

M Ed (Honours) Thesis

*The development of an empathic
educator*

*Implementing psychodynamic
pedagogy through drama in education*

by

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**This work is dedicated to my mother,
my first teacher.**

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Contents

<i>Statement of topic</i>	1
<i>Background to this study</i>	2
<i>My story as a teacher</i>	5
Teaching English in high schools	6
Teaching English in Japan	11
Writing distance learning materials	13
Learning to teach drama	14
Discovering performance as a clown	15
Writing student learning materials in the Pacific	19
<i>Historical background</i>	20
Nature of teaching	26
<i>Methodology</i>	28
<i>Implementing psychodynamic pedagogy in the classroom</i>	37
Mirroring	40
Mirroring stress and relaxation	41
Affective attunement	44
Teaching in the playground – learning to be affectively attuned	45
Engagement	47
Empathy	48
Spiral	51
Systems and routines – thinking about the spiral	53
Group work as scaffolding for empathy	57
Rehearsed preparation	59
The unconscious	61
Enthusiasm	64
Reflection	65
Psychodynamic lessons	66
<i>Learning to implement drama in education</i>	72
Puppets	78
Teacher in role	81
A reflection on a lesson where I went into teacher in role as a disabled artist	83
Drama as a rehearsal for a real life event	84
‘Yamuna’	86
Some improvised drama	91
Playbuilding students’ stories	93
<i>Performing and teaching as a children’s clown</i>	96
Clowning as a teacher	97
Teaching as a Clown	102
<i>Conclusion</i>	104
<i>References</i>	110

Statement of topic

Empathy is a psychodynamic term to describe sophisticated teaching and communication skills that are based on a dynamic interrelationship between learners' emotional and cognitive states. Educators need empathic understanding and attunement to teach psychodynamically (Arnold, 1996). This study describes my development as an empathic educator.

This document reflects upon significant moments in the classroom characterised by an emotional and cognitive dynamic as I taught English as a Second Language (ESL) in a Sydney primary school from 1997-98, as well as my occasional performances as a children's clown in a variety of non educational settings. This thesis explores both the theoretical and practical dimensions of implementing psychodynamic pedagogy (Arnold, 1994) as a teacher and as a children's performer which led to improved teaching and learning in the classroom. In particular, it focuses on my attempts to implement psychodynamic pedagogy through drama in education.

Psychodynamic pedagogy provided an enabling theory to reaffirm my belief in the importance of teaching to develop, nurture and sustain the necessary enthusiasm for effective teaching. It provided the theoretical perspective to understand my own complex identity as a teacher. It guided me in the moment when learning 'happened' between myself and my students.

This document captures fractions of teaching moments, incidents, lessons and memories between 1997-1998 that demonstrate my development as an empathic educator. Collectively they form a rich tapestry of diverse and ever changing teaching opportunities and experiences that were never repeated. Teaching is like a rough diamond that can never be fully polished to show its perfect brilliance. There is no such thing as the perfect lesson, teaching day, week, term or year. Teachers can only capture the glimmer of the perfect diamond – when emotions and thoughts fused, blind us with its power.

Background to this study

What does it mean for a teacher to be cognitively and emotionally engaged in the act of teaching? How does a teacher improve her/his teaching? What does it feel to be an empathic teacher? How is empathy developed as a teaching skill? How can empathy maintain teachers' enthusiasm in their teaching?

This thesis is primarily a study of the process of implementing psychodynamic pedagogy as a teacher/researcher. Psychodynamic pedagogy states that when there is an engagement between thinking and feeling states, a dynamic is created to spiral the learner into higher and more profound levels of learning (Arnold, 1994). This thesis examines the practical implications of implementing psychodynamic pedagogy by a teacher in a school and in particular how the emotional demands of teaching interacted with the cognitive demands.

This phenomenological study describes my emotional and cognitive journey as a teacher. In the chapter 'My Story as a Teacher' I explore a professional crisis where I perceived failure in implementing student-centred practice in the teaching of English. It describes how I worked through this crisis to return to feel empowered as a teacher.

This thesis is an intrasubjective reflection about my experiences of implementing psychodynamic pedagogy in a school from 1997-1998. Psychodynamic pedagogy was a theory that could not just be read about, it had to be enacted. I had to 'live it' (Arnold, 1994). My research is at the pulsating heart of teaching – in a school, working and relating with other teachers, students and parents, often under difficult circumstances. Its method is self reflective narrative.

This study reflects upon what it feels to be a teacher and teach. My identity as a teacher is intimately related to the activity of teaching. Yet this is often difficult to articulate about. Often when teachers talk about their teaching, others look upon with glazed, patient looks, waiting for the conversation to move on. This document attempts to

describe the complex, multifaceted and often contradictory demands of teaching. Teaching is a compromise between the vision and the administrative, the theory and the practice and the paradox of encouraging students to develop in the private domain of self expression yet satisfying more public demands of scrutiny (Meek, 1983). Likewise, I had to deal with contradictory emotions - disempowerment with my economic and social status as a teacher, yet profoundly empowered by the knowledge that I could make a difference to a child's life. I needed high levels of enthusiasm to achieve quality teaching yet I was often physically and emotionally exhausted by this demand.

Each teacher is a unique professional with different strengths, weaknesses, needs, aspirations, interests, talents, skills, personalities, histories and teaching styles. All teachers have their own unique stories to tell about their students, classes, lessons and schools. Psychodynamic pedagogy recognises and values these stories. In this study I tell my story as a teacher, in the lifetime process of learning to teach.

Often the latest innovations in education mirror a charismatic teacher yet because teaching is an intensely personal activity it must be mediated by and within each teacher. Teachers can only 'be' themselves. They cannot 'be' another teacher. Best practice occurs when teachers search, experiment and value what they have to offer as teachers. They can collaboratively learn from one another. Teachers need to build on their strengths rather than compare themselves with their peers. As such I needed to explore, understand and discover my 'self' as a teacher to professionally develop.

I had to begin to understand my emotions as a teacher, which were complex, variable, contradictory, intimately related to my physical and mental state and what was occurring in my personal life. Teaching was not 'just' about teaching the subjects 'English' or 'Drama' - it was intertwined with many dimensions of my emotional and cognitive self.

This thesis describes moments of joy and disappointment that I experienced and continually worked to understand and resolve my identity as a teacher. It is about my

search to achieve excellence in teaching English when best practice is extraordinarily difficult to achieve and sustain.

In contrast to my professional life as a teacher was my voluntary, occasional work as a children's performer or 'clown', where I entertained young children with dramatic play, song, mime, in homes, parks, preschools, for celebrations and community and social gatherings. I developed the role of 'Aunty Ni Ni'. Most people would describe her as a clown but 'she' is probably somewhere betwixt a clown and a simply colourful, incredibly optimistic and eccentric character with a bright and cheerful soul. Clowning, as 'Aunty Ni Ni' became a theatrical metaphor for me to experiment as a teacher. It liberated me from the 'superior' adult, moral, institutionalised role of 'teacher', strongly shaped by the serious, responsibility that 'loco parentis' implies. Clowning provided new ways of thinking about teaching.

The premise underlying this thesis was that I found working in the institutional environment of a school difficult, tiring and often demoralising. Teaching and 'work' were synonymous experiences, yet as an educator committed to implementing best practice, I had to resolve the tension between the nature of work with the unique nurturing quality of being a teacher and its critical role in shaping children's lives.

My story as a teacher

Patrick Diamond explains the complex and deeply personal affect of being a teacher as *the teacher self I am, the teacher self I fear to remain, and the teacher self I hope to become* (Diamond, 1995).

The teacher I fear to be is one who is ordinary, silent, mute, passive, withdrawn, inactive, depressed and who believes teaching is indeed a ‘loser’s job’. This fear lurks like a shadow, silently, but powerfully, whispering “You can never be the teacher you want to be”. It is my self doubting teacher voice. It is my fear of failure and criticism. It is my fear of the inertia and boredom caused by the institutional and hierarchical nature of schools, the low status job, the noise, the dirt, the pressure, the tiredness, the repetitive trivia, the constant child company, the rude and defiant child, the tedious ‘marking’ and the impossibility of pleasing very diverse stakeholders. ‘Teaching failure’ is a powerful reality because of the high expectations of competence in diverse skills that teachers cannot realistically fulfil. As an English teacher I was expected to be an expert in writing, reading, speaking and listening development, children’s literature, English literature, film, poetry, video, mass media, information technology as well as many other areas. It was daunting and overwhelming. I had to resolve this fear if I was to teach effectively.

The teacher I am and the teacher I want to be is what this study is about. It explores my changing and developing identity as teacher. My interest in this research project began in 1997 when I returned to teaching after a five year break. During this absence from face-to-face teaching I wrote learning materials and ran workshops for teachers along with many other enhancing professional experiences.

It is important to state that I chose teaching as my career with great enthusiasm and commitment. I wanted to share the joys I had experienced as a learner. During my Dip Ed (University of Sydney, 1981), I was awarded excellence in my practicum, yet this did not guarantee my success as a teacher. After nine years of teaching I felt disillusioned,

undervalued, low in self esteem, cynical, with a confirmed sense that I had failed as a teacher. Basically, I had become an unhappy teacher. Undoubtedly there were other issues in my personal life impacting on my teaching. They form another subtext, for another audience. Yet the issues of teacher self-esteem and morale are important ones facing teaching. My disillusionment as a teacher reached a crisis in 1992 when my self esteem plummeted to the point where I adamantly rejected teaching as a profession. I left teaching never wanting to return.

Teaching English in high schools

Partially due to circumstance and choice, I moved schools frequently, teaching in five high schools over five years. There is no need to name these schools because they now exist only as memories. My first year of teaching in 1982 was as a full time casual teacher, teaching English and History at a specialist, selective high school. I remember organising a special WWI Day where my Year 10 class acted out a play about being in the trenches, ate Anzac Biscuits and danced to popular war songs. Another lesson I vividly remembered was teaching a poem about a mosquito. I felt elated because I managed to integrate speaking, reading, listening and writing in cohesive ways. We read the poem. We acted it out. We talked about it and we wrote about it. All my theoretical understandings meshed into practice and I felt the quality of student engagement and learning was high during this moment of teaching.

The following year (1993) I found another long term casual teaching appointment at a boys' high school. Although I had completed a successful practicum at this school, returning as an employed teacher was a completely different experience. I felt alienated with the corporal punishment used and the subversive politics of the English/History staffroom in conflict with their head teacher. I had a difficult Year 7 class. It was a relief, mid-year, when I was finally granted my permanent appointment and thus able to start the official beginnings of my career as a teacher with the NSW Department of Education. I was appointed to a disadvantaged high school in Western Sydney (1983-85). I was excited and enthusiastic about this appointment, especially when I recognised

the innovative programs in the school's English department, such as journal writing, an annual drama festival, exciting units of work based on Britton's spectrum of transformational, expressive and poetic language modes. However I found it difficult to balance the needs and demands of preparing, teaching and evaluating interesting and innovative lessons for five classes. I spent too much time preparing for small aspects of lessons which lasted only a few brief moments that meant I was underprepared for other classes.

I was unaware that the freedom I offered my students was too great. My lessons lacked clear beginnings, middles and endings. Often they were too complicated. They lacked continuity and when ideas didn't work, instead of reworking them and breaking them into more manageable steps, I discarded them ready to try a new idea. I strongly refused the perceived alternative of teaching language as isolated skills, typically described as 'comprehension questions', 'language exercises' 'grammar' or 'busy work' (Moffett, 1968). I perceived this as boring, unimaginative and going against my knowledge and understanding of how children learn language best - when they are using language for purposeful activities. It was understanding the complex nature of purpose and audience that I had yet to learn.

What did I do?

I remember organising a Year 7 class to write scripts to accompany some old slide reels to present to another Year 7 class. As we prepared them I remember the distinct child's voice calling out, "Miss, I need you". I felt gratified. I did help children. Teaching was an altruistic endeavour for me. I was extremely enthusiastic but perhaps this enthusiasm manifested itself in a perception of eccentricity? Endorsing this, was a trolley I purchased to wheel my resources from class to class. This brought laughter and merriment to the kids and in my own way, perhaps I was a 'clown' teacher long before I ever performed as a clown? However, by expressing my eccentric self I opened myself to ridicule and failed to protect myself emotionally. The cost of being a 'clown' was to negate my power in the serious business of setting the school's agenda. My ideas were

dismissed. I allowed the school's conservative culture to devalue my enthusiasm. My failure to keep classes quiet and well behaved only placed pressure on my already stressed supervisors. Regretably a supervisor said to me, "I don't care what you do, as long as you keep your classes quiet". This comment devastated me because it reflected a complete ignorance of my goals as a teacher. I was working to implement a student-centred English program which focused on fun and enjoyment for the children, group discussion, role play, writing as a process. I just didn't have the sophisticated skills to achieve these goals. Structure, control, direction, variety, consistency, routines are all needed for effective teaching but I lacked the knowledge of how to internalise these skills for student-centred learning.

My most memorable and pleasant experiences of this school were the walks I took groups of Year 7 children on, for sport, allowing students to bring their dogs along with them. I felt great warmth from the interactions between myself and the students as I walked and talked through the open parkland and streets surrounding the school. With the dogs, there seemed a spirit of adventure and if ever I were to write a children's novel I would love to write about these time.

In 1986 I again moved schools. Still lacking a firm sense of classroom control I began to internalise this as failure. I also began to lose belief that my 'ideal school' existed. I was unaware that my reputation was being shaped by how well I could manage a class, yet very aware that teachers were critical of my teaching. I had a fluctuating sense of competence and lacked skills to mobilise the support I did receive. So after one year at the school, I requested a transfer to another school.

At this school (1987), I longed to be enthusiastic but feelings of boredom and disenchantment had set in. I had high expectations of what English teaching was – fulfilling, challenging and rewarding, yet I did not feel this. The exciting world of English teaching, that I had read about (Britton, 1972; Moffett 1968, Watson 1977) didn't seem to exist in reality. Yet innovation did exist at this school – mixed ability classes, an inspiring debating camp, a 'Drop Everything And Read' program but somehow I could

not emotionally connect with them. A pattern of clashing with supervisors and peers had set in, leaving me feeling isolated and resentful. I felt hurt that other teachers saw chaos rather than what I perceived as my efforts to implement good English teaching practice. I remember feeling disappointed after an inspector observed my teaching. Instead of validating me as an enthusiastic English teacher trying to implement good practice, I awaited her inevitable disclaimer - "but". Once uttered I felt totally deflated. There seemed a lack of encouragement and support for innovative practice in schools if it led to noisy, off task student behaviour and apparent chaos.

Why did I consistently lack good classroom control? Perhaps the isolated nature of teachers' work failed to provide me with the mentors I needed to guide and demonstrate how to implement student-centred teaching? Was it because I lacked belief in myself as a teacher? Was it because I pushed a trolley from class to class, carrying my resources, that marked me as a teacher not to be taken seriously? Was it because I failed to make my agendas explicit to the children I taught? Was it because I rushed my lessons? Was it because I handed the power over to the students before they had the skills to be independent learners? Was it because I transferred schools too frequently and so never developed the relationships I needed to teach in empathic ways? Was it because I refused to play the authoritarian role of 'ogre'? Did attempting to make learning fun, exciting and meaningful lead to unruly, silly, off task student behaviour? Was it because I lacked adult support? Was it because my class sizes were too large? Was it because I was too idealistic about teaching English in high schools?

Once realizing my goal of becoming a teacher, I felt disappointed because I perceived I was not highly valued as a teacher in the school. I did not feel 'promotion material'. My failure to 'master' classroom control was an important indicator that I had failed to navigate the school hierarchy. I tried to put into practice what I believed about good teaching and learning but my early teaching was characteristically noisy and chaotic with apparent lack of control. I seemed to face constant and persistent difficulties managing students with behavioural problems. I could not effectively gain these students' interest or commitment to cooperate in my teaching plans. Often my plans did not work, not

because they were not theoretically valid but because they required sophisticated skills I had yet to acquire. The coordination of group work, timing, selection of resources, meeting the needs, interests and skills of students were all extremely challenging and difficult. Often activities took longer than I anticipated or I would be finished too quickly (Warren, 1992). Often I made tasks too complex and children were confused about what and why they were doing an activity. Often I ran out of ideas of what to 'do' facing a class of restless and anxious children needing to be occupied. Many lessons were effectively sabotaged when I simply forgot or misplaced one essential resource. Negotiating a student-centred curriculum was not a simple task. I lacked interpersonal skills with my peers, seeking their approval yet rejecting their support if it did not match my views of teaching English. Increasingly I felt disempowered by the hierarchical, authoritative nature of high schools. I felt isolated with a sense that I didn't belong, to what I perceived, as a conservative teaching culture. I was in 'blame mode' – blaming my peers and supervisors for stifling 'my' enthusiasm and for 'making me' feel like a victim. Yet to focus on this perception of failure negates many of my achievements as a teacher. I engaged children. I motivated some. I was enthusiastic. I tried my best to make learning an enjoyable and meaningful activity for many students.

In mid 1987 I was offered an opportunity to teach English in Japan on a prestigious exchange program for one year. It was a relief. I felt disappointed by what I perceived as the dissatisfying world of high school teaching. The dissatisfaction wasn't from my unruly, noisy students but from conflicts, misunderstandings, lack of validation from the school's culture. I refused to compromise my theoretical understandings about English teaching yet I was naive about the interpersonal 'rules' of working in a school hierarchy which were inherently political. My perception of failure was related to my difficulties in manoeuvring within the political world of the school. My lack of effective and consistent classroom control combined with the lack of peer validation, finally demoralised me. I failed to conform to the powerful image of the 'good teacher' who maintains a quiet and functioning class. Even today, this perception that 'I can't control a class' can powerfully deflate my sense of competency. When a teacher asked me what I was doing with my

Year 1 class to generate so much noise - "I don't know what you're doing – but there's too much noise" (April, 1997) I felt overwhelmed with a sense of failure and self doubt.

Teaching English in Japan

Teaching English in Japan was pivotal in my development as an educator. It was a fascinating experience, culturally, socially and provided a broad overview of an education system.

My experience in Japan confirmed everything I had read about language learning – you learn language by using it, in meaningful contexts and through relationships. I was confronted by what 'Language' is. I lived in it – it was everywhere. Unable to speak Japanese, I lacked the codes to unlock it but with encouragement, use and time I learnt. Language learning was an innate human need to communicate. I was reduced to the helpless experience of an infant, unable to cope in simple everyday acts like going to the bank or the more complex demands of securing accommodation. Meanwhile professionally I was transformed from a low status teacher to a high status foreign teacher which almost immediately overcame any low self-esteem I felt as a teacher.

While my Japanese improved, there was no obvious improvement with the students' English in the schools I visited. They lacked an ability to speak or listen to English. The English language was taught as a language to be 'acