripted texts*

Script work is not used until Year 11 to allow focus on improvisation and on devising with stories. It is important to Aroha that students work from their own stories and learn to develop drama from these before they move to scripted text. In this way, Aroha increases students' aesthetic understandings through their own experiences of play-building, so they can apply this learning to play texts. Her programme has included the study of New Zealand plays such as *Children of the Poor* by Mervyn Thompson, *The Pohutakawa Tree* by Bruce Mason, *Verbatim* by William Brandt and Miranda Harcourt, and *Purapurawhetu* by Briar-Grace Smith. Aroha frequently works with New Zealand texts, firstly because she believes New Zealand secondary school students are not exposed to enough of their own history and stories in our education system, and secondly because she believes they are brilliantly written pieces, still relevant to New Zealand. Other texts include *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller and *Antigone* by Sophocles – chosen for their rich themes and the opportunities these texts provide to explore ensemble work. Aroha's work

with plays moves students beyond the technical concerns of performance to investigate the deeper meanings being explored through the text and the ways these relate to their own experiences. She offers an example of her work with the play *Verbatim*, which is based on the verbatim account of a convicted killer, within the context of the Year 12 production. In order to undertake this work, she recognised a need to acknowledge and discuss with students whether it was appropriate for the class to present the work, given the recent murder of a local man. She explains more about the process and outcome of this work:

*The class were given a couple of days to discuss this with family and then we met again. They decided to go ahead as no one in the class had a close association to the murder case. Since exploring this play and role specifically, the students have expressed greater empathy and awareness for those around them and for why people might live a life involving crime, drugs, alcohol, and abuse.*

Aroha considers it important to her drama practice to align theatre-making activity with the development of students' critical consciousness. She acknowledges this as a vital part of her work, despite the fact the development of critical, social awareness does not feature as an explicit part of NCEA drama assessment. Referring to the process she utilised when working with *Verbatim* (above), she notes:

*The [Achievement] standard does not call for this but simply 'development of role'. Well, I could do that without us spending time addressing process or themes.*

Students explore Stanislavski's approach to scripts as well as working physically with text. As mentioned, Aroha works with them to explore the world of the play – ensuring students gain a sense of the characters and the dramatic world as having coherence outside of the script, so students can bring more depth to their interpretations of the script.

The students are also involved in many decisions concerning the use of production technologies – particularly design features. During the classroom observation, discussions of this nature centred around the kind of dramatic effect of these choices and the aesthetic implications of these ‘signs’.

Aroha has selected theatre forms that allow a progression of dramatic skills across several years and have a strong emphasis on physicality in all of the work. There is a sense of unity in Aroha’s programme that allows students to deepen their skills in physical work, character work and in creating original drama work as a result of the theatre forms and foci she selects across the senior drama programme. At Year 10, students focus on Greek theatre and the use of a Greek chorus through the rewriting and physical presentation of a myth.

*Clowning [at Year 11] leads on from mime skills in junior school and is both a fun way to end the year as well as helping students to realise the craft involved. Commedia at Year 12 is more sophisticated clowning. It has strong links to theatre history, there’s the challenge of the mask. It brings the spirit of improvisation into the programme and sets up research standards for the year. Both require a high level of physical commitment.*

## **5.6 Grace: enacting the curriculum**

### *Approaching drama curriculum*

When considering her approach to teaching drama, Grace first shared what she considers to be the foundational skills and understandings her students needed in order to progress in Drama. Grace believes an understanding of story is vital for students. She works on developing skills in the use of drama techniques – how to use voice and body in stylised ways, for the creation of characters, and to communicate to an audience the situation and relationships between characters.

### *Setting the scene*

Grace’s work with junior classes begins with games and “having a lot of fun”. She uses games to develop skills of performance and self-expression, believing the

right game can provide a way in to new methods of working and to new ideas. Like Aroha, Grace often selects games that will scaffold other aspects of drama work – such as ensemble skills, performance work or conceptual understandings, helping students to make kinaesthetic and cognitive connections. For example, she finds status games or games that involve betrayal can provide good ground for character exploration and connections with themes in play texts.

Grace has explored process drama methodologies in her training, including having the opportunity to see Dorothy Heathcote teach. She explains she utilised process drama methodologies more often in South Africa than she does in New Zealand, possibly due to the number of significant social issues South Africans were facing. In response to her current socio-cultural setting, Grace frequently uses the convention of teacher-in-role to increase student engagement and stimulate imagination, “sparking them off in a certain direction”. When she recognises a need to explore social issues within the group she is working with, she will employ drama processes to do so.

#### *Improvisation and devising: making drama*

Initial improvised or devised activities with students may include things like soundscapes, radio play horror stories, physical theatre, and slow motion fighting (action, reaction and control and exaggerated facial expressions). While students explore a range of contexts, Grace is also socialising them into effective ways of working creatively and collaboratively. At junior level, making and accepting offers is a central focus in the learning, along with the idea of collective responsibility in developing creative ideas.

Initially, students devise using a straightforward narrative, developing realistic characters and introducing conflict and tension. In this work students discover the ways drama conventions and elements can be used to convey character to the audience. Grace makes use of questioning in order to help students crystallise, extend or clarify their ideas, asking students, “What is the story that you are telling? Who is involved? Why should the audience care? Do they even know this

person? Do they want to know about this person? What is it that is going to intrigue them?"

Grace's questions emphasise the impact on the audience – raising students' awareness of the need to communicate ideas clearly and imaginatively, and teaching juniors to develop more effective and less predictable narratives through their use of conflict and tension. In exploring tensions, she encourages students to consider the status of roles and the impact of the context on characters:

*So if you have two protagonists, then you've got to think about who are their allies, how does that work? If you have a group against an individual you've got to think about what gives that individual enough power to go against the group; that the power struggle is equal. And so we talk a lot around that.*

These narratives become more sophisticated at senior level, where Grace asks students for greater audience impact:

*... then I'm asking them to give me moments when the audience goes, 'What the?' and so the audience is intrigued or surprised or forced into confronting a question or a thought around the issue that they dealing with or whatever.*

Grace draws on Stanislavski's approach to creating character in order to develop students' skills at creating believable roles on stage. She finds this approach, with its clearly defined steps, particularly useful for less intuitive students, who are able to construct rounded characters through the creation of character histories.

*It gives them this idea of fleshing out the character, it's not just somebody who exists for the moment of the play, but is somebody who exists beyond that – to help them to make their work more believable and a bit richer.*



Grace's current students also explore Commedia del'Arte – through clowning/comedy in Year 10 and a more formal exploration of the theatre form at NCEA Level 1.

### *Developing rich contexts*

As a result of implementing NCEA Achievement Standards as a form of assessment, Grace has developed a programme where students are immersed in (what she refers to as) “rich contexts”, rather than using a topic-based (atomised) approach or having the assessment activities drive her programme of teaching. Her discussion reveals the impact of grappling with the NCEA assessment agenda:

*What I have realised going through these changes [to Drama as an NCEA subject] as an experienced teacher, and reflecting on this, I began to think to myself, I want to be the teacher I used to be! I want to be that enthusiastic teacher who has time to experiment, and who has time to do all these fun things again – and how can I do that? And I realised I can do that again, if I put NCEA back in its place and the idea of using a rich context drew me.*

Accordingly, Grace has developed learning experiences where students explore a range of artistic-aesthetic dimensions for a longer period of time within one broad context, and then get to select which aspects of their work they would like to develop and present against various achievement standards. She explains that a rich context is one that will enable her to explore the aspects she believes pertinent for students at the various year levels and also one that reflects her own interests, so she is able to bring enthusiasm and passion to the work herself. From this starting point, she can work with students to co-create drama. Assessment through Achievement Standards is considered after working within the context, not before. Grace explains:

*... then at the end of all of that we can decide, “okay we need to do some assessment – okay what? What are we going to do? How are we going to assess it? What standards are out there?” – so that the assessment comes at the end and not the beginning.*

(Further discussion regarding Grace's "Rich contexts" is found in *Chapter Six: Focus, Section 6.4.1.*) Grace has used the New Zealand play, *The Bellbird* by Stephen Sinclair, as a context for unpacking conventions, elements and roles and as a stimulus for devising work at NCEA Level 1 for a number of years and now works with *The Pohutukawa Tree* by Bruce Mason. It is clear from the account of her practice that devising is an important focus in equipping seniors with artistic-aesthetic understandings. The learning that occurs through these devising experiences provides skills that students take into scripted work. Grace will often ask students to put scripts aside and work physically, calling on the conventions and processes of devising as they do so.

With older students, devised work will often have a socio-political focus. Students in her current programme explore Brecht's theatre for social and political change and devise their own Brechtian style drama around a New Zealand-based political issue.

At Level 3, students explore advanced principles of devising through a New Zealand context – drawing on historical items in Te Papa, the national museum of New Zealand. When working at this level, Grace concentrates on non-naturalistic theatre, challenging students to explore the socio-political dimensions of theatre, whereas her work with juniors is focused on building believability.

### *Scripted texts*

Like Aroha, Grace's work has a strong emphasis on physicality so students work with physical and visual dimensions of drama for some time before they work with scripts. When they do move on to script work, they explore how to translate the script looking at voice, body and movement and space to create realistic characters (as in the Stanislavski approach). Her recent courses have included a focus on American Realism and feminist theatre so scripts within these genres have been explored. Her programme has also included a focus on New Zealand theatre so scripts such as *Purapurawhetu* by Briar Grace-Smith and *The Pohutukawa Tree* by Bruce Mason have also been explored, especially at Year 13.

### *Presenting drama*

Grace employs certain rituals to enhance the presentation process for students, such as insisting on affirmation through audience applause and that dramatic work begins from a frozen position to create a frame for the work. She regularly offers feedback and involves students in this process. Grace asks students to receive feedback without discussion or defence, and encourages them to make their own judgment about what they will take on and what they will leave. The presentation phase is therefore a time where students make greater connections to theory, have opportunity to articulate the reasons behind their artistic decisions and to practice critical reflection. Grace supports students to receive and sift feedback, which serves their learning and gives them tools to manage this challenging dimension of being a practising artist.

## **5.7 Reflections on enacted curriculum**

### *5.7.1 Prescription versus flexibility*

### *5.7.2 Improvisational drama*

### *5.7.3 Narrative, meaning-making and critical consciousness*

### *5.7.4 Personal aesthetic and the impact of context*

The work of these drama teachers illustrates the centrality of the artistic-aesthetic in the conceptualisation of drama education in New Zealand. Much of the content covered in these programmes concerns explorations of drama as an art form and aims to equip students to use drama forms, elements and conventions to create aesthetic works. This is not to say that participants are essentially teaching technical courses in theatre arts. A closer examination of content selection and pedagogy reveals a firm commitment exists to the personal, social, cultural and critical potentials of drama education. Literature suggests that student engagement in drama (and in other disciplines) is enhanced when teachers work with contexts that students have experienced or can relate to from their real lives

(G. Aitken & Sinnema, 2008; Ewing & Simons, 2004). The work of these participants provides many examples of how they are achieving this.

The following section further examines the salient themes arising from this presentation of enacted curriculum. The philosophical underpinnings of participants' practice and their personal and professional views of drama in the New Zealand curriculum will be explored in the next chapter (*Chapter Six: Focus*).

### **5.7.1 Prescription versus flexibility**

Planning in drama is important for a number of pragmatic reasons – staffing, budgeting, resourcing and meeting the required assessments for government-endorsed qualifications. Providing stakeholders with an indication of the teaching and learning occurring within the classroom is important. Planning aids teacher preparation, enabling teachers to identify potential student needs ahead of time, to scaffold activities and utilise a range of strategies to enhance learning – particularly when that learning is experiential and reflection is needed to concretise it cognitively. However, as outlined in *Chapter Two, Sections 2.3 and 2.4*, tensions do exist between having a pre-planned programme of teaching and the need to be flexible enough to be able to respond in the moment to student interest, input and needs. Neelands (2001) expresses this as the dialectic between the planned and the lived:

The artistry of teachers occurs significantly in the dialectic between the planned and the lived. This is what many people do not understand. That what we do every day is to mediate the plan with the lived experience of kids coming to our classrooms through thousands and thousands of little interactions. We have a responsibility which we take seriously for delivering a curriculum, but we do it in ways which are sensitive to the population of kids who sit in front of us in the classroom. (p. 16)

Being overly planned or having content prescribed can become a barrier for teachers who also wish to encourage creative processes (processes which are emergent in nature) and co-construct work with students. Teachers who wish to

explore genres/forms that utilise a substantial amount of improvisation (such as process drama approaches or forum theatre) also face challenges in framing measurable outcomes ahead of time.

The ability of teachers to improvise and collaborate with students is considered valuable to both student engagement and to achievement outcomes, particularly when teachers are employing the student-centred methods of socio-cultural teaching. Improvisation and collaboration is also considered to be the mark of a creative teacher and a characteristic of a teacher's artistry (Neelands, 2001; Sawyer, 2004). If planning is too regimented, teachers lose their ability to respond and collaborate with learners. If planning is too loose, concerns over accountability and curriculum coverage arise (Sutton, 1995). Within the scope of Drama education, some learning does require a more structured approach whereas other learning experiences require openness and spontaneity. While positivist theorists argue that explicitly-stated learning outcomes increase achievement, in this artistic-aesthetic process of creative possibility, defining the ends runs counter to qualities of curiosity, discovery and originality that engage students (see also *Chapter Two, Section 2.4*). Drama teachers negotiate these tensions in their work on a daily basis.

### **5.7.2 Improvisational drama**

Improvisational drama has a significant place in the classroom practice of each participant. Also referred to as 'exploratory drama' (Anderson, 2012), improvisational drama may include games, warm-ups and more extended improvisations. Developing a cohesive learning community within the classroom is vital to student achievement in drama. Participants use improvisational drama to develop the kinds of behaviour, skills and attitudes in students that will serve the collaborative and creative work drama demands (see also *Chapter Six, Section 6.2.3*).

For example, the nature of James' teaching practice encourages his students to develop a range of qualities. These include openness to learning and a willingness to participate; they need to gain confidence to express their opinion and to back

themselves; they need to explore, experiment, compromise, take risks, accept failure and be spontaneous. When engaging in creative collaborations, the ability to manage one's self and to tolerate frustration and (apparent) chaos are also essential. Through frequent improvisation experiences, and critical reflection on these experiences, drama students come to understand more of the skills and dispositions required for creative and collaborative drama. Furthermore, these activities often require humour, playfulness and spontaneous physical expression – features that contribute to facilitating creative processes and to an environment that encourages creativity (Balin, 1993; Craft, 2000). Despite an emphasis on openness and play, Schonmann (2005, 2009) explains that improvisation involves a dialectic process that has a spontaneous (creative) component and a planned cognitive component – there are rules and forms that frame improvisations.

Improvisational drama activities appear in the group-building phase of drama programmes, but they are also employed as preparatory work within devising and scripted contexts. Aroha, Phillip and Grace reserve script work for seniors in order to build junior students' understandings of dramatic structures (such as the elements and conventions) through improvisation and play-building. Improvisational drama enables students to engage in creative exploration of the events, characters and dramatic worlds encountered in stories, play texts or real-life contexts. Imaginative explorations into characters and their worlds, outside of the given text, aid in the comprehension of text. This enables students to realise acting roles with greater conviction and can also inform technical design. These understandings enable students to more readily interpret play texts (devised and scripted) as dynamic and temporal. Such applications of improvisational drama provide a means for developing creative ideas but also provide opportunities for critical reflection and dialogic learning. Furthermore, Schonmann (2009) suggests improvisation also serves the artistry of teacher, who must be able to experiment with new activities, even at the risk of possible failure.

### ***5.7.3 Narrative, meaning-making and critical consciousness***

In the enacted curriculum of participants, there are a number of instances where students are invited to explore and experiment with their own stories, or to extend

and develop known stories. Devised work (or play-building) is a strong component in each participant's current programme and one of the main contexts provided by teachers that allow students to explore, experiment and interrogate stories.

Learning episodes within devised drama units often have a focus on creative processes and artistic skill development, enabling students to communicate their stories in increasingly sophisticated ways. Greenwood (2010) explains that through structured drama processes, students develop questioning techniques, research skills and often build knowledge of their local histories. As they work dramatically and collaboratively, they shape and unpack images, "develop character and plot, explore climactic moments, evolve dramatic symbols, move backwards and forwards through the emerging narrative and reflect on their work and the story" (Greenwood, 2010, p. 74). In order to build students' understanding of the elements and narrative structures, this kind of exploratory dramatic work is often introduced before approaching scripted text (see also *Chapter Two, Section 2.1.2*). Participants explain that early sequencing of teaching units also serves a pedagogical function; for example, personal story-telling can increase the sense of ownership students have over classroom work as well as building greater trust within the group. Furthermore, devised work requires greater emphasis on collaborative processes and therefore, provides opportunities for students to be cognizant of their personal contributions to groups and to actively reflect on the impact of certain behaviours on relationships and the progress of the group.

British drama educationalists, Kempe and Ashwell (2001, p. 4) maintain that classroom drama should include introducing students to the works of professional playwrights and professional theatre performances in order to develop "a practical understanding of the craft of drama". They argue that critically reviewing existing forms and conventions of drama is important so students can understand the social context of their work and use these to tell their own stories.

However, the intention to equip students with a practical understanding of the craft of drama is not the only end point. Drama is conceptualised by drama

educationalists as 'a way of knowing'. *Chapter Two, Section 2.2.1* introduced the work of Bruner (2002), who stresses the importance of narrative and meaning-making to the development of self-hood in people's lives, and Vygotsky (see *Chapter Two Section 2.1.5*) emphasises the capacity imagined experience provides for new understandings – including an appreciation of 'otherness' (Østern, 2006; van Manen, 1994; Vygotsky, 1930/2004; Wagner, 1998). The opportunity to construct and deconstruct meanings, identities, and histories, and to approach social issues in order to develop critical consciousness, is made possible through the selection of rich contexts – including both devised drama and scripted texts.

For example, there is a huge emphasis on New Zealand theatre in the work of participants. Through plays like *Purapurawhetu* by Briar-Grace Smith and *The Pohutukawa Tree* by Bruce Mason, teachers and students explore aspects of New Zealand's history and grapple with the impact of identity, colonisation and biculturalism; the kinds of social discourse that is the domain of Habermas' emancipatory knowledge. As outlined in *Chapter Two, Section 2.2*, drama allows deconstruction, construction and critique of culture. To encourage this kind of critical work, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) issue a list of prescribed texts for NCEA Drama Level 3 (see *Appendices*) which features a number of New Zealand plays. Through dramatic contexts, students are introduced to cultural forms and historical moments that have shaped our collective identity and defined our culture. Learning about New Zealand theatre and about ourselves as New Zealanders must surely be the domain of Drama education in New Zealand schools – it is unlikely to occur anywhere else in the world and is an important part of building critical consciousness and encouraging social discourse around matters of concern to New Zealand as a democratic society.

Anderson (2012, p. 95) claims that, "the drama classroom at its best is creative, experimental, physical and critical. All these features are contextualised within the aesthetics of drama and theatre". It is, of course, possible for drama teachers to implement drama activities that do not take students into critical dialogue and reflection about their worlds – perhaps because the contexts chosen to frame such



activities allow students to explore superficial themes or because the teacher has decided to focus on other objectives. These objectives might include increased participation, skills in group processes or the development of artistic processes – such as constructing effective narratives to increase aesthetic impact. Drama educationalists who are critical of the provision of teacher education in New Zealand would also suggest that teacher ignorance about the pedagogical possibilities within drama will also prevent such potential being realised in the classroom (Greenwood, 2009; O'Connor, 2009b, 2011). In the final instance, enactment of curriculum is the domain of the individual teacher and the extent to which teaching content moves towards the more critical, educative processes found in Applied Theatre methodologies (such as those discussed in *Chapter Two, Section 2.2.2*), or centres around equipping students artistically depends on the individual philosophy held by the teacher, the nature of their school environment and the ability to negotiate accountability demands.

#### **5.7.4 Personal aesthetic and the impact of context**

The work of classroom teachers involves delivering mandated curriculum, interpreting classroom curriculum in order to be responsive to students, and finding the space to express their professional identity as artists and educators passionate about drama. Schonmann (2009, p. 536) identifies this as, “the dialectic of interaction between the two opposing forces of autonomy and dependence, of being able to work within an educational system with its own constraints without being burnt out”. Through their training, professional development, artistic work and teaching experience, these teachers have developed mastery of the drama art form that can also be conceptualised as a personal aesthetic. This may include a preference and passion for certain forms, genres and styles. Decisions about curriculum content are therefore informed, in part, by this aesthetic and also in response to their school contexts.

For example, because of his school context, James’ work in drama is closely connected with intentions of extending and broadening children’s literacy (and their understandings of language in a dialogic sense). As a result, James chooses works of literature, including Shakespeare and Anton Chekov. Devised work is

often stimulated by pretexts that relate to the transitions these children are making into adolescence or concern social commentary on urban living, notions of progress, achievement and worth. Phillip has also constructed devised drama contexts that encourage his senior students to story their transition into the working world. However, because he experiences his students as having lower literacy levels, he has chosen to emphasise devised work and texts that closely connect to his (predominantly) Pasifika students. These dramatic explorations draw on cultural forms and motifs, and encourage students to dialogue about their lives. Through performance, students share the outcomes with their community.

Aroha and Phillip provide strong programmes in devised theatre while David finds his male students prefer the structure of a given script. Aroha and Grace both emphasise physical theatre and the development of physical skills. Julia has a strong emphasis on creativity in her teaching, encouraging students towards imaginative use of imagery and narrative to increase the aesthetic impact of their work. The impact of context and personal aesthetic is also found in the decisions teachers make over whether to explore emotive and controversial themes. For example, Aroha has her senior students use Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty to produce "risky" theatre. The religious character of Julia's school means she chooses not to ask her students to explore this kind of work. Instead, she regularly explores humanitarian themes and feminist perspectives. These accounts of curriculum enactment therefore reflect the intersection of participants' personal aesthetic, mandated curriculum and assessment, and their responsiveness to student groups.

## **5.8 Evaluating teaching practice**

*5.8.1 Teacher observation of student engagement and motivation*

*5.8.2 Ownership and independence*

*5.8.3 Learning conversations*

*5.8.4 Artistic-aesthetic achievement*

*5.8.5 Performance outcomes*

Alongside the enactment of curriculum in the classroom, teachers are involved in ongoing evaluation of the impact of these decisions on learning and achievement. The ways teachers evaluate their teaching effectiveness give some insight into what is being valued in the classroom. Discussions with participants gave rise to five key areas of consideration and these are now presented.

### **5.8.1 Teacher observation of student engagement and motivation**

When evaluating their own work in the classroom, participants emphasised student engagement and motivation to succeed as initial factors in judging the success of their teaching. Student engagement not only refers to the willingness of students to participate in the work but also to their ability to progress through the learning activities in drama. As a discipline that requires knowledge to be physically manifested through the body, through the storying of images in physical space, engagement is very evident, and progress readily assessed, through teacher observation.

*Student engagement is easily observed through their productivity in semi/un-supervised situations. This is perhaps the most satisfying part of where we are getting to – being able to send them out [of the classroom to work in other spaces] and seeing total focus almost all of the time and realising that they actually care and want to do well. **David***

### **5.8.2 Ownership and independence**

Like David, Phillip also sees the level of independence students show as an indicator of the success of the lesson/unit. If he sees pupils taking a significant

level of responsibility for their work, he knows that the content is working. Phillip's students will often work in a self-directed manner outside of class time, showing a depth of engagement with the work. Some of Phillip's senior classes have given up many lunch times to rehearse:

*Some of these classes I have mocked by suggesting that they clearly don't have a social life. The truth however is more likely to be that they feel inspired by what they are doing and they really enjoy creating and developing work in such a social context. Phillip*

When students are highly motivated to present artistically effective work for an audience, participants know that both the choice of content, and the scaffolding of the content, has been successful. Grace concurs, explaining that there is a level of ownership students have over the work that means less teacher monitoring is required, but also that students are motivated by their ability to achieve artistically and to impact an audience.

### **5.8.3 Learning conversations**

While participants draw on teacher observation and performance outcomes to assess achievement, they also make more direct inquiries into the response students have to the work. Fleming (2001) stresses that attending to the nature of the experience students are having is vital to aesthetic education if we are to avoid technocratic and meaningless exercises in theatre arts. James, working with Year 7 and 8 students, relies on student feedback through a range of modalities including interviews, discussions, recordings, reflective journals or play books, and art work. Feedback from reflective journals, anecdotal feedback and reflective discussions provide important information to assist planning at any stage in the teaching sequence.

James is cognizant of the power these reflective discussions have, not only to indicate learning but to direct learning also. These "whole class learning conversations" are a rich source of information, in which children reflect on the action, looking back and forward. He explains:

*A good sign is when they draw independently on their life experiences. An even better sign is when our conversations start to drive the drama. I record some of these conversations and they often appear in new form in the children's written work. **James***

Given the participatory nature of learning in drama and the significance of student engagement, this information is important – but perhaps more important is the act of asking; the invitation to have a voice, to negotiate and move towards shared ownership. James and his students work together to identify what they wish to achieve, “and, with feedback”, James explains, “the students become more discerning – especially about the complex ways you create meaning”.

When the work involves devising and performing, the key artefacts are the children's ‘play books’, where work in English associated with drama is recorded. Ongoing observations and reflections are made in the middle of the action and provide evidence for learning and also serve as the basis for a play story they write when the drama is over. James emphasises that these play stories are not an abstract reflection, but “show a transfer of learning, which can also be quite moving”. As a teacher also concerned with literacy outcomes, James experiences this reflective writing process as leading to significant achievement in literacy for his students also.

*These vivid and coherent writing performances show the power of aesthetic learning; in them, children often perform a curriculum level above their performance in text type tasks. If higher order thinking involves non-linearity and synthesis, this quality of writing is that. This is quite unlike standard text type or procedural exercises. **James***

Questionnaires and journal activities are frequently used in order to gauge interest and understanding. Online learning environments also offer students further opportunity to reflect and process learning, as well as providing evaluative information for teachers. James observes that some students will make new contributions to discussion from this more personalised space than they will within the classroom setting.

#### **5.8.4 Artistic-aesthetic achievement**

Grace evaluates whether students can progress artistically and collaboratively through a creative task and complete a piece of work that will engage an audience aesthetically. James articulates artistic progress along a progression from imitative, to expressive, to creative work. Grace maintains this formative assessment is vital in order to know what support and guidance groups require. Taylor (2006a) emphasises the need for theatre educators to assess whether or not students have acquired an 'aesthetic sensibility' in order to move students beyond rote-learning. O'Toole and Dunn (2002) advocate similar approaches to evaluation, where the teacher operates as a participant-observer, evaluating the ability of students to engage and progress throughout the process – rather than relying on the assessment of outcomes.

Students' ability to progress in terms of the depth, complexity and novelty of their creative work are dimensions these teachers use to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. Julia reflects on whether the work builds on students' prior learning and extends students:

*[I'm looking for] some amount of growth for most of the students; can they make connections and show understanding that was not evident at the start of the unit? Does the unit scaffold the ongoing learning towards next unit and future years? ... If the answer to these questions is yes then it is deemed to have been successful. **Julia***

#### **5.8.5 Performance outcomes**

Aroha notes that a sense of success in drama teaching and in the achievement of students is also illustrated through audience feedback (when performances are public) – so this is a measure she also uses to determine the effectiveness of her teaching programme. She recalls performances where Year 12 students did site-specific drama based on the school's war history and Year 13 presented devised performances using Artaud as their theorist:

*Both performances were extremely well received; students were on a high, it was a real buzz and they seem to noticeably mature from the work. You*

*can also feel the difference in the atmosphere and confidence after a really successful piece of work. Aroha*

Predictions of student results in NCEA Achievement Standards and in accordance with curriculum levels are also used as an indicator of effective teaching. Aroha and her colleagues reflect on the tasks, their teaching, student progress at rehearsals, and on assessment workshops held prior to assessment events. When very good students fail to achieve to their potential, Aroha ensures assessment tasks are revisited.

## **Chapter summary**

This chapter has presented accounts of the curriculum enacted in participants' classrooms. Teaching programmes indicate the centrality of the artistic-aesthetic dimension of drama education and close alignment with the achievement objectives of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). There are definite similarities in the programmes on offer – each includes improvisational drama, devised drama and the study of play texts and theatre forms. Each has a strong emphasis on maximising student participation and increasing students' ability to work independently and collaboratively. However, participants shape and refine their specific course content in response to their unique school context, their personal aesthetic and in response to their students. Teaching episodes are thoughtfully sequenced to allow the development of understandings fundamental to drama work. These include understandings of dramatic elements and structures, of narrative, visual and aural imagery, various cultural and historical theatre forms and conventions, as well as creative, collaborative and critical dispositions. When evaluating their own practice, teachers draw on information from a range of sources including creative outcomes, performance outcomes, observation of student engagement and motivation levels, as well as the level of ownership students take when working in Drama. Reflection tools provide important information for future planning and negotiation for both students and teachers. These accounts of enacted curriculum provide some insight into the practice of New Zealand drama teachers. However, a closer investigation of the

philosophies and pedagogies employed by teachers is needed to truly build a detailed picture of the complexities and artistry of drama teaching. The following chapters address these complexities, beginning with *Chapter Six: Focus*, which examines the philosophical underpinnings of participants' practice and their response to the current curriculum and assessment environment.



## Chapter Six: Focus –

### Curriculum and assessment in drama education

#### ***Negotiating the school curriculum***

*6.1 Participants' philosophy of drama education*

*6.2 Drama education and the impact of the New Zealand curriculum*

#### ***Approaching assessment***

*6.3 Assessment of learning in drama*

*6.4 Putting assessment "in its place"*

The previous chapter explored aspects of drama teaching practice related to the selection and delivery of curriculum content, task design and artistic-aesthetic processes. This chapter explores the goals and purposes of drama education for the six participants in this study, and their experience within the current policy environment. Participants were asked to describe their philosophy of drama education in the classroom and to reflect on the impact of the latest curriculum developments and on the historic shifts that have occurred for Drama with the advent of the *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000). Of interest to this study are the perceived benefits and tensions for drama practice arising from the current curriculum and its assessment.

A philosophy of teaching is generally seen as a set of underlying principles that guide and sustain a teacher's work throughout the inevitable trials and victories encountered over a teaching career (Fraser, 2012). These personally-held values, attitudes and beliefs about teaching guide teaching practice, shape choices in content and learning focus, and give meaning to the professional practice of teaching. *Chapter Two: The field of drama education* has outlined the central philosophies informing drama education, revealing a strong emphasis on the development of practical and emancipatory knowledge, rather than technical knowledge (Habermas, 1972). In this chapter, the philosophies held by

participants are examined in order to discover more about the philosophical underpinnings informing drama education practice in New Zealand schools.

## 6.1 Participants' philosophy of drama education

Through experiences in drama, Grace hopes students will “develop themselves personally – in their confidence and their knowledge of themselves, the world and other people and how we work and operate in this world”. David’s personal philosophy of drama education echoes this, maintaining that Drama provides “life-skills” to many and careers in performing arts to a few: “For me it’s not first and foremost drama as in theatre”. While a percentage of students will go on to develop careers in performing arts, David sees more students benefitting from the process of participation in drama. David believes participation in drama work (and the processes of art-making) has a significant role to play in helping young people to make more informed choices in their own lives:

*To me, drama is possibly giving them a medium to express where they are at in that [personal development] journey – sometimes through their own lives, sometimes through other characters' lives and possibly vicariously living and experiencing other people's lives. David*

Heathcote writes that drama, “does not freeze a moment in time, it freezes a problem in time, and you examine the problem as the people go through a process of change” (Heathcote, 1984, p. 114). While dramatic forms and processes are being employed in the Drama classroom, drama theorists maintain students are also exploring what it is to be human – to make choices and face consequences.

### *Metaxis: learning for living through work in role*

Examining life from various perspectives and points in time reveals human motivations, objectives, power relationships and personal decision-making. Through the process of metaxis (Boal, 1979) students can recognise both the fictional and the real when in role and thus develop a dual sensibility. This touches on what Anderson refers to as “the central paradox of drama education: authentic experience can be explored through the process of fiction” (2004b, p. 102). James

sees Drama as having a unique power to facilitate this personal learning, imagination and narrative meaning-making, while extending children's knowledge of drama as an art form:

*They gain awareness of their own minds, their distinctive style. Because drama is about language, it's about social context, it's about your body, it's about human culture, it's about using cultural tools – a socio-cultural view of learning. James*

Learning in this way encourages curiosity and wonderings that naturally arise in children, and fits with the function of play. This enables children to gain deeper engagement and ownership over these learning inquiries. As James puts it:

*There's also concord between children's natural affinity for make believe and the metaxis of dramatic representation. Also for storytelling ... the drama classroom sets up extrinsic structures, which do not block off the intrinsic spaces of children. James*

Like James, Julia also intends to engage her drama students in active imagining – to realise the creative power that exists in their ability to imagine, to ask “what if?” A description of the nature of learning in drama from James helps to further elucidate the way drama can facilitate these real-world understandings:

*Drama helps children in a dual way. Not only is their learning concrete and experiential but it also spatialises learning (in the action, on the edge of the action, degrees outside the action) so children can reflect on it. James*

Such views on the purposes and function of drama education align with the work of key drama education practitioners and educational theorists (see also *Chapter Two, Sections 2.2 and 2.3*). For example, Heathcote and Bolton's work highlights the central importance of reflection on action and in action, as well as the 'dialectical discussion' that takes place as students shape drama work. Greenwood (2003) explains that drama work offers a site where meanings are made and read,

where social understandings are acted out, but she also emphasises that meaning is actively shaped (not merely reflected) through this process and understandings are refined. Bakhtin's dialogic theory holds that being in the world is always a dialogic act – where reality is experienced and perceived by the self, positioned in a particular time and space. Time and space impacts and informs these experiences and perceptions. It is these dialogic interactions that allow “novelness” – new imaginings, definitions and conceptions of the world around us (Holquist, 1991, p. 84).

This ‘learning through’ relationships and through dialogue reflects the emphasis on developing Habermas’ practical and emancipatory knowledge (see also *Chapter Two, Section 2.4.1*) – the kind of education that contributes to participatory democracy (Freire, 2004; Grundy, 1987; Habermas, 1972; Leadbeater, 2008; O'Connor, 2010). Neelands (2011) considers three abilities are needed for democratic living – critical thinking, transcending local concerns and being a citizen of the world, and imagining, sympathetically, the situation of another person. Drama teachers need to provide opportunities for students to critically reflect from a range of viewpoints to discover authenticity, as well as to develop their own subjective and authentic views of the world (Anderson, 2004b; Bolton, 1998).

Positioning students in this way increases their agency (at least in the act of learning, if not beyond) and values their personal knowing, their participation and their ability to reflect and respond in new and insightful ways. Through these artistic-aesthetic and social processes, drama teachers work at raising consciousness, something Heathcote refers to as “innerstanding”, that is where “acts of knowledge become conjured through embodied interactional relationships” (McCammon & McLauchlan, 2007, p. 947).

The educational philosophies held by the teachers in this study embrace these aims and processes. The following description from James provides an apt example of the dialogic nature of learning in his Drama classroom and the social impact experienced as a result of this:

*I think this improvising is a great form of modelling; it's convivial and infectious. We are also our own audience and develop our own codes and rituals. This world expands into a fictional community of people who've had similar thoughts and experiences. The process is bigger than any one performance and from what the students tell me much later, it resonates. So drama in Year 7 and 8 can be a rehearsal for later. For learning and life. **James***

Worthman (2006, p. 24) presents research into community-based ensemble theatre drawing on Bakhtin's notion of "novelness", arguing that the adolescents in his study listened and responded aesthetically to each others' life experiences and in doing so, made sense of these experiences; to "see the world by authoring it, by making sense of it through the activity of turning it into a text". Phillip's aesthetic approach to drama aligns with this. His overall goal is not about enabling students to create theatre products but to give students something deeper through their work, something that connects with their personal identities and wider communities.

*I'm not about trying to create an excellent performance – that's a nice by-product of a process, but I am trying to get students to value stories – be it stories from working with text, reading and studying plays by NZ writers, or again in that devised process where it's stories that relate to themselves or to their family. **Phillip***

There are at times political and social challenges to investigating issues that are alive in our communities. James shares his experience:

*One problem I face as a drama teacher is the audience expectation, the combination of parents as market and parents as gatekeepers. Certain products are acceptable, but tackle things that are really at stake or have aesthetic edge, and watch the fur fly! **James***

Due to the dynamic nature of the learning experience in drama and the numerous social contexts and social exchanges students can be engaged in, drama theorists

argue that the seeds of personal and social transformation already exist powerfully in the art form (Anderson, 2004b; Taylor, 1998; D. Wright, 2004). Heathcote and Bolton (1995, p. 100) claim drama will, “transform our understandings of human motivations, both our own and others”. Other New Zealand drama teachers have shared their views of the transformative impact of drama in conversations on the Dramanet listserv<sup>14</sup>, stating that the outcomes of drama include things such as creativity, connectedness, compassion, critical thinking, confidence and courage (Collins, 2011). Anderson (2004b) argues that drama teachers are ‘transformative pedagogues’ and Neelands (2004) takes this further, suggesting that drama teachers should expect this ‘miracle’ of transformation in their classrooms.

Authenticity is seen by drama theorists, such as Taylor (2006a) and Neelands (2004), as being essential to transformation – that the dramatic experience and the contexts we interrogate need to resonate with real life. *Chapter Five: Dramatic action* illustrated the high incidence of New Zealand theatre texts, and units of work devised from personal, cultural and historical stories in the work of these teachers gives some indication of the depth (and breadth) of the learning intended. Brecht articulates a vision for theatre that captures the philosophy of drama education articulated by these participants – despite the variation in their school contexts, experience and the specifics of their practice:

We shall make lively use of all means, old and new, tried and untried, deriving from art and deriving from other sources, in order to put living reality in the hands of living people in such a way that it can be mastered. (Brecht, 1938/1995, p. 189)

While artistic-aesthetic knowledge is seen as important, learning in the domain of theatre arts is not expressed as the ultimate goal for drama education. Instead participants identify holistic goals such as personal growth and interpersonal, cultural and political awareness as the most important outcomes of an education in drama. Artistic-aesthetic practice is therefore seen as the *vehicle* by which this

---

<sup>14</sup> Dramanet is an email listserv providing a professional support network for New Zealand drama teachers, accessed at <http://www.artsonline.tki.org.nz>

holistic learning is facilitated – through the processes of participation in drama and through the creation and appreciation of theatre.

## **6.2 Drama education and the impact of the NZ Curriculum**

As outlined in *Chapter Four: Cast and context*, the major policy developments for drama education in New Zealand have been the advent of the *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* in 2000, the development of Drama as a senior secondary subject assessable through the standards-based assessment framework of NCEA, and the development of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). This study explores how teachers experience this policy environment and the extent to which they consider it has enabled quality teaching and learning in drama education. The ability to enact espoused theory is influenced by curriculum, assessment and school policies.

Participants identified areas such as embodied practice, the development of professional discourse and the development of ensemble culture as benefiting from the current New Zealand curriculum model. They also noted a number of tensions in working within this framework and its assessment, due to their philosophies of drama education and the nature of artistic-aesthetic learning.

### ***Drama in the Arts Curriculum***

Participants in this study were generally very positive about the *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* document (Ministry of Education, 2000) and the scope it provided for drama education in New Zealand schools. In particular, participants saw benefits to the embodied nature of learning and the development of professional theoretical discourse arising from this curriculum and its successor, the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007).

#### **6.2.1 Embodied practice**

All participants in this study felt that the shift from English to the Arts has allowed Drama to develop a greater practical emphasis (rather than a literary one) and accordingly, greater learning and teaching is now focused on artistic-aesthetic dimensions of drama. The emphasis on ‘practical knowledge’ in the Arts

curriculum strands invites physicality in Drama. Grace describes this shift as vital because it allows dramatic meaning to be experienced in time and space, as something happening in the moment. In doing so, drama becomes something “ephemeral” – during the learning and in performance. Grace points out that it is this physicality that enables drama work to become a powerful pedagogy, “a way of teaching, a way of learning, a political act, an artistic act, all of those things”.

James agrees that the move into the Arts learning area has allowed the artistic-aesthetic aspects of learning in drama to be addressed more fully. His work with children performing *King Lear* (for example) included an exploration of silence, stillness and the power of gesture, aspects which may have not been pursued had the work been guided by English curriculum objectives alone. Kinaesthetic learning is central to the work of these teachers, as seen in the accounts of practice in *Chapter Five: Dramatic action* – particularly in junior secondary drama programmes, where forms such as physical theatre, clowning and mime are often taught in order to develop students’ physicality. Certainly during 2004-2008, there were a number of professional development workshops offered in physical theatre by Drama New Zealand companies and such as Zen Zen Zo<sup>15</sup>. Workshops in physical theatre, for example exploring Anne Bogart’s approach to theatre-making (Bogart & Landau, 2005), helped a number of drama teachers to up-skill in this kinaesthetic dimension of drama.

As a passionate playwright and writer, Phillip sees both advantages and disadvantages when considering the impact of moving drama from English into the Arts learning area: “English departments seem to have washed their hands of drama – and that saddens me”. One important disadvantage he identifies is the potential for English teachers to relinquish responsibility for teaching plays within their curriculum area. Subsequently, many New Zealand students may not ever be exposed to literature such as Shakespeare, unless they participate in Drama. James adds he would still like to see Drama have its own learning area in order to have the curriculum capture and encourage more of the pedagogy of learning *through* Drama alongside learning *within* the art form of Drama.

---

<sup>15</sup> Zen Zen Zo is an Australian physical theatre company.



### **6.2.2 Developing professional discourse**

The development of a national curriculum statement for Drama has also contributed to the development of teachers' professional knowledge. While participants agreed that the curriculum provided only one of several possible conceptualisations, they were happy to work with this. Grace emphasises that it is the foundations of drama education she returns to in order to orientate herself. Phillip believes that the *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000) document has provided "a shape, structure and body of knowledge to teaching drama" which has enabled greater theorising of artistic practice. Z. Brooks (2010) also found that the curriculum and NCEA Drama assessment contributed to the development of a shared professional discourse for New Zealand drama teachers. Drama education theorists in Australia had a similar response to the creation of the Elements of Drama in the Queensland Drama syllabus (S. Davis, 2008) and to the theorising of drama elements by Haseman and O'Toole (1986).

### **6.2.3 Developing an ensemble culture**

Fostering the ability for students to participate and collaborate as an ensemble is a strong theme emerging from participants' accounts. This is seen as both an end (in terms of what students will take from the subject) and the means by which students progress in Senior Drama. Neelands (2009) describes the process of building an ensemble as:

a way of modelling how through collective artistry, negotiation, contracting of behaviour and skilful leading, the ensemble in the classroom might become a model of how to live in the world. (p. 175)

Although personal development and relational outcomes are well recognised by teachers and practitioners of drama education, the valuing of process and intrapersonal/interpersonal development outcomes are not directly reflected in the New Zealand Curriculum Achievement Objectives for Drama (see *Appendices*). There is however an obvious connection between these goals and the 'key

competencies'<sup>16</sup> of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) and this is another aspect of the curriculum favoured by these teachers.

In junior school, Phillip's goals are to develop students' sense of identity and ability to participate and contribute to drama work. This includes helping students to develop "a sense of self-esteem, confidence, presentation skills", which he sees as being the "fundamental building blocks" for success in drama. Once given this foundation, Phillip's students can move into developing deeper understandings of the art form and the ability to communicate meaning through drama. This he refers to as "a new literacy".

Aroha describes the drama classroom as being a place where social skills, cooperation, creativity, diversity, and acceptance of each other are taught and valued. She explains she is teaching values in junior drama, in order to build an effective collaborative and creative culture amongst the students. This is both valuing of student experience in the here-and-now, as well as creating the positive social environment she believes is essential for achieving good artistic-aesthetic outcomes in Drama.

David believes ensemble skills are so vital to participation in senior drama that he has developed systems within the school that allow a level of screening for senior students wishing to do drama. There is an expectation that new senior drama students will have the self-management skills to work productively in the drama classroom, and have a willingness to move out of their comfort zone and to work appropriately in a semi-supervised environment. At the time of our interview, David was trialling a new initiative where he accepts students who have may have struggled with behaviour and/or attitude based on a behavioural/effort contract between themselves and their parents.

Phillip and Aroha agree that the introduction of key competencies into the New Zealand Curriculum and the refining of achievement objectives in Drama have not resulted in any significant changes to their teaching. Grace says, while certain

---

<sup>16</sup> The key competencies of the New Zealand Curriculum include 'thinking', 'managing self', 'relating to others', 'participating and contributing', and 'using language, symbol and text'.

aspects of teaching and learning have been highlighted due to the inclusion of key competencies, this has largely confirmed the kind of practice effective drama teachers are already engaged in. Julia is confident that she could relate them to “just about every unit of work” she does, and David sees the key competencies as being central to the learning process in drama. He believes Drama is more able to address these competencies directly than any other subject. Naming these competencies has allowed Phillip to identify new areas of potential growth for his students and Aroha has developed information sheets for her students and parents that use the language of the values and key competencies for the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) in order to clearly signpost these dimensions of the work in Drama.

Drawing from professional conversations on the Dramanet Listserv and in professional development meetings, the increased awareness of key competencies and their enactment in the drama classroom has affirmed the importance of an effective ensemble culture on achievement. This has given teachers greater impetus to develop classroom practice and pedagogies to enable ensemble development. It has also provided a shared language with which to articulate drama practice to teachers of other disciplines. The increased visibility of these social, creative and critical dimensions of drama practice seems to have given drama teachers greater confidence regarding the legitimacy of Drama in the national curriculum.

### *Student perspectives on learning in drama*

Students in these classrooms shared similar conceptualisations of drama education and its outcomes. Aroha’s students articulated that Drama afforded a wide range of benefits. These included developing social skills, confidence, skills to handle different real life situations, communication skills (including the ability to present and express ideas and stories in different ways), and knowledge of different forms of theatre.

David's students identified similar learning outcomes in Drama – seeing benefits to their confidence, their ability to undertake public speaking and to participate in other creative fields.

*You're getting something out of it – it's preparing you for the future. It's not like maths where you have to find log and that sort of crap that means nothing.*

*It's one of the very few subjects that allow you to use your imagination instead of just learning from a book or being told what to do.*

(Student Interview: Yr 12 Dav)

In summary, these participants have welcomed the move to place Drama within the Arts curriculum, resulting in greater scope for the kinaesthetic practice of drama and the realisation of dramatic elements beyond that of a typical literary study. For some, this conceptualisation of drama has still not gone far enough and they would like to see drama have its own learning area, while others acknowledged disadvantages as English teachers turn their attention to other texts and genres and leave plays to the Drama teacher.

From our conversations about the purposes and aims for drama education, it is clear that the educational goals of each participant are highly student-centred and involve using drama to explore human experience – in particular, exploring identity and relationship, decisions, ethical issues, issues of social justice, and empathy. Underlying this is the belief that, as Balin (1993) suggests, engagement with theatre educates. Learning about dramatic elements and conventions enables students to give form to their experience of the world. Furthermore, they work to create communities that allow expression, reflection, refraction and dialogue to occur – and new possibilities to be imagined, new realities to be storied. Participants were not focused purely on having students come away with a knowledge of theatre history, expertise in Brecht or New Zealand theatre, or the ability to create and sustain a convincing role – even though this content often features and is assessed.

#### **6.2.4 Tensions with an outcomes-based curriculum**

Given the somewhat-lofty goals of drama education and their own philosophy of drama education, drama teachers face several challenges due to the nature of curriculum and assessment. This section explores the implications of an outcomes-based curriculum and the impact on teaching and learning in drama.

*I note an increasing degree of uniformity in primary teaching which I think is largely due to the dominant outcomes-based model. I'm at odds with this. There's a big difference between learning hinging on a fixed outcome or two, and learning in drama, which is open ended, and where the outcomes are many and complex. James*

As indicated in *Chapter Two, Section 2.4 Educational policy and drama education*, tensions in the framing of drama within the curriculum, and its assessment, are long-standing within the field of drama education. These tensions are not resolved by the New Zealand Curriculum, which retains an emphasis on measurable, behavioural outcomes (Z. Brooks, 2010; McGee, 2012; O'Connor, 2009b). O'Connor (2009b) contends that this outcomes-based approach results in education that is disconnected from the present lives of children and that much of Drama's power is lost when delivered in this manner. Expressing his concern over the losses he perceives to be the consequence of moving drama into the New Zealand curriculum, he laments:

In moving to the centre nearly all that attracted me to drama and had sustained me was compromised and lost so that now drama is like everything else that is "doled out like charity" (Heathcote in Carroll, Anderson and Cameron, 2006) in New Zealand schools. The heart, mind and spirit sucked out of its very existence. (2009b, p. 5)

Due to the New Zealand Curriculum's emphasis on behavioural outcomes, there is a greater risk that teachers will treat it as a technocratic framework – that is, a prescriptive document that directs teachers as to what must be taught without consideration of context or situation (Cornbleth, 1990). James is critical of the technocratic approach, arguing this outcomes-based model of curriculum

maintains a “reductive view of students” and serves “a narrow pedagogy”. Reflecting on his experience of learning in schools under the New Zealand curriculum, James states:

*This is ironical: All the talk about creativity and authentic learning, but routine and didactic learning is everywhere. James*

Taylor (2006a) argues that the emphasis on measurable outcomes can lead to models of drama education which emphasise the acquisition of theatre skills and content over the development of students’ critical and perceptual abilities through participation in collaborative and spontaneous playmaking. Taylor warns that teachers who are focused on outcomes “usually forget that the human context shapes the theatre classroom, and they become driven to evaluate end products” (2006a, p. 112). Greenwood (2010, p. 75) describes the lowest moment in her teaching career as being told that, “I won’t have time to save the world; I just need to concentrate on getting my students through NCEA” by a pre-service teacher. Theorists argue that such a focus results in an inferior drama curriculum – courses in theatre arts that focus on technical skills, historical theatre facts and forms – knowledge which is readily measured and assessable but a focus which misses much of the richer intentions of drama education. Critical, creative and integrated thinking is more complex to measure. It happens as a result of diverse (often non-linear) integrative processes (A. Davis, 1995; Rawlins et al., 2005). Furthermore, drama theorists maintain that the privileging of outcomes-based knowledge within the school curriculum has undermined teachers’ interests in process-focused drama work and the subsequent contributions this pedagogy can make to education (Bolton, 1998; O’Toole, 1992; Taylor, 2006a).

The intentions, philosophy and practice of the teachers in this study align with an emphasis on aesthetic creation. They work to empower students to express experiences and perspectives through their participation in drama-making. A concern for measurement of outcomes poses a challenge to drama teaching practice, however these teachers negotiate accountability while focusing on developing the aesthetic abilities – including creativity, criticality and the

development pro-social behaviour and attitudes in their students. Balin (1993) argues that recognising drama as an aesthetic enterprise shifts the emphasis from technical knowledge to the capacity for meaning-making and dialogue through the art form of drama. This focus on meaning-making is one suggested by Bolton (1992) as a useful assessment guideline for drama teachers, although, as Schonmann (2007) points out, actual methods of assessing meaning-making are not made explicit. The next section explores more closely the ways teachers are grappling with accountability and assessment within this policy environment.

## **6.3 Assessment of learning in drama**

*6.3.1 Learning and assessment in the primary school context*

*6.3.2 Assessment of junior drama at secondary level*

*6.3.3 Assessment of senior drama through NCEA*

Assessment of learning continues to be a contentious issue for education in New Zealand. The current New Zealand government has implemented accountability measures such as National Standards in literacy and numeracy and there are moves to institute performance-based pay for teachers (where performance is measured by student achievement). These initiatives have been met with fierce opposition from principals and teachers, who fear the impact this will have on teaching and learning. Opponents would rather see increased support for 'assessment for learning' approaches than standardised testing with its focus on measurement (Thrupp & Easter, 2012).

As explored in the previous section, the nature of learning in the Arts is quite different from many traditional disciplines, and therefore, the traditional modes of assessment do not provide the best ways to assess it. Assessment in drama has been a contentious issue in the field because of the key role assessment plays in determining purpose and scope of learning, and due to the differing conceptualisations of what it is drama educators actually want to achieve

(Schonmann, 2007). Kempe and Nicholson (2007) assert that good assessment practice in drama will provide clear information about student achievement, provide information about barriers to achievement, and give insight into teaching and learning. In this way, good assessment informs teaching practice. O'Toole and Dunn (2002) emphasise the need for students to be assessed in regard to their ability to manage drama processes, and DeLuca (2010) believes that authentic assessment in the arts must measure more than solely technique and aesthetics; it must engage with the complexity of creativity and the collaborative inquiry processes that give rise to it. Landy (2006) has a similar emphasis, purporting that the purposes of assessment in drama are to determine readiness to engage in drama activities and to determine competence in undertaking dramatic activities. Anderson (2012) argues that assessment needs to be authentic and relevant to the art form and industries of drama and theatre. Eisner (2002b) identifies three features of arts education that provide potential for meaningful assessment. These include the technical quality of work produced, the display of inventive use of an idea or process, and the expressive power of aesthetic quality it displays. However, Drama as a subject within the national curriculum faces pressure to conform to assessment practice commonly used in other disciplines where outcomes are more easily measured and products are emphasised over processes.

### ***6.3.1 Learning and assessment in the primary school context***

In practice, the Arts remain on the margins in the New Zealand primary school context – often the domain of specialist primary teachers and not offered in depth by many generalist primary teachers (O'Connor, 2009b). When considering the whole of the primary sector, drama is most often found where a school is planning to present a major school production to the parent community. Drama for learning is used by fewer teachers, however there are pockets of teachers who are exploring process-based drama, supported by the work of tertiary educators and programmes such as Mantle of Expert (V. Aitken, 2011). Research suggests that the Arts are often not formally assessed at primary level, due to the pressure and preoccupation with achievement in literacy and numeracy (Byres, 2006).



As the only primary-level teacher in this study, James offers a unique perspective on the issues in assessment of drama at this level. A performing arts specialist and a curriculum advisor in his school, James has the freedom to explore drama education within his extension English class, Drama option classes and the Drama Club – and this freedom is reflected in his pedagogical approach to assessment. Once his students have begun to engage with a context or dramatic provocation, the direction of the learning is determined by their curiosities and by the learning experiences James creates to enable their inquiries/discoveries. James then works to co-construct learning intentions and their assessment alongside his students. He explains:

*The success criteria for a unit aren't preset and extrinsic and the kids enjoy arriving at them for themselves. The unit is often driven by questions that the children share, and yes, something has to be at stake. My role here is to help them articulate these intentions and questions clearly, and to sometimes provoke new ones. **James***

James' approach aligns with the work of Elliot Eisner who began to consider the notion of 'expressive' outcomes in his theorising of learning in the arts, in contrast to the focus on instructional outcomes that could be measured in behavioural terms. These 'expressive' outcomes could not be known in advance and students and teachers arrived at these through a process of mutual discovery (Efland, 2004). While James admits it can be challenging to plan and teach in this way (that is, responding to the emerging interests of students), James believes there are benefits to allowing children to determine the direction of their learning and to develop competence as "inquirers".

Inquiry-based learning approaches have increased in New Zealand primary schools in recent years, with many primary school programmes dividing into a default curriculum of literacy, numeracy and inquiry. While this inquiry learning trend might support James' student-centred approach to learning, he cautions that the use of inquiry learning as a solution to an overcrowded curriculum is still a concern for drama (and all the Arts) because, "teachers do not understand the time

the Arts require". Consequently explorations in and through the Arts can be superficial, lacking the quality of teaching needed to provide depth of learning for children. Furthermore, James perceives a privileging of technical knowledge (Habermas, 1972) in these inquiry contexts, and a devaluing of the social, somatic and aesthetic dimensions of learning. It would seem there is still a need for primary teachers to discover what aesthetic inquiry through the Arts can offer children and can contribute to learning in other disciplines.

James believes the process of performance drama can provide a wealth of opportunities for teachers wishing to address learning across many different curricula. He also sees drama as enhancing views of what literacy is. He finds the meaning-making and dialogic interaction that occurs in Drama (for example, through acts of story-telling) provides children with valuable literacy strategies and creative opportunities. It also enhances the views students have of themselves and others. James recognises the potential drama offers for engaging children in reflection, due to the many opportunities for reflecting in role, on the edge of role and out of role. He maintains that this level of reflection enables learning and assessment to happen across many dimensions (and many disciplines) of the curriculum. James and his school were, at the time of our interview, exploring 'assessment as learning', including learning stories where students are more involved in the assessment process, drawing on group reflection and reflection in role – assessment in "the thick of learning", and using a wider range of work from students as evidence.

James would like to see more primary specialist drama teachers collaborating and sharing work to extend their practice. He identifies a need for ongoing professional networking for drama teachers in schools because drama teaching pedagogy and practice often places drama teachers in opposition to educational trends:

*So my journey has led me to being at odds with some of the dominant trends in primary schools; being on the margins can be bracing. The downside is a sense of isolation, and the lack of resourcing. **James***

Primary level drama teachers like James battle on within their school contexts with less support and affirmation of their contrary approach to curriculum and assessment.

### ***6.3.2 Assessment of junior drama at secondary level***

Participants in this study enjoy greater freedom in their assessment at junior secondary level due to the absence of pressure from external/national accountability measures. They employ similar approaches to assessment of learning at junior secondary level, often focusing this in a way that allows students to develop the kinds of social-collaborative skills and attitudes needed in Drama and equipping students to use the discourse of 'elements, techniques and conventions' needed to achieve at senior level.

Phillip focuses assessment on group skills, presentation skills and journal skills in his Year 9 (10 week) course, while Aroha's Year 9 assessments focus on the students' use and understanding of elements and techniques of drama. One of Aroha's junior assessments asks students to use the conventions of mime and demonstrate their understanding of these conventions through practical and reflective activities. Being able to identify and justify the use of elements and techniques is fundamental to assessment at senior level and reflects a close fit with New Zealand Curriculum Achievement Objectives at Level 5.

Although ensemble skills are emphasised and group work often features as an assessment focus, it seems the bulk of assessment centres around the development of 'theatre literacy' in the junior secondary school. At Year 10 level, Aroha's assessment focuses on five aspects that mirror NCEA Achievement Standards at senior level. This includes the students' ability to use and understand elements and techniques of drama (in performance), to demonstrate understanding of a theatre form, to use conventions and elements to devise and perform drama, and to demonstrate understanding of devised drama. Likewise Julia's assessment at Year 10 focuses on the facts of theatre forms, participation and contribution to group work, and awareness of artistic intention and impact.

David explains that in senior drama, students are learning to respond as performers and as audience members, and to become more critically aware of what drama and theatre is about. Aroha stresses the need for students to develop criticality in drama and to be able to articulate their understandings, responses and beliefs in response to their own work and the work of others. To equip them in their ability to be critical, Aroha believes it is important for students to learn the language of drama theory (defined by the terminology given in the Drama curriculum and NCEA Achievement Standards) so they can use this language in their critical analysis of performance work.

Performance presentations, portfolio worksheets and conferencing are often used at junior level. A number of participants have an expectation that students will make regular journal reflections, guided by questions provided by the teacher. Again, this is preparation for the kinds of portfolio evidence required by some NCEA Achievement Standards (although the demand for written evidence to support performance work has decreased with the new NCEA Matrix of 2011). Furthermore, conferencing and journal activities provide theoretical connections to practical work and aim to develop students' criticality. Phillip employs less written reflection, as this is a component his students are less enthused about, and David often chooses to provide templates and sentence starters to assist his students.

### **6.3.3 Assessment of senior drama through NCEA**

*I think with NCEA in some ways we made a rod for our own back but on the other hand NCEA was the salvation of Drama within the curriculum.*

**Julia**

When discussing their experience with NCEA assessment in drama, participants focused on the tensions they experienced with the system. The overwhelmingly positive contribution of NCEA to drama education is that Drama is now a legitimate senior subject, but aligning classroom drama practice with standards-based assessment outcomes has not been straightforward due to the challenges of assessing artistic work and the emphasis drama education places on process

objectives. These challenges are better addressed by standards-based assessment than they were in the norm-referenced assessment of School Certificate and Bursary examinations as standards-based assessment does allow a more student-centred approach to teaching and assessment. The transparency of standards and criteria enables students to take more ownership of their achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Crooks, 1988; Rawlins, et al., 2005).

When participants were asked how their practice was impacted by NCEA assessment, our discussion centred on a number of key tensions they were grappling with. In addition to tensions arising from the measures used to assess, tensions were also experienced around the place of written evidence, the process versus performance emphasis, and the administrative burden the NCEA system imposes.

#### *Tensions due to the measures used in assessment*

Grace addresses a central tension in the assessment of achievement in drama:

*One of the frustrations about doing things like assessment schedules is finding the right words to describe that magical thing that happens in a performance that you can't possibly describe, and in fact, once it is gone, you're not even sure if it was there because it is so other-worldly in a way.*

**Grace**

Z. Brooks' (2010) research into the impact of NCEA Drama assessment also found a number of teachers struggled with the terminology used across the various Achievement Standards. External exams would surprise with terms such as 'production components' and debates raged on topics such as whether 'mood' was an 'element' or the outcome of elements. Like Grace, David also noted tensions in trying to define with words that which constitutes achievement, something he sees many drama teachers experiencing.

*I struggle with those often, those little wordy things. Exactly that – 'with conviction' and so if it just says 'performs a role' – what does that actually mean? **David***

While Grace wrestles with the subjective nature of aesthetic engagement, and the role of emotional response at times when assessing performance, she reminds herself that emotional response is indeed part of aesthetic engagement and therefore a valid tool in assessment of artistic-aesthetic achievement. Anderson (2012) supports the view that teacher subjectivity (born of knowledge, experience and understandings of drama and theatre) ought to be embraced and built on through discussion and moderation practices.

### *Tensions on the teacher-examiner continuum*

One of the significant shifts for teachers arising from NCEA is the double role the system places teachers in – that of being both teacher/co-artist and examiner. In her discussion around assessment, Grace identifies tensions that arise due to the interpersonal relationships formed with students:

*I still struggle with the fact that in moderation I will give a student a mark and I think to myself am I giving this student a better mark because I like her? Because I think that she is a lovely person? What is that about?*

**Grace**

Given the nature of drama work and the collaborative roles teacher and student often undertake, there is often greater closeness achieved. As explored in the next two chapters, drama teachers will often deliberately position themselves as an encourager and one who values risk-taking and participation over product outcomes. Such a stance is at odds with the evaluative judgments they are then required to make in the role of examiner – and this is a role they move in and out of as the school year (and internal assessment) unfolds. Julia finds having to evaluate students according to performance criteria can be a challenging aspect of assessment. Students may be progressing in their confidence and contribution yet still not meet the standard, and assessing a student as ‘Not Achieved’ can seem to run counter to the desire to encourage and motivate them towards greater success. This can result in relational challenges for teachers, who cannot acknowledge this growth via formal assessment, and in turn, may fail students on their performance

abilities, despite valuing the process and personal development dimensions of drama education more highly.

### *Process versus performance*

Whilst inclusion in an outcomes-focused curriculum may have initiated concerns, Drama's inclusion in the standards-based system of NCEA has now magnified the need for achievement in areas such as pro-social conduct, creativity and contribution to be recognised. Valuing performance outcomes over quality participation during the creative process is a tension exacerbated by the focus of assessment. In considering the 2009 review of standards and the draft changes released in 2010, David expressed concerns over the lack of valuing of quality participation and contribution students make in practical performance work. David believes that NCEA Achievement Standards in Drama should acknowledge the quality of a student's participation in the process – which is something the assessment of portfolio process could potentially touch on in the early iteration of NCEA Drama Standards but not in the subsequent versions.

*You take your absolute off-the-wall extrovert, who you know is going to get up and perform extremely well but he could have been an absolute pain in the arse for the last three months while you were working through the process. And that is the potential. David*

Taylor (2006a, p. 114) argues that there is always “product in process and process in product”. As it is impossible to separate artistic learning from social learning, a successful assessment model must recognise both dimensions (Dickinson, Neelands, & School, 2006). These tensions continue to be raised and debated within professional networks (Darragh, 2011) because some of what Drama values lies “beyond the confines of traditional academic values” (Z. Brooks, 2010, p. 195).

### *Tensions over the place of written evidence*

The ability to critique and justify artistic intentions and decisions through logical argument is a dimension of drama that is more readily measured than many other aspects of drama. Several NCEA drama assessment tasks require both performance and an explanation of artistic process. This has been a site of tension for many

drama teachers wishing to recognise performance achievement in students who struggle to articulate a justification for their work or rely on a more intuitive/somatic sense to guide performance decisions.

Phillip has concerns regarding the place of written evidence in the assessment for achievement in drama NCEA Achievement Standards and believes that different models of assessment should still be explored. Phillip explains that requiring his students to “validate their quality performance work with quality writing” can be a barrier to their achievement.

Z. Brooks (2010) found that the written work required for NCEA was a factor that resulted in drama teachers changing their pedagogical approaches when delivering NCEA – and can also be seen to influence the focus and delivery of learning in junior secondary drama in this study. While visual arts and music offer performance standards that do not require students to provide written justifications of their work, Drama performance work has required students to submit a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate their intentions and rationale. Some teachers maintain that justifying learning through written accounts of performance practice has led to over-assessment (Z. Brooks, 2010).

Julia does acknowledge that the emphasis on written reflection has had advantages for student learning in drama, although she believes other modes (such as interviews and video conferencing) could be used. She finds reflection (written or otherwise) provides important information regarding students’ levels of understanding and therefore informs her teaching.

The revised NCEA Drama Matrix 2011 (Ministry of Education, 2011) reflects a shift in written requirements (see *Appendices*). For example, at Level 1 (Year 11) Achievement Standard 90008: “Demonstrate knowledge of a drama/theatre form through a practical presentation” had previously required both a practical performance utilising relevant conventions and elements of the theatre form along with a written account. Students needed to attain a satisfactory level in both dimensions to meet the Standard. The revised Matrix (Ministry of Education, 2011) has now divided this work into two separate Achievement Standards – one



internally assessed and practical, “Select and use features of a drama/theatre form in performance”, and an externally assessed written account, “Demonstrate understanding of the history and features of a drama/theatre form”. In this way students are able to receive due reward, whether their strengths lie in performance or literacy.

### *Administrative burden*

Unsurprisingly, implementing a national system of standards-based assessment has involved a huge amount of professional time. Developing systems for national moderation of internally-assessed standards has required greater recording, storing and submission of student work. David states that the administrative demands of assessment and moderation are the more challenging aspects of his work. As a Head of Department, Phillip experiences a substantial administrative burden from the current assessment and moderation processes in New Zealand. He explains, “I find that moderation period really ugly. That’s the side I’m not excited about”.

David has worked to cut down the amount of written evidence students have to provide and explains that requiring elaborate portfolios can become a huge workload burden for teachers.

Recent policy decisions have meant changes to moderation processes and to the demands of particular Achievement Standards and Unit Standards in Drama. This is a source of frustration at times for Julia because changes can have a significant impact on workload.

*We seem to just reinvent the wheel all the time here. We’ve just got something worked out and then, “Hey, we’ve got to start all over again” and work out new ways of doing it. Julia*

Julia believes assessment needs to be “less teacher-stressful”. Educational theorists have also warned against the negative impact on teachers’ working lives and practice due to the burden of assessment and record-keeping (Abbs, 2003; Ball, 2003; Codd, 2005). Abbs (2003) highlights the distraction and interference of

needing to attain assessment 'results'; something Taylor (2006a) refers to as 'dreaded accountability'. As Z. Brooks (2010) contends, a culture of performativity threatens effective teaching and learning in drama.

### *School and class productions*

Another source of considerable workload for drama teachers comes as a result of the frequent dramatic productions required to enable Achievement Standards in Production to be addressed. Many sole drama teachers face being responsible for productions across several year levels. Inclusion in NCEA has come with pressures on teachers and schools to improve facilities, staffing and resourcing (Z. Brooks, 2010) but it has also increased the time teachers and students are engaged in Drama outside of the school day. Phillip describes his production term as being "insane", finding he is at school three or four nights a week, for seven weeks in a row. Students frequently attend live theatre shows in the evenings with all the associated responsibility, administration and care falling to the drama teacher.

*I think by teaching drama there's only one option and that is you work bloody hard and you're essentially a foot soldier despite being the head of a department. Phillip*

Phillip admits that the challenges of NCEA, the burden of productions (some large scale), assessment and moderation, and the responsibilities of being Head of Department are making his job unsustainable, and he is unsure how long he will continue in this position. He perceives that being a Head Of Department in Performing Arts means a far greater workload, involving many more hours than other subject areas seem to require. He resigns himself to the reality that it is a challenging task to teach a programme that allows achievement in NCEA Drama.

## 6.4 Putting assessment 'in its place'

6.4.1 *Rich contexts versus atomisation of learning*

6.4.2 *Journeys in assessment: aligning and returning*

6.4.3 *Creating space in drama programmes*

6.4.4 *'Credit chasing' across the curriculum*

6.4.5 *Formative assessment and reflection*

Phillip uses NCEA Achievement Standards to assess senior drama although assessment is an area of considerable dissatisfaction for him, largely due to the pressure he experiences from the nature and volume of assessment. He feels he is constantly assessing and he describes this as a "strait jacket":

*I do feel there's a danger of the tail wagging the dog, that we have become too assessment driven. ... it just feels like [assessment is] endless. That we are just teaching to the assessment. We just finish something and there's not enough time to play. Phillip*

David also feels his programme is very assessment driven as a result of policy at both a school and national level, "It's ludicrous, you know. I'm teaching to assessment 95% of the time". Like Phillip, he observes that at times there is not the space to explore and trial ideas, nor the opportunity for the depth the work might need. This is particularly challenging for those drama teachers who are in sole-charge of the drama programme in their school.

In the context of NCEA assessment, teachers at the senior drama level have a schedule of achievement standards in drama to offer students and a range of assessment activities they can choose from to assess the standard against (see *Appendices*). Curriculum writer and academic, Rose Hipkins (2007) warns:

If the main purpose of learning in the senior secondary school is seen as gaining qualifications, then assessment for these qualifications may become the de facto curriculum. (p. 20)

#### **6.4.1 Rich contexts versus atomisation of learning**

Grace is well aware that the risk for drama teachers is that these assessment activities turn into a prescribed drama programme – a programme driven by assessment needs and the availability of resources, and impacted by inexperience as new drama teachers are brought in to teach drama in response to the growth of the subject area. Having engaged in the implementation of NCEA Drama for several years, she reflects on the impact for her own teaching:

*What I have realised going through these changes as an experienced teacher and reflecting on this, I began to think to myself I want to be the teacher I used to be! I want to be that enthusiastic teacher who has time to experiment, and who has time to do all these fun things again – and how can I do that? And I realised I can do that again, if I put NCEA back in its place and the idea of using a rich context drew me. **Grace***

Accordingly, Grace has developed learning experiences where students explore a range of artistic-aesthetic dimensions for a longer period of time within one broad context, and then get to select which aspects of their work they would like to develop and present against various achievement standards.

*I can use this context to explore all those things that I think Year 11 need to experience and learn. I can choose a context as the teacher that reflects my passion and my interests are fed as well and then once I introduce it and start playing, the students can bring to it what their passions and ideas are and together we can make something out of that and then at the end of all of that, we can decide, “okay we need to do some assessment – okay what? What are we going to do? How are we going to assess it? What standards are out there?” So that the assessment comes at the end and not the beginning. **Grace***

Grace’s experience reflects the burden many teachers have endured in aligning their courses with the Achievement Standards and undertaking the increasingly cumbersome assessment and moderation processes that NCEA entails. Being heavily assessment-driven is not the only concern arising from NCEA. Some

educationalists argue that standards-based assessment increases the risk of fragmented learning or 'atomisation' (Hall, 1999). Taylor (2006a, p. 113) argues that a teacher's lack of confidence or clarity can impact on the coherence of a teaching programme, and a tendency to "think in terms of discrete unit or lesson plans, isolated modules and study programmes, with neither internal nor interrelated coherence". He adds:

They neglect to recognise that ultimately they are presenting themselves, their loves and passions, their personal aesthetic. You are what you teach, not a series of bulleted points under a discrete attainment target. (Taylor, 2006a, p. 113)

This has been a concern raised by Greenwood (2009, p. 258) who asks, "Are we more concerned with interpreting the minutiae of NCEA descriptors than with exploring the role of the aesthetic?" Other authors argue that atomisation is not a necessary consequence of standards-based learning – and recommend an integrated approach to programme design, just as Grace is exploring (Hager, Gonczi, & Athanasou, 1994).

Julia can see the opportunity for drama teachers to move back to a more holistic approach to teaching and learning, where they are mindful of the broader goals of drama education rather than a technocratic (skills-based) view of curriculum content. In this way she echoes Grace's notion of the need for rich contexts for learning in drama:

*We have to get back to saying, "Okay, we are doing this unit on a legend and as we do it, we are bringing in elements and conventions of drama" – but we are always using techniques, and accept that the learning isn't just ... you know, it's almost like you can break it down so much that "today we are just talking about pause in our speech and ... we ... will ... pause ..." you know? **Julia***

Like James, Julia recognises the potential fragmentation and loss of meaning that can happen as a result of narrowing learning and teaching to addressing the most

accessible/measurable outcomes (such as the ability to ‘use pace and pause for impact’) rather than appreciate the real-world/fictional world contexts in which such skills and abilities have meaning. Julia explains there is a tension for teachers in finding the balance between delivering content that is appropriate for NCEA Achievement Standards and that which is relevant for the students they teach. She challenges herself to design her units with specific student groups in mind and considers what they will get out of the learning experience.

*When we started NCEA I think I, as much as anyone, was like, “Right, we have to do this achievement standard and it has to be done now”. Julia*

Julia now believes that the new curriculum and its key competencies, values and principles are more helpful in addressing the risk that drama teachers face in delivering an overly-prescribed programme in order to address NCEA assessment. The emphasis on pro-social learning and learning for democratic citizenship is found in the front-end of the document, however what translates into school culture and classroom practice must vary. Neelands (2009) argues that splitting the pro-social learning and development from the artistic domain in the categorisation of drama as a subject in the curriculum has caused greater emphasis on “pro-technical acquisition and measurement of ‘subject knowledge’ and ‘products’ in drama” (p. 179). He explains that to remove the pro-social dimensions of learning in Drama “unpicks the weave of drama as a living practice beyond schools” (p. 180) and in doing so, Neelands argues, drama’s power to serve in authentic democracy – to give voice to the disempowered, to question culture and society, to challenge political powers, is removed.

#### **6.4.2 Journeys in assessment: aligning and returning**

The accounts of these participants give cause for hope that New Zealand drama education practice within the current policy environment can continue to promote critical consciousness and social transformation through drama education, despite the centrality of performance skills and artistic decision-making as assessment foci. Several participants expressed their experience in senior drama as assessed by NCEA as that of a journey – one from which it was possible to return!

Grace admits she has spent considerable time considering NCEA and its requirements but also feels she is increasingly able to develop her own programme using NCEA as an assessment tool – rather than have her programme dictated by the Ministry-endorsed drama assessment activities. She has felt more and more confident to move back to a focus on what she wants students to experience and develop.

Z. Brooks (2010, p. 238) found teachers were moving from “compliance to confidence” in delivering drama programmes that were assessable by the NCEA standards, and, in the current study, teachers are taking a step further in re-positioning NCEA assessment as a less-dominant determiner of their teaching and learning programmes. Grace describes the challenge of ensuring her practice aligned with the Drama Achievement Standards and of managing the subsequent administrative demands.

*But that has been a journey to get back to where I was before because NCEA was huge and it has taken up a lot of our thinking and planning time and headspace but I think that we are going back now. **Grace***

Julia acknowledges that a natural progression has happened for many teachers who have had to master NCEA requirements but are now returning to greater autonomy – in the selection of content and in their approach to teaching in the drama classroom.

*Yeah I think we are heading in the right direction. It's saying, “Right we've got what we want out of [NCEA], now we are going to ...” almost like it's used us and now we are going to use it. **Julia***

Grace has been involved in creating assessment resources for the Ministry of Education and this level of professional involvement has also helped her feel confident she can create her own contexts for assessment.

Of course in order to *return* to rich drama practice, a teacher has to have known what that rich practice looks like, how to facilitate it and how to manage the

challenges of assessment in order to preserve a learning environment that will allow for creative exploration in and through drama.

Grace believes there are a number of things at play that can increase the risk that teachers will use a more prescriptive, assessment-driven approach to delivering the drama curriculum, in particular teachers who are relatively inexperienced or who have school management who frequently bring NCEA assessment to the forefront. She sees confidence, breadth of knowledge and experience of drama as being influential factors in the way drama teachers manage tensions between accountability and creative classroom practice. Certainly, research from Hipkins (2007) and Fastier (2009) supports Grace's view.

#### **6.4.3 Creating space in drama programmes**

Creating space within programmes to allow for increased exploration and creativity in drama and to avoid prescriptive programming is something these teachers are exploring – although the pressures of the assessment system and a measurable outcomes-based mentality towards learning continue to push against pedagogical practice.

Aroha sees senior drama being driven by NCEA assessment but she says she tries “to stand up to it”. Like Grace, she believes there is plenty of scope for creativity in the standards if teachers are prepared to write their own tasks. One of the ways Aroha has countered this focus on assessment is to reduce the credits on offer. Her school maintains that offering 20 credits at Year 11 is sufficient, so she offers a choice of an achievement standard in either an acting or technical role in the class production (rather than students doing both). She is reluctant to lose any more of the Year 11 programme because she sees the content of Year 11 as both important grounding for senior work and as “the roundup” to the junior drama programme.

At Year 12 and 13 Aroha moves into teaching more challenging theatre studies work. She has created more space in her programme by cutting one of the external assessments, with support from the school management. Reducing the assessment pressure in her Year 12 programme has created more time for exploring creative



approaches to processing theoretical course content and is a move occurring in other subject areas (Fastier, 2009).

Aroha describes Year 13 as being particularly “driven by assessment” with the exception of work for a One Act Play festival, which is not part of the NCEA programme. She finds many of her students enjoy the opportunity to participate in this work without the burden of recording the process for assessment. She approaches the final Achievement Standard 3.3 *Devise, script and perform drama as solo, duet or trio* as a graduation piece to mark the end of their five-year course. This work is designed by students and focuses on the Theatre of Cruelty, which Aroha describes as a “really risky kind of theatre, that pulls on everything we’ve been teaching them”. Approaching the assessment in this way has meant greater freedom and creativity for students.

Aroha works to find ways to bring the course content alive so that students do more than undertake a body of work purely to be assessed on it. Making the decision to pursue work outside of the NCEA programme does have consequences for students however, if they are trying to get University Entrance using drama and have to pass three Drama standards. One of Aroha’s students said he felt the challenges of NCEA drama for students were underestimated:

*Because it is far more demanding than a lot of other subjects. That’s not a bad thing but it’s hard to find a balance.*

(Student Interview: Yr 13 Aro)

Other students agreed that it was time consuming and that they didn’t feel teachers from other subjects necessarily understood the demands on them from Drama or that they saw achievement in Drama as important for students. One student commented, “They think, oh it’s *[just]* Drama and you’re like yeah, it’s DRAMA!” Such comments echo James’ sentiments about the arts taking more time than learning in some other areas. In drama, this is due to the need for collaboration, for creative ideas to incubate, for the editing and refining of work to take place, and finally, for presentation and reflection to occur. Students who

undertake a range of creative subjects in NCEA have to grapple with serious deadlines that may impede their ability to engage fully in this creative process.

Research into other subject areas delivering NCEA found teachers were taking similar steps to reduce the burden of assessment, as a result of their time and experience in NCEA. Fastier (2009) found that geography teachers achieved a reduction in workload by using a mix of resubmission, informal formative assessment and reducing credits on offer. Like participants in the current study, Fastier's geography teachers have gained the confidence to create more flexibility in their course design, integrated informal formative assessment with classroom learning and designed more local-based contexts, specifically tailored to the needs of their students – resulting in “improved assessment-related pedagogy” (p. 152). David notes that a shift in his school's policy so practice examinations no longer occurred twice during the school year has made more time for internally assessed work. Finding more time within programmes allows teachers some respite from the administrative burden, but more importantly for drama, enables greater space to experiment, refine and formatively assess work.

#### **6.4.4 'Credit-chasing' across the curriculum**

While Aroha was able to find a solution for her students in her school context, there are implications for reducing the amount of credits on offer that can be problematic for drama in other school settings. For David, issues arise for students who want to get as many credits from Drama as possible. Drama is also competing with other subjects so offering fewer credits can mean students select another subject to maximise their credit count.

Julia adds that the status of assessment also has an impact on the motivation and engagement levels of students, where assessed learning is the only learning students want to engage in and too much non-assessed learning reduces the status of drama work.

*You know they so quickly get into that, “Oh are we getting marked on this?” and how to get them out of that mindset and still be doing the valuable learning – it's almost as if, “I don't want to do any learning*

*because we are not getting marked on what we learn". You know, there is no way around it. **Julia***

Hipkins (2007) also reported that those parents who were more negative about NCEA were concerned that "without a sufficiently strong assessment 'carrot' their child would see no reason to do more than the bare minimum of work" (p. 57). Unsurprisingly, Meyer, McClure, Walkey, McKenzie, and Weir (2006) found lower achievement rates in NCEA for those students who were motivated to 'just do enough' versus those who were motivated to 'do their best'. Thomas (2007) points out that the Meyer et al. (2006) motivation study indicates that the NCEA design fails to encourage students to excel "as there is plainly no tangible reward for doing so" (Thomas, 2007, p. 4) and also enables students to avoid work they felt they would not enjoy, or would find too challenging. This is a dynamic that poses a considerable challenge for the collaborative learning community that exists in the drama classroom.

#### **6.4.5 Formative assessment and reflection**

Formative assessment has a significant role to play in the teaching and learning of drama, and in increasing the agency students have in their learning and achievement. Standards-based assessment provides potential for quality formative assessment that can lead to significant improvement in student achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998; James, 2000; Supovitz, 2001).

Many teachers regard formative assessment as the most valuable aspect of the learning process and prefer this to the examiner role they are forced take on when assessing NCEA standards. There is also a sense that these formative conversations are of more relevance to the development of artistic-aesthetic understandings and processes than summative judgments are (Landy, 2006).

Grace frequently uses formative assessment, asking questions and making suggestions to get students "to think beyond where they are at". This may be done informally or in a more structured way, where students get co-constructed written feedback on their work-in-progress a week from the final assessment date, and spend the last week working with this feedback.

David also uses formative assessment to assist students to refine and extend their work just prior to formal summative assessment. He considers this time of informal presentation, reflection and editing to have a major impact on their final achievement and notes the importance of two questions: “Why are you doing that?” and “What are you trying to achieve?” Enabling students to have a clear intention and to critically justify their artistic choices in light of this intention is important to their achievement, particularly when the strength of this argument is a measure of success in the NCEA Achievement Standards. David sees bringing students back to these artistic intentions as one of the key roles of the drama teacher. He stresses the importance of reflection in drama in order to enable students to make cognitive connections to their work. He perceives reflection to be “less natural” for many boys and therefore sees the practice as having “huge psychological benefit” for them.

Phillip uses formative feedback and discussion in order to continue to extend students beyond imitation and stereotypical role-play. This is a time when he also makes considerable connection to the elements to heighten students’ understandings of the ways elements can be manipulated to enhance and develop dramatic work. Phillip works from the premise that there is no such thing as being finished and so motivates his students to keep examining and exploring ways they can extend and develop their work:

*... you should always be looking for ways to make this more exciting, more challenging. I like the idea that the Arts are partly about striving for something you never arrive at. **Phillip***

Aroha’s approach to developing students’ artistic-aesthetic ability involves developing their awareness of what it is to respond as a performer and as an audience member – and formative assessment plays an important part in this. Understanding drama work from these two perspectives is seen as extremely important to developing a critical awareness of dramatic performance. These objectives are also reflected in the New Zealand curriculum objectives and the demands of NCEA assessment.

Like Phillip, Aroha maintains that understanding central concepts within drama (such as drama elements, conventions, and technologies) and being able to use this vocabulary enables further critical analysis. “Outside eye” is the term she uses to describe the formative process of having someone view work critically from the perspective of an audience member. The “outside eye” looks for areas that could be clarified or improved on in drama work. This may include dramaturgy and/or performance values – for example the structure, use of dialogue, performance in role, visual impact, and use of technologies.

The process of developing this critical lens begins with juniors and Aroha sees this as a significant area for drama students to master. Her role as teacher in this learning is to “train their eye”, to go beyond a superficial emotional response to a piece of dramatic work to interrogating the artistic choices made and their implications – the deeper use of language, symbol and text to communicate meaning and provoke dialogue or thought. Framing this reflective process through the use of key questions is central to her approach – and she finds questions such as, “What worked?” and “Where to from here?” open up discussion for students.

Eventually senior students will initiate this formative feedback process themselves as part of their preparation. Aroha insists that seniors “get someone to ‘outside eye’” as part of their devising work. In this way, formative assessment features as part of the creative process and provides a structure to assist the development of artistic understandings.

As with David and Phillip, Aroha asks students to articulate and justify their intentions in order to facilitate this constant awareness of the audience and the impact of creative decisions on drama work. Stating their intentions and articulating the question they wish the audience to be considering at the end of their work are ways to focus the artistic development of the work. Taylor (2006a, p. 127) goes further to assert that, “a teacher stance that does not invite students to heighten their critical facilities is not permitting the evolution of an individual or group aesthetic”.

## Chapter summary

Participants in this study view the framing of drama within the Arts curriculum as a positive and progressive development for drama education in New Zealand. This is predominantly due to the greater development of embodied learning, of professional discourse and of artistic-aesthetic understandings they consider it has afforded. The New Zealand Curriculum has also served the work of these drama teachers. Drama teachers can readily identify with the key competencies, which have captured something of the socio-cultural pedagogies employed in the drama classroom as well as the broader aims they have for their students. While teachers in this study did not feel this changed or challenged their practice, it has given them a discourse they can share with colleagues across the curriculum.

Teachers also noted a number of tensions in working within this framework and its assessment, due to their philosophies of drama education and the nature of artistic-aesthetic learning. Some participants felt the focus on measurable outcomes is a real challenge to the Arts, agreeing with critics of the current curriculum framing and codification of the discipline of Drama, who fear that this results in a technocratic delivery of drama education. These teachers believe that effective teaching and learning in drama means valuing process as much as the creation of art. Accordingly their practice reflects their intention to develop artistic-aesthetic understandings through a holistic exploration of human experience, not through a focus on techniques and methods. They continue to explore ways to dialogue with lived experience through the processes of art-making and performance.

The 'front end' of the New Zealand Curriculum (its key competencies, vision, principles and effective pedagogies) serves to inform the theatre arts focus in the learning area and these experienced teachers can find justification for their pedagogical practice here. There are concerns that beginning teachers will not make the same connections as a consequence of increasingly limited pre-service and in-service training in drama education, and the pressures of a standards-based assessment system in a market-driven school context.

The presence of NCEA Achievement Standards with prescribed assessment activities has had a marked influence on planning and delivery of topics in recent years. Teachers have found themselves burdened by the administration and constrained by the demands of delivering a programme assessable by the Achievement Standards. This study reveals that, increasingly, teachers are adapting, writing new assessment activities and finding their own way through the demands of the qualification. As a group of experienced teachers who have gained high levels of trust from senior management in their schools, they are perhaps more empowered to negotiate school policy, in order to design their own parameters and to find what works for Drama in their particular school context. When these programmes, skills and ensemble culture are in place, the artistry of teachers may well flourish – provided their passion is not crushed through cumbersome workload pressures. While this is heartening, it does not reduce the risk that beginning teachers, or teachers who have not received strong foundations in drama education in their training, will tend to deliver an overly prescribed programme driven by assessment.

More positively, these stories of practice make a contribution to the New Zealand drama education community in providing some insight into how experienced teachers are negotiating the tensions of the policy environment. Of particular note is the ways in which teachers are applying a more student-centred approach to teaching and learning in drama – through the use of formative assessment, by creating space in their programmes for exploration and responsiveness, and through the development of rich contexts that allow for deeper integration of learning rather than atomisation.





## Chapter Seven: Role –

### The drama teacher as artist and co-artist

*7.1 Aesthetic leadership: the drama teacher as an artist*

*7.2 Sharing status: the drama teacher as a co-artist*

This chapter investigates the pedagogical practice of each participant more closely. In order to capture and unpack some of the complexities in the drama teacher's role, the role is framed according to two key dimensions emerging from the interviews with teachers and students: that of artist and co-artist. The roles of artist and co-artist offer insight into the epistemological orientation of participants, the pedagogical choices teachers make to foster artistic-aesthetic achievement, and the way the learner is positioned in the learning process. The connection between the roles teachers take, the metaphors they choose to describe these roles, and the ways this reveals pedagogical practice has been explored in the work of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), Sfard (1998) and Schraw and Sinatra (2004). Viewing practice through these lenses enables 'thick description' and helps to illuminate the complexities of creative learning and teaching in the drama classroom.

The role of the drama teacher, delineated by drama education theorists such as Heathcote, Bolton, Neelands and O'Toole, has traditionally been informed by the participatory epistemologies of socio-cultural theory rather than acquisition-based approaches to teaching and learning. 'Knowing' in drama happens at the cognitive, affective and physical (or somatic) level, and learning is a result of participation in this classroom community. So how do these teachers facilitate the development of this artistic learning community? This chapter proceeds with an analysis of the descriptions of practice that help to define the nature of these roles, firstly focusing on the drama teacher as an artist.

## **7.1 Aesthetic leadership: the drama teacher as an artist**

*7.1.1 Drama teachers as practicing artists*

*7.1.2 Artistic achievement and professional credibility*

*7.1.3 Willingness to work in role*

*7.1.4 Keeping in the creative flow*

*7.1.5 Utilising the power of tension to engage students*

*7.1.6 Allowing creative space*

In considering the areas of expertise a drama teacher requires, the following range of knowledge provides an overview of the territory of drama education:

- subject knowledge – including knowledge of drama forms and processes, theatre history, genres, plays and playwrights; pedagogical content knowledge – such as strategies for facilitating drama processes;
- curriculum knowledge – including an awareness of the philosophical underpinnings and the structural features (such as strands and achievement objectives);
- artistic-aesthetic knowledge – including a working knowledge of the creative process, dramatic forms, elements and conventions, and of aesthetic engagement.

Graduating pre-service drama teachers are expected to have developed a strong foundation in both curriculum and subject knowledge in this specialist field. Further to this, a drama teacher must draw on knowledge about their school context, community and the psychosocial developmental needs of the students when deciding on programmes and approaches for learning and teaching. As illustrated in *Chapter Two: The field of drama education*, the basis of drama subject knowledge is the terrain of the artistic-aesthetic. Aesthetic modes of knowing and the language of theatre is at the core of drama education, and these artistic-aesthetic modes provide the means and the mechanisms for the socio-cultural and pedagogical-educational potential of drama education (Schonmann, 2009). Accordingly, artistry is an essential dimension of the drama teacher's role. Artistic understandings, explorations and processes play an important role in shaping the

choices drama teachers make about both content and pedagogy. Phillip acknowledges this dimension of drama teaching practice:

*An effective drama teacher does not only teach the arts but they also have artistry in their own delivery style. They tell a good story or they play with being in role; they explore and use the conventions that are at the disposal of arts educators. Phillip*

Participants offer a number of examples of creative teaching practice, particularly in the ways they engage and motivate students. Given the creative and expressive nature of drama, Phillip explains that drama teachers can approach content from a number of angles, using a wider range of strategies than many other disciplines can offer – such as games, in-role work, continuums, hot seating and other improvisations. These strategies are creatively employed to stimulate imagination, heighten the senses and to encourage students to engage aesthetically. Neelands (2009) explains why this area of pedagogical expertise is such a vital aspect of the drama teachers' role:

In every drama class students have to make a positive choice whether to join in or not, without this willingness bred of interest and engagement, there can be no active drama. ... For this reason drama has often been associated with a rich and engaging pedagogy. A pedagogy which turns the pedagogic and artistic traditions and lines it draws on into a contemporary praxis. (p. 140)

Several themes relating to artistry arose in discussion with participants and their students. These include personal art-making practice, the impact of artistic achievement on professional credibility, teachers working in role, keeping in the creative flow, utilising the power of tension to engage students, and allowing for 'creative space' in lesson planning and delivery. These dimensions are explored in the following section.

### **7.1.1 Drama teachers as practicing artists**

Participants in this study prioritise art-making in their lives, in and outside of their school context. Despite the pressure teaching imposes on time and energy levels or the workload challenges secondary teachers face implementing NCEA Drama (see *Chapter Six: Focus*), they are what Anderson (2004b, p. 105) refers to as “arts-enriched practitioners”. While there was variation in how active participants were in artistic endeavours outside the school environment, all participants have experience as dramatic artists, frequently engage in acts of art-making (often within professional artistic communities), and their work has the recognition of their school community and wider arts communities. Phillip and James write and perform original plays; David has been directing major school productions for several years and often participates in local community theatre; Aroha directs and performs in devised works for national competitions, has directed semi-professional theatre and regularly takes part in community theatre projects. James and Aroha are also musicians. Grace and Julia have undertaken many artistic projects within their school contexts, directing and producing plays and musical productions. Grace has a growing interest in film and is exploring this medium within the context of the drama curriculum. Schonmann’s (2009) research into the professional identities of ‘veteran’ theatre teachers in school contexts reveals Canadian teachers have a similar commitment to developing as both artists and teachers:

It was important for them to stress that their professional lives are twofold and that they see the importance of both aspects. Thus, in a way, teaching is perceived as an art form that is constructed upon the skills and the personal characteristics of the teacher-artist – and not only on technical skills. (p. 533)

James refers to his own curiosity and passion for the creative process:

*The idea of the creative process is endless, open-ended and fascinating, and there are many different ways of doing it. So that’s always very interesting to me. **James***

For David, the major school production is an extra-curricular context that offers him greater creative expression personally:

*For me that is the creative side – it's my creative outlet, which I don't feel to anywhere near the same extent in the classroom. David*

David sees his role in this extra-curricular drama context as being quite different to the role he takes in the drama classroom, where he perceives himself to be a co-artist. He explains this is due to coordinating a large number of adults in the production team, the tight timeframes he is working within, and the fact he is asserting his own creative work in this context.

Aroha describes an incident where her 'artistic self' was affirmed in a professional development context with the director of Toi Whakaari, New Zealand's National Drama School. She explains this work increased a sense of her own artistry and artistic process as a drama teacher, particularly in directing and devising work. Arts educators suggest that involvement in personal artistic work is a way teachers can avoid burning out. Thompson (1986, p. 47) suggests that teachers have a responsibility to nurture their artistic self, "lest we become an empty bowl with nothing to offer pupils". She argues that personal engagement in the creative process also increases a teacher's awareness of the challenges students face. Furthermore, Thompson claims teachers who gain their sense of accomplishment through the artistic work of their students, rather than through their own artistic lives, can suffer resentment when students fail to achieve.

This emphasis on practical artistry is something Julia believes drama teachers need far more than they need theory. She considers it is vital for drama teachers to be imaginative and responsive, to "think outside the square" and "have a go". Risk-taking qualities such as these are a key feature of artistic practice. Drama teachers participating in McCammon, O'Farrell, Sæbø, and Heap's (2010) research also perceived these qualities to be essential to teaching creativity and to teaching creatively. There is a tangible amount of risk-taking in the work of the teachers in this study, especially for those presenting devised work or large-scale productions to their communities. James' work provides a convincing example of this. He

devises work collaboratively with children for public performance, modelling creativity, exploration, and innovation within drama. The risk is palpable:

*This play that I am doing at the moment, I've never done one like this. I'm nervous about it. I'm anxious, I don't really know if it's going to work or not, [I'm] thinking it might be a bit of a fizzer. James*

At the heart of this risk-taking is a high level of confidence in both the creative process and in his understandings of theatre practice and processes. James' work and his artistry could be seen to approach Schonmann's (2009) exhortation:

A theatre teacher's identity should be constantly deepening his or her experiences, finding a path between the closed and the open ways of teaching in a constant search to build new patterns. (p. 536)

James consoles himself with the understanding that, ultimately, the work is collaborative: "it just depends on what ... me and the children can make of it". Such statements reflect James' belief that children are capable of creating and performing complex and rich texts, and that they do so with real understanding of both meaning and form.

### **7.1.2 Artistic achievement and professional credibility**

A number of students participating in this study acknowledged the artistic achievements of their teachers. Phillip's students volunteered that it was "pretty cool" that Phillip had published scripts and been involved in devised work and movies. James' students recognise the artist in their teacher and his passionate disposition. James believes his passion for his subject and for the work it involves gives him strength as a teacher. Responses from his students support this. They perceived these qualities to be a departure from the teaching they were used to:

*When Mr D came to the school he brought creativeness because I think the school was a bit boring and plain and being neat. But when Mr D came he brought this whole new attitude thing.*

(Student Interview: Year 7-8 Ja)

Another student recalled James' arrival at the school and the contrast in approach he had when compared with her previous teachers. She remarked plainly (but respectfully) to James about the unusual, "out-there things" he did to engage students:

*I used to think it was silly and annoying but then I came to get something out of it because there's no point just sitting there ignoring what you were saying because it seemed a bit weird. I tried to understand what it actually means.*

(Student Interview: Year 7-8 Ja)

The above comment reveals the level of trust this student has in James, to be frank about her own experience and to assert her commitment to learning in his class. While these students experienced James' teaching style as unconventional, they also found his lessons compelling. Artistic modelling and leadership also impact the perceptions and increase the status students afford Drama. This is frequently as a result of their interactions with professional theatre artists. David explains:

*I employed [a professional theatre practitioner] to come in and do some work on character development and motivation leading up to Foreskin's Lament and that was great [professional development] for me and just amazing for the guys as well. ... interacting with people like that – [the students go home] and sit down and see him on an ad on TV or watch Aramoana "Out of the Blue," and there he is. I mean that's pretty iconic.*

**David**

Certainly, the New Zealand Ministry of Education's *Arts Strategy 2006-2008* recognises the importance on ongoing engagement with artistic communities, stating:

Quality arts education tends to be characterised by a strong partnership between schools and outside arts and community organisations.  
(Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 11)

David believes seeing professional theatre and being exposed to this level of artistry are some of the most important experiences his drama students can have. He maintains that such experiences contribute significantly to the development of students' artistic-aesthetic understandings, to their appreciation of drama as an art form and to their awareness of the possibilities Drama (as a subject) can offer them. Phillip, working within a very different school context, notes that not every student arrives with cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in drama, and therefore school-based experiences become even more important:

*Most of our pupils have literacy issues and are not exposed to aesthetic experiences as much perhaps as students from more European-based backgrounds. Phillip*

Phillip talks of building "theatre literacy" in his students – that is, the ability to decode and use the signing system found in theatre – much of which draws on cultural forms and involves intertextuality. Students who have not had exposure to theatre or the literary forms theatre often draws on (such as fables, fairy tales, or pantomime) face greater challenges when they attempt to engage with the semiotics of theatre.

The modelling of artistic expertise, creativity and life-long learning is something participants see as integral to the role of a drama teacher. The artistic-aesthetic understandings teachers gained from their personal arts practice informs, not only their subject knowledge, but also their pedagogical practice in the classroom. Four distinct areas emerged from the participants' accounts, which connect artistic practice to pedagogical choices in their drama teaching. These include the teacher working in role, utilising the power of tension to engage students, keeping students in the 'creative flow', and allowing for creative space.

### **7.1.3 Willingness to work in role**

*Perhaps the most effective thing I find I can do in drama (which always gets a great response from students and from which they say they learn very quickly) is variations of teacher-in-role. David*



One of the more creative pedagogies a drama teacher has to draw on is the ability to work in role and to facilitate learning experiences from within fictional contexts. There has been much theorising of this strategy by drama education theorists, including work by Heathcote, Johnson, and O'Neil (1984), Morgan and Saxton (1987), Bolton (1998), and more recently, V. Aitken et al. (2007). Participants stressed the importance of working in role as the drama teacher – whether it be interacting in role with students in structured improvisations or modelling activities in role. Work in role by the teacher may be the catalyst for process-based drama work through which students explore events and issues in role or it may function as a means of permission-giving, encouraging students to take risks in performance work.

Aroha says she would not ask anything of the students that she was not willing to demonstrate herself. Similarly, David believes work in role not only serves to model expectations of given tasks but is also a way of communicating professionalism:

*Drama teachers MUST be able to step out of their comfort zone in front of students, which means they have to feel safe in front of [the students] too ... to gain professional credibility with students. **David***

Playfulness is introduced when the teacher works in role, and this is highly engaging for students. Students valued this aspect of David's teaching, including 'teacher modelling' and 'participation in role' as part of their advice to new drama teachers.

The extent to which these teachers utilised the convention of teacher-in-role was dependent on time and their intentions for their students' learning. Julia and Grace have extensively used teacher-in-role over their drama teaching careers. However, Julia finds her current NCEA programme does not allow her time to work in role as much as she would like and Grace does not draw upon teacher-in-role drama processes as much in her school context as she did when working in a South African context.

#### **7.1.4 Keeping in the creative flow**

Another feature of teacher artistry identified by participants concerns the need to have an understanding of creative processes and the ability to create conditions in the classroom that foster this. For instance, Julia emphasised several times during our interview that her approach to teaching the theoretical dimensions of drama is to try to integrate it into the practical drama work.

*Along the way I'm throwing in bits of theory, Brecht, Stanislavski, all that kind of thing, if it fits in with what we are doing. That's how we do it, you know? ... I'm trying to get away from: "right it's June, we have to start Brecht now".* **Julia**

This approach to addressing theory aims to keep students immersed in the creative flow – a notion explored by Csikszentmihalyi (1990). Csikszentmihalyi identifies *flow* as a state of consciousness creative people engage in; a state characterised by a high level of focus, which is effortless and automatic. Julia's decisions about how and when to introduce theory to her students are made with the goal of serving the creative work in which they are engaged. McCammon et al. (2010) describe the ability to move between playfulness and hard work as a characteristic of creative people and it is perhaps this dialectic that Julia is addressing. She emphasises that her approach to teaching students about dramatic elements, conventions and techniques (factual/technical knowledge about drama) is not to provide students with a deconstructed account of these structures but to work imaginatively with them, using a story context with the practical intention of developing the drama work. Julia emphasises the need for students to first *experience* the conceptual/theoretical aspects they will later deconstruct. She says:

*Generally the first piece of work I do works with drama techniques, although I don't say to them we are going to work on drama techniques but that is the reason we do what we do.* **Julia**

Thus knowing is applied and responsive to the creative process students are engaged with. While she wants students to be able to use and understand the theoretical language of drama, Julia wants the focus to be on the practice of drama

and to keep the imaginative, dynamic dimension of drama work alive in her classroom.

Related to this notion of keeping the creative flow is the issue of ownership – the need to be serving the emergence of the students’ creative work rather than imposing the learning intentions of the teacher on the work. Accordingly, Julia works outward from the emerging creative work into the theory and techniques that will serve the work.

*So it's not something I say, "right we have to learn these techniques and this is how we are doing it". It's more, "think of a story, you know this story so well – if we were to look at it from a different perspective ..." and get them using their imagination, putting themselves in other people's bodies which is what drama is all about essentially, isn't it? **Julia***

This strategy aims to reduce potential alienation of students by imposing prescribed content based on outside agendas. Acquisition-based strategies, while appropriate for teaching technical knowledge, can disrupt the creative processes that are essential for learning and achievement within the drama classroom. These examples reflect the challenges drama teachers face in covering the range of knowledge required by the subject and its assessment. Creativity takes time and immersion (Fiske, 1999).

#### **7.1.5 Utilising the power of tension to engage students**

Tension is a key element in drama and a central feature of aesthetic engagement (Bundy, 2005; O'Toole, 1992). O'Toole (1992) discusses the nature of dramatic tension and cites a drama advisor as saying, "Tension is the spring of drama. Not the action, it is what impels the action" (p. 133). Sources of dramatic tension include the tension of mystery, of surprise, tension in relationships, tension of the tasks characters must complete and the tension of intimacy between characters (Bundy, 1999; O'Toole, 1992). While the focus of O'Toole's discussion concerns the teacher's use of tension to sustain fictional worlds created in the drama classroom, accounts of practice from participants suggest they also utilise tension

as a pedagogical tool in the construction and delivery of lessons. In this way they aim to increase the aesthetic impact of lessons and student engagement.

The teaching strategies Aroha shares reveal her frequent use of tension as a pedagogical device. She maintains that you don't have to "reveal all" to students, rather it can be effective to have them wonder where a lesson is going, in a similar way to a writer holding an audience's interest in a story.

*Sometimes they don't know where I am heading but then I'll tie it all up for them. So they'll go – "Oh!" And they'll remember that activity because they were really engaged with it, because there was a bit of anticipation about "where is she going with this – she's doing something with us ... doing something unusual".* **Aroha**

Aroha believes one of the outcomes of her years of experience in drama teaching has been developing strength in student engagement. This approach is supported by Ewing and Simons (2004), who agree that tension is needed within the dramatic worlds students enter but also within the classroom learning experience.

Tension produces the excitement of 'the edge,' which engages learners both intellectually and emotionally, and motivated them to become involved in the drama activity. (Ewing & Simons, 2004, p. 10)

Aroha approaches potentially "dry" content in varied ways to keep students engaged. For instance, she often creates a sense of competition (tension of the task) for students to drive their discovery when researching, or she devises ways to present 'knowledge about drama' content through performance challenges. She adds that it helps if she maintains a high level of enthusiasm herself. Aroha's students commented on this dimension of her practice and the way this encourages a second level of analysis from them through the experience. One student explained:

*Mrs X does this weird-as stuff. One day we went in and all the lights were down and this music was playing and she was turning it up and down.*

*And all the time you have to think – “what the heck is she doing! What are we learning?” So you have to think about it and instead of writing notes and being given the answers, you have to make your own conclusions.*

(Student Interview: Year 13 Ar)

Aroha’s use of tension stirs the affective dimension in her students – a mode of engagement central to artistic-aesthetic knowing (Eisner, 1985). Discovery and curiosity are closely connected to the tensions of mystery and surprise – and all serve to engage students. Studies have found that when teachers adopted language that emphasised discovery and curiosity (even their own curiosity – “I want to see how well you can do ...”), a shift in emphasis happened for the whole group. Task completion and *doing* work became less of a focus. Instead there was more valuing of *learning* (G. Aitken & Sinnema, 2008; Sewell, 2006). By engaging students experientially and aesthetically, Aroha also develops their criticality in viewing and creating performance work.

*Yeah coz it’s kinda like you are the audience for a while. Because the audience comes in and they don’t know what to expect, so it’s like that for you. It gives you an example of what you have to create.*

(Student Interview: Year 13 Ar)

These methods of enhancing student engagement form part of the artistry of Aroha’s teaching.

James is also aware of the impact tension can have in a drama lesson. He believes there is a risk of children disengaging when the outcomes of the learning experience are stated at the beginning because the end is then known, prescribed and teacher-driven. This, he sees as countering the characteristics of curiosity and emergent discovery that fuel the collaboration/co-construction that is central to his aesthetic approach.

As discussed in *Chapter Six: Focus*, James resists using learning outcomes that are “too rational and explicit”. He prefers learning to be more intrinsic, so terminology

and theoretical concepts might not be introduced directly (as highlighted in the previous *Section 7.1.4*). James chooses to provoke curiosity and a sense of wonder in order to move students into imagined worlds, rather than reducing the learning experience down to known (and measurable) outcomes stated before learning has begun. James believes that such practices can lead to delivery that is routine and consequently less engaging. He enjoys using “running plans”, improvising as he goes. This is a process he describes as “convivial and infectious” for children. He believes that children are able to identify what it is they are learning:

*My experience is when you immerse children in social interactions channelled by the [dramatic] conventions, and in an aesthetic experience that does not have a given text or process format, the students work out why they are learning and which skills and strategies they need to focus on as they go. James*

Support for James’ position on improvisation and the careful handling of achievement objectives comes from Pike (2004), who says:

Teaching which is less explicit and more aesthetic invites participation on the part of the learner because (like the work of art rather than the diagram) gaps are left that only learners can fill. Aesthetic teaching is not, therefore, dominated by a concern to implement aims and objectives or to transmit knowledge in the formal didactic sense; it involves leading the way into a tradition or a way of working and a culture where personal growth is fostered. (p. 25)

Eisner (2002b, pp. 155-156) also sees teaching as “a form of human action in which many of the ends achieved are emergent” and found as a consequence of interaction with students. Accordingly, aesthetic learning arises from the creative projects that students undertake and there is a sense of the learning unfolding as the performance work progresses.

### **7.1.6 Allowing creative space**

Approaching a lesson with less prescription also creates spaces for creative possibilities to emerge. Phillip believes an effective drama teacher is attentive to the learning environment and able to change the direction of the lesson in the moment, if required. He explains that the openness of the imagination, combined with the openness of the physical teaching space (often a large space without desks), allows teachers flexibility and scope in their approach to lesson content. He selects a metaphor to illustrate this dimension of teaching artistry, likening the drama teacher to “a conductor of a large orchestra”:

*There are many choices, angles and strategies available and the key to the teacher’s effectiveness is which section do they select and play with? If a drama teacher is a good listener then one lesson may have a number of tonal shifts and comprise of a number of movements. Phillip*

This metaphor emphasises the responsiveness of the teacher and the emotional, physical and thematic ‘rhythms’ they may create with the students in a lesson. Sawyer (2004, p. 12) offers the view that creative teaching is improvisational performance: a metaphor that also captures the “emergent and collaborative nature of classroom practice”. Although the metaphor ‘teacher as performer’ has been used extensively in teacher education, this has often been used to describe spirited delivery of ‘scripted’ instruction and fails to capture this responsive dimension. Sawyer’s metaphor is more closely aligned with the constructivist practice of drama educationalists. Hansen (2005) also defines creative teaching as the result of responsiveness, rather than inventiveness:

*Creativity as responsiveness denotes a form of openness to the setting, which may or may not complement or fit harmoniously with what is preset, prefigured, or anticipated. (p. 58)*

The notion of allowing space within teaching plans is also conducive to creative work because of the need to allow time for gestation. In a sense, allowing time for gestation can also be seen as responsiveness: responsiveness to creative ideas that

are emerging for students on both conscious and unconscious levels (Fisher, 2004).

James explains that his improvised approach to lessons enables a shared aesthetic to develop over time – one that centres on exploration of the real world through fictional worlds:

*I think this improvising is a great form of modelling; it's convivial and infectious. We are also our own audience and develop our own codes and rituals. This world expands into a fictional community of people who've had similar thoughts and experiences. The process is bigger than any one performance and from what the students tell me much later, it resonates.*

**James**

Hansen (2005) goes further to suggest that this kind of work – the work that involves making meaning of the world with children through art-making – permeates through to a life of meaning for *the teacher*.

If new teachers deepen their ability to pay attention and to engage in creative work, they position themselves to receive one of teaching's primary offerings to its practitioners, namely, a life of meaning. (Hansen, 2005, p. 58)

Such artistry aligns with what Greenwood (2006) defines as the scholarship of teaching, reflecting the 'complex clusters' of knowledge, both conscious and unconscious, that underpin teaching decisions. She states:

The integration of the knowledge, the scholarliness, is craft based: it is interdependent with practice. It is shaped by interactions of teaching. It involves minute successive discoveries, evaluations, decisions. It is often characterised by co-discovery. As it builds on existing knowledge, it also engages in the formulation of new knowledge, for further sharing. (p. 8)



Helen Timperley (2008, p. 6) states that these “moment-by-moment decisions about lesson content and process” are shaped by multiple factors such as teacher knowledge, beliefs about what is important to teach and how students learn. Drama teachers require considerable ‘buy-in’ from students, and their responsiveness to what is happening in the group and awareness of whether creative work has ‘traction’ informs their moment-by-moment decisions.

The accounts of teaching practice offered in *Chapter Five: Dramatic action* could be read as linear or prescribed, but any reading needs to be couched with the understanding that plans could be abandoned or changed along the way in response to the students and context. Neelands (2001) identifies this as the dialectic between the planned and the lived:

The artistry of teachers occurs significantly in the dialectic between the planned and the lived. This is what many people do not understand. That what we do every day is to mediate the plan with the lived experience of kids coming to our classrooms through thousands and thousands of little interactions. We have a responsibility, which we take seriously, for delivering a curriculum, but we do it in ways which are sensitive to the population of kids who sit in front of us in the classroom. (p. 16)

## 7.2 Sharing status: the drama teacher as a co-artist

*7.2.1 Being led by students' curiosity and discoveries*

*7.2.2 Negotiation and ownership*

*7.2.3 Developing the 'outside eye'*

*7.2.4 Students as leaders*

The accounts of practice in this study indicate these drama teachers emphasise a student-centred approach to learning in drama, and the roles and strategies they employ reflect this. Research into the relationship between creative teaching and teaching for creativity suggests that creative teachers use creative means in their teaching situations. In doing so, they allow students to be creative and/or to learn more about creativity. Student creativity was positively impacted provided the students had ownership and control of their learning, saw the work as relevant, and played an active part in determining what that learning would be (Craft, 2005; Jeffrey & Craft, 2004; Jeffrey & Woods, 1997; Jeffrey & Woods, 2003). Participant accounts of pedagogical practice in this study also reflect such findings. Thus the role of the drama teacher as an artist is complemented by the role of co-artist.

Haseman (2002) describes the drama teacher as being 'leaderly' – that is, the work is not explicitly teacher-driven but is also not without a leader. Leadership is provided by the drama teacher's choices to structure and scaffold the dramatic learning experience. These choices may include times of leading from the front, times when teachers work in and out of role, and times when they direct students to reflect on the action (Anderson, 2004b). Holland and O'Connor (2004) found that arts teachers often took the role of co-artist. Similarly, in an exploration of two case studies in drama and dance, authors Deans, O'Toole, Raphael, and Young (2009, p. 166) identify aspects of the teacher's role in the learning process as 'facilitator', 'questioner', as 'participant and sharer' – all of which could be seen to be facets of the co-artist role.

In order to develop an effective community of practice, drama teachers in this study share power with students so that they might come to develop their own sense of identity and agency as artists.

The drama contexts, in which teacher and students work as co-artists, are varied. Power in this instance concerns the choice of content and artistic decisions. For the secondary teachers in this study, the opportunities for co-artistry happened within the performance of play texts or within devising contexts. On occasion devising may involve the whole class but more frequently occurred in small group contexts. James and the Drama Club were an exception to this, as they tend to collaborate on whole group projects in devised theatre, developing original scripts and on performances of play texts. These dramatic contexts allow varying levels of involvement for the teacher and students. Despite the variation of involvement, the teacher can be seen as always operating as a co-artist on some level, whether they are providing feedback on work, teaching artistic-aesthetic processes and content, or scaffolding and structuring student work.

Several emergent themes reveal how participants facilitate this co-artistry. These themes fall into three broad areas:

1. They design work that will arouse student interest and allow space for students to pursue the stories and themes that have captured their imagination.
2. They negotiate with students around the content and artistic-aesthetic decisions made.
3. They train students to be able to view their work from both performer and audience perspectives through structured reflection, questioning and personal response processes.

*Section 7.1.7* addressed the practice of allowing space within lesson plans for the teacher to make different choices, to abandon plans or take new turns in response to how the lesson was playing out. Allowing creative space is also closely related to the pedagogy drama teachers practice in their role of co-artist, when the creative space is given over to the students so they have input into the learning

experience. The first two themes presented here – 7.2.1 *Being led by students' curiosity and discoveries* and 7.2.2 *Negotiation and ownership*, address this dimension of co-artistry in the practice of participants.

### **7.2.1 Being led by students' curiosity and discoveries**

*I think one of the chief virtues of drama is the pleasure children take in it.*

**James**

As indicated in *Chapter Five: Dramatic action*, each participant in this study designs drama tasks in a variety of dramatic contexts (including devising or research tasks) that allow students to explore stories and/or themes they are interested in. In order to allow students to be spurred on by their own interest and curiosity, Grace's teaching programme offers students a wide range of choices in both their focus of study and in the aspects of work they wish to have assessed. In this way, there is room for greater ownership and engagement with the work. V. Aitken et al. (2007) explore the connections between drama teaching and relational pedagogy, arguing that allowing spaces for children to determine "where the learning *may go* rather than teachers determining where it *will go*" enables children to "participate more fully and actively construct knowledge through engagement with their teachers, their peers and the real and imagined words of drama" (p. 16).

Julia's approach to drama teaching involves setting up pretexts and dramatic worlds for students to explore and run with. As part of allowing creative space, Julia explains that she takes the role of facilitator, though at times will lead in order to model or inform students so they can explore these new ideas and lead the exploration themselves. In her work with juniors, Julia will intentionally design lessons that allow students to take ownership of the creative work emerging:

*They are the ones that decide which direction to take things in and often that is what happens, it doesn't matter how well I have planned, what I have planned to happen in this sequence of lessons, the students may take it in a totally different direction and that is great. **Julia***

In this way, Julia's artistry manifests as the ability to design and facilitate learning experiences that enable her to work alongside students as a co-artist. Julia's students expressed appreciation for the openness of her practice in their interview. They recognised and valued the space she provides for them to make their own discoveries. One student noted that Julia didn't interrupt, allowing time for ideas to form and firm up before she made suggestions. They saw this as her allowing them to learn for themselves:

*Yeah she waits until we have something we are happy with. And then she says, "oh how about you guys do this" or "just try this and see how it goes", kinda thing and she waits for us to learn it, not just tell us.*

*She lets you do the thinking and you learn and it's easier to remember if you discover.*

(Student Interview: Year 11 Ju)

According to Julia's students, this provision of intellectual space includes giving time to master skills and techniques, and allowing time for all students to form understandings before moving on to new content.

Closely related to this notion of engaging student curiosity is the principle of designing learning experiences that allow for and encourage student discovery. An example of this socio-cultural approach to learning in drama was evident in the teacher observation of David. David initially provided a frame for the practical work by recapping on prior learning, making connections between the work and the theoretical concepts but allowing room for student discovery. The student exploration was still scaffolded however, with David alerting students to what he wanted them to notice and discuss after they had experienced the practical exercises. Structure was also given to groups who needed to collaborate initially. After giving task instructions, David identified and reiterated the three key decisions that groups needed to negotiate before they could effectively undertake the practical task. The purpose of the practical work was made clear to students who were later able to articulate this for themselves. Students acknowledged the

experiential nature of this approach to learning and the difference between this and their learning in other subjects:

*In some other subjects you just listen and write down notes; you don't practice what you want to do. But here you get taught and you also get to perform it as well. And you get the connection.*

*Like in maths they give you formulas and to work out a certain question you have to use them. But in drama you get formulas for drama overall and you can use whichever ones you want.*

(Student interview: Year 12 Da)

### **7.2.2 Negotiation and ownership**

While drama work is often based within small-group contexts where it is clearly driven by students, at times drama teachers undertake projects that are more co-collaborative and involve the whole group. Having gained student interest and buy-in, drama teachers in this study encouraged students to negotiate with them over content and artistic-aesthetic decisions that may occur within the drama classroom.

Allowing increased ownership of creative work is a way Aroha facilitates a high level of engagement. This is particularly evident in the devised and improvisational aspects of her programme, where Aroha perceives students make a bigger investment and care more about the quality of the work during the process and the end product (if there is one). Aroha encourages ongoing student input into these whole-class projects by inviting students to offer ideas in class discussion, acting on these ideas and allowing students to submit ideas on paper should they have further ideas outside the class time.

James often works in this way with his Year 7-8 students and he places significant emphasis on the students having ownership of this work. In fact, he identifies the shift in ownership of the learning from teacher-driven to student-driven as an indicator of success. With this shift in ownership comes a greater commitment

from students, the development of a “shared sense of purpose” and later, understanding:

*An unmistakable seriousness often unfolds out of this purpose; the students develop a group identity that is quite distinctive to each project; this allows for devolved, fluid roles for me. This sense of ‘us’ means we are in business. **James***

During the classroom observation, a number of decisions concerning the dramatic treatment of the devised script were made. James often made initial offers, framed as an experiment or trial. After these ‘offers’ were explored, the merits were debated with the whole group. Students were confident enough to offer suggestions, at times reminding James of this and that – showing they were cognizant of the wider dramatic context, the audience experience and the world of the play. James describes his approach as distinctly student-centred within the primary school context.

*My job becomes more interesting in that I am less and less the enforcer (except when the heat goes on in rehearsals and I’m acting as the director). So drama is effective because you can use its social and aesthetic language and elements to bring about that shift away from the teacher towards a learning community. **James***

As part of undertaking the role of co-artist, Aroha believes that drama teachers need to be open to the potential artistry students are capable of:

*You need to develop a spirit of curiosity yourself, that it’s possible that students will find a way to make something work and it may not be the way you would have done it. **Aroha***

There is considerable negotiation over the content and focus of drama work, particularly with the Drama Club where performance texts are negotiated and co-constructed with the children. An example of this power-sharing is seen in the

work of the Drama Club where roles are auditioned for and the audition panel includes children.

*Some parents don't like that because they are very competitive about who gets into the plays. But I deny that and say in all drama there are different levels of collaboration as well. We've started making up the play together so why wouldn't I involve the children in the audition process as well? I make the decision, but they're giving me their ideas and they often disagree with me. **James***

Research into teacher-student collaborative approaches to drama work has found experienced teachers were more likely to employ these strategies than beginning teachers. Matusov and Rogoff (2002) found that the more experienced teachers and adult helpers were when working in drama, the more likely they were to work cooperatively with children. Baker-Sennett, Matusov, and Rogoff (2008) cite Patt and Göncü (2001) and Seaman (2001), who found beginning teachers were initially concerned about managing behaviour and engineering products and needed to learn how to trust and guide student involvement. Baker-Sennett et al. (2008) explored adult- and child-directed planning of plays and emphasise the challenge for teachers, along with the benefits to student identity and sense of agency, when plans were kept open. While the previous exploration of the role of artist revealed the use of flexible lesson plans to allow greater responsiveness by the teacher, this strategy also enables co-artistry to occur.

Participants agree that there are limits to this collaborative approach. Several participants experience times in the process of theatre-making when it is no longer possible to engage in a collaborative process and they take a more directive role. The edges of the democratic process were often found when time constraints and public performance pressure loomed. At these times there is an increased need for a leader to make firm decisions and give a clear structure in order to complete the project. James commented:

*But every now and then I'll just be like every other teacher and I'll have a point I want to get across and I'm sick and tired of something or I haven't*



*got enough time and I'll be much more directive because there's something I want to achieve. I've been doing this play, now we've got three rehearsals from whoa to go – how the heck are we going to do that? So I'll have to be bossy, you know? That's the way it is. James*

As James alludes, tensions may also arise when the artistic-aesthetic know-how and experience of the teacher counters that of students, particularly when the drama work is of higher stakes – such as in public performance contexts. He maintains there is a misconception that you have to do what children immediately think of in order to give children ownership. An example of this comes from negotiations over the design aspects in the performance of *King Lear*:

*You know I had a big revolt in my class about Shakespeare because all the other classes were in Renaissance costumes and we just did ours in black suits. ... And the kids thought that was boring. James*

Rather than choosing to go with the children's idea, something that would impact the artistic-aesthetic nature of the work, James draws on his own artistic expertise and explains to the students the reasons for his decision:

*I said, "Well I want to emphasise the emotions; it's about expressing the feeling in the play and it's hard enough for you to be an adult already and then to be in an Elizabethan outfit ... we didn't even know what they were like. You just look like a whole lot of little kids running around the stage in dress ups, there wouldn't be any dignity. Whereas you can understand a father's rage towards his child. You can understand all of those things, can't you?" James*

Interestingly, James' explanation to his students gives their creative work more status and reveals the high expectations he has about what they are capable of achieving. Sharing power and offering choices can present challenges due to the increased opportunity for conflicting viewpoints. These examples emphasise that, whilst James employs a student-centred approach, this does not mean abdicating his position of authority completely. While the drama teacher may share power,

they are still central to the learning event taking place. O'Neil and Lambert (1982) state:

It is the teacher, working with the pupils within the drama, who will build on the pupils' ideas and make a bridge between their own experience of the world and the meaning of the drama, so that both insight and understanding arise from the activity. (p. 10)

Accordingly, James guides his students to explore new ideas and encourages them to take artistic-aesthetic risks. In this instance, he decided to persist with something he knew would work (in an artistic-aesthetic sense) while realising his students may not understand this until they experienced it.

*The trouble is you can't say that at the beginning. The reason for your decision will come later on and they'll understand. But sometimes you do have to enforce it at the beginning. And that can cause trouble. **James***

James maintains that sometimes he has to take a stance and then manage the interpersonal 'fallout':

*The way to give them ownership [in this instance] wasn't to give them any choice but was to lead them to come to understand it by doing it. So sometimes it's not so much about choice but it's about handling the process right. **James***

Students discussed the impact of James' approach to the classroom with him during my interview. Their comments reveal the shift in teacher-student roles they experienced:

*When Mr B came to the school he brought creativeness because I think the school was a bit boring and plain and 'being neat'. But when Mr B came he brought this whole new attitude thing.*

*I used to have teachers that would tell me what to do so when Mr B wouldn't tell me what to do, I'd get really scared that I'd do it wrong and I used to ask him all the time ...*

*Mr B doesn't actually paint the picture; he gives us the paint.*

(Student Interview: Year 7-8 Ja)

Comments from students, when asked about advice they might offer to beginning drama teachers, also reflect the impact of James' strong emphasis on collaboration and student understandings about how their input contributes to aesthetic achievement:

*Let the children contribute their ideas and combine them together. Don't just write a script by yourself because it won't have any feeling if the children don't have any input in it. And they won't act it as well because it's just like something the teacher wrote and s/he telling me just to perform it. So I think it's got to have feeling and the children's ideas in it.*

(Student Interview: Year 7-8 Ja)

Another student commented:

*Be nice. Be open to different people's opinions, cause at first it might not seem right but underneath it, it's probably got something good and worth listening to. And if children make mistakes and stuff, don't get angry at them and say, "You just can't do this". You need to work on it with them ... just be patient.*

(Student Interview: Year 7-8 Ja)

The interview also revealed the influence of the co-artist relationship James had developed with students. Because James has guided them to new discoveries, the students were more willing to stay open and to follow his lead:

*They've got this new thing (which is also a nice kind of cognitive thing) of saying, "but we are going to wait till we decide because that's what we've*

*been taught to do – we are not going to judge that this is rubbish, we are going to wait to see what happens and how it works out”. James*

David explains that there are limits to the amount of collaboration he can afford due to time pressure, particularly when undertaking class productions, although he does work to make the process transparent to students and to use that as a learning opportunity.

*Sometimes, they’ll say to me, “Sir, why’s that there?” and I’ll say, “Okay – where do you think it should be?” And sometimes I’ll say, “yes, yes, good, let’s try that” or I’ll say “no, because we’ve got to do this and this” ... as long as they know where you are going and what you are trying to achieve. David*

Allowing students this kind of power and ownership is a reflection of the level of trust that has developed between teacher and student. Even when he has had to drive decisions, David believes that there is room for these to become learning opportunities for students. Students acknowledged the difference between this approach (where the teacher provided guidelines rather than rules) and their learning experience in other subjects:

*There’s a lot more freedom and independence involved. Mr C gives us a lot of opportunities to express ourselves and use our skills and to think about it on our own instead of being told what to do.*

(Student interview: Year 12 Da)

Ultimately, the philosophy drama teachers’ hold drives them to utilise these challenging relational pedagogies. James’ description of his work reveals it is his desire to empower students that leads him to undertake these collaborative, co-constructed artistic-aesthetic experiences in drama.

*The thing that I really like doing is that thing in drama where you start with nothing and at the end you’ve got something. You’ve got this thing that just exists for a moment and it’s made up of all these qualities that*

*are all language – you know, gesture and light and words and the children have this amazing sense that they've done something together which they couldn't possibly have done on their own. James*

Despite the ephemeral nature of these artistic creations, the experience of being part of this learning community is something more enduring:

*And by being in that, they have this sense that they have more power than they ever knew they had or possibly could have, and it was to do with them and it was also to do with us. You know? And it's not just drama, it's something else as well – it's something bigger than drama. James*

This vision of the possibilities that arise from acts of co-creation in drama are perhaps also echoed by theatre practitioner, Augusto Boal (1992), who says:

Life is expansive, it expands inside our own body, growing and developing, and it also expands in territory, physical and psychological, discovering space, forms, ideas, meanings, sensations – this should be done as dialogue: receiving from others what others have created, giving them the best of our own creation. (p. 2)

### **7.2.3 Developing the 'outside eye'**

As discussed in *Chapter Five: Dramatic action*, an essential part of the artistic cycle is that of reflection. It is an area that provides further opportunities for the teacher to work as a co-artist. Aroha sees her role is that of a 'guide' and an "outside eye" when facilitating creative drama work. She provides guidance in the form of structure and base skills/knowledge, in order for students to create their own original work, and then gives feedback on the creative work they generate – exploring artistic decisions, their impact and intention. In this way she is building theoretical and artistic understandings through the reflective processes of personal response and deconstruction of product and process – that is the "outside eye".

*I would call myself an Outside Eye. So I'm the one standing outside saying, "That has real potential, that idea, you should probably think about exploring that some more". So rather than solve the problem for them, present the problem to them and then let them work on it some more.*

**Aroha**

In this reflective practice, she works alongside students to increase their awareness of the artistic-aesthetic dimensions of their drama work and the work of others. Aroha believes that the modelling of this kind of critical inquiry into drama work is important in order for students to develop their own capacity to question and refine drama work:

*It also teaches the students the language of outside eye. It's always very cool when you hear them doing the same for each other within the group.*

**Aroha**

Although David doesn't use the same term as Aroha, he functions in a similar way, teaching students to keep their ideas clear and focused, to question and critique their work against the intentions they have for it:

*This has made their devised product much more sophisticated. If they first establish their dramatic intentions then everything they do must be measured against it; if something's not working they must adapt it to the dramatic intentions or change their dramatic intentions. When students understand this process, it seems to take away some of the grey for them.*

**David**

Graham Nuthall (2002) explains that part of the role of the teacher in social constructivist teaching is to:

avoid providing students with knowledge of solutions when it is possible for them to work it out for themselves ... the student role is not just to give answers but to express genuine beliefs or make serious claims and to support them with evidence or reasons. (p. 48)

Such aims reflect a desire to develop criticality in students. Participants use reflective activities to encourage critical thinking on the part of students, to invite students to offer their own solutions and responses and to learn to trust their artistic-aesthetic knowing. Students practice self-reflection and also reflect on the work of others. During this reflective process, students move between the roles of audience member and performer/playwright, viewing work from these varying perspectives. When this dialogue occurs as part of formative or summative assessment processes, students have an active role in the assessment process (Schonmann, 2007) and this is appropriate given the student-centred pedagogies these teachers employ. Several participants extend on and encourage this development of criticality through the inclusion of theoretical understandings of theatre forms such as Brecht, Forum Theatre (Boal, 1992) and Artaud – forms which position the audience as active meaning-makers in the theatrical exchange. Accordingly, reflection does not only focus on critique of performance work, but also focuses on the processes students have engaged in, including group and peer feedback, and on the human issues brought to the fore through drama.

#### **7.2.4 Students as leaders**

The discussion of co-artistry found in the previous sections of this chapter reflects the development of a community of practice – where students negotiate ways of working, have a sense of agency over the work, and are increasingly able to critically reflect on this work. Eventually students progress to a level of mastery where they are able to work independently from the teacher. As part of this development process, participants encourage senior students to lead. In David's senior classes, students contribute to the learning process through their own modelling, undertaking of rituals (such as beginning with games), and in ownership of tasks – including offering feedback.

*We have seniors who are very happy to run things ... they'll go off and work with each other and they'll know that there is a part of something that is not right so they'll be in at lunchtime. ... They love critiquing each other and making suggestions to each other and saying "why did you do this and why did you do that". **David***

David sees that the experiences his drama students are having in the wider performing arts community within the school have had an impact of the processes students undertake in the Drama classroom. He provides an example around the independent undertaking of peer-instruction and critique in order to refine drama work:

*... and that's probably come across from the production side of things really, where we have a programme of understudies, and our principals have become so fantastic at teaching the understudies and spending time with the understudies and so that culture does seem to be spreading into the classrooms. **David***

David has seen positive results from allowing students to lead others, despite their lack of experience. This dimension of his practice indicates the height of trust in his students and in the experiential process of learning in drama:

*The prime example would be the young woman who started choreographing for us in the major production. She was a student (and was dancing and choreographing) and she got out of the kids ten times more than an adult choreographer has got out of them. That was fascinating. **David***

David also adds he has experienced “high-class” aesthetic outcomes from junior students as a result of their involvement in a junior production entirely written and directed by senior students. Although he cannot identify exactly why this works so well, David suspects there is something about working with peers who have high expectations, and seeing peers achieve these expectations, that is motivating.

*They just love it and they want to be doing it themselves now in the future. They are already saying, “jeez I want to be doing this”. I don't know. But kids seem to buy in to their peers doing things and I find that in class too. **David***



Fraser et al. (2004) found the use of peer-tutors was a feature in a number of Arts classrooms. Research into the impact of peer-teaching has found benefits for student engagement and social benefits for those who tutor. Goodlad and Hirst (1989) found peer-tutors improved in confidence and self-esteem. Morrison, Burton, and O'Toole (2006) suggest that the peer-teaching context can also provide disaffected students with a voice and a greater sense of agency. Morrison et al. have developed peer-tutoring projects in drama aimed to re-engage disaffected learners and to encourage positive leadership from students. These authors make a strong connection between peer-teaching and the development of critical thinking skills, because peer tutors engaged in reflection and made connections between content, pedagogy and their students (Morrison, et al., 2006). Participants in the current study also utilise peer-tutoring, although in a less formal sense. They indicate this is a way to encourage students to find their voice and to lead others as part of developing their agency and their authority as 'knowers' and co-artists – and in this way, continue to develop as active participants in a community of learners.

In the role of the co-artist, these drama teachers create learning experiences that give considerable ownership to students. Providing content that engages students, that concerns students' own lives and informs their immediate contexts is seen as being an important dimension of their drama practice. Co-artistry also involves negotiating artistic decisions with students and encouraging criticality through building an awareness of personal aesthetic response and helping students to make connections between artistic decisions and intentions. This is not to suggest teachers abdicate leadership. Here, teachers lead through providing structure and boundaries that allow creative projects to be manageable. They lead by providing and extending on foundational understandings and experiences in drama, and they lead by framing questions that encourage students to find creative and aesthetic means to communicate through drama. Finally, they lead by framing dramatic explorations in a way that encourages students to know more about themselves and more about the issues faced by other groups in society.

## Chapter summary

This chapter has examined the pedagogy of participants through the lens of the roles of artist and co-artist. While a more traditional approach to education would have teachers espousing their own creative process and personal artistic interests and achievements, these teachers draw on their artistic-aesthetic understandings to serve their teaching of drama and utilise socio-cultural methods. Several participants believe that providing students with experiences of professional theatre, and sharing their own artistic practice within the school community has increased the status of their subject. Accordingly, they perceive students have increased confidence that engaging in Drama means engaging in learning that has value and is worthy of respect.

As explored in *Chapter Two, Sections 2.3.5 and 2.3.6*, creative teaching – in any discipline – has been conceptualised as “using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting and effective” while teaching *for* creativity is said to involve sharing power with learners and valuing learner agency (NACCCE, 1999, p. 89). It also includes encouraging inquiry and critical thinking, offering opportunity for learners to discuss thinking, and encouraging acts of creativity (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004). The distinction between creative teaching and teaching for creativity could apply to the roles of artist (creative teaching) and co-artist (teaching for creativity) although such a dichotomy doesn’t fall neatly.

In the classroom context, the artistry of the drama teacher becomes a means to engage and inspire students. Through creative task design, the ability to improvise and to create aesthetically-engaging teaching sequences, these teachers stimulate their students’ own artistic-aesthetic understandings. They affirm the use of imagination, and activate sensory and embodied knowing. Drawing on their own artistry, these participants pay close attention to the flow of the creative process within teaching sequences, and use the range of creative tools at their disposal to arouse students’ curiosity and engagement.

Despite contrasting creative teaching with teaching for creativity, the artist and co-artist roles of the drama teacher are fluid and inter-relational. Teachers move

between leading and allowing students to take the lead, adapting and being responsive to the rhythm of a lesson, as if trying to generate a spark they can nurture into a fire (Craft, 2005).

Co-artistry demands shared power and co-operation – and its success rests on a healthy relationship between teacher and students. Eisner (1974) points out that the belief behind initiatives such as the *American Artists in Schools* programme is that those who produce art are most able to teach art. However, in an article exploring how the programme might be evaluated, Eisner suggests that effective teaching may depend more on the personality and ability to form productive relationships with students than artistic skill does. He states:

One might conjecture that beyond a certain basic level of artistic skill, increments in skill makes little difference in teaching effectiveness; the individual's personality, his ability to establish rapport with students and teachers, is the significant factor. (1974, p. 22)

Furthermore, the collaborative nature of learning in drama requires greater social and emotional connection between students. The theme of relationships in the drama classroom was prominent in participant accounts and this dimension of their work is investigated more closely in the following chapter.



## Chapter Eight: Relationship in the drama classroom

### **8.1 Establishing community: trust and participation**

*8.1.1 The interpersonal dimension of the teacher-student relationship*

*8.1.2 Establishing values and ways of working*

*8.1.3 Content selection and task design*

### **8.2 Encouraging agency: expectations and accountability**

*8.2.1 Fostering achievement through high expectations*

*8.2.2 Fostering interpersonal accountability*

The previous chapter explored two dimensions of the drama teacher's role in the artistic-aesthetic learning process. The lenses of artist and co-artist provide insight into the ways participants facilitate learning and manage power in the Drama classroom. This examination of pedagogy captures something of the underlying craft of drama teaching – that is, the integration of knowledge into embodied practice. However, it does not address another vital dimension of their work: the social and emotional climate of the classroom. Because learning in drama is socially constructed and dialogic in nature, the relational, social and emotional climate of the classroom becomes highly significant. The ability to establish and maintain a positive, productive climate can determine the effectiveness of the drama teacher. In order to illuminate the relational dimension of participants' work, this chapter looks closely at relationships within the drama classroom. Presented here are the salient themes regarding the dispositions and relational practices participants consider pertinent to the development of a positive learning community.

### **8.1 Establishing community: trust and participation**

The concept of ensemble-based learning within theatre captures many principles and characteristics of an ideal social climate for the drama classroom. Neelands (2009) sees ensemble-based learning as the result of “the democratisation of

learning and artistic processes through high quality relationships for living and learning together” (p. 183). As stated in *Chapter Two, Section 2.3.3*, Neelands defines ensemble learning according to the following characteristics: the uncrowning of power of the director/teacher; a mutual respect amongst the players; a shared commitment to truth; a sense of the intrinsic value of theatre-making and a shared absorption in the artistic process of dialogic and social meaning making.

An analysis of participant accounts reveals these characteristics throughout their work, some of which have been addressed in previous chapters. Shared power, mutual respect, valuing truth, and dialogic and social meaning-making shape the kinds of relationships drama teachers have with their students and this impacts the quality of the learning environment. Teachers in this study see these relationships as vital to artistic-aesthetic achievement in Drama.

#### *Risk-taking in drama and the need for trust*

In discussions about their approach, each participant emphasised the importance of creating an effective relational dynamic in the classroom, stressing that this was the pedagogical starting point for their work. Julia articulates her goal as being one of bringing students to the point where they can fully participate in drama and make discoveries about themselves, their imagination and about the dramatic worlds they enter.

*[I’m] trying to foster the enthusiasm of young people – just getting them hooked on drama is something that I love doing, and storytelling.*

**Julia**

Participation in drama involves self-expression – in and out of role and frequently in front of an audience of peers. Therefore, there is a certain amount of psychological and emotional risk involved. Even adult drama students can find drama confronting – particularly due to drama’s embodied, performance-based nature, and its innovative and improvised forms. The risk for teenagers (who are negotiating the psychosocial challenges of adolescence) or for children (who are developing a sense of self) is surely much greater. Opportunities for critique are

increased and even encouraged in this setting. This may leave students open to negative judgments from teachers and peers. Neelands (2010) states:

The making of relationships in drama and in the professional ensemble often requires the taking of extraordinary risks for all involved. ... Young people must make themselves vulnerable and visible in order to participate and must know that there is protection and mutual respect for difference from within the group to match the personal and social challenges of taking a part in the action. (p. 140)

Thus, the risks in the drama classroom occur on the personal, interpersonal and artistic level. Aroha explains how the public nature of drama makes creating a sense of safety an important part of her drama practice:

*It's that rapport that needs even greater attention – you are asking these students to step up every day and put their work on display. I liken it to walking into Maths and the paper is all over the wall and they have to do all their working on that paper and anyone at any time can come take a look and see how well or badly it's going for you. Isn't that what we are asking students to do everyday? ... so we better take real good care of them. **Aroha***

Aroha believes that the level of safety students feel in the classroom environment impacts their ability to take the risks necessary to extend the artistic-aesthetic quality of their work.

*They are not going to take the risks with their work if they think someone is going to knock them back or put them down or not appreciate what they have done – or the effort it took to create and perform. **Aroha***

Risks in drama also arise from creative experimentation, the rejection of predictable forms and themes in favour of novel and innovative work, and from

deep engagement in role. Such risk-taking is therefore highly encouraged in the pursuit of artistic achievement.

### *Establishing a healthy learning community*

Research from educationalists outside arts education into creative, collaborative communities of practice indicates that certain values, dispositions and attitudes are essential to the healthy functioning of the community. Alton-Lee's (2003) research found several pedagogical practices fostered the development of caring, inclusive and cohesive communities. She refers to the concept of a learning community where learning is the central focus (not unlike Neelands' 'shared absorption' and 'intrinsic valuing'), and where there is interdependence between the social environment and academic achievement. As outlined in *Chapter Two, Section 2.3.4*, this research identified a number of pedagogical practices that positively impact learning communities in the classroom, a number of which are relational practices. These include caring and supportive teacher-student interactions, valuing and addressing diversity, utilising peer assistance, giving specific training in collaborative group work, and the use of mechanisms for student accountability (Alton-Lee, 2003).

A safe emotional/social environment was seen by participants to be essential in order to successfully facilitate creative collaboration and full participation amongst students in Drama. Participants referred to several areas of practice that assisted them to develop emotional safety and group cohesion. These include developing the interpersonal dimension of their relationships with students (see *Section 8.1.1*), establishing values and ways of working that are inclusive and encourage positive collaboration (see *Section 8.1.2*), and designing programmes and activities to build confidence and social awareness (see *Section 8.1.3*). These themes are now presented.

#### ***8.1.1 The interpersonal dimension of the teacher-student relationship***

When asked to describe her approach to drama teaching, establishing the teacher-student relationship and reinforcing the importance of participation and contribution was Grace's first focus. The creation of a trusting and productive



relationship with, and between, students was seen by participants in this study to be a vitally important task for the drama teacher wishing to create an effective environment for Drama. The significance of the teacher-student relationship to educational achievement has been well documented, and positive teacher-student relationship is often used as a measure of teacher effectiveness (Craft, 2000). Martin and Dowson (2009), who conducted an in-depth review of theory and research into interpersonal relationships, achievement and motivation, concluded that positive relationships with significant others were, “cornerstones of young people’s capacity to function effectively in social, affective, and academic domains” (p. 351).

Noddings (2005) writes that relationships with teachers can at times be more significant to students than those with their own parents. Whilst working to increase connection and share power with students, she emphasises the need for teachers to recognise this relationship is, ultimately, unequal; teachers hold power and responsibility beyond that of their students. V. Aitken et al. (2007) argue that in drama, spaces need to be negotiated by teachers and students in order to encourage “a sense of collaboration and mutual risk-taking and by permitting a new range of behavioural, expressive and social conventions to be explored” (p. 16).

When working with junior drama students, Aroha takes a firm approach and asserts herself as the leader. There are clear, non-negotiable boundaries and rules. She believes this helps to build trust in the students, who know she is in control and will keep them emotionally and physically safe. Due to the physical, expressive and collaborative nature of the work, Aroha explains that the drama classroom can feel chaotic for students at times. She maintains that students need to feel there is some order and safety within this.

In Aroha’s initial work she asserts herself as the authority and defines the boundaries for the learning community in a relatively traditional manner. However, in order to develop deeper connections with students and to facilitate the sharing of power that defines pedagogy in the Arts, Aroha moves beyond these

formal teacher/student roles – a pattern consistent across the participants. In this way, power begins to be negotiated, and teachers and students begin to see each other as individuals – rather than merely relating to the role each holds. In doing so, the ‘interpersonal’ dimension of the student-teacher relationship forms. Frymier and Houser (2000) explain:

When teachers communicate with students as individuals and utilize skills such as ego support, they make it easier for students to ask risky questions. Students avoid asking questions because they fear being seen as stupid or foolish. When a trusting and caring relationship develops between teachers and students, a safe learning environment is created. (p. 217)

Aroha acknowledges this interpersonal dimension when she stresses that drama teachers need to be prepared to be “in relationship” with students. She believes effective drama teachers are prepared to work at a deeper level of connection with and to students. Julia shares a similar realisation she had about the need for drama teachers to be prepared to fully engage with students when she was confronted with a new Media Studies teacher also employed to teach drama:

*She said, “I don’t know a thing about teaching drama. I don’t want to do it, I don’t like it and the thing I hate most is sitting down on the ground with students”. And I thought, “Oh! What am I going to do here?” What do you do with someone who can’t even sit on the ground with the students, can’t mix in with them ... doesn’t like touching people, you know?! That’s the biggest drawback of any drama teacher I’ve ever seen: somebody who cannot touch people. **Julia***

In Julia’s example, the Media Studies teacher was resistant to participating in a physical, spatial arrangement commonly employed by drama teachers precisely because it removes the physical (and psychological) barriers that traditional classrooms affirm. This teacher prefers to work from a safer distance – both physically and relationally. A willingness to engage in interpersonal relationships

with individual students is vital in order to establish the kind of trusting relationships required in the drama classroom – and this begins with the teacher.

### *Personal disclosure*

Phillip also believes that the rapport established by the teacher is of the utmost importance and is central to effective classroom management in Drama. He says, “I put a lot personally into my relationships with students. I try to strike up a rapport with them”. Phillip explains that he often develops a deeper connection with students through personal disclosure:

*I also try as part of the process [to share] anecdotes about my own past and childhood and I often do this because it helps to develop this sense that I am more than a schoolteacher. **Phillip***

Phillip’s personal disclosure is calculated and often occurs in the context of modelling the kind of sharing that students might engage in, such as when creating or understanding stories in drama. In doing so, Phillip creates a sense of immediacy in his relationship with students. Immediacy is defined as the perception of closeness (Richmond, Gorham, & McCroskey, 1987) and is a quality in trusting relationships.

### *Ego support*

Studies into communication skills have found that immediacy is created in the classroom when the teacher employs a range of communication skills, such as ego support, comforting, and narrative skill (Frymier & Houser, 2000). Ego support involves encouragement and affirmation of students’ skills and abilities (Burlinson & Samter, 1990), while narrative skill refers to the ability to entertain through jokes, stories and gossip (Frymier & Houser, 2000). Each of these communication skills feature in the accounts of pedagogical strategies participants employ as part of building a safe environment.

In reflecting on the strengths she has as a drama teacher, Julia identifies several dispositions that she believes are important in her work, such as having a sense of humour, being fair and impartial, and having a love for the work herself. Julia’s

account of her work provides several examples of ego-supportive communication and, although this was not a term she used, her comments reflect confidence in her ability to provide this kind of support to her students:

*One of the things I can do is take a student who's saying, "Hmpf, I'm not doing that" and actually working on them over time and getting them to that place where they are confident enough to give it a go in class. **Julia***

The work Julia refers to here concerns the building of a sense of safety and a sense of agency in the student through supportive interaction and connection. Accounts of the students' experience of the teacher-student relationship were also revealing. The advice students offered to new drama teachers strongly focused on behaviours and attitudes that increased emotional safety, enabled trust to develop between teacher and students and positively impacted the affective tone of the classroom. For example, students believed drama teachers needed confidence – including a willingness to work in role, enthusiasm, humour, openness, positivity and warmth. When asked what advice they would give to beginning drama teachers, students responded:

- *Always be positive and enthusiastic. And happy.*
- *Be confident and relate to your students.*
- *Let [students] do the work instead of you doing it for them.*

(Student Interview: Year 11 Ju)

- *Be enthusiastic. Don't be dull because that will make the class real boring.*
- *Join in in what we are doing. Like [Mr C] gives examples and actually acts out things.*

(Student Interview: Year 12 Dav)

- *Make [students] feel comfortable for what you are trying to teach them.*

- *Also have fun as well. [The teacher] can have fun too if they want too.*

(Student Interview: Year 10 Ph)

The above comments reveal that students value the mutuality of participation and enjoyment in the learning experience. James' Year 7-8 students also indicate they consider it important that drama teachers relate to students in a way that provides acceptance of students' own boundaries. Feeling accepted by teachers is associated with emotional, cognitive, and behavioural engagement in class (Connell & Wellborn, 1991). Their advice to new drama teachers reflects their (possibly intuitive) awareness that drama teachers need to provide ego-support for students engaging in drama. In particular, they encourage teachers to avoid embarrassing students:

*Don't put people on the spot if they really don't want to do it. Don't force them because if you force them to do something in the play, the play will be bad because they won't be acting as well. And if they don't want to do it, you can just help them to be more confident.*

(Student interview: Year 7-8 Ja)

When students were asked to give advice to new drama students, they identified a number of personal dispositions students should aspire to, along with ways of managing the emotional challenges of undertaking work in drama. Much of this advice also came in the form of ego-supportive statements. Advice from James' Year 7-8 students revealed the importance of self-belief and of making the most of the opportunities Drama afforded. They advised drama students to avoid embarrassment and "be yourself", "put yourself out there", and "just be who you are". They believed it was worse to be shy than to "give it 100%".

*If you are too shy you are not really showing yourself and what you can do and all the opportunities will pass if you just sit there and watch. Like you have to go for it or else you won't make much of the experience.*

(Student interview: Year 7-8 Ja)

These students also showed an awareness of the challenges of performance – the personal risk of being seen to be “wrong” and the pay-off of having the courage to persevere.

*Don't let other people's opinions put you down. Because it is right in a way, you don't actually know you are doing something – you don't actually know if it's right, but just keep thinking positive and you try again. Like, you keep trying. If you don't try you are not going to go anywhere.*

(Student interview: Year 7-8 Ja)

Such comments also reveal an awareness of the experiential nature of drama work and the need for audience response and feedback in order to discover more about what works and what does not work. There is an acceptance from these children that risks must be taken and in order to do so, there must be a willingness to endure failure from time to time.

#### *Warmth, humour and having fun*

Like the students above, Grace also emphasised the need for students to experience a sense of fun to nurture trust and openness in the drama classroom. One of the ways participants create this sense of fun is through the use of humour. For example, Grace's discipline strategies often involve a performance/creative dimension, such as insisting students invent and share an imaginative and original story as to why equipment was left behind. So, although the boundary is enforced, there is an aspect of goodwill in the delivery of the consequence. Generating enjoyment, laughter and a sense of fun is often a pedagogical intention as well as an outcome of drama work. Phillip notes that, “the moment you can humour them you instantly become three-dimensional”.

Grace is mindful of how she can impact relationships with her students and she chooses fun activities to maintain positivity and openness towards them:

*When I find that my relationship with the kids is getting too intense – if they are not working as hard as I want them to or if I am starting to*

*feel stressed about what is going on in the classroom, I use games to have fun with them and to remind myself that actually, that's an important part of our relationship as well. To help me to let go of some of the serious stuff. **Grace***

Grace emphasises that students need to play and to trust in order to move beyond their comfort zone. By nature, play requires openness, lightness and a willingness to engage. Fraser et al. (2004, p. 52) found an atmosphere of “playful and crafted spontaneity” existed in classrooms where drama regularly occurred, and Winston (2009, p. 44) agrees that “gaiety”, “compassion”, “charm” and “good-hearted cheerfulness” are qualities that many drama teachers foster in their classroom, not only as part of establishing “a spirit of co-operation and generous good-humour” but also for their intrinsic virtue. Happiness in classrooms is a quality Noddings (2003) argues ought to be an aim of education.

#### *A closer connection*

There was a perception from both students and teachers in this study that the drama teacher-student relationship was qualitatively different from relationships in other subject disciplines. David's students referred to the drama environment as being more relaxed and friendly than in other subjects. One student referred to their Year 12 class as being “a family” and several students spoke about the high level of trust they had established as a group over the years of working together in Drama. These students also noted that their relationship with David was warmer and more responsive than the relationships with teachers of other subjects:

*Yeah there's more of a friendship. It's more relaxed. Not relaxed as in we can do whatever we like but more relaxed.*

(Student interview: Year 12 Dav)

The students believe that time spent out of class, in rehearsals and in performances, contributed to a deepening of this relationship. Consequently, they felt they had more of a voice and were more willing to voice their opinions in Drama:

*With other teachers the most talking you do is about answering questions or asking questions but in drama there is more discussing it and learning a bit more. You are a lot more willing to put your hand up and say something.*

(Student interview: Year 12 Dav)

Field notes from the teaching observation of David's lesson report a down-to-earth, playful rapport was evident. Praise and encouragement were frequently given but David also challenged the Year 12 students from time to time, teasing them in order to provoke deeper thinking, greater precision and clarity in their answers. During my interview with his students, this playful teasing was reciprocated. These students emphasised the skills David displayed when playing a female role, and when asked to describe the characteristics of "an effective drama teacher", they wryly identified particular physical attributes David possesses. David's students also commented that they felt a drama teacher needed to be able to relate to students "with an equal status". David too experiences a greater level of closeness with his drama students than those he teaches in English.

*My Year 13 classes I'm extremely close to. They call me Dad around the school, "Giddy Dad, how are you?" and once [the school year] is over, for the first time ever I am going to have them home for a barbeque and that is something I wouldn't have ever contemplated in the past. **David***

He attributes this to the need for greater reliance on each other in Drama, which provides an increased number of opportunities for building trust – but also to the character of the students. He explains:

*For me, that is simply because I can trust them, and I can trust them implicitly and I haven't been able to say that consistently over the years – I could say it of a few but not the whole class. **David***

Like David's students, Julia's students also experience her approach as being different to their teachers in other subjects. They described her as being "a lot



happier” and felt she related to them more than other teachers did. One comment from a student shows the interplay of Julia’s open approach to practical work and the openness she maintains relationally:

*And she’s more positive and doesn’t give us such hard boundaries and tasks to do like, ‘Do this now and then you’ve got to do that,’ but [she says] ‘in this period I want you to get some really good pieces done and I want you to be creative’ and stuff.*

(Student Interview: Year 11 Ju)

Aroha sums up the affective tone these drama teachers are attempting to create in their classrooms and emphasises the importance of the teacher’s disposition in achieving this:

*We need to keep it a really safe place, a place of exploration, a place where the spirit of improvisation is alive and valued, where it’s okay to have epic success and epic failure. You need to really care about the students’ spirit/attitude and wellbeing. They are asked to bring so much more to drama personally than to other subjects, I think. **Aroha***

The creation of a caring environment as an important dimension of pedagogy is an idea supported by a growing body of literature. Ryan and Grolnick (1986) found that teachers who were emotionally warm developed greater confidence in students, while Kontos and Wilcox-Herzog (1997) found lower student motivation and achievement where teachers were not perceived as being warm. Students’ sense of support – that is their sense that they are liked, respected, and valued by the teacher – increases the likelihood that they will be motivated and that they will value and succeed in the subject (Goodenow, 1993). This connection between motivation and a supportive teacher-student relationship is also held up by Noddings’ (2003) research, where students were more willing to work for teachers who consistently demonstrated care for their students.

### *Maintaining boundaries and serving the learning*

Each participant emphasised that there is a clear purpose driving the development of their interpersonal relationships with their students. That is, they seek to relate to students in a way that facilitates effective outcomes in drama education, and this is their first priority. Positive rapport, gaining respect, and having fun are part of this, and of course, these characteristics make teaching and learning a more rewarding and enjoyable experience, but their primary goal is to enrich the learning. Aroha is aware that her role is always one of 'Teacher':

*Liking you as a teacher is built from respect for you as an artist and teacher, not the other way round – I truly believe that, and I think it's a boundary that can easily get blurry in drama – you have to be very good at reading those signs. **Aroha***

In generating immediacy and sharing power with students, Aroha's primary agenda is to care and support students so they can grow and achieve in the drama classroom, and beyond.

*You also have to balance your rapport with the students with your professionalism – especially with Year 12 and 13 [students] who you can end up spending a lot of time with and getting to know very well. My measure is always "Can I 'pull rank' (for want of a better term) and them do as asked?" – when they don't, I know I have lost their respect. **Aroha***

Such comments reflect the complexities of these relationships for drama teachers. Research reveals that establishing and maintaining caring relationships with students requires considerable investment of self and emotional energy (Aultman, Williams-Johnson, & Schutz, 2009; A. Hargreaves, 2000; Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006; Schutz, Cross, Hong, & Osbon, 2007; Zembylas, 2003). Aroha is aware that trust in the classroom is also created when students can rely on the teacher to manage the group and maintain appropriate boundaries. Boundaries in interpersonal relationships with students are also an area that teachers can find difficult to negotiate. Aultman et al. (2009) found beginning teachers struggled at

times to find workable boundaries in their use of personal disclosure, and when faced with student disclosure. Others struggled to find a balance between friendliness and maintaining control. Being more involved and open with students can increase a teacher's own emotional vulnerability. Despite these potential challenges, participants in the current study presented as being confident in their ability to establish caring relationships with students and to strike a balance that allowed relationship and learning to occur. Similarly, Aultman et al. (2009) found experienced ('veteran') teachers had greater confidence in their ability to maintain ethical boundaries, and attributed this to a stronger teacher identity.

### **8.1.2 Establishing values and ways of working**

The vision of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8) is for New Zealand schools to nurture "confident, connected, actively involved and life-long learners". A student-centred curriculum, the values "to be encouraged, modelled, and explored" include excellence, innovation, inquiry and curiosity, equity, community and participation, ecological sustainability, integrity, and respect for human rights (p. 10).

Research into adolescent behaviour shows that pro-social values, such as those identified in the New Zealand Curriculum, and self-efficacy (where self-efficacy is defined pro-socially as self-mastery and a sense of being trustworthy) were associated negatively with delinquency, risky sexual behaviour, and drug use (Ludwig & Pittman, 1999). Ludwig and Pittman (1999) cite further studies that also correlate problem behaviour with weak pro-social values, including Zeiman and Benson (1983), Allen, Weissberg, and Hawkins (1989), and R. L. Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, and Conger (1991). Such research indicates there is much to gain from including the development of pro-social values as a curriculum objective, and a lot at stake for young people and for society itself.

Discussions regarding the pedagogical intentions of the participants, and the content they choose to teach, show their work closely aligns with the values of the New Zealand Curriculum. Participants view pro-social values and practices as essential to achievement in Drama and, as presented in *Chapter Six: Focus*, pro-

social values and practices are believed to develop as a result of *participating in* drama. Aroha states that, “first and foremost”, she is teaching values in junior secondary drama, in order to build an effective collaborative and creative culture amongst the students. She identifies this as one of her strengths as a drama teacher, explaining: “I think I am very good at getting students to work together as a team”.

Aroha sees the drama classroom as being a place where social skills, cooperation, creativity, diversity, and acceptance of each other are taught and valued. She describes these values as being like “tikanga<sup>17</sup> – the way we do things in drama; how we respond to each other”. These values have immediate relevance to the artistic/performance contexts students are working in. In particular, she emphasises trust, generosity and acceptance of others through rehearsal processes and in the many problem-solving tasks students are confronted with in drama:

*When there is a problem with a particular piece, rather than just saying, “You’ve got stupid ideas”, hopefully we are teaching them how to stop, think critically and evaluate the work rather than evaluate the person. Rather they say, “That idea – we don’t like it, we need to do something different from what we decided on”. **Aroha***

Grace emphasises participation, encouraging students to undertake personal challenges in their work. She avoids over-emphasising performance outcomes:

*It’s this weird combination of ‘it doesn’t matter’ and ‘it does matter’ – it’s only a practice or it’s only a game or an experiment – but it does matter because I’ve got to do the best I can. You can’t fail – you can only fail if you don’t do it. **Grace***

This valuing of participation is found in Aroha’s work too. When working with new groups, Aroha selects purposeful drama games that require full participation, self-discipline and cooperation with the insistence and expectation of compliance.

---

<sup>17</sup> Tikanga – Maori term for appropriate customs and practices.

Typically, drama games involve concentration, active listening, physical discipline, making offers (giving creative ideas), accepting and extending on the offers of others (without reservation), and attuning to dynamic social cues. They often involve spontaneous, random groupings, physical contact and spatial relations that move into personal space. The skills these games employ are overtly identified to students in order to increase their awareness of what is valued and expected in the drama classroom. Grace also begins with games and activities that are fun and involve the whole group working together:

*The thing about games is that they can also help you to sort out group dynamics as well because they do force kids to work with everybody and so you can break down cliques quite nicely with games. **Grace***

By asserting pro-social values in these ways, participants attempt to remove or reduce the social barriers that can impede full participation in drama.

Phillip's experience is that the communities his students come from highly value mutual respect, generosity and acts of support. These are not values that he has to overtly teach in order to create a cooperative environment:

*I personally believe that our students are incredibly sophisticated socially. I find that they are so inclusive, so tolerant. I mean Pacific Island culture loves to mock, there is no question about that, but there is no specific target. They'll take the piss out of themselves but they are so caring. That's my experience. **Phillip***

Phillip recognises the cultural capital his students bring (Bourdieu, 1986) and is able to build on this accordingly.

*Even in the junior class, you'll see that even though they are only meeting three times over six days, they know when someone is having a bad time and they really look after each other. Most of these kids don't have any material advantages and therefore the things that they*

*value are friendships and relationships. That's a real strength of our community. Phillip*

Despite this, Phillip adds that some Year 9 classes do not gel quite so well. He sees this as the result of large class sizes, along with the variety of teaching styles and expectations students encounter in other classes. Therefore, there is still a need to acclimatise students to the ethos and culture of the Performing Arts classroom and to assert the dispositions and attitudes that are expected.

### *Teacher modelling*

Asserting and modelling pro-social behavioural and attitudinal expectations, and maintaining these boundaries, are also vital to building trust in the teacher-student relationship (Cooper & McIntyre, 1996a, 1996b; Craft, 1996, 2000). The teacher's positive and active involvement in drama lessons – through participation in activities, modelling and expressions of support – reinforce these behavioural expectations, while contributing to the development of positive relationships (Wallis, 2010).

### **8.1.3 Content selection and task design**

The participants see the selection and shape of learning experiences in the classroom as another important dimension of creating emotional safety and positive relationships. In initial work with new drama students, David is aware that the activities he selects need to create enough safety for students, in order that they will engage, take risks and grow in confidence.

*You've got to be careful that you are not making them feel like dicks; that you are getting them to buy into it ... somehow you've got to engineer it round in a way that they are happy or their confidence grows and they get in and have a go. David*

David's comments reinforce again the importance of full and active participation in drama experiences and the significant role planning and lesson design plays in this. Aroha explains one of the first major learning points in her development as a drama teacher was realising the importance of scaffolding drama work to create a

sense of agency and safety for students. She uses a tongue-in-cheek example of what happens in drama – students working in role at being trees:

*The first one was my first placement where my associate said to me you can't just ask them to "be a tree" without any build up to that or all you will get is a pretty lame tree and some really embarrassed kids. He taught me about building the students up/scaffolding tasks so that by the time you ask them to "be a tree", they are so absorbed in the task that you get this amazing tree! **Aroha***

David stresses that effective pitching of levels of safety and risk is vital when Drama is a compulsory subject for all students, as is the case with his Year 9 pupils. When students opt to take drama, further risks can be taken in the selection of activities because there is greater likelihood that students are aware and willing to take these risks. David's discussion of his practice also highlights some of his perceptions around gender, which impact his selection of activities.

*One of the problems I think is that guys generally are looking for structure and the hardest job we have is getting them to abandon the structure and to be more creative. **David***

Like Phillip, David acknowledges that ways of working together form over time and experience.

*Sometimes I haven't given the right guidelines but they are really prepared to get in and have a go and there is total trust in the class and it's taken some years to develop that culture. **David***

### ***Story-telling and identity***

The inclusion of personal and family stories as provocation for drama work is another way drama teachers can positively develop a sense of trust within the drama classroom. Not only do stories have emotional appeal that engages students, the sharing of real life experiences can encourage greater connection (G. Aitken & Sinnema, 2008; Cayanus, 2004; Goldstein & Benassi, 1994; Rosenfeld &

Gilbert, 1989). There are, however, foreseeable risks involved with this approach. Stories that exacerbate a sense of difference or disclosure can be more exposing than is safe for students, especially those who may have experienced trauma or painful circumstances (Burman, 2001, p. 6). Teachers need to exercise ethically and psychologically safe practice in this kind of work (Rex, Murnen, Hobbs, & McEachen, 2002).

The devising work Phillip has students do draws heavily on their real life experiences and encourages greater levels of personal disclosure. Phillip instructs students to honour this material, and to respect the courage it takes to offer up personal stories for the purposes of drama-making. He is careful to model these values too. He thoughtfully frames the process of selecting and sharing stories to encourage appropriate (safe) levels of disclosure.

In reflecting on their work in drama, Phillip's Year 10 students identified greater self-expression and confidence as outcomes of both their drama work and the relationships formed with others during this work. A level of safety and acceptance (immediacy) had been established and they felt this was a qualitative difference in the relationships in Drama, when compared to students in other subjects. The overlapping, collaborative responses from this group of students can also be seen as an indication of their cohesion. It reflects a level of attunement and a desire to support each other (when faced with an academic researcher asking questions!). Phillip's students explained the increased closeness to other drama students they experienced, saying:

- *Yeah, you bring more of yourself to the friendship than you normally would.*
- *And the good thing about that is they know what you are talking about and they share your pain and they share your glory sometimes.*
- *Yeah it's about that experience.*
- *As if they felt it themselves.*

(Student interview: Year 10 Ph)



In order to facilitate rich learning experiences, theorists suggest classroom curriculum must connect directly to students' lives, while focusing on the knowledge and processes appropriate to academic disciplines (Brophy & Alleman, 2002; Nuthall, 2002). Similarly for James, connecting the content children are exploring in drama with the real world has become central to his pedagogy:

*I would characterise my journey as engaging my teaching more and more with our world. You reach the children and they reach you. And teach you. Perhaps my expectations are too high sometimes, but better to err on that side. It's Bakhtin's idea of dialogue. **James***

These concerns reflect current human experience and social issues of power and relationship, rather than topical matters or current events:

*Right now we are working towards a play that satirises the utopian spin of the technocrats; the issues are so real to the students. More and more I avoid media and entertainment industry themes. You know the Commonwealth Games, super heroes etc. **James***

When drama teachers select rich, relevant contexts and explore these in a way that allows students to contribute new ideas, insights and perspectives in a dialogic process, relational connection is also built. In a manner similar to the Mantle of Expert approach (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995; Johnson & O'Neil, 1984; O'Neill, 1995b), such honouring of student contribution and openness to their understandings affords status, wisdom and expertise to students. Relating to students in this manner supports the development of identity; identities students can grow into through, and beyond, the drama experience.

These New Zealand drama teachers view the relational dynamic within the classroom as highly important to their work in Drama. The dialogic nature of their practice means participants consciously work to establish a healthy collaborative culture through the values they uphold and the ways they model these values within their relationships with students. The teacher-student relationship is seen as highly significant to this learning environment and participants actively work to

create immediacy and trust through their use of ego-supportive communication skills, narrative skills, personal disclosure, and by actively teaching social skills that build and maintain group cohesion. In order for students to take artistic, personal and interpersonal risks essential to drama work, teachers assert pro-social values such as openness to and acceptance of others' ideas, a willingness to work inclusively, and the need for relationships to be respectful and constructive. These behaviours and attitudes are often taught explicitly to students, through ensemble-based games and exercises.

## **8.2 Encouraging agency: expectations and accountability**

### *8.2.1 Fostering achievement through high expectations*

### *8.2.2 Fostering interpersonal accountability*

Part of establishing a safe and productive community of learners involves not only creating an emotionally and psychologically safe environment, but also strengthening the identity and agency of the members in the community, so that they can develop greater mastery and make stronger contributions to the work of the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Participants in this study stressed the need for students to become increasingly accountable for maintaining their responsibilities and relationships. This was particularly the case for those participants teaching at secondary level, where students were moving into adulthood. The themes of high teacher expectations (see *Section 8.2.1*) and interpersonal accountability (see *Section 8.2.2*) arose as key aspects in increasing agency in Drama. While these themes could have been presented within the teacher-student relationship section (see *Section 8.1.1*), several participants stressed that these dimensions were highly important to their facilitation of effective drama work. They were adamant the role of facilitator required more than providing a safe environment and opportunities for students to be creative in drama; it required challenging students to strive for excellence in their work. Grace stressed:

*You need to be really clear about what you want and constantly challenge and demand more and better because you don't just accept where students are at the moment. You need to go beyond that. You need to take them and even push them, further than where they are now, where they are comfortable. **Grace***

### **8.2.1 Fostering achievement through high expectations**

Alton-Lee (2003) identifies two characteristics associated with teacher expectations of students that feature in quality teaching:

[That] the teacher establishes and follows through on appropriate expectations for learning outcomes and the pace at which learning should proceed and that high expectations are necessary but not sufficient, and can be counterproductive, when not supported by quality teaching. (p. vi)

Alton-Lee's research found that a balance between critical reflection and encouragement needed to be maintained to support achievement, claiming that a "culture of niceness" can undermine achievement (2003, p. 25). Grace echoes this:

*I don't think that just being completely sweet and accepting ... it's nice and it's comfortable for a while but it doesn't move students on, it doesn't make them better or challenge them. **Grace***

Alton-Lee's research also found that high expectations, unsupported by effective teaching, are counterproductive. In these instances, such expectations can be threatening and detrimental to both the student-teacher relationship and to achievement. A responsive balance between acceptance and challenge must be struck.

Marilyn Fryer (1996) investigated 1,028 teachers and found that the teachers most orientated to creativity were those who believed all students were *capable* of creativity. These teachers valued individual expression and aimed to deepen students' understandings of the world, to increase empathy and the use of

intuition. James positions his students as capable, aesthetic “knowers” who often exceed the expectations other theatre practitioners hold of them:

*... we are amazed at how children don't like plays put on for children. They don't like being condescended to. If you gave them a play and said this play is going to be all about refugees and how you've got to treat them and all the rest ... Nah! They're not going to watch that, just like adults don't want to. **James***

His expectations of students increase the likelihood he will engage with them and respect their opinions. This also deepens the interpersonal nature of the teacher-student relationship (Frymier & Houser, 2000). James' students were aware of the negative impact of low teacher expectations in drama, with one student offering the following advice to drama teachers:

*Don't look at people on their first go at something and think that because they didn't do it well that they are not going to be good at that because they might have it right, sort of.*

(Student Interview: Yr 7-8 Ja)

Phillip acknowledges the importance of establishing a work ethic in the drama classroom:

*Pupils, seniors in particular, know that they are in an environment that demands a high level of engagement and this often results in a high level of performance, be it exams or presentation work by the students. **Phillip***

Phillip believes part of establishing this work ethic involves setting an example himself – in his effort and through maintaining consistency in the way he relates to students – in his attitudes and in his expectations of them:

*From feedback given to me by my pupils a practice that is valued by them is my continual expectation that they extend themselves and*

*strive for their best work. I have no specific way that this expectation is communicated to the pupils apart from me simply modelling this attitude in the way I prepare and teach a lesson. Phillip*

Aroha believes expecting students will have “something to offer” is a vital characteristic of the teacher-student relationship:

*... and I think getting the best quality work out of them, that valuing of excellence (and its not about getting NCEA ‘Excellence’) ... it’s about performing to your best all the time. And I don’t expect anything more of you than your best. Aroha*

In this way, Aroha is responsive to the diverse needs of her students. She explains that this means being aware students will be working at varying levels and “recognising what [individuals] are giving”, rather than having blanket standards.

*So for some of you, that means you’re going to work quietly in your team and you’re going to contribute one idea and that, to you, is a real step up. Whereas someone else ... they are not happy until they excel. I think I’m good at getting the best out of kids. Aroha*

Goal-setting is a practice Aroha uses to co-construct and articulate expectations with students. This also encourages the development of a work ethic. She begins with Year 10 students:

*In Term One we do a huge focus on how you positively contribute to the class; what have you done this week that you feel really happy with? What’s your focus for next week going to be? Aroha*

Participants in this study suggest it is not only having a cognitive belief that students actually can achieve at high(er) levels that makes a teacher effective, but also the willingness to engage in relationship with students whilst holding this belief. As a Head of Department, Aroha has observed less-experienced teachers struggling with drama groups as a result of low teacher expectations, too much

focus on task instructions, and not enough focus on building the relationship with the students.

*They can do a whole period of work and I'll pop in to see what they've been up to and it doesn't look any different from the start. **Aroha***

Aroha explains that as a result, students can be slow to come in, slow to get started and “laid back” in their approach to the work. She makes a connection between students’ lack of discipline and passion for their work and low teacher expectations. Aroha stresses the need to build loyalty in students, and to work at getting students to come in wanting to share or to eagerly carry on from the previous lesson.

The theme of high expectations was also very present in the discussion with Grace. She sees good drama teachers as being very accepting, non-judgmental but also challenging of students; they are able to push their students on to higher levels of achievement.

*On the one hand [students] have to feel comfortable enough to risk, but on the other hand I don't think they need to become too comfortable because otherwise it just becomes too easy and they don't try any more. **Grace***

An example from Grace’s practice arises when students are challenged by the demands of rehearsal processes:

*When they get a piece of script and once they've read it, I'll make them put it down and recreate it without the script so that they remember the physical stuff. They find it hard and they resist but it doesn't mean to say they don't have to do it. (Laughs). **Grace***

During the lesson observation, Grace set clear expectations for students in terms of their focus and self-discipline. Early in the lesson she reiterated these: “Hold your freeze. Girls, I want a little bit more discipline please”, as well as using positive

feedback to generate a clear understanding of the intentions of the work: “I’m glad to see you using different levels”, “I like the way some of you have a different focus”. While Grace works to facilitate and guide students in work they create themselves, she refuses to accept work that is below standard. This expectation is something Grace makes explicit to students:

*This is one of the things I’m quite clear about. Just because something is hard, doesn’t mean you don’t do it. Yes it is hard, so you’ve got to work harder in order to make it happen. **Grace***

In order to maintain an effective drama community, participants were mindful of the need to challenge and stretch students, while remaining responsive in their relationships.

### **8.2.2 Fostering interpersonal accountability**

Closely related to high expectations is the notion of accountability. While much of the discussion with participants concerned what *they* do to create trust and build relationship, student contribution is a significant factor in defining the health of these interpersonal relationships. Noddings (2005, p. 108) stresses that while teachers have a greater responsibility to determine the quality of their relationships with students, nevertheless the relationship is mutual. She argues that students have a responsibility to “respond to their teachers’ efforts”, explaining that teaching students to become “recipients of care” is one of the greatest tasks of a teacher.

Students must understand that their responses enliven or dampen their teacher’s enthusiasm. ... Students cannot be expected to teach their teachers, but they can be expected to respond with growing sensitivity to attempts to promote their own growth. (Noddings, 2005, p. 108)

Aroha spoke of the need to generate a sense of loyalty in students, and this is something clearly evident in discussions with her students. These students reported that they wanted to do well for Aroha because of the huge effort they

consider she puts into her teaching and into ensuring they achieve to their highest potential. Regarding their drama teachers, Aroha's students chorused:

- *They make you want to try hard.*
- *Yeah because it seems they are making an effort for you.*
- *Yeah they are doing it for you.*
- *Like a huge effort.*
- *Like a different effort compared to other teachers.*
- *Yeah you feel bad when you don't.*

(Student Interview: Year 13 Ar)

Aroha's notion of creating a sense of loyalty closely relates to Noddings' (2005) view that students need to learn to respond to the efforts of their teachers. David explains that he models respect for all students while setting clear boundaries and expectations for behaviour. He maintains that students have a responsibility to establish a trusting relationship with him.

*Well I try to treat everyone ... it's probably role modelling, I try to treat everyone equal, I try to trust everyone but they sure know about it if they destroy that trust or put that trust under threat. **David***

Grace insists students are held accountable for their progress (or lack of it). She explains, "I won't let them get away with shoddy stuff". She insists that students show their work, even if they have not rehearsed, in order to reinforce the need to take responsibility for their actions. The formative assessment she offers before formal assessment provides important learning opportunities for students and Grace stresses to her students that they need to take responsibility for utilising these opportunities. Students who present under-developed work for formative assessment lose the opportunity to receive artistic guidance that would deepen their work. She explains:

*I say to them, "if you come to formative assessment and you're not prepared, you're wasting your own time because what is going to*



*happen is I am going to give you feedback that you already know. ... So how does that help you? So you've got to be really, really prepared because then I can give you feedback on stuff you haven't thought about". **Grace***

From the interview with Grace's students, it was evident they had a clear understanding of her position:

*She's very much, "I will help you but in the end it's up to you". She will guide you but in the end it's really up to you. I don't think we would be as strong as we are now if she hadn't given us that little bit of guidance and said, "okay, now it's your turn to take what I've given you and learn from it".*

(Student Interview: Year 12 Gr)

When asked whether this approach was ever too harsh, Grace's students' commented that they experienced her as being fair, despite the disappointment when she doesn't "save them". One student replied, "It's fair but at the time you are like, 'Oh ...'". They saw 'being fair' as really important, because "otherwise you just end up despising your teachers".

Within the context of a caring relationship, these participants continue to challenge students to be responsible for themselves, their relationships and their achievement in the drama classroom. A comment from Grace reflects her awareness of the need to be responsive to the interpersonal complexities at play:

*You have to be challenging but you have to notice individual students and what kinds of challenges they can deal with. You have to be really perceptive. **Grace***

Grace is committed to maintaining positive and productive connections with her students, so she is mindful of the impact of challenges on students and the need to keep interactions constructive.

### *Managing relationships between students*

Fraser et al. (2007) acknowledge that the extensive use of group work in the Arts provides students with many opportunities to build relational skills in listening, turn taking, questioning and supporting others. Inevitably collaborative work gives rise to conflict as well as cooperation. Noddings (2003) argues that learning about conflict and cooperation is absolutely vital for young people and should feature more prominently in the curriculum of our schools.

Julia notes the need to manage participation and relationships in the classroom in order to differentiate learning for varying abilities and in order to maintain enough space for all students to engage.

*It's really important for us as drama teachers to create a positive atmosphere and find ways of bringing out the potential of the students and not allow the divas to rule the roost. Because there is that aspect to drama! **Julia***

Often this means extending students' self-awareness and social skills so they can come to see how the nature of their participation impacts others. Julia sees the social dynamic in the classroom as one of the most important things to get working right and acknowledges the powerful influence individuals can have on the group.

*If one particular student is absent, sometimes you can see the whole social dynamic change – could be in a positive way, could be in a negative way. **Julia***

Julia finds that the students who develop confidence during their time in Drama may show far more progress than those who arrived with confidence and demonstrated artistic skills and talent from the start.

*It fascinates me because you often find that the very talented students are not the ones who are developing as much as the ones who come in and who are a bit shy and scared. And we can get so much more from them. **Julia***

Such comments highlight the satisfaction these teachers get in seeing their students progress, even if these gains are not reflected in formal assessment results, and the willingness of teachers to invest in students with various abilities, not just those high-achievers. David is mindful of the range of student abilities and needs within each class. He is aware that he can determine a grouping that will continue to stretch and challenge students artistically and socially – allowing for greater differentiation. Therefore, he will retain the right to determine the make-up of groups, particularly for assessment in senior drama.

*It's good because it challenges them to move outside the boundaries. Because a few of them will go back to the same group every time and they get in these ruts and it actually limits their creativity ... they get into routine and they have their little hierarchy already established.*

**David**

David is mindful of the social barriers that can constrain students' willingness to extend themselves. He is committed to creating a culture where there is permission to risk-take, where there are role models – including the teacher, professional players and senior students – who are able to demonstrate expertise and encourage participation and risk-taking for other students.

*It's about taking risks. It's about them feeding off each other and we've now got some strong performance individuals in the classes who will try things out and other guys will think, "Oh jeez that's okay, I can have a go at that".* **David**

As part of facilitating the collaborative work that dominates learning in drama, Grace insists students take personal responsibility for both their work and for maintaining productive working relationships. She explains:

*I do insist that you take responsibility for yourself as an individual and yourself in the group. And so I will constantly reinforce the fact that if you don't meet your responsibilities to the group, I'm not going to save you.* **Grace**

David also resists rescuing students from interpersonal challenges in collaborative work, believing there are greater rewards for students who can negotiate these conflicts with some autonomy.

*It's good to see one or two of the more highly driven kids having to cope with someone in the group who is looking out the window all the time when they are trying to get something done, and they will come to me and say, "oh ..." and I'll say, "It's your group, you have to sort it out".* **David**

Grace shares David's view and although she will sometimes mediate face-to-face conflict resolution, she avoids intervening in an authoritative way.

*Sometimes kids will come to me and complain about other kids and so on. I will almost always get them together with me, in the same space, and say, "Okay, you tell me what you said and now you tell me what you said and now talk to each other", so I don't become piggy-in-the-middle, the mummy who solves all the problems, because I don't think that helps.* **Grace**

Grace believes it is possible for students to achieve despite competitive or combative dynamics within their relationships with other students – something that she occasionally experiences in the single-sex girls' school.

*Very often you will find that in classes that are a little bit combative, where there are groups of kids that are a little bit mean to each other, people will work really hard to rise above that. They will identify what it is about 'the other' that they don't want to be like and that will help them to get better and work harder.* **Grace**

There is an authenticity to the relationships David forges in the senior classes. He is upfront with students about difficult behaviour and holds students accountable, while maintaining a willingness to support and affirm them. In turn, he has seen a healthy social culture develop within the subject area. He shares an example of a

student whose behaviour and attitudes present some social challenges for other students, but who has found a love for drama and a place within the classroom drama community:

*I think about a boy we've had in Level 3 and he's a boy with some physical impairment and he's a guy who at times in the school has certainly been target of bullying; sometimes because he has brought that on himself but certainly not always. But he's embraced drama. It's about the only thing he's got standards in. **David***

David observes his drama students as engaging in healthy and authentic relationships with this student, in a way that the student may not experience elsewhere in the school community.

*He can be a real pain in the arse and we all give him a hard time, but we give him a hard time in a loving sort of a way – you know there's a difference, and we don't always give him a hard time, but we certainly do have him on. And that to me is a sign of the maturity of the class. And when he does well and he gets a merit, and he's got a couple of merits this year, the guys are "Oh well done, that's fantastic" and that's pretty cool stuff. **David***

### **Challenges identified**

Having built up a drama department and a culture within performing arts for 19 years at the time of our interview, Phillip faces the challenge of maintaining this. There are challenges from two sides. The first challenge he sees is due to the new intake of students each year, which means this way of being and working together needs to be established again. He says:

*Every school has its own distinct issues; the main one our department faces is sustaining the current level of output by our staff. We've been creating wonderful things with our school here for many years, but the pain in the butt is that you have to start from scratch again at the beginning of every year. It's like, you've got a new group of Year 9s*

*and it's not like they just breathe it in, by a process of osmosis, and recognise the long established values of our department. Phillip*

Secondly, Phillip experiences challenges to maintaining the culture in his department due to the professional practice of new staff. One of the biggest challenges Phillip sees to drama education is a lack of “adequate” training at tertiary level – training that will prepare teachers for the reality of teaching secondary school drama students. It concerns him that this lack of preparedness impacts his department and the maintenance of the culture/standards he has established over the years.

## **Chapter summary**

Parker Palmer (1998) describes good teachers as possessing a “capacity for connectedness”, the ability to make complex connections between their subjects, their students and themselves – but ultimately in a way that allows students to make connections to their own world. He states:

The connections made by good teachers are held, not in their methods, but in their hearts – meaning *heart* in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self. (p. 11)

This chapter has described the ways these particular drama teachers approach and shape their relations with students, in order to facilitate learning in drama. The discussion presented in this chapter reveals the relational complexities drama teachers face in their work with students and the significance of relational pedagogy to the work of teaching and learning in drama. In a sense, it has captured some of their methods – personal disclosure here, use of humour there – but as Palmer suggests, to reduce these relationships to an account of behavioural technique is to miss the point. Each participant is forging a dynamic, complex and living relationship with individual drama students – and in many cases, these relationships will continue for several years as students move through their school years.

Creativity and collaboration require trust, emotional safety and accountability, and while certain behaviours, attitudes and dispositions have been identified as a vital part of a drama teacher's pedagogical repertoire, the heart within their work is harder to capture. van Manen (1994) encourages teachers and researchers to understand that "spaces can be created where pedagogical relations in classrooms and schools have a chance to emerge, to be nurtured and strengthened" (p. 152). It is these spaces that we need to learn more about, rather than the strategies and techniques employed.

As they negotiate their own philosophy of drama and the curriculum within their school context, these teachers are working to create a classroom environment conducive to creative and collaborative theatre-making and role-taking, and to the pro-social and personal development of students. Many drama educationalists also recognise these pro-social goals as being higher than the goal of effective theatre-making (Neelands, 2004; O'Connor, 2009b). Theorists such as Noddings and Palmer also argue that developing our young people's ability to establish and nurture emotional and social connections with others is a worthy educational goal, whether this serves achievement in a discipline area such as Drama, or not (Noddings, 2005; Palmer, 2003).





## Chapter Nine: Conclusions

*9.1 Revisiting purpose and approach*

*9.2 The main findings of the study*

*9.3 Contributions to knowledge*

*9.4 Implications for practice*

*9.5 Implications for policy*

*9.6 Suggestions for further research*

*9.7 Final thoughts*

### **9.1 Revisiting purpose and approach**

As discussed in the previous chapters, drama education has undergone a period of growth in New Zealand due to its inclusion as one of four Arts disciplines within the Arts Learning Area of the curriculum and also as a result of its inclusion in the National Certificate of Educational Achievement for senior secondary students. Despite this apparent progress, some drama educationalists in New Zealand have expressed reservations over these policy developments and the ability of drama teachers to deliver effective drama education within this environment (Z. Brooks, 2010; O'Connor, 2009b). In order to learn more about the nature of drama education practice occurring in New Zealand schools, this study has investigated the practice of a number of experienced drama teachers working under the mandate of the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007). Experienced drama teachers were selected in order to discover the impact of recent policy developments on classroom practice and in order to identify the ways these teachers negotiate this environment to achieve their personal vision of drama education. In accordance with recommendations for case study by Yin (2003) and Stake (2003), this collective case study offers a rich, descriptive account of drama teaching practice. Such an account contributes to deeper understandings about what drama education in New Zealand classrooms entails. It also examines the relationship between these examples of enacted practice and

theoretical discourses in drama education, and reveals the complexities of classroom practice.

In particular, this research identified and documented the nature of teaching and learning experiences in Drama being provided by experienced teachers. In order to capture a breadth of practice and artistic-aesthetic interest, and thus to avoid an overly narrow sample of drama practice, six experienced teachers who have diverse aesthetic and educational interests, and who worked in a cross-section of New Zealand schools, were selected. As a qualitative study, this research provides 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of the practice of six New Zealand drama teachers. The work of each teacher was identified through interviews, an analysis of planning documents, an observation of their teaching practice, and interviews with their students. The in-depth interviews enabled teachers to give a detailed account of their programmes, planning decisions and approaches to classroom practice, as well as the thinking behind these choices. This discussion was often contextualised through reference to specific classroom episodes, providing layers of detail about the scholarship behind these acts of teaching. The analysis of planning documents provided a comprehensive account of course content and assessment foci across several year levels, complementing and confirming the interview accounts. An investigation of pedagogical practice was a central focus in this research, particularly as the scholarship and artistry of experienced drama teachers was being sought. Pedagogical practices were ascertained through an analysis of reported practice provided in the interview accounts and the observation of enacted classroom practice. In addition to this, interviews with students enabled an alternative perspective on the nature of learning and teaching in each participant's classroom. This included confirmation and clarification of participants' pedagogical practices, learning foci and the impact of their practice on student experience. Transcripts and case study summaries were provided to each participant in order to ensure the accuracy and validity of this material before further theorising of the material began. The outcome of this analysis is now summarised in the following section.

## **9.2 The main findings of the study**

The findings synthesised in this section are focused around the four key questions of the study. These include the conceptualisations participants have of drama education in schools; their experience and views on the current curriculum and assessment policy environment; beliefs about effective drama teaching and the nature of their pedagogical practice; and the tensions they encounter in this work.

### ***9.2.1 How do these teachers conceptualise the drama curriculum in their particular school context?***

This study has investigated the ways participants conceptualise the drama curriculum in school contexts, drawing from analysis of interviews, classroom observations, planning documents and student interviews. At the time of data collection, each participant was working in a middle management position within their school setting. In regard to choices around curriculum content and course design, each reports having a sense of autonomy over their work. Although drama education can be marginalised in some school settings as being less academic or even frivolous, teachers in this study enjoy a context where the work of persuading colleagues and students that drama contributes to the serious business of learning is a battle that has been won. Participants feel they have gained the trust of their senior managers and receive their respect. There is an acceptance that their work in the drama classroom is in line with the educational vision of their schools, and perhaps more importantly, senior managers believe these teachers have the ability and expertise to effectively deliver such educational experiences. A number of these schools have invested significantly in their drama departments, providing purpose built performing arts facilities.

Conceptualisations of the nature and enactment of drama education within the classroom have been informed by participants' own experiences in drama, in the teaching of drama, through training in theatre and in teacher education, and as a result of on-going professional learning. Aroha, David, Phillip and Julia trained as teachers initially, while working in amateur and professional theatre. Grace and James trained professionally in the arts industry before moving into education. Julia and Grace trained in Scotland and South Africa respectively, undertaking

extensive training programmes in theatre and drama education. Julia, Grace and James note the influence of drama education practitioners such as Heathcote, Way, Slade, Grotowski and Bolton in their own conceptualisations of drama education, and all six participants have identified the work of Boal, Brecht and Stanislavski as influential to the development of their drama practice.

These drama teachers conceptualise drama education as education in both theatre-based artistic-aesthetic processes and in social-collaborative processes. The nature of knowing in drama is seen as embodied, ephemeral, dialogic, and artistic. These artistic acts happen within a social context and draw on diverse real-world social contexts. They involve negotiation, social risk-taking, imagination and perspective-taking. These participants often work with stories that arise from the lived experiences of their students and their communities. They frequently work with New Zealand theatre texts, exploring stories and significant events (both fictional and non-fictional) connected to life in New Zealand. Such work is reflexive, informing and shaping students' social consciousness.

Furthermore, these teachers work to create a classroom environment that enables students to develop personally – in their sense of self and their identities, as well as pro-socially – that is, in their ability to participate and contribute to the classroom learning community by collaborating with, relating to, and negotiating effectively with peers. Participants see social development as both a means to effective artistic-aesthetic achievement in drama and as a worthy end in itself for students engaging in drama education. Such views of drama education align with theorising by contemporary drama educationalists such as Neelands (2001, 2009, 2010), and reflect the integration of historically polarised positions on the purpose of drama education within schools. This prioritising of pro-social and psychosocial outcomes for education also aligns with the work of contemporary educational theorists such as Noddings (2005) and Palmer (1998, 2003).

When asked to consider the framing of drama education within New Zealand's national curriculum and the extent to which they perceived this curriculum design

served or hindered their work in drama education, each participant saw the framing of drama within the Arts curriculum (rather than within the English curriculum) as a positive and progressive development for drama education in New Zealand. They consider that aligning drama with other arts has enabled greater development of embodied learning, assisted the development of a professional discourse, and nurtured artistic-aesthetic understandings that they see as essential for teaching and learning in drama education.

While participants did not feel that the inclusion of the key competencies, vision, principles and effective pedagogy found in the 'front end' of the New Zealand curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) had changed or challenged their practice, they did find support for their pedagogical practice here. They believe this defining of process objectives and of effective pedagogies has helped to shape a professional discourse they can share with colleagues who work across the curriculum. Some participants believe that the outcomes-based focus of the national curriculum pose challenges to creativity in their teaching and assessment of drama. James believes drama would be better served if it were a separate learning area – rather than grouped with three other arts – in order that the potential for drama as a pedagogical approach could be more fully realised within classrooms.

The accounts of curriculum enactment provided in this study reflect the intersection of participants' personal aesthetic, mandated curriculum and assessment, and their responsiveness to student groups. There are a number of similarities in the design and selection of course content across these six cases. For instance, each participant uses exploratory drama activities to establish classroom rituals and routines. They offer learning experiences in devised theatre, explore acting technique and technical production roles, and facilitate the performance of published plays. The artistic cycle of exploring, making, presenting and appreciating drama is central to the work of these teachers – and reflects an alignment with the current curriculum policy. Importantly, these teachers conceptualise drama education as incorporating education about the art form of drama with making meaning of human experience. Several participants referred

to the development of theatre 'literacy' and were not opposed to viewing artistic-aesthetic learning as similar to acquiring a language – learning to use its symbols, codes and texts. However, the accounts of practice – particularly discussion about the intent and desired outcomes for drama experiences held by these teachers – reveal they do not confine their work to teaching the acquisition of this 'language'; rather they seek to create rich learning experiences that also allow students to grapple with their lived experience.

*Chapter Five: Dramatic action* presents a close analysis of the work of individual participants, revealing the way they tailor learning experiences to the particular needs of the student groups they work with. James' work in drama is closely aligned with intentions of extending and broadening children's literacy. As a result, James chooses to work with classic literature such as Shakespeare. James' practice is highly collaborative and strongly dialogic; that is, discussion with students about artistic decisions, meanings and intentions is a strong feature in James' process – and a means to developing literacy and agency in his students. He often selects drama pretexts that arise from the psychosocial worlds of students.

Likewise, Phillip chooses contexts that relate to the psychosocial world of his students, providing drama contexts that encourage his students to story their lived experiences. As a teacher of (predominantly) Pasifika students, these dramatic explorations draw on cultural forms and motifs, and encourage students to dialogue about their personal and cultural identities, to celebrate and interrogate their cultural histories and communities, and to convey these understandings to others through dramatic performance. Phillip identifies that his students often lack the cultural capital that supports literacy achievement. His work aims to give students voice through theatre literacy, giving physical expression to ideas while continuing to support and extend students' engagement with literary texts and their literacy development.

These and the other examples given in the study (see *Chapter Five*) illustrate the ways participants negotiate the mandated curriculum and assessment objectives to enable a responsiveness to the lived experience (Neelands, 2001) of the

students they work with. Participants' selection of contexts, dramatic forms and genres also reflect their own interests and aesthetic preferences. Aroha and Phillip provide strong programmes in devised theatre and physical theatre – areas of theatre they have personally delved into over several years. Julia is committed to providing her students with an environment where they can indulge their imaginations and creativity. She provides many open-ended provocations and creative tasks to enable students to explore what it is they are taken with aesthetically. Grace has built a strong repertoire of theatrical forms, genres and texts over her years of training and teaching, which allows her to offer a wide variety of options to students, but also to diversify her content to indulge her own interests and passion.

Many of these units of work allow students to explore technical knowledge areas (such as theatre-making, theatrical forms and histories) while also requiring investigation of personal, social and political discourses. Through this rich layering of learning in drama, these teachers deliver drama education experiences that move beyond a narrow focus on the technical knowledge of theatre-arts, extending learning into practical and emancipatory knowledge domains (as categorised by Habermas, 1972).

### ***9.2.2 What do these teachers believe constitutes effective drama teaching and learning?***

While 'effectiveness' has not been quantified in this study, the notion of effective drama teaching could be conceived as teaching that enables students to experience the richness of an artistic-aesthetic curriculum, informed by the field of drama education. Such effective drama teaching might include empowering students to participate in creative and aesthetic processes with increasing confidence, independence and mastery; to excel in the acquisition of dramatic skill and knowledge of dramatic processes, conventions and elements in order that they might utilise these for their own dramatic ends. A measure of effective drama teaching might also include enabling students to excel in assessment programmes such as NCEA Drama or to receive public acclaim for their performance. Drawing from the field of drama education, effective drama teaching might also include the

ability to design learning experiences that enable students to make meaning of their lived experience; to gain insights into the experiences of others, to experience empathy, wonder and personal empowerment as a result of exploring dramatic worlds. This study has sought to gain understandings of what experienced drama teachers and their students consider necessary for effective drama teaching.

From the accounts of practice, several themes indicate what participants believe constitutes effective drama teaching. Certain personal characteristics were seen by participants to be necessary to effective drama teaching. Each participant stressed the need for drama teachers to have passion and enthusiasm for drama practice and for their students. Enthusiasm was a characteristic also identified by each student group as being essential for effective drama teachers. In order to motivate student groups to participate and take the social and creative risks that result in powerful drama, drama teachers need to be able to entice, enthuse and challenge their students – and to have this energy for the work themselves.

Establishing and maintaining constructive and productive relationships within and between students was also seen as being fundamental to effective drama teaching. This emphasis on the ability of arts educators to establish productive relationships with students is supported by Eisner (1974, p. 22), who suggests that effective teaching in arts education may depend more on the personality and ability to form productive relationships with students than on possessing artistic skill. These relationships are characterised by mutual respect, warmth, shared power and a commitment to high standards. Such teacher-student relationships are also important to culturally-responsive, inclusive teaching practice (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop, 2012).

The descriptions of effective teaching practice provided by participants, and supported by the views of their students, reflect the use of socio-cultural teaching methods. Effective drama teaching results in the increased participation of students in the learning process. By employing co-artistry and engaging in negotiation over learning directions, artistic decisions and their impact, effective drama teachers increase the levels of student independence, enrich the creative



opportunities for students and deepen the level of criticality students bring to their work in drama. Building a student's ability to work as part of an ensemble is seen as both the means to deepen work in senior secondary drama, and as an end in itself. Participants believe development in these personal and social domains foster significant and valuable outcomes for all students studying drama. These outcomes are intentionally pursued, rather than seen as a bonus by-product of drama education.

Lave and Wenger's (1991) model of learning as a result of engagement with a 'community of practice' provides a useful comparison to the dynamic of learning within these drama classrooms. Participants see drama work as being practical and embodied – and therefore effective drama teaching involves enabling students to fully participate in drama as an art form and a learning process, and to learn through doing. Theory is valued in as much as it expands artistic understandings and provides new possibilities but it is the application of theory that is most valued. Formative assessment is a significant feature of the learning process in these classrooms. Teachers use this reflection time to provide feedback and coaching, as well as offering students opportunities to reflect and respond critically to their work and the work of others.

The ways participants evaluate their own teaching practice reveals more about the teaching and learning to which they aspire. Levels of student engagement and motivation are important indicators of teacher efficacy in any classroom, but particularly so for drama, where groups of students are required to work independently and to take responsibility for artistic decisions and their practical out-workings. Several participants viewed increased independence and ownership of the work by students as a positive sign of teaching efficacy. The quality of student reflection on work during classroom discussions provides another measure of efficacy for teachers, who employed a range of methods to elicit this reflection – including whole-class discussion, journal reflections, student conferencing and questionnaires. Performance outcomes and increasing levels of artistic-aesthetic achievement are further indicators of teacher efficacy considered by participants.

Several participants believe that engaging in artistic practice and having personal performance experience are two areas that afford important benefits for drama teachers. On-going artistic experience is thought to enable greater sensitivity to creative processes, and to impact positively on the perceived status of the subject within the wider school community. Engagement with artistic communities also provides further professional learning opportunities for teachers and, given the breadth of play texts, artistic forms and technologies that could have relevance in the drama classroom, such learning is life-long.

Traditional hierarchical models of theatre often have esteemed artistic experts who have great power over the cast and companies engaging in theatrical events. These powerful figures determine aesthetic 'rights and wrongs' and participation in such a community consists of compliance and attempts to please. This is a highly competitive domain where the artistic work itself is valued more highly than any relational goals or desires to develop artistic community. In contrast, the work of these teachers is deliberately highly cooperative – despite foreseeable pressure to produce results or to compete with other schools.

This is not to argue that artistic-aesthetic achievement is not a goal or an outcome of effective drama teaching – certainly this is an area teachers use to determine their own achievement and is also the main focus of NCEA Achievement Standards. However, these teachers value the process of engaging in drama as much, if not more, than artistic-aesthetic achievement through the creation of artefacts. While committed to developing students' abilities to create and present powerful drama, these teachers work to develop artistic-aesthetic understandings through a holistic exploration of human experience, rather than through a focus on techniques and methods. These teachers continue to explore ways to dialogue with lived experience through the processes of art making and performance, and they are searching for spaces where the focus of learning and reflection – and the dialogue – can be emergent and co-constructed with their students. This dialogic emphasis deepens the learning so a focus on the artistic-aesthetic dimensions moves towards making meaning. As Palmer (1998) notes, good teachers possess a "capacity for connectedness". This includes the ability to connect with students

and to make connections between subject matter and the matter of real living. In drama education literature, this is the ability to facilitate metaxis – where dramatic worlds inform and enliven real worlds.

### ***9.2.3 What pedagogical decisions do these teachers make to achieve effective teaching and learning in drama?***

Having explored the ways drama education and effective drama teaching are conceptualised by these experienced drama teachers, this study also investigated the pedagogical approaches they utilise. From the initial analysis of the pedagogical strategies and approaches utilised by participants, two key categories emerged. At times, participants worked to create aesthetic experiences in their classrooms through their acts of teaching – so that learning experiences became aesthetic experiences; acts of pedagogical artistry on the part of the drama teacher. At other times, participants worked to draw out the creativity and agency of their students. These differing roles undertaken by the drama teacher are defined in this study as artistry and co-artistry. The distinction between artistry (creative teaching) and co-artistry (teaching for creativity) is one also found in the literature concerning the development of creativity (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004; NACCCE, 1999) and while there is considerable overlap between both roles, this distinction does provide a useful lens through which the complexities of drama teaching can be deconstructed.

Drawing on their own artistry, participants explain that they pay close attention to the creative process within teaching sequences. They use the range of creative tools at their disposal to arouse students' curiosity and engagement and work mindfully to establish a sense of creative flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) within teaching episodes. Drama strategies are creatively employed in order to heighten the aesthetic connections students have to the work. Lesson sequences often utilise the element of tension – arousing students' curiosity and emotional response to engage and motivate further exploration. As artists, teachers sometimes undertake risks in this work, including surprising students with the unexpected or working in role to draw students into dramatic worlds and “Big Questions”. In this way, the artistry of the drama teacher becomes a means to

model artistic-aesthetic processes as well as to engage, inspire and inform students.

Creating a sense of creative flow in a lesson was an important aspect of teacher artistry for participants. Because they often intend to engage students aesthetically in their lessons, several participants mentioned they pay careful attention to the way factual and/or theoretical content is addressed. At times, particularly with new or junior groups, theoretical notions of drama elements and structures are addressed after they have been explored practically. In this way, the active and playful orientation within a drama activity is preserved and theory serves to expand and develop practical understandings (particularly when in reflection) rather than interrupting creative activity. James asserts that stating learning intentions prior to a teaching sequence can have the effect of disengaging students. This careful handling of theory and factual knowledge is more challenging in senior secondary drama where active drama work must be supported by critical and well-articulated understandings. Through creative task design, the use of improvisation and the construction of aesthetically engaging lesson sequences, participants stimulate students' own artistic-aesthetic understandings, affirm the use of imagination, and activate sensory and embodied knowing.

A key intention held by these teachers concerns the development of students' artistic-aesthetic capabilities, and a number of pedagogical strategies are utilised by participants in order to meet this intention. Teachers facilitate creativity and understandings of the artistic-aesthetic process by positioning themselves as a co-artist. Creative teaching – in any discipline – has been conceptualised as “using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting and effective”, while teaching for creativity is said to involve sharing power with learners and valuing learner agency (NACCCE, 1999, p. 89). Co-artistry demands shared power and co-operation – and its success rests on a healthy relationship between teacher and students. It also includes encouraging inquiry and critical thinking, offering opportunity for learners to discuss thinking and encouraging acts of creativity (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004).

Another feature of co-artistry in the practice of these teachers relates to the task designs they employ. Teachers actively seek to give over ownership of creative work to students. Frequently, they design work that allows space for students to pursue stories and themes that are of interest to them or arise from their own worlds. This work may also be balanced with work that is more teacher-led – though, as James’ case reveals, this may still involve considerable negotiation. While inventive teaching might be seen as creative, it is responsiveness – to context, to students, to the unexpected, to the moment, that gives rise to creativity and marks a creative teacher.

In order to achieve co-artistry, time must be available for negotiation, experimentation and review, for editing and debriefing, and for meanings to be made. The work of these drama teachers is dialogic in nature and periods of critical reflection are regularly incorporated into lessons to facilitate this. These reflection times may come at the end of presentations or after trialling initial ideas and provide opportunity for formative assessment. Aroha uses the term ‘outside eye’ to capture this important phase of the artistic process, where students viewed work from the perspectives of audience, performer and playwright. Through careful use of questioning, teachers assist students to make important connections between artistic decisions, meanings and intentions. Discussion will also move to reflections on human experience, arising from the dramatic texts (including the original drama work students produce in class) encountered. Participants ensure that these reflection times are used to make complex connections between drama and their students’ lives – ultimately in a way that allows students to make connections to their own world.

As outlined in the previous section, the relational dynamic within the classroom is highly significant for these drama teachers and their students. When discussing pedagogical approaches to drama teaching, several participants emphasised that creating an effective social environment within the classroom was their first concern because participation in drama work involves taking personal, interpersonal and artistic risks. The importance of positive, productive relationships between drama teachers and their students was also emphasised by

each student group interviewed. The development of an interpersonal relationship with students was seen as vital in order to establish a trusting environment; that is where teachers and students relate to one another as individuals rather than out of impersonal teacher/student roles. Participants actively work to create immediacy and trust through their use of ego-supportive communication skills, personal disclosure and narrative skills. They frequently employ humour and playfulness to lift energy and create greater openness within the group. Participants also stressed the need for careful planning in the selection and design of classroom activities in order to build students' confidence and agency. Exposing students to risky work too soon was seen as detrimental to participation and achievement.

As well as establishing productive interpersonal relationships, these teachers actively work to establish pro-social values and behaviours within the classroom. These include encouraging openness to and acceptance of others' ideas, valuing and encouraging the willingness to work inclusively, and insisting that behaviour is respectful and constructive. While student groups may vary in terms of their ability to function pro-socially, these behaviours and attitudes are frequently taught explicitly to students through ensemble-based games and exercises.

Establishing positive interpersonal relationships is a pedagogical strategy designed to achieve the ultimate goal of high achievement in drama education. Participants were clear about their boundaries in this and the need to keep the learning at the centre. For instance, Aroha explains that knowing she must assess students' work and be able to 'pull rank' helps her to keep a professional distance. A number of participants emphasised that facilitation of drama work is not a passive or saccharine activity. They do not believe that providing time, space, encouragement and creative stimuli is enough for students to achieve in Drama. Instead, they believe that students need to be challenged and disciplined in order to achieve. They have high expectations of what their students can accomplish artistically, academically and socially. Each participant in this study has a firm classroom management style and clear boundaries – while also establishing warm, affirming relationships with students. Ultimately they wish to increase the sense

of agency students experience in artistic-aesthetic creation and in the learning process.

#### **9.2.4 How do these teachers navigate tensions that arise?**

This investigation has identified a number of tensions for New Zealand drama teachers. Several tensions arise as a result of the policy environment in New Zealand – that is, due to certain characteristics of the national curriculum and its assessment, and the out-workings of these policies within school contexts.

A number of participants agreed with critics of the current curriculum framing and codification of the discipline of Drama, fearing that teaching practice dominated by concerns with measurable behavioural outcomes results in a technocratic delivery of drama education that stifles creativity. Such an approach runs counter to creative, imaginative and emergent interactions that feature so strongly in drama education experiences. There has been strong opposition from arts education theorists such as Greene (1977) and Taylor (1998, 2006a) to a model of school curriculum drawn from a positivist paradigm; that is a model that quantifies and predicts measurable, sequential outcomes or ‘standards’. Creative teaching approaches require more time than transmission models of teaching require. Aesthetic experiences happen in an expanse of time – moods settle, words hang in the air – and so making space within allotted course time is vital in order for drama teachers to realise these pedagogical possibilities and to facilitate creative achievement in their students. Dialogic learning requires space for discussion and reflection. Furthermore, participants in this study emphasise the need to be in relationship with their students – and this too requires time and the investment of emotional energy. Drama education has attempted to come in from the margins of school curricula, but there are concerns of a positivist conceptualisation of teaching and learning could paralyse or destroy the best that the field offers (Z. Brooks, 2010; O'Connor, 2009b; Taylor, 1998).

NCEA Achievement Standards in Drama and the prescribed assessment activities accompanying them initially have had a marked influence on planning and delivery of work in drama at secondary level, requiring drama teachers to engage closely

with the assessment requirements. Those participants who work in the secondary sector have found themselves burdened by the administration of the assessment system and constrained by the demands of delivering a programme assessable by the Achievement Standards. They describe their early work in implementing NCEA as “driven by assessment”. Heavily prescribed courses can impact negatively on the creative process. There is less openness, flexibility and time for development, exploration and refining of creative ideas.

This study has identified a number of ways drama teachers are attempting to adapt their programmes and approach in order to put “assessment in its place”. One emergent theme was that there had been a period of time where teachers had worked to align their classroom practice to address the requirements of NCEA Drama Achievement Standards and participants felt they were now returning to their previous best practice. Participants in this study were cognizant of the challenges this poses to their classroom practice. Some seek to preserve a student-centred approach to teaching and learning in drama by writing new assessment activities that capture the interests of their students and address the specific contexts they work in. Several participants have developed regular times for structured formative assessment practices to occur. These reflective times are used to develop students’ abilities to critique and justify artistic-aesthetic decisions. Teachers value these times more than periods of summative assessment, due to the important teaching opportunities they afforded and the discussion students engage in.

Grace attempts to avoid an overly-prescribed and linear programme by developing rich, broad contexts for drama learning. In these contexts, the learning can move in a number of directions in response to student interest, or collaborative interests, providing greater choice and agency for students. These rich contexts allow for deeper integration of learning rather than the atomisation of learning (such as the learning encouraged in the NCEA Achievement Standards criteria, for example). Several participants have created more space in their programmes by offering fewer credits in NCEA, in order to allow more time for exploration and responsiveness. As a group of experienced teachers who have gained high levels of



trust from senior management in their schools, these teachers are perhaps more empowered to negotiate school policy, in order to design their own parameters and to find what works for Drama in their particular school context.

Another area of tension for participants arises due to the pedagogical demands of their teaching practice. *Chapters 7 and 8* have outlined the highly relational nature of these pedagogies and identified the considerable emotional and interpersonal investment participants make. Students and participants have emphasised the need for drama teachers to bring enthusiasm and passion to their daily work in the classroom. Managing the conflicts that arise in such a way as to keep drawing increased participation from students and deepening the emotional safety experienced by groups requires considerable self-management and emotional intelligence. Emotional challenges for a drama learning community can also arise between young people, who are attempting to collaborate amidst the chaos of the initial stages of the creative process, while managing the terrors of a looming public performance. For sole-charge drama teachers, relationships must also be maintained with multiple year groups across a number of years. While this can help to deepen and strengthen relationships, it does require considerable emotional commitment and can also bring ongoing challenges.

Participants in this study acknowledge the importance of maintaining warm relationships with their students. In reflecting on the impact of NCEA Drama on her teaching, Grace identified the requirement that teachers internally assess students as being a challenge to her relationships in the classroom. The shift from being an encourager, motivator, problem-solver and story-teller to a formal examiner was an uncomfortable one at times. Other participants acknowledged that NCEA Achievement Standards and the emphasis on performance skills contained in several standards did not allow them to formally reward students who had made considerable progress in their level of participation and contribution in drama, yet had not manifested this in performance tasks. Returning a 'not achieved' result to these students did not reflect the value teachers placed on this progress.

Phillip identified another source of relational challenge occurring on a departmental level. Maintaining a classroom culture where positive relationships are emphasised and the ensemble-based learning approach is upheld can be an ongoing challenge within a drama department, particularly when working with beginning teachers and student groups who were new to the school. This could potentially undermine the established culture in the department. As a result, considerable professional development and ongoing mentoring of beginning teachers was required, greatly increasing the workload burden for those in middle management. James has encountered relational challenges of a different kind, where parents act as gate-keepers to the kinds of stories and themes they are happy for children to explore in performance – even though this content has been developed by children in an intensely collaborative, student-centred and dialogic way.

Participants in this study share an appreciation for the art of theatre, for the craft of making theatre and for the pedagogies that enable this to be taught. Their work in drama is shaped by the communities they work in and the students they serve, as well as by the national curriculum and assessment programmes. They work hard to navigate the tensions between the demands of national and school policies and their private vision for drama education, and continue to develop their practice in order that the curriculum and its assessment should serve the needs of the specific learners and community that they are engaged with.

### **9.3 Contributions to knowledge**

Within the international literature for drama education, research into classroom practice of Canadian, British and Australian drama teachers exists (Anderson, 2003, 2004b; McLauchlan, 2011; Schonmann, 2009; P. Wright & Gerber, 2004) though this is not extensive and few studies offer the thick description of classroom practice provided in this study. Furthermore, few studies have investigated the nature of drama education enacted in New Zealand classrooms. The stories in this study of practice make a contribution to both the New Zealand drama education community and the international drama education community by

providing insight into the ways experienced teachers are interpreting the mandated curriculum and negotiating the tensions of the New Zealand policy environment.

An in-depth account of the pedagogical practice of experienced drama teachers is provided in the study, revealing the significance of pedagogical knowledge to teaching and learning in drama. While something of the breadth and depth of drama education practice is articulated in the Learning Area statements and achievement objectives found in current policy documents, the practice demonstrated in this study reveals the centrality of pedagogical content knowledge in order for teachers to achieve the artistic, transformative and emancipatory outcomes theorised in the literature. These accounts also offer rich examples of curriculum content drama teachers are selecting and working with in their classrooms.

Given that drama is a relatively new addition to the national curriculum, critical dialogue between policy makers, educationalists and drama educationalists must continue to develop in order for drama education to flourish within school settings. This study makes a useful contribution to this dialogue by examining the practice of drama teachers in New Zealand classrooms in relation to key areas of contemporary educational discourses, including socio-cultural theory, theory and literature in creativity, and historical and contemporary drama education theory. Utilising these contemporary discourses to theorise drama education enables educationalists and policy makers from outside the discipline to gain a greater appreciation of the nature of drama education and to appreciate the significance of pedagogical practice to achievement in drama. Furthermore, these detailed accounts of what it is drama education teaches reveal just how instrumental the subject is as a means to address the core vision, principles and values that are the foundation of the New Zealand national curriculum.

This study offers the drama education community an informed account of current practice in six New Zealand classrooms and of the salient issues facing these experienced drama teachers. The research confirms that these teachers engage in

intentional pedagogical acts such as the use of artistry, acts of co-artistry and relational pedagogy to establish effective learning communities in school-based drama. These pedagogies align with those identified in international literature. Through the thick description and multiple readings in the study, the complex acts of teaching occurring in the daily work of New Zealand drama teachers can be seen; acts of co-artistry and artistry are illustrated in terms of curriculum delivery and classroom interactions. Likewise, relational pedagogy is identified and deconstructed in terms of classroom interactions, dispositions and behaviours. This analysis of teachers' practice and their professional learning histories has implications for training and professional learning for drama teachers and heightens our understanding of the impact of the new curriculum on drama education.

#### **9.4 Implications for practice**

Some drama educators have raised the concerns that, due to the rapid growth of Drama, the increase of new drama teachers, and the limitations of pre-service teacher education offerings to prepare teachers, what will feature in Drama classrooms will be impoverished. Anderson (2004b) believes that supporting teachers to harness the transformative power in drama should be a key focus for pre-service and in-service training and development. While the development of Drama within the Arts learning area (Ministry of Education, 2000) has meant pre-service drama teachers are coming to the classroom with increased understandings of the art form of drama and of drama as pedagogy, inadequate provision of pre-service drama education in New Zealand and the in-flux of new drama teachers due to the inclusion of drama in NCEA may undermine the quality of drama teaching in New Zealand schools. Greenwood (2009) wonders if New Zealand drama teachers will be strong in their knowledge of the craft of Drama but limited in their understandings about what this craft could be used for. The promise for drama education in New Zealand lies in the practice of its teachers and the alignment between curricula, its assessment and the field of drama education, which encompasses both art form and critical pedagogy. How can we ensure that beginning drama teachers acquire the skills and understandings that will enable

them to be effective drama teachers? Bringing new drama teachers into the discourses within the field – through professional learning networks, pre-service, in-service and professional learning opportunities – has become all the more important given the risks that current NCEA assessment poses for drama. Due to performativity pressure and the administrative burden drama teachers face, there is increased risk of assessment becoming the dominant driver of curriculum selection, including a tendency towards a technical focus on theatre arts over other knowledge outcomes. There is also further risk that drama education will be teacher-driven and that curriculum delivery will be highly-prescribed, increasing the barriers to creative teaching practice and to the teaching of creativity. The work of the six participants in this study, and the issues explored throughout, make a strong contribution to the work of preparing beginning drama teachers. These accounts provide examples of rich classroom practice in action and give voice to the tensions encountered and to the solutions explored by classroom practitioners.

There are implications for the collective practice of New Zealand drama educators. For drama education to mature in New Zealand, we must continue to offer professional learning opportunities that will expose new teachers to the breadth and depth within the field. Participants in this study acknowledge a range of influences on the development of their professional practice, including exposure to a variety of theatre practitioners working in a range of contexts. Exposure to those approaches to drama education that are focused on emancipatory outcomes, such as those found in applied theatre and other process drama approaches (including the Mantle of Expert), as well as ongoing professional dialogue and critical reflection on policy and practice, is needed in order to empower drama teachers – particularly those who are working within school environments where relational pedagogy and process objectives are not seen as vital to the education of young people. Professional learning opportunities focused solely on administration of NCEA assessment are of use to the everyday work of drama teachers, but if these are the only opportunities on offer there is a risk of reinforcing the assessment-driven practice which participants in this study are working hard to move away

from. Participation in these professional networks is an aspect of teacher development that school management needs to actively support and encourage.

## **9.5 Implications for policy**

This study has documented the practice of six experienced drama teachers who, in general terms, find the current New Zealand curriculum policy sufficient in enabling the delivery of quality drama education. While the Drama learning area is strongly focused in the artistic-aesthetic domain, the work of these drama teachers addresses the whole of the curriculum document. There is a strong emphasis on the development of pro-social key competencies and education for democratic citizenship within the conceptualisations of drama education and its purposes. There is concern amongst drama educators that because explicit connections between the achievement objectives in Drama and pro-social outcomes have not been made, new drama teachers may fail to realise effective drama education in schools. The dominance of behavioural outcomes and the pressures of accountability and performativity can encourage overly-prescribed curriculum delivery and place emphasis on technical aspects of drama education.

Given the breadth of educational outcomes for drama education, a broader model of assessment of learning must continue to be negotiated. A number of further questions arise as a result of this study. For example, how might schools nurture and acknowledge the development of process-oriented outcomes through the Arts? Could NCEA Achievement Standards in Drama also assess process-orientated outcomes, giving greater recognition to the attainment of ensemble skills and pro-social behaviours? How can educational policy better support the pedagogies that are employed in drama education? How can we continue to engage in critical dialogue in order to move curricula beyond a focus on technical knowledge and challenge the dominance of scientism in educational policy? Ongoing professional dialogue about the current classification and framing of drama education within the curriculum, its assessment, and its ability to capture the centrality of pro-social outcomes is recommended if New Zealand policy is to effectively support quality arts and drama education.

There are important implications for schools wishing to promote the development of creativity arising from this study. As participants in this study confirm, creativity and collaboration require trust, emotional safety and accountability. Developing these qualities in the classroom environment requires time and sustained interaction. This study reveals the significance of relational pedagogy to effective teaching and learning in drama, including artistic-aesthetic achievement. Furthermore, creativity is best nurtured through learning experiences that are open-ended, flexible and responsive. This approach to curriculum and planning goes against trends in theories of effective teaching, such as those that recommend having comprehensive, linear plans and articulating clear learning intentions to students before undertaking the learning. Schools that have policy statements that enable sustained periods of arts exploration and allow arts experiences to be integrated throughout the curriculum (particularly at primary level), and have school managers with an understanding of the diverse pedagogies and planning that enables effective drama teaching, will be able to minimise barriers for their teachers.

Ensuring that beginning and pre-service teachers acquire understandings of the most effective pedagogies for drama education is an area of concern for New Zealand education. This is exacerbated in a climate where in-service arts-focused teacher education is poorly funded by the government, many pre-service courses in teacher education are offering fewer hours in subject disciplines, and drama must compete with the three other arts grouped in the Arts Learning Area of the curriculum. There are no current government initiatives to preserve and develop the quality of arts programmes in New Zealand schools. This is despite the evidence regarding the impact of Arts education on communities and student achievement (Deasy, 2002; Ewing, 2010; Matarasso, 1997; NACCCE, 1999), the relevance of Arts pedagogies to culturally-responsive teaching (V. Aitken, et al., 2007; Alton-Lee, 2003; Bishop, 2012), and the potential this offers in addressing those populations most likely to fail in New Zealand schools.

## 9.6 Suggestions for further research

This study offers a benchmark of the practice of experienced New Zealand drama teachers at this time. The research presents detailed accounts of drama education these teachers are enacting within the constraints of curriculum and classroom resources, but has not investigated whether such practice is typical. Further research into the practice of a larger sample of New Zealand drama teachers may reveal further variations of practice as well as enabling greater confirmation and generalisation of these results. This could include an expanded investigation into the perceived value of drama education drawing on the views of students, teachers, schools and the wider community. Such research might also attempt to develop an evaluative measure of drama teaching practice. This study has included the voices of drama students and inquired into their experiences of teaching and learning in participants' classrooms. Gathering more in-depth accounts of student experience may also offer greater insight into the relational nature of learning in the drama classroom and perhaps into the development of identity as members of a community of drama practice. If New Zealand education wishes to strengthen creativity, arts industry and democratic citizenship, large-scale quantitative research into the nature and benefits of quality arts education practice is also vital. Such research evidence will add weight to qualitative studies, which argue developments in policy and practice are necessary to accommodate the unique demands of arts pedagogies and creative processes.

Given the tensions identified in this study, further investigation into the philosophies and pedagogical practice of beginning drama teachers would make a valuable contribution to the local context, providing an indication of the kinds of professional learning and pre-service teacher education most needed. Investigations into the provision of initial teacher education and in-service professional learning opportunities would also help to clarify tensions and needs. Another area for future research arising from this study concerns the dynamic of teachers aligning their practice closely with the priorities identified in curriculum and assessment policy and then moving (or returning) to more creative and open practice. Understanding more about this process of negotiating policy demands



may assist New Zealand drama teachers to avoid impoverished drama practice. This might also include research into the barriers to assessment approaches that address process objectives; outcomes that might better represent the breadth of the field of drama education.

In order to realise more of the transformative potential of drama education, further studies into the ways teachers are facilitating practical and emancipatory learning within the drama classroom would also contribute to the field. This might include further investigation into the kinds of contexts identified in this study and the acts of teaching that enable drama students to achieve deeper insight, empathy and criticality. Such investigation might also focus on the ways schools support communities of Arts learners and the impact of participating in these communities.

## **9.7 Final thoughts**

Acts of transformation, enlightenment and enlivenment that occur in drama classroom settings arise from 'smaller' acts of teaching – the choice of a play-text; a decision to begin here, not there; sharing a moment of laughter or allowing a moment of stillness to settle. The daily practice of the teachers in this study involves such artistry, along with considerable investment of energy and time, passion and professionalism, creativity and authentic connection. Professional learning for teachers is ongoing and, as with creative ventures, there is a sense in which we have never quite finished. Paulo Freire (2006/1970) says, "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (p. 72). This study of the work of six leading drama teachers is part of this 'hopeful inquiry'; a contribution to the ongoing professional dialogue that will continue to be most important for drama education in (and beyond) New Zealand schools.



## References

- Abbs, P. (1989). *A is for aesthetic: Essays on creative and aesthetic education*. Lewes: Falmer.
- Abbs, P. (1993). Reflections on aesthetic education. In E. P. Errington (Ed.), *Arts education: Beliefs, practices and possibilities*. Geelong, Vic.: Deakin University Press.
- Abbs, P. (1994). *The educational imperative: A defence of Socratic and aesthetic learning*. London: Falmer Press.
- Abbs, P. (2003). *Against the flow*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Ackroyd, J. (2000). Applied theatre: Problems and possibilities. *Applied Theatre Researcher*, 1, 1-12.
- Aitken, G., & Sinnema, C. (2008). Effective pedagogy in social sciences: Best evidence synthesis. Wellington, NZ: Ministry of Education.
- Aitken, V. (2011). *Everything links to everything really doesn't it?: Drama and learning in mantle of the expert*. Paper presented at the Drama New Zealand Conference 2011, Auckland.
- Aitken, V., Fraser, D., & Price, G. (2007). Negotiating the spaces: Relational pedagogy and power in drama teaching. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 8(14), 1-18.
- Alexander, R. (2004). *Towards dialogic teaching: Rethinking classroom talk*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge, Dialogos.
- Alexander, R., Rose, J., & Woodhead, C. (1992). *Curriculum organisation and classroom practice in primary schools: A discussion paper*. London: Department of Education and Science.
- Alison, J. (2005). *Teachers talk about NCEA: Research report on focus groups with secondary teachers (summary version)*. Wellington: Post Primary Teachers Association.
- Allen, J. P., Weissberg, R. P., & Hawkins, J. (1989). The relation between values and self- efficacy in early adolescence. *Developmental Psychology*, 25(3), 458-464.
- Alton-Lee, A. (2003). *Quality teaching for diverse students in schooling: Best evidence synthesis. Report to the Ministry of Education*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Anderson, M. (2002). *Journeys in teacher professional development: narratives of four drama educators*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia.
- Anderson, M. (2003). 'I took the road less travelled and that has made all the difference.': the professional journeys of two primary drama educators. *NJ (Drama Australia Journal)*, 27(1), 5-14.
- Anderson, M. (2004a). Drama futures: Possibilities for research, advocacy and policy in the 21st Century. *NJ (Drama Australia Journal)*, 28(2), 31-39.
- Anderson, M. (2004b). What is a drama teacher? Some stories from praxis. In L. A. McCammon & D. McLauchlan (Eds.), *Universal mosaic of drama and theatre: The IDEA 2004 dialogues* (pp. 99-108). Ottawa, Canada
- Anderson, M. (2012). *Masterclass in drama education: Transforming learning and teaching*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

- Artaud, A. (1982). *The theatre and its double*. London: John Calder.
- Aultman, L. P., Williams-Johnson, M. R., & Schutz, P. A. (2009). Boundary dilemmas in teacher–student relationships: Struggling with “the line”. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 636–646.
- Baker-Sennett, J., Matusov, E., & Rogoff, B. (2008). Children’s planning of classroom plays with adult or child direction. *Social Development*, 17(4), 998-1018.
- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Balin, S. (1993). Theatre, drama education and the role of the aesthetic. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 25(5), 423-432.
- Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 18(2), 215-228.
- Bamford, A. (2006). *The wow factor: Global research compendium on the impact of arts in education*. Berlin: Waxmann Verlag.
- Battye, S. (2005). E hao ki te taonga pounamu: Seek the revered treasure - a trip down memory lane and a peep into the future of drama in education. *Drama New Zealand: Conference Journal*, 29(1), 11-21.
- Beetlestone, F. (1998). *Creative children, imaginative teaching*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Belenky, M. F., Clinchy, B. M., Goldberger, N. R., & Tarule, J. M. (1986). *Women’s ways of knowing: The development of self, voice and mind*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bergum, V. (2003). Relational pedagogy: Embodiment, improvisation, and interdependence. *Nursing Philosophy*, 4(2), 121-128.
- Bernstein, B. (1996). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Bishop, R. (2012). A culturally responsive pedagogy of relations. In C. McGee & D. Fraser (Eds.), *The professional practice of teaching* (pp. 185-205). North Shore, Auckland: Cengage Learning Australia.
- Bishop, R., & Berryman, M. (2006). *Culture speaks: Cultural relationships and classroom learning*. Wellington: Huia Publishers.
- Bishop, R., Berryman, M., Tiakiwai, S., & Richardson, C. (2001). *Te toi huareha*. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.minedu.govt.nz>.
- Bishop, R., Berryman, M., Tiakiwai, S., & Richardson, C. (2003). *Te kotahitanga: The experiences of year 9 and 10 Māori students in mainstream classrooms*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Bishop, R., & Glynn, T. (1999). *Culture counts: Changing power relations in education*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998). Assessment and classroom learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*, 5(1), 7-74.
- Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the oppressed*. London: Pluto Press.
- Boal, A. (1992). *Games for actors and non-actors*. London: Routledge.
- Boal, A. (1996). Politics, education and change. In J. O'Toole & K. Donelan (Eds.), *Drama, culture and empowerment: The IDEA dialogues*. Brisbane: IDEA Publications.

- Bogart, A., & Landau, T. (2005). *The viewpoints book: A practical guide to viewpoints and composition*. New York: Theatre Communications Group.
- Bolstad, R. (2010). *The contributions of learning in the arts to educational, social and economic outcomes (Part 1)*. Wellington: Ministry of Culture and Heritage Retrieved from <http://www.mch.govt.nz/research-publications/our-research-reports/contributions-learning-arts-educational-social-and-econom>.
- Bolstad, R., & Gilbert, J. (2008). *Disciplining and drafting, or 21st century learning? Rethinking the New Zealand senior secondary curriculum for the future*. Wellington: NZCER Press.
- Bolstad, R., Gilbert, J., McDowall, S., Bull, A., Boyd, S., & Hipkins, R. (2012). *Supporting future-oriented learning and teaching - a New Zealand perspective*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Bolton, G. (1985). Changes in thinking about drama in education. *Theory Into Practice*, 24, 151-157.
- Bolton, G. (1992). *New perspectives on classroom drama*. Hempstead: Simon & Schuster Education.
- Bolton, G. (1998). *Acting in classroom drama: A critical analysis*. Oakhill: Trentham Books.
- Bolton, G. (2003). *Dorothy Heathcote's story*. Staffordshire, U.K.: Trentham Books.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital (English trans.). In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook for theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258).
- Bourdieu, P. (1996). Understanding. *Theory, culture and society*, 13(2), 17-37.
- Bowell, P., & Heap, B. (2001). *Planning process drama*. London: David Fulton.
- Boyask, D. (1999). The Aotearoa New Zealand association of art educators response to the arts in the New Zealand curriculum draft. Wellington: ANZAAE.
- Brecht, B. (1938/1995). The popular and the realistic. In R. Drain (Ed.), *Twentieth century theatre: A sourcebook* (pp. 188-191). London and New York: Routledge.
- Brecht, B. (1987). *Brecht on theatre*. London: Eyre Methuen.
- Brook, P. (1968). *The empty space*. London: MacGibbon & Kee.
- Brooks, L., & Scott, C. (2000). Teachers' professional self-concept. In S. Dinham & C. Scott (Eds.), *Teaching in context*. Camberwell: The Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Brooks, Z. (2010). *Assessing creativity: teachers' perceptions of the effect of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) on teaching and learning in the secondary classroom in New Zealand*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- Brophy, J., & Alleman, J. (2002). Learning and teaching about cultural universals in primary-grade social studies. *Elementary School Journal*, 103(2), 99-114.
- Bruner, J. (2002). *Making stories: Law, literature, life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bundy, P. (1999). *Dramatic tension: Towards an understanding of 'tension of intimacy'*. Doctoral thesis, Griffith University, Brisbane.
- Bundy, P. (2005). Asking the right questions: Accessing children's experience of aesthetic engagement *Applied Theatre Researcher*, 6(12).

- Burleson, B. R., & Samter, W. (1990). Effects of cognitive complexity on the perceived importance of communication skills in friends. *Communicatio Research*, 17, 165-182.
- Burman, J. (2001). *Risky writing: Self-disclosure and self-transformation in the classroom*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Burton, B. (1991). *The act of learning: The drama-theatre continuum in the classroom*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.
- Burton, B., & O'Toole, J. (2005). Enhanced forum theatre: Where Boal's theatre of the oppressed meets process drama in the classroom. *NJ (Drama Australia Journal)*, 29(2), 49-57.
- Burton, J., Horowitz, R., & Abeles, H. (1999). Learning in and through the arts: Curriculum implications In E. B. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning*. Washington DC: The Arts Education Partnership & The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.
- Bushnell, P. R. (1992). *The development of grade related criteria in sixth form certificate drama*. Christchurch: University of Canterbury.
- Byres, J. (2006). *Positioning, constructing and assessing visual arts: Primary teachers' perspectives*. Masters of Teaching and Learning, Christchurch College of Education, Christchurch, New Zealand.
- Catterall, J. (2009). *Doing well and doing good by doing art: The long term effects of sustained involvement in the visual and performing arts during high school*. Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles Imagination Group.
- Catterall, J., & Waldorf, L. (1999). Chicago arts partnerships in education: Summary evaluation. In E. B. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning* (pp. 47-62): The Arts Education Partnership, The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.
- Cayanus, J. L. (2004). Effective instructional practice: Using teacher self-disclosure as an instructional tool. *Communication Teacher*, 18(1), 6-9.
- Chambers, J. H. (1989). The aesthetic-artistic domain, criticism, and teaching. *Journal of Aesthetic education*, 23(3).
- Chizhik, A. W. (2009). Literacy for playwriting or playwriting for literacy. *Education and Urban Society*, 41(3), 387-409.
- Clandinin, J., & Connelly, M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Claxton, G. (1999). Moving the cursor of consciousness: Cognitive science and human welfare. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 6(2-3), 219-222.
- Codd, J. (2005). Introduction: is there a 'Third Way' for education policy? In J. Codd & K. Sullivan (Eds.), *Educational policy directions in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Southbank, Victoria: Thomson Dunmore Press.
- Collins, P. (2011, August 8). The 8 C's of drama [electronic mailing list message]. Retrieved from dramanet@artsonline.tki.org.nz
- Connell, J. P., & Wellborn, J. G. (1991). Competence, autonomy, and relatedness: A motivational analysis of self-system processes. In M. R. Gunnar & L. A. Sroufe (Eds.), *Self processes in development: Minnesota symposium on child psychology* (Vol. 29, pp. 244-254). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cooper, P., & McIntyre, D. (1996a). *Effective teaching and learning: Teachers and pupils perspectives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

- Cooper, P., & McIntyre, D. (1996b). The importance of sharing power in classroom learning. In M. Hughes (Ed.), *Teaching and learning in changing times* (pp. 88-108). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cornbleth, C. (1990). *Curriculum in context*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Courtney, R. (1974). *Play, drama and thought: The intellectual background to drama in education* (3rd ed.). London: Cassell & Collier Macmillan Publishers.
- Craft, A. (1996). Nourishing educator creativity: A holistic approach to CPD. *British Journal of In-service Education*, 22(3), 309-322.
- Craft, A. (2000). *Creativity across the primary curriculum: Framing and developing practice*. London: Routledge.
- Craft, A. (2005). *Creativity in schools: Tensions and dilemmas*. Canada: Routledge.
- Craft, A., Jeffrey, B., & Leibling, M. (2001). *Creativity in education*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Crooks, T. (1988). The impact of classroom evaluation practices on students. *Review of Educational Research*, 58(4), 438-481.
- Cropley, D. H. (2011). The dark side of creativity. In S. R. Pritzker & M. A. Runco (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of creativity* (2nd ed., Vol. 1, pp. 351-357). San Diego: Elsevier, Inc.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage Publications Inc.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1998). *Finding flow: The psychology of engagement with everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Cusworth, R., & Simons, J. (1997). *Beyond the script: Drama in the classroom*. Newtown: PETA.
- Darragh, T. (2011, November 16). Level 1 devising standard [electronic mailing list message]. Retrieved from dramanet@artsonline.tki.org.nz
- Davis, A. (1995). Criterion-referenced assessment and the development of knowledge and understanding. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 29(1), 3-21.
- Davis, D., & Lawrence, C. (Eds.). (1986). *Gavin Bolton: Selected writings*. London: Longman.
- Davis, S. (2008). Coming of age: Dialogues about “dramawise” and the elements of drama. *NJ (Drama Australia Journal)*, 31(2), 59-71.
- Deans, J., O’Toole, J., Raphael, J., & Young, S. (2009). Art embodied and disembodied: Expression, representation, and reflection. In C. Sinclair, N. Jeanneret & J. O’Toole (Eds.), *Education in the arts: Teaching and learning in the contemporary curriculum*. Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press.
- Deasy, R. J. (2002). *Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership.
- Delors, J. (Ed.). (1998). *Education for the twenty-first century*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).
- DeLuca, C. (2010). The capacity of assessment in arts education. *Encounters on Education*, 11(Fall), 3-12.

- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The research act* (Revised ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: Free Press.
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience* (2005 ed.). New York: Penguin Group.
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan.
- Dickinson, R., Neelands, J., & School, S. (2006). *Improving your primary school through drama*. London: David Fulton.
- Donaldson, J. (2012). *Between two worlds: An examination of the tensions of practice encountered by secondary school music teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North.
- Donelan, K. (2009). Drama in the classroom: A national perspective. *NJ (Drama Australia Journal)*, 33(1), 46-54.
- Douglas, J. (1985). *Creative interviewing*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dunn, J. (2006). The imagination at work within the dramatic play of adolescent girls. *The Applied Theatre Researcher/IDEA Journal*, 7, 1-13.
- Edmiston, B., & Enciso, P. (2003). Reflections and refractions of meaning: Dialogic approaches to reading with classroom drama. In J. Flood (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (2nd ed., pp. 868-880). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Efland, A. (2004). Arts and the creation of mind: Eisner's contributions to arts education. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 38(4), 71-80.
- Egan, K. (1986). *Teaching as story telling*. London, Ontario: Althouse Press.
- Egan, K. (1991). Relevance and the romantic imagination. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 16(1), 58-71.
- Eisner, E. (1974). Is the artist in the school program effective? *Art Education*, 27(2), 19-23.
- Eisner, E. (1985). Aesthetic modes of knowing. In E. Eisner (Ed.), *Learning and teaching the ways of knowing* (pp. 23-36). Illinois: The National Society for the Study of Education.
- Eisner, E. (1991/1998). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Eisner, E. (2002a). From episteme to phronesis to artistry in the study and improvement of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18(4), 375-385.
- Eisner, E. (2002b). *The educational imagination* (3rd ed.). New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Eraut, M. (2000). Editor's Introduction: Design of initial teacher education. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33, 453-456.
- Ewing, R. (2010). The arts and Australian education: realising potential. In S. Mellor (Ed.), *Australian education review No 58*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Ewing, R., & Simons, J. (2004). *Beyond the script: drama in the classroom*. Newtown: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Fastier, M. (2001). The evolution of achievement standards based assessment in the New Zealand senior secondary school context. *New Zealand Journal of Geography*, 111, 16-23.



- Fastier, M. (2009). Managing NCEA assessment practice more effectively. *New Zealand Geographer*, 65, 147-153.
- Fischer, G., Giaccardi, E., Eden, H., Sugimoto, M., & Ye, Y. (2005). Beyond binary choices: Integrating individual and social creativity. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 63(4-5), 482-512.
- Fisher, R. (2004). What is creativity? In R. Fisher & M. Williams (Eds.), *Unlocking creativity*. London: David Fulton.
- Fiske, E. B. (Ed.). (1999). *Champions of change: The impact of arts on learning*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership.
- Fleming, M. (2001). *Teaching drama in primary and secondary schools: An integrated approach*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (1994). Interviewing: The art of science. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 361-376). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2005). The interview: From neutral stance to political involvement. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 695-727). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Franks, A. (1996). Drama education, the body, and representation (or, the mystery of the missing bodies). *Research in Drama Education: the journal of applied theatre and performance*, 1(1), 105-120.
- Fraser, D. (2012). The work and artistry of teaching. In C. McGee & D. Fraser (Eds.), *The professional practice of teaching* (4th ed., pp. 55-75). South Melbourne, Vic: Cengage Learning Australia Pty Limited.
- Fraser, D., Henderson, C., & Price, G. (2004). The art of the matter: The development and extension of ways of knowing in the arts. Retrieved from <http://www.tlri.org.nz>
- Fraser, D., Price, G., & Aitken, V. (2007). Relational pedagogy and the Arts. *Set: Research information for Teachers*, 1(2007), 42-47.
- Fraser, D., & Spiller, D. (2001). Effective teachers. In C. McGee & D. Fraser (Eds.), *The professional practice of teaching* (2nd ed.). Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Freire, P. (1973). *Education: The practice of freedom*. London: Writers and Readers Publishing Co-op.
- Freire, P. (1985). *The politics of education: Culture, power and liberation*. London: Macmillan.
- Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Freire, P. (2004). *Pedagogy of hope*. London: Continuum.
- Freire, P. (2006/1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th anniversary ed.). New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Fryer, M. (1996). *Creative teaching and learning*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Frymier, A. B., & Houser, M. L. (2000). The teacher–student relationship as an interpersonal relationship. *Communication Education*, 49, 207-219.
- Gallagher, K. (2001). *Drama education in the lives of girls: Imagining possibilities*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Gardner, H. (1993). *The unschooled mind*. London: Fontana Press.
- Garrett, P. (2009). Arts in Australia's national school curriculum — Media release. Retrieved from <http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/garrett/2009/mr20090417b.html>

- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, C. (1988). *Work and lives: The anthropologist as author*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gibson, R., & Anderson, M. (2008). Touching the void: Arts education research in Australia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 28(1), 103–112.
- Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (Third ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Goldstein, G. S., & Benassi, V. A. (1994). The relation between teacher self-disclosure and student classroom participation. *Teaching of Psychology*, 21(4), 212 – 217.
- Goodenow, C. (1993). Classroom belonging among early adolescent students: Relationships to motivation and achievement. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 13, 21-43.
- Goodlad, S., & Hirst, B. (1989). *Peer tutoring: A guide to learning by teaching*. London: Kogan Page.
- Greene, M. (1977). The artistic-aesthetic and curriculum. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 6(4), 283-296.
- Greene, M. (1988). *The dialectic of freedom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Greenwood, J. (2003). Drama as a way of knowing. In E. M. Grierson & J. E. Mansfield (Eds.), *The arts in education: Critical perspectives from Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 119-136). Palmerston North: Dunmore Press Ltd.
- Greenwood, J. (2006). *It looks so simple: An examination of the complex scholarships of teaching*. Paper presented at the NZARE National Conference 2006 "Manaakitanga: Feel the Spirit" 5-8 December, Rotorua, New Zealand.
- Greenwood, J. (2009). Drama education in New Zealand: A coming of age? *The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 14(2), 245-260.
- Greenwood, J. (2010). Road blocks, road works and continuing explorations of the terrain: An examination of drama in education in New Zealand in relation to the UNESCO Road Map. *Encounters on Education*, 11(Fall), 67-79.
- Greenwood, J. (2011). Aesthetic learning and learning through the aesthetic. In S. Schonmann (Ed.), *Key Concepts in Theatre/Drama Education* (pp. 47-52). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Grumet, M. (2007). The beast in the matrix. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*, 9(1 & 2), 235-245.
- Grundy, S. (1987). *Curriculum: Product of praxis*. Sussex: The Falmer Press.
- Habermas, J. (1972). *Knowledge and human interests* (2nd ed.). London: Heinemann.
- Hager, P., Gonczi, A., & Athanasou, J. (1994). General issues about assessment of competence. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 19(1), 3-16.
- Hall, C. (1999). National Certificate of Educational Achievement: Issues of reliability, validity and manageability. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education*, 9, 173-196.
- Halliwell, S. (1993). Teacher creativity and teacher education. In D. Bridges & T. Kerry (Eds.), *Developing teachers professionally*. London: Routledge.
- Hansen, D. T. (2005). Creativity in teaching and building a meaningful life as a teacher. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 39(2 Summer 2005), 57-68.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times*. London: Cassell.

- Hargreaves, A. (2000). Mixed emotions: Teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16, 811–826.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fulton, M. G. (Eds.). (1992). *Understanding teacher development*. London: Cassell.
- Haseman, B. (2002). The leaderly process drama and the artistry of “rip, mix and burn”. In B. Rasmussen & A.-L. Ostern (Eds.), *Playing betwixt and between: the IDEA dialogues 2001* (pp. 234-240). Bergen: International Drama Theatre Education.
- Haseman, B., & O'Toole, J. (1986). *Dramawise: An introduction to the elements of drama*. Richmond, Australia: Heinemann.
- Heathcote, D. (1984). Drama as a process for change. In L. Johnson & C. O'Neill (Eds.), *Dorothy Heathcote: collected writings on education and drama* (pp. 113-124). Evanston, Illinois: Northern University Press.
- Heathcote, D., & Bolton, G. (1995). *Drama for learning: Dorothy Heathcote's mantle of the expert approach to education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Heathcote, D., Johnson, L., & O'Neil, C. (Eds.). (1984). *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on education and drama*. London: Hutchinson.
- Hetland, L., & Winner, E. (2001). The arts and academic achievement: What the evidence shows. Executive summary. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 102(5), 3-6.
- Hipkins, R. (2007). Taking the pulse of NCEA: Findings from the NZCER National Survey of Secondary Schools 2006. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.
- Hitchcock, G., & Hughes, D. (1989). *Research and the teacher: a qualitative introduction to school-based research* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Holland, C., & O'Connor, P. (2004). Like writing off the paper: Report on student learning in the arts. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Holquist, M. (1991). *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world*. London: Routledge.
- hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope*. New York: Routledge.
- Hornbrook, D. (1998). *Education and dramatic art* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Hubbard, R. S. (1996). *A workshop of the possible: Nurturing children's creative development*. York, ME: Stenhouse.
- Isenbarger, L., & Zembylas, M. (2006). The emotional labour of caring in teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22, 120-134.
- Jackson, A. (2005). The dialogic and the aesthetic: Some reflections on theatre as a learning medium. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 39(4, Special Issue: Aesthetics in Drama and Theatre education), 104-118.
- Jackson, A. (2011). Participatory forms of educational theatre. In S. Schonmann (Ed.), *Key concepts in theatre/drama Education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- James, M. (2000). Measured lives: The rise of assessment as the engine of change in English schools. *The Curriculum Journal*, 11(3), 343-364.
- Jeffrey, B., & Craft, A. (2004). Creative teaching and teaching for creativity: Distinctions and relationships. *Educational Studies*, 30(1).
- Jeffrey, B., & Woods, P. (1997). The relevance of creative teaching: Pupil's views. In A. Pollard, D. Thiessen & A. Filer (Eds.), *Children and their curriculum: The perspectives of primary and elementary children* (pp. 15-33). London: Falmer.

- Jeffrey, B., & Woods, P. (2003). *The creative school: A framework for success quality and effectiveness*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- John-Steiner, V., Connery, M. C., & Marjanovic-Shane, A. (2010). Dancing with the muses: A cultural-historical approach to play, meaning-making and creativity. In M. C. Connery, V. John-Steiner & A. Marjanovic-Shane (Eds.), *Vygotsky and creativity: A cultural-historical approach to play, meaning-making and the arts*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Johnson, L., & O'Neil, C. (Eds.). (1984). *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on education and drama*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Jones, S. R., Torres, V., & Arminio, J. (2006). *Negotiating the complexities of qualitative research in higher education: Fundamental elements and issues*. New York: Routledge.
- Kempe, A. (2001). Drama as a framework for the development of literacy. *Set: Research information for Teachers*, 2(25), 1-7.
- Kempe, A., & Ashwell, M. (2001). *Progression in secondary drama*. London: Heinemann.
- Kempe, A., & Nicholson, H. (2007). *Learning to teach drama 11-18* (2nd ed.). London: Continuum.
- Kincheloe, J. (1991). *Teachers as researchers: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Kincheloe, J. (2004). Says who? Who decides what is art? In K. Rose & J. Kincheloe (Eds.), *Art, culture and education: Artful teaching in a fractured landscape*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Klein, J. (2005). From children's perspectives: A model of aesthetic processing in theatre. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 39(4), 40-57.
- Kohn, A. (1999). *The schools our children deserve: Moving beyond traditional classrooms and 'tougher standards'*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Kontos, S., & Wilcox-Herzog, A. (1997). Teachers' interactions with children: Why are they so important? Research in review. *Young Children*, 52, 4-12.
- Kredell, R. (2006). Finding the balance and embodiment in arts assessment with "No child left behind". In P. Taylor (Ed.), *Assessment in arts education*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.
- Landy, R. J. (2006). Assessment through drama. In P. Taylor (Ed.), *Assessment in Arts Education* (pp. 83-106). Portsmouth, N.H: Heinemann.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.
- Leadbeater, C. (2008). *What's next? 21 ideas for 21st century learning*. London: The Innovation Unit.
- Ludwig, K. B., & Pittman, J. F. (1999). Adolescent prosocial values and self-efficacy in relation to delinquency, risky sexual behavior, and drug use. *Youth Society*, 30, 461.
- Luton, J. (2010). *Drama and theatre in and for schools: Referencing the nature of theatre in contemporary New Zealand*. Master of Arts, Waikato University, Hamilton.
- Lyngstad, M., & Eriksson, S. (2003). Interview with Augusto Boal about the rainbow of desire. Retrieved from <http://ebookbrowse.com/interview-with-augusto-boal2pdf-pdf-d88398542>

- Mahn, H., & John-Steiner, V. (2002). The gift of confidence: A Vygotskian view of emotions. In C. G. Wells & G. Claxton (Eds.), *Learning for life in the 21st Century*. Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell.
- Martin, A. J., & Dowson, M. (2009). Interpersonal relationships, motivation, engagement, and achievement: Yields for theory, current issues and educational practice. *Review of Educational Research*, 79(1), 327-365. doi: 10.3102/0034654308325583
- Matarasso, F. (1997). *Use or Ornament? The social impact of participation in the arts*. Bournes Green, Stroud: Comedia.
- Matusov, & Rogoff, B. (2002). Newcomers and oldtimers: Educational philosophies-in-action of parent volunteers in a community of learners school. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 33, 415-440.
- McCammon, L. A., Berggraf Sæbø, A., & O'Farrell, L. (2011). "Creativity really comes by what's inside of you": Drama/theatre teaching and learning and creative achievement. In S. Schonmann (Ed.), *Key concepts in drama/theatre education* (pp. 215-220). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- McCammon, L. A., & McLauchlan, D. (2007). Research on drama and theater for social change. In L. Bresler (Ed.), *International handbook of research in arts education* (pp. 945-964): Springer.
- McCammon, L. A., O'Farrell, L., Sæbø, A. B., & Heap, B. (2010). Connecting with their inner beings: An international survey of drama/theatre teacher's perceptions of creative teaching and teaching for creative achievement. *Youth Theatre Journal*, 24, 140-159.
- McGee, C. (2012). Teachers and curriculum decisions. In C. McGee & D. Fraser (Eds.), *The professional practice of teaching* (4th ed., pp. 76-96). South Melbourne, Vic: Cengage Learning Australia Pty Limited.
- McLauchlan, D. (2011). What makes a great high school drama teacher? In S. Schonmann (Ed.), *Key concepts in theatre/drama education* (pp. 39-44). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- McLean, J. (1996). *An aesthetic framework in drama: Issues and implications*. Brisbane: NADIE.
- Mercer, N., & Littleton, K. (2007). *Dialogue and the development of children's thinking: A sociocultural approach*. Oxon; New York: Routledge.
- Meyer, L., McClure, J., Walkey, F., McKenzie, L., & Weir, K. (2006). *Final report. The impact of NCEA on student motivation*. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington.
- Ministry of Education. (2000). *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (2006). *The arts strategy 2006-2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/Schools/CurriculumAndNCEA/NationalCurriculum/TheArtsStrategy.aspx>.
- Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1-13*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (2011). *Drama matrix for 2012*. Retrieved from <http://ncea.tki.org.nz/Resources-for-aligned-standards/The-arts/Drama>.
- Morgan, N., & Saxton, J. (1987). *Teaching drama: A mind of many wonders*. London: Hutchinson Education.

- Morrison, M., Burton, B., & O'Toole, J. (2006). Re-engagement through peer teaching in drama. In P. Burnard & S. Hennessy (Eds.), *Reflective practice in arts education* (pp. 139-148). Netherlands: Springer.
- Mortimer, E. F., & Scott, P. H. (2003). *Meaning-making in science classrooms*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Mutch, C. (2005). *Doing educational research: a practitioner's guide to getting started*. Wellington: NZCER Press.
- NACCCE. (1999). *All our futures: Creativity, culture and education*. London: Department of Education and Employment.
- Neelands, J. (1996). Towards an interactive research paradigm. In P. Taylor (Ed.), *Researching drama and arts education: Paradigms and possibilities*. London: Falmer Press.
- Neelands, J. (1998). *Beginning drama 11-14*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- Neelands, J. (2001, July 14, 2001). *Remember we are human: Garth Boomer memorial address*. Paper presented at the Joint National AATE/ALEA Conference, Hobart, Tasmania.
- Neelands, J. (2004). Miracles are happening: Beyond the rhetoric of transformation in the western traditions of drama education. *Research in Drama Education: the journal of applied theatre and performance*, 9(1), 47-56.
- Neelands, J. (2009). Acting together: Ensemble as a democratic process in art and life. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 14(2), 173-189.
- Neelands, J. (2010). The art of togetherness. In P. O'Connor (Ed.), *Creating democratic citizenship through drama education: The writing of Jonathan Neelands*. Staffordshire: Trentham Books.
- Neelands, J. (2011). *Drama - same difference: Diversity and mutuality of process and practice*. Paper presented at the National Drama International Conference 11 - 14 April 2011, Swansea, Wales.
- Neelands, J., & Choe, B. (2010). The English model of creativity: Cultural politics of an idea. *International Journal Of Cultural Policy*, 16, 287-304.
- Neelands, J., & Dobson, W. (2000). *Theatre directions*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Neelands, J., & Goode, T. (1990). *Structuring drama: A handbook of the available forms in theatre and drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- New Zealand Department of Education, & Osborn, J. R. (1973). *Classroom drama for forms 1 to 4: Suggestions for teachers in primary and secondary schools* (Rev ed.). Wellington: New Zealand Department of Education.
- New Zealand Qualifications Authority. (2009). *Changes to qualifications 1970-2001*. Retrieved from <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications/ssq/changes.html>.
- Nicholson, H. (1999). Aesthetic values, drama education and the politics of difference. *NJ (Drama Australia Journal)*, 23(2), 91-100.
- Nicholson, H. (2005). *Applied drama: The gift of theatre*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Noddings, N. (2003). *Happiness and education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Noddings, N. (2005). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education* (Second ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

- Nuthall, G. (2002). Social constructivist teaching and the shaping of students' knowledge and thinking. In J. Brophy (Ed.), *Social constructivist teaching: Affordances and constraints* (pp. 43-79): Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- O'Connor, P. (2009a). Remembering horses drawn in sand: Reflections on drama education on the edge. *NJ (Drama Australia Journal)*, 33(1), 19-30.
- O'Connor, P. (2009b). Silent, upon a peak in Darien: Drama education from the edge. *Drama Research: international journal of drama in education*, 1(2-16).
- O'Connor, P. (2011, Friday 8 April). Re: [Dramanet] FW: Media release: E-learning a powerful tool for teaching the arts [electronic mailing list message].
- O'Connor, P. (Ed.). (2010). *Creating democratic citizenship through drama education: the writings of Jonothan Neelands*. Staffordshire, England: Trentham Books Ltd.
- O'Neill, C. (1995a). *Dramaworlds: A framework for process drama*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- O'Neill, C. (1995b). Foreword. In D. Heathcote & G. Bolton (Eds.), *Drama for learning* (pp. vii-x). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- O'Neill, C., & Lambert, A. (1982). *Drama structures: A practical handbook for teachers*. London: Hutchison and Co.
- O'Toole, J. (1976). *Theatre in education: New objectives for theatre - new techniques for education*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- O'Toole, J. (1992). *The process of drama: Negotiating art and meaning*. Oxon: Routledge.
- O'Toole, J. (1998). Playing on the beach: Consensus among drama teachers – some patterns in the sand. *NADIE Journal*, 22(2), 5-19.
- O'Toole, J. (2009). The three pillars of art. In J. O'Toole, M. Stinson & T. Moore (Eds.), *Drama and curriculum: A giant at the door* (pp. 127-143). Dordrecht: Springer.
- O'Toole, J. (2011). Emma's dilemma. In S. Schonmann (Ed.), *Key concepts in theatre/drama education* (pp. 13-18). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- O'Toole, J., Burton, B., & Plunkett, A. (2005). *Cooling conflicts: A new approach to conflict and bullying in schools*. Sydney, Australia: Pearson Education.
- O'Toole, J., & Dunn, J. (2002). *Pretending to learn: Helping children through drama*. Frenchs Forest, N.S.W. : Pearson Education.
- O'Toole, J., & O'Mara, J. (2007). Proteus, the giant at the door: Drama and theater in the curriculum. In L. Bresler (Ed.), *International handbook of research in arts education* (pp. 203-218): Springer.
- Osmond, C. R. (2007). Drama education and the body: "I am, therefore I think". In L. Bresler (Ed.), *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education* (pp. 1109-1118): Springer.
- Østern, A.-L. (2006). Emerging research as a basis for developing a poetics of drama education *NJ (Drama Australia Journal)*, 30(2), 9-25.
- Owens, A., & Barber, K. (2001). *Mapping drama: Teaching and assessing drama*. Carlisle: Caryl Press.
- Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.
- Palmer, P. J. (2003). Teaching with heart and soul: Reflections on spirituality in teacher education. *Journal of teacher education*, 54, 376-385.

- Patt, M. B., & Göncü, A. (2001). Talking the talk: Constructivist teachers guiding children's problem-solving. In A. Göncü & E. L. Klein (Eds.), *Children in play, story and school*. New York Guilford.
- Peterson, R. (1992). *Life in a crowded place: Making a learning community*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.
- Piaget, J. (1954). *Play, dreams and imitation in childhood*. New York: Norton.
- Pike, M. (2004). Aesthetic teaching. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 38(2), 20-37.
- Podlozny, A. (2000). Strengthening verbal skills through the use of classroom drama: A clear link. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 34(3/4, Special Issue: The arts and academic achievement: What the evidence shows), 239-275.
- Rawlins, P., Brandon, J., Chapman, J., Leach, L., Neutze, G., Scott, A., & Zepke, N. (2005). Standards-Based Assessment in the Senior Secondary School: A Review of the Literature. *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work*, 2(2), 107-115.
- Rex, L. A., Murnen, T. J., Hobbs, J., & McEachen, D. (2002). Teachers' pedagogical stories and the shaping of participation: "The dancer" and "graveyard shift at the 7-11". *American Educational Research Journal*, 39(3), 765-796.
- Richardson, R. (1994). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 516-529). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Richmond, V. P., Gorham, J., & McCroskey, J. C. (1987). The relationship between selected immediacy behaviors and cognitive learning. In M. McLaughlin (Ed.), *Communication yearbook 10* (pp. 574-590). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Robinson, K. (2001). *Out of our minds: Learning to be Creative*. Chichester: Capstone Publishing Limited.
- Rogoff, B. (1994). Developing understanding of the idea of communities of learners. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 1(4), 209-229.
- Rosenfeld, L. B., & Gilbert, J. R. (1989). The measurement of cohesion and its relationship to dimensions of self-disclosure in classroom settings. *Small Group Research*, 20(August), 291-301.
- Ryan, R. M., & Grolnick, W. S. (1986). Origins and pawns in the classroom: Self-report and projective assessments of individual differences in children's perceptions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50, 550-558.
- Rychen, D., & Salganik, L. (Eds.). (2003). *Key competencies for a successful life and a well-functioning society*. Cambridge, MA: Hogrefe and Huber.
- Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. London: Sage.
- Sawyer, R. K. (2004). Creative teaching: Collaborative discussion as disciplined improvisation. *Educational Researcher* 33(12), 12-20.
- Saxton, J., & Miller, C. (2008). Acts of hospitality. *New Zealand Journal of Research in Performing Arts and Education: Nga Mahi a Rehia*, 1(1).
- Schechner, R. (1994). *Performance theory*. London: Routledge.
- Schonmann, S. (2005). "Master" versus "servant": Contradictions in drama and theatre education. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 39(4), 31-39.
- Schonmann, S. (2007). Wrestling with assessment in drama education. In L. Bresler (Ed.), *The international handbook of research in arts education* (pp. 400-421): Springer.
- Schonmann, S. (2009). The game veteran theatre teachers are playing: Anatomy of musings. *Teachers and Teaching*, 14(4), 515-538.



- Schraw, G., & Sinatra, G. M. (2004). Epistemological development and its impact on cognition in academic domains. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 29(Special issue), 95-102.
- Schutz, P. A., Cross, D. I., Hong, J. Y., & Osbon, J. N. (2007). Teacher identities, beliefs and goals related to emotions in the classroom. In P. A. Schutz & R. Pekrun (Eds.), *Emotion in education* (pp. 223–241). San Diego, CA: Elsevier.
- Seaman, J. (2001). A new teacher learning to share responsibility with children. In B. Rogoff, C. Goodman Turkanis & L. Bartlett (Eds.), *Learning together: Children and adults in a school community*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sewell, A. (2006). *Teachers and children learning together: Developing a community of learners in a primary classroom*. Doctoral thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North.
- Sfard, A. (1998). On two metaphors for learning and the dangers of choosing just one. *Educational Researcher*, 27(2), 4-13.
- Shallcross, D. J. (1981). *Teaching creative behaviour: How to teach creativity to children of all ages*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Sheridan-Rabideau, M. (2010). Creativity repositioned. *Art Education Policy Review*, 111, 54-58.
- Shklovsky, V. (1991). *The Theory of Prose* (B. Sher, Trans.). Bloomington, IL: Dalkey Archive Press.
- Shusterman, R. (2006). Thinking through the body, educating for the humanities: A plea for somaesthetics. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 40(1), 1-21.
- Simons, J. (2002). Following the leader: An observation of the work of Brad Haseman on “leaderly” process drama. In B. Rasmussen & A.-L. Ostern (Eds.), *Playing betwixt and between: the IDEA dialogues 2001* (pp. 234-240). Bergen: International Drama Theatre Education.
- Simons, R. L., Whitbeck, L. B., Conger, R. D., & Conger, K. J. (1991). Parenting factors, social skills, and value commitments as precursors to school failure, involvement with deviant peers, and delinquent behavior. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 20(6), 645-664.
- Sinclair, C., Jeanneret, N., & O’Toole, J. (Eds.). (2009). *Education in the arts: Teaching and learning in the contemporary curriculum*. Victoria, Australia: Oxford University Press.
- Slade, P. (1954). *Child drama*. London: University of London Press.
- Smith, M. K. (2003/2009). Communities of practice. *The encyclopedia of informal education*. Retrieved from [http://www.infed.org/biblio/communities\\_of\\_practice.htm](http://www.infed.org/biblio/communities_of_practice.htm).
- Stake, R. (2003). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed., pp. 134-164). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Stanislavski, K. (1948). *An actor prepares* (E. Hapgood, Trans.). London: Geoffrey Bles.
- Starko, A. J. (2005). *Creativity in the classroom*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc. .
- Styan, J. L. (1960). *The elements of drama*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Supovitz, J. A. (2001). Translating teaching practice into improved student achievement. In S. H. Fuhrman (Ed.), *From the capitol to the classroom*:

- Standards-based reform in the States* (pp. 81-98). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Sutton, R. (1995). *Assessment for learning*. Salford: RS Publications.
- Taylor, P. (1998). Beyond the systematic and rigorous. In J. Saxton & C. Miller (Eds.), *The research of practice, the practice of research* (pp. 73-88). Canada: IDEA Publications.
- Taylor, P. (2006a). Returning the aesthetic to the theatre/drama classroom. In P. Taylor (Ed.), *Assessment in arts education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Taylor, P. (Ed.). (2006b). *Assessment in arts education*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.
- Thomas, S. (2007). Fixing the NCEA: Ongoing problems, current reforms and proposed changes. Retrieved from Maxim Institute website: [http://www.maxim.org.nz/index.cfm/policy\\_research/article?id=1102](http://www.maxim.org.nz/index.cfm/policy_research/article?id=1102)
- Thompson, K. (1986). Teachers as artists. *Art Education*, 39(6), 47-48.
- Thrupp, M., & Easter, A. (2012). *Research, analysis and insight into National Standards (RAINS) Project*. Hamilton: New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa.
- Timperley, H. (2008). *Teacher professional learning and development*. France: International Academy of Education.
- Turner, V. (1982). *From Ritual to Theatre: the human seriousness of play*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.
- Turner, V. (1987). *The anthropology of performance*. New York: PAJ Publications.
- van Manen, M. (1994). Pedagogy, virtue and narrative identity in teaching. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 24(2), 135-170.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1930/2004). Imagination and creativity in childhood. *Journal of Russian and Eastern European psychology*, 42(1), 7-97.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wagner, B. J. (1979). *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as a learning medium*. London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd.
- Wagner, B. J. (1991). Imaginative expression. In J. Flood, J. M. Jensen, D. Lapp & J. R. Squire (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (pp. 787-804). New York: MacMillan Publishing.
- Wagner, B. J. (1998). A way of knowing. In J. Saxton & C. Miller (Eds.), *The research of practice, the practice of research*. Victoria, British Columbia: IDEA Publications.
- Wallach, M., & Wing, C. (1969). *The talented student*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Wallis, C. (2010). *Relational pedagogy in a New Zealand secondary school drama classroom*. Master of Education, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.
- Way, B. (1967). *Development through drama*. London: Longman.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- White, M., & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. New York: WW Norton.
- Winston, J. (2005). Between the aesthetic and the ethical: Analysing the tension at the heart of Theatre in Education. *Journal of Moral Education*, 34(3), 309-323.

- Winston, J. (2009). Beauty, laughter and the charming virtues of drama. *Drama Research: international journal of drama in education*(1), 38-45.
- World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our common future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Worthman, C. (2006). Fostering dialogical interaction: The radical side of self-generated dramatic arts activities. *NJ (Drama Australia Journal)*, 30(1), 23-33.
- Wright, D. (2004). Embodied learning and drama education. In C. Hatton & M. Anderson (Eds.), *NSW perspectives in drama education: The state of our art* (pp. 77-89). Sydney: Currency Press.
- Wright, P., & Gerber, R. (2004). Competency in Australian drama teachers: Mapping the terrain *NJ (Drama Australia)*, 28(2).
- Yin, R. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Zeiman, G. L., & Benson, G. P. (1983). Delinquency: The role of self-esteem and social values. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 12(6), 489-500.
- Zembylas, M. (2003). Caring for teacher emotion: reflections on teacher self development. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 22, 103-125.



## Appendices

*Appendix A: Participant information*

*Appendix B: Participant consent form*

*Appendix C: Authority for release of transcript*

*Appendix D: Information for children (up to Year 6)*

*Appendix E: Information for students (Years 7-13)*

*Appendix F: Information for parents/caregivers*

*Appendix G: Parent/caregiver consent form*

*Appendix H: Student consent form*

*Appendix I: Drama Curriculum Achievement Objectives*

*Appendix J: NCEA Drama Matrix 2012*

*Appendix K: NCEA Drama Matrix 2005*

*Appendix L: Prescribed texts for NCEA Level 3 Drama*



## Appendix A: Participant information



### How do teachers facilitate Drama Education in New Zealand classrooms?

#### Information for Teachers

Dear XXX

My name is Tracey-Lynne Cody and I am a post-graduate student at the University of Canterbury College of Education undertaking PhD research. I also work as a Senior Tutor in Drama and Drama Education at Massey University College of Education. I am researching the work of six experienced drama teachers working in New Zealand schools. In particular, I am looking at the artistic-aesthetic learning process that occurs in the Drama classroom and the ways teachers facilitate this learning. I hope the findings will build greater understanding of drama education in New Zealand as well as being of benefit to other drama teachers, their students and their training providers.

Thank you for considering participating in this research.

#### What would your involvement include?

If you agree to participate in this project you will be asked to:

- Participate in a semi-structured interview with me, discussing the kinds of things you do with students – pedagogy, routines and processes. This may take up to an hour and a half and will be held out of class time. In most cases this will be a face-to-face meeting.
- Read and if necessary clarify and amend the transcript from our interview in order that you are happy with the way you are presenting your views and experience.
- Share your scheme (or similar documentation) and relevant unit planning with me to help me understand the kinds of topics you cover with your students and the progression students move through.
- Negotiate a time for me to come to observe and video-record a classroom episode with you and your students. This may happen over one or more lessons and will involve you working with students to meet aesthetic-artistic learning outcomes. We will negotiate the class, time of term and lesson that will work best for the project and that you are most comfortable with.
- View the video footage together to reflect on the learning experience and the issues the episode raises.
- Select a small group of students who will view this footage and give their responses to the drama work and their ideas about what they are learning. You may choose to be present or absent during their viewing of the videoed work.



**Confidentiality**

Your views and your teaching work as discussed in the interview and based on other documentation will be presented anonymously. To assist me in this, I will give you a pseudonym to protect your privacy. These transcripts will be securely stored and kept confidential.

All documentation regarding your teaching programme will also be kept confidential, stored securely and be returned or destroyed at the end of the study.

The main purpose of videoing the teaching episodes is so we can reflect on the work. If the video footage offers something of importance to the study, I would like to explore the possibility of using excerpts in my report or presentations on the research. In this instance, I will show you the clip and ask your permission to include this in my report. Although your name will not be used, there is a possibility that you and/or your school could be identifiable from the video footage. If you are uncomfortable with the clip being used, you are welcome to refuse and I will find another way to include the moment that doesn't involve the video clip. I will not use any video clips of you in the report without getting your permission first.

If you are happy to take part in the research, please sign and send the consent form in the envelope provided. You are also welcome to contact me by phone or email. My contact details and those of my chief supervisor, Dr Janinka Greenwood, are set out below. You are welcome to contact either of us if you have any questions about this project.

If you have any concerns about the process or conduct of the researcher, you may also contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Ethics Committee; see contact details below.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Tracey-Lynne Cody

*University of Canterbury College of Education*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher**

Tracey-Lynne Cody MA (hons), Dip Tchg  
[t.l.cody@massey.ac.nz](mailto:t.l.cody@massey.ac.nz)  
c/o Private Bag 11222  
Massey University College of Education  
Palmerston North  
06 3569 099 x8836  
027 2478279

**Chief Supervisor**

Dr Janinka Greenwood  
School of Literacies & Arts in Education  
University of Canterbury College of  
Education  
[janinka.greenwood@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:janinka.greenwood@canterbury.ac.nz)  
03 364 2987 x44390

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee.
2. Complaints may be addressed to:  
Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee  
College of Education, University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH  
Telephone: 345 8312



## Appendix B: Participant consent form



### How do teachers facilitate Drama Education in New Zealand classrooms?

#### Teacher Participant Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I am happy to take part in this project.

- I understand that comments I make in the interview and the classroom episode may be used in presentations and reports and I will be video taped teaching a drama lesson.
- I understand that neither my name nor my school will be used in any presentations or reports about the research however it may be possible that I could be identified by video footage.
- I understand that I will be informed about any video footage used in presentations will have the right to decline permission for this to be used.
- I understand that participation in this project is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the project at any time (up until data collection) without repercussions.
- I understand that any information or material collected during the study will be stored securely for 5 years and destroyed after this time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Appendix C: Authority for release of transcript



### How do teachers facilitate Drama Education in New Zealand classrooms?

#### AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

**This form will be held for a period of five (5) years**

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview conducted with me on \_\_\_\_\_.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used by the researcher, *Tracey-Lynne Cody*, in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name - printed** \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Appendix D: Information for children (up to Year 6)



### Information for the Children in XYZ class (up to Year 6)

Hello. My name is Tracey-Lynne Cody and I am a student at the University of Canterbury College of Education. When I'm not being a student at Canterbury, I work as a lecturer in Drama and Drama education at Massey University College of Education. I am researching children's learning in drama and I would like your help.

I will be coming to see your class during some of your drama lessons. I have been talking with your teacher about the work s/he has planned and I am looking forward to seeing the drama work you create together. Afterwards, I will be asking for your ideas about what you learned during the drama work and talking some more with your teacher. I really want to know what you think, so all your answers will be important.

I will be recording our interview on an audio tape and video-tape to help remind me of your ideas when I write my report. You will all have code-names so no-one else will know what you said.

If something happens which is really important and involves you on the video, I will come back to you to ask if you would be happy for me to show other people that moment. If you feel shy about being seen on the video and would feel happier if this didn't happen, you can say no and that will be fine. If you are happy, I will ask your parents for their permission too before I use it. If they are not happy for the clip to be used, I will find another way to talk about the important moment that doesn't involve the video clip. I will not use any video clips of you without getting this permission first.

If you agree to take part in the research, please sign the consent form. I have also sent your parents/caregivers a letter and consent form to sign.

If you have any questions about this project, you can talk to your parents or caregivers or to XYZ. You can also ask me any questions when I come to class. If you change your mind about sharing your ideas with me, that's fine, too. All you have to do is say so and you can go back to your classroom.

Thank you for thinking about helping me. I am looking forward to meeting you.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Tracey-Lynne Cody. University of Canterbury College of Education*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee.

2. Complaints may be addressed to:  
Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee  
College of Education, University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH

Telephone: 345 8312

## Appendix E: Information for students (Years 7-13)



### Information for Drama Students (Year 7 -13)

My name is Tracey-Lynne Cody from the University of Canterbury College of Education, and I am researching a drama teaching project that looks at the way you are taught Drama and the ways the teacher works with you to help you to create drama together.

In class I and your teacher will ask questions about how you have been learning drama this year. I will record your comments to use when we give presentations on this project or when we write our reports. I will make sure your name is not written down when recording your comments and will make sure your name is not used in the reports or presentations.

If you don't want to participate, you can choose not to make any comments when these class discussions happen and no one will mind.

I will bring a video camera to class to film your teacher in the drama class so that I can look at the work again later. Students answering the teacher, or working in groups in class may also be filmed. The video may be used in presentations about the drama project. You can choose not to be filmed.

If you are happy to take part you will need to sign the consent form and return it to your teacher. Your parents/caregivers will need to sign a form too. If you have any questions you can talk to your teacher or your parents/caregivers.

---

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee.

2. Complaints may be addressed to:  
Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee  
College of Education, University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH

Telephone: 345 8312

## Appendix F: Information for parents/caregivers



### How do teachers facilitate Drama Education in New Zealand classrooms?

#### Information for Parents/Caregivers

Dear parents and care-givers

My name is Tracey-Lynne Cody and I am a post-graduate student at the University of Canterbury College of Education undertaking PhD research. When I'm not being a student at Canterbury, I work as a lecturer in Drama and Drama education at Massey University College of Education. I am researching the work of drama teachers in schools and I am working with XXX. I would like your child to participate in this research.

I will be visiting the classroom and observing the work of XXX and the children as they participate in drama work. This may involve one or more lessons. I will be asking for children's responses to the drama work and their ideas about what they are learning. I will be videoing the practical work and discussion. I will use the information I get when writing and talking about this research.

Each of the students will have a code name so no-one else will know who made the comments I will use in my report of this research.

The main purpose of the research is to focus on the work of XXX in the lesson, however if something happens which is really important and involves your child on the video, I will come back to them to ask their permission for me to include that clip in my report. This means other people who read my thesis may see it and may identify your child. If either you or your child is uncomfortable with the clip being used, you can say no at any time. I will find another way to include the important moment that doesn't involve the video clip. I will not use any video clips of your child in the report without getting you and your child's permission first.

If you agree for your child to take part in the research, please sign the consent form below. I have also sent them a letter and consent form to sign.

If you have any questions about this project you can talk to me or to XXX. If you have any complaints you may also contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Ethics Committee; see contact details below.

If your child changes their mind about sharing their ideas with me, that's fine, too; all they have to do is say so.

Thank you for thinking about helping me. I am looking forward to meeting your child.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
*University of Canterbury College of Education*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee.

2. Complaints may be addressed to:  
Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee  
College of Education, University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH

Telephone: 345 8312

## Appendix G: Parent/caregiver consent form



### How do teachers facilitate Drama Education in New Zealand classrooms?

#### Parent/Caregiver Consent Form

I give permission for \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the project, “**How do teachers facilitate Drama Education in New Zealand classrooms?**”

I have read and understood the information given to me about the research project and what will be required of my child/the child in my care.

I have discussed the project with \_\_\_\_\_ and am happy that he/she understands what he/she will be asked to do and that he/she can withdraw at any stage.

I understand that anything my child says during this research discussion will be treated as confidential. My child’s name will not be used at any time in the study. No findings that could identify my child will be published without my permission.

I understand that participation in this project is voluntary and that I can withdraw my child or he/she can withdraw from the project at any time without repercussions.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this form along with the student’s consent form to [name of person] (the project coordinator at your child’s school).*

1. This project has received ethical approval from the University of Canterbury College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee.

2. Complaints may be addressed to:  
Dr Missy Morton, Chair, Ethical Clearance Committee  
College of Education, University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800, CHRISTCHURCH

Telephone: 345 8312

## Appendix H: Student consent form



### How do teachers facilitate Drama Education in New Zealand classrooms?

#### Student Consent Form

Tracey-Lynne Cody and my teacher have talked with me about the drama teaching project they are working on this year.

- I have read or heard the information and am happy to take part in this project.
- I understand that comments I make may be written down and used in presentations and reports and I may be video taped.
- I understand that my name will not be written down next to my comments and that my name will not be used in any presentations, reports or the video.
- I understand that I do not have to participate in any part of the discussion or video taping if I do not want to.
- I understand that any information or material collected during the study will be stored securely for 5 years and destroyed after this time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Appendix I: Drama Curriculum Achievement Objectives

Source: Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand curriculum for English-medium teaching and learning in years 1-13*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Level	Strands	Achievement Objectives Students will:
<b>One</b>	<i>Understanding the Arts in Context</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate an awareness that drama serves a variety of purposes in their lives and in their communities.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Practical Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the elements of role, focus, action, tension, time, and space through dramatic play.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Ideas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute and develop ideas in drama, using personal experience and imagination.</li> </ul>
	<i>Communicating and Interpreting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share drama through informal presentation and respond to ways in which drama tells stories and conveys ideas in their own and others' work.</li> </ul>
<b>Two</b>	<i>Understanding the Arts in Context</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and describe how drama serves a variety of purposes in their lives and their communities.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Practical Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore and use elements of drama for different purposes.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Ideas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and sustain ideas in drama, based on personal experience and imagination.</li> </ul>
	<i>Communicating and Interpreting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share drama through informal presentation and respond to elements of drama in their own and others' work.</li> </ul>
<b>Three</b>	<i>Understanding the Arts in Context</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the functions and purposes of drama in cultural and historical contexts.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Practical Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use techniques and relevant technologies to explore drama elements and conventions.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Ideas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate and develop ideas with others to create drama.</li> </ul>
	<i>Communicating and Interpreting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present and respond to drama, identifying ways in which elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies combine to create meaning in their own and others' work.</li> </ul>
<b>Four</b>	<i>Understanding the Arts in Context</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the functions, purposes, and technologies of drama in cultural and historical contexts.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Practical Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and use techniques and relevant technologies to develop drama practice.</li> <li>Use conventions to structure drama.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Ideas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate and refine ideas with others to plan and develop drama.</li> </ul>
	<i>Communicating and Interpreting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present and respond to drama, identifying ways in which elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies create meaning in their own and others' work.</li> </ul>



<b>Level</b>	<b>Strands</b>	<b>Achievement Objectives Students will:</b>
<b>Five</b>	<i>Understanding the Arts in Context</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the characteristics, purposes, and function of drama in a range of contexts.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Practical Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and use techniques, conventions, and relevant technologies for specific drama purposes.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Ideas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and refine ideas to develop drama for specific purposes.</li> </ul>
	<i>Communicating and Interpreting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present and respond to drama and describe how drama combines elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies to create structure and meaning in their own and others' work.</li> </ul>
<b>Six</b>	<i>Understanding the Arts in Context</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the forms and purposes of drama in different historical or contemporary contexts, including New Zealand drama.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Practical Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and use techniques, conventions, and technologies in a range of dramatic forms.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Ideas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research, evaluate, and refine ideas in a range of dramatic forms to develop drama.</li> </ul>
	<i>Communicating and Interpreting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perform and respond to drama and make critical judgments about how elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies are used to create form and meaning in their own and others' work.</li> </ul>
<b>Seven</b>	<i>Understanding the Arts in Context</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research the purposes of production, performance, and technologies of drama in a range of contexts, including New Zealand drama.</li> <li>Explore how drama reflects our cultural diversity.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Practical Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select and refine the use of techniques, conventions, and technologies in specific dramatic forms.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Ideas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research, critically evaluate, and refine ideas to develop drama in specific dramatic forms.</li> </ul>
	<i>Communicating and Interpreting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rehearse and perform works in a range of dramatic forms.</li> <li>Respond to and make critical judgments about rehearsal processes and performances.</li> </ul>
<b>Eight</b>	<i>Understanding the Arts in Context</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research, analyse, and critically evaluate how drama, including New Zealand drama, interprets, records, or challenges social and cultural discourse.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Practical Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research, analyse, and integrate elements, techniques, conventions, and technologies in dramatic forms for specific purposes.</li> </ul>
	<i>Developing Ideas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research, critically evaluate, and refine ideas to create original drama work.</li> </ul>
	<i>Communicating and Interpreting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse, rehearse, and perform works in a range of dramatic forms, assuming a variety of artistic or technical responsibilities.</li> <li>Reflect on and critically evaluate a wide range of works and performances.</li> </ul>

# Appendix J: NCEA Drama Matrix 2012

**Drama Matrix 2012**  
 Note: Expiring Level 2 internal achievement standards can also be used for assessment in 2012. All registered and expiring achievement standards can be accessed at [NZQA](http://nzqa.govt.nz).

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Techniques	<b>1.1</b> AS90006 Apply drama techniques in a dramatic context. 4 credits Internal	<b>2.1</b> AS91213 Apply drama techniques in a scripted context. 4 credits Internal	
Devise	<b>1.2</b> AS90997 Devise and perform a drama. 5 credits Internal	<b>2.2</b> AS91214 Devise and perform a drama to realise an intention. 5 credits Internal	<b>3.2</b> AS90608 Interpret scripted text and integrate drama techniques in solo or paired performance Internal
Form or period	<b>1.3</b> AS90998 Demonstrate understanding of features of a drama/theatre form. 4 credits External	<b>2.3</b> AS91215 Discuss a drama or theatre form or period with reference to a text. 4 credits External	<b>3.3</b> AS90609 Devise, script and perform drama for solo, duo or trio performance 5 credits Internal
Features	<b>1.4</b> AS90999 Select and use features of a drama/theatre form in a performance. 4 credits Internal	<b>2.4</b> AS91216 Perform features of a complex drama or theatre form or period. 4 credits Internal	<b>3.4</b> AS90610 Demonstrate knowledge of theatre form or period by analysing and interpreting two scripted texts 4 credits External
Play, playwright, practitioner	<b>1.5</b> AS91000 Demonstrate understanding of a significant play. 4 credits Internal	<b>2.5</b> AS91217 Examine the work of a playwright. 4 credits Internal	
Perform a role	<b>1.6</b> AS90009 Perform an acting role in a scripted production. 5 credits Internal	<b>2.6</b> AS91218 Perform a substantial acting role in a scripted production. 5 credits Internal	<b>3.5</b> AS90611 Research and carry out a performance or technical/production role in a significant production 6 credits Internal
Viewed performance	<b>1.7</b> AS90011 Demonstrate understanding of the use of drama aspects within live performance. 4 credits External	<b>2.7</b> AS91219 Discuss drama elements, techniques, conventions and technologies within live performance. 4 credits External	<b>3.6</b> AS90612 Analyse drama processes in a new context and reflect critically on drama performance 4 credits External
Script writing		<b>2.8</b> AS91220 Script a scene suitable for drama performance. 4 credits Internal	
Direct		<b>2.9</b> AS91221 Direct a scene for drama performance. 4 credits Internal	

Retrieved from 22 January, 2012 <http://ncea.tki.org.nz/Resources-for-aligned-standards/The-arts/Drama>

December 2011

## Appendix K: NCEA Drama Matrix 2005

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>Drama Techniques</b>	<p><b>AS90006</b> Use drama techniques</p> <p><b>1.1</b> Internal <b>4 credits</b></p>	<p><b>AS90299</b> Apply drama techniques in an improvised group context <b>2 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90300</b> Apply drama techniques in a group within a scripted context <b>3 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90301</b> Structure, record and perform devised drama using elements and conventions <b>4 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90302</b> Apply knowledge of a drama/theatre form or period through performing a role within a presentation <b>5 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90303</b> Perform a substantial acting, technical or production role <b>5 credits</b> Internal</p>	<p><b>AS90608</b> Interpret scripted text and integrate drama techniques in solo or paired performance <b>5 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90609</b> Devise, script and perform drama for solo or paired performance <b>5 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90610</b> Demonstrate knowledge of theatre form or period by analysing and interpreting two scripted texts <b>4 credits</b> External</p> <p><b>AS90611</b> Research and carry out a performance or technical/production role in a significant production <b>6 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90612</b> Analyse drama processes in a new context and reflect critically on drama performance <b>4 credits</b> External</p>
<b>Drama Elements and Conventions</b>	<p><b>AS90007</b> Use elements and conventions to devise and perform a drama <b>4 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90008</b> Demonstrate knowledge of a drama / theatre form through a practical presentation. <b>3 credits</b> Internal</p>	<p><b>AS90304</b> Apply knowledge of and make judgements about drama processes and performance in a new context <b>5 credits</b> External</p>	<p><b>AS90610</b> Demonstrate knowledge of theatre form or period by analysing and interpreting two scripted texts <b>4 credits</b> External</p> <p><b>AS90611</b> Research and carry out a performance or technical/production role in a significant production <b>6 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90612</b> Analyse drama processes in a new context and reflect critically on drama performance <b>4 credits</b> External</p>
<b>Theatre study</b>	<p><b>AS90009</b> Perform an acting role <b>4 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90010</b> Perform a technical or production role <b>4 credits</b> Internal</p>	<p><b>AS90303</b> Perform a substantial acting, technical or production role <b>5 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90304</b> Apply knowledge of and make judgements about drama processes and performance in a new context <b>5 credits</b> External</p>	<p><b>AS90610</b> Demonstrate knowledge of theatre form or period by analysing and interpreting two scripted texts <b>4 credits</b> External</p> <p><b>AS90611</b> Research and carry out a performance or technical/production role in a significant production <b>6 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90612</b> Analyse drama processes in a new context and reflect critically on drama performance <b>4 credits</b> External</p>
<b>Production Role</b>	<p><b>AS90009</b> Perform an acting role <b>4 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90010</b> Perform a technical or production role <b>4 credits</b> Internal</p>	<p><b>AS90303</b> Perform a substantial acting, technical or production role <b>5 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90304</b> Apply knowledge of and make judgements about drama processes and performance in a new context <b>5 credits</b> External</p>	<p><b>AS90610</b> Demonstrate knowledge of theatre form or period by analysing and interpreting two scripted texts <b>4 credits</b> External</p> <p><b>AS90611</b> Research and carry out a performance or technical/production role in a significant production <b>6 credits</b> Internal</p> <p><b>AS90612</b> Analyse drama processes in a new context and reflect critically on drama performance <b>4 credits</b> External</p>
<b>Review and Evaluation of Performance</b>	<p><b>AS90011</b> Understand and reflect on drama processes and performance, applied to new context(s) <b>5 credits</b> External</p>	<p><b>AS90304</b> Apply knowledge of and make judgements about drama processes and performance in a new context <b>5 credits</b> External</p>	<p><b>AS90612</b> Analyse drama processes in a new context and reflect critically on drama performance <b>4 credits</b> External</p>

Retrieved 30 November, 2005 from <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/qualifications-standards/qualifications/ncea/subjects/drama/levels/>

## Appendix L: Prescribed texts for NCEA Level 3 Drama

<p><b>2012</b></p> <p>"Appropriate texts include, but are not limited to, those listed below. Texts studied must enable in-depth exploration of the features of the theatre form or period."</p>	<p>Anton Chekhov: The Cherry Orchard, The Three Sisters Aristophanes: The Frogs, Lysistrata Arthur Miller: The Crucible, Playing for Time Bertolt Brecht: Mother Courage, The Caucasian Chalk Circle Briar Grace-Smith: Purapurawhetu When Sun and Moon Collide Bruce Mason: The End of the Golden Weather, The Pohutukawa Tree Caryl Churchill: Top Girls, Soft Cops</p>	<p>Euripedes: The Trojan Women, Medea Federico Garcia Lorca: The House of Bernarda Alba, Blood Wedding George Bernard Shaw: Saint Joan, Arms and the Man Greg McGee: Foreskin's Lament Harold Pinter: The Birthday Party, The Hothouse Hone Kouka: The Prophet, Waiora Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis: Krishnan's Dairy, The Pickle King Jean Anouilh: The Lark, Antigone</p>	<p>Jean Betts: The Revenge of the Amazons, Ophelia Thinks Harder Lynda Chanwai-Earle: Foh Sam, Ka Shue Maurice Shadbolt: Once on Chunuk Bair Mervyn Thompson: Children of the Poor, Coal Town Blues Oscar Kightley and Dave Armstrong: Niu Sila, Fresh off the Boat Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest, Lady Windermere's Fan Renee: Wednesday to Come, Pass it On</p>	<p>Samuel Beckett: Waiting for Godot, Endgame Sophocles: Antigone, Oedipus Stephen Sinclair: The Bellbird, The Bach Tennessee Williams: The Glass Menagerie, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof Timberlake Wertenbaker: Our Country's Good, The Love of the Nightingale Vincent O'Sullivan: Shuriken William Shakespeare: Twelfth Night, Macbeth</p>
<p><b>2011</b></p> <p>"Appropriate texts include, but are not limited to, those listed below. Texts studied must enable in-depth exploration of the features of the theatre form or period."</p>	<p>Anton Chekhov: The Cherry Orchard, The Three Sisters Aristophanes: The Frogs, Lysistrata Arthur Miller: The Crucible, Playing for Time Bertolt Brecht: Mother Courage, The Caucasian Chalk Circle Briar Grace-Smith: Purapurawhetu When Sun and Moon Collide Bruce Mason: The End of the Golden Weather, The Pohutukawa Tree Caryl Churchill: Top Girls, Soft Cops</p>	<p>Euripedes: The Trojan Women, Medea Federico Garcia Lorca: The House of Bernarda Alba, Blood Wedding George Bernard Shaw: Saint Joan, Arms and the Man Greg McGee: Foreskin's Lament Harold Pinter: The Birthday Party, The Hothouse Hone Kouka: The Prophet, Waiora Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis: Krishnan's Dairy, The Pickle King</p>	<p>Jean Anouilh: The Lark, Antigone Jean Betts: The Revenge of the Amazons, Ophelia Thinks Harder Lynda Chanwai-Earle: Foh Sam, Ka Shue Maurice Shadbolt: Once on Chunuk Bair Mervyn Thompson: Children of the Poor, Coal Town Blues Oscar Kightley and Dave Armstrong: Niu Sila, Fresh off the Boat Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest, Lady Windermere's Fan</p>	<p>Renee: Wednesday to Come, Pass it On Samuel Beckett: Waiting for Godot, Endgame Sophocles: Antigone, Oedipus Stephen Sinclair: The Bellbird, The Bach Tennessee Williams: The Glass Menagerie, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof Timberlake Wertenbaker: Our Country's Good, The Love of the Nightingale Vincent O'Sullivan: Shuriken William Shakespeare: Twelfth Night, Macbeth</p>
<p><b>2010</b></p> <p>"Appropriate texts include, but are not limited to, those listed below. Texts studied must enable in-depth exploration of the features of the theatre form or period."</p>	<p>Anton Chekhov: The Cherry Orchard, The Three Sisters Aristophanes: The Frogs, Lysistrata Arthur Miller: The Crucible, Playing for Time; Bertolt Brecht: Mother Courage, The Caucasian Chalk Circle Briar Grace-Smith: Purapurawhetu, When Sun and Moon Collide Bruce Mason: The End of the Golden Weather, The Pohutukawa Tree Caryl Churchill: Top Girls, Soft Cops</p>	<p>Caryl Churchill: Top Girls, Soft Cops George Bernard Shaw: Saint Joan, Arms and the Man Greg McGee: Foreskin's Lament Harold Pinter: The Birthday Party, The Hothouse Hone Kouka: The Prophet, Waiora Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis: Krishnan's Dairy, The Pickle King</p>	<p>Jean Betts: The Revenge of the Amazons, Ophelia Thinks Harder Lynda Chanwai-Earle: Foh Sam, Ka Shue Maurice Shadbolt: Once on Chunuk Bair Mervyn Thompson: Children of the Poor, Coal Town Blues Oscar Kightley and Dave Armstrong: Niu Sila, Fresh off the Boat Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest, Lady Windermere's Fan</p>	<p>Renee: Wednesday to Come, Pass it On Samuel Beckett: Waiting for Godot, Endgame Sophocles: Antigone, Oedipus Stephen Sinclair: The Bellbird, The Bach Tennessee Williams: The Glass Menagerie, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof Vincent O'Sullivan: Shuriken William Shakespeare: Twelfth Night, Macbeth</p>

<p><b>2009</b> "The prescribed texts for 2009 are..."</p>	<p>Arthur Miller: The Crucible Aristophanes: The Frogs Anton Chekhov: The Cherry Orchard Jean Belts: The Revenge of the Amazons Bertolt Brecht: Mother Courage Briar Grace-Smith: Purapurawhetu</p>	<p>Bruce Mason: The End of the Golden Weather Caryl Churchill: Top Girls George Bernard Shaw: Saint Joan Greg McGee: Foreskin's Lament Harold Pinter: The Birthday Party Hone Kouka: The Prophet Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis: Krishnan's Dairy</p>	<p>Lynda Chanwai-Earle: Foh Sam, Ka Shue Mervyn Thompson: Children of the Poor Oscar Kightley and Dave Armstrong: Niu Sila Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest Renee: Wednesday to Come</p>	<p>Samuel Beckett: Waiting for Godot Sophocles: Antigone Tennessee Williams: The Glass Menagerie Vincent O'Sullivan: Shuriken William Shakespeare: Twelfth Night, Hamlet, Macbeth, A Midsummer Night's Dream</p>
<p><b>2008</b> "The prescribed texts for 2008 are..."</p>	<p>Arthur Miller: The Crucible Aristophanes: The Frogs Anton Chekhov: The Cherry Orchard Jean Belts: The Revenge of the Amazons Bertolt Brecht: Mother Courage Briar Grace-Smith: Purapurawhetu</p>	<p>Bruce Mason: The Pohutukawa Tree Caryl Churchill: Top Girls Euripides: Medea George Bernard Shaw: Pygmalion Harold Pinter: The Birthday Party Hone Kouka: Waiora Michael Gow: Away</p>	<p>Mervyn Thompson: Children of the Poor Oscar Kightley and Dave Armstrong: Niu Sila Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest Renee: Wednesday to Come Samuel Beckett: Waiting for Godot</p>	<p>Sophocles: Antigone Tennessee Williams: The Glass Menagerie Vincent O'Sullivan: Shuriken William Shakespeare: Twelfth Night, Hamlet, Macbeth, A Midsummer Night's Dream</p>
<p><b>2007</b> "The prescribed texts for 2007 are..."</p>	<p>Arthur Miller: The Crucible Aristophanes: The Frogs Anton Chekhov: The Cherry Orchard Jean Belts: The Revenge of the Amazons Bertolt Brecht: Mother Courage Briar Grace-Smith: Purapurawhetu</p>	<p>Bruce Mason: The Pohutukawa Tree Caryl Churchill: Top Girls Euripides: Medea George Bernard Shaw: Pygmalion Harold Pinter: The Birthday Party Hone Kouka: Waiora Michael Gow: Away</p>	<p>Mervyn Thompson: Children of the Poor Oscar Kightley and Dave Armstrong: Niu Sila Oscar Wilde: The Importance of Being Earnest Renee: Wednesday to Come Samuel Beckett: Waiting for Godot</p>	<p>Sophocles: Antigone Tennessee Williams: The Glass Menagerie Vincent O'Sullivan: Shuriken William Shakespeare: Twelfth Night, Hamlet, Macbeth, A Midsummer Night's Dream</p>

Source: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/assessment/search.do?query=Drama&view=achievements&level=03> Retrieved 18 October 2012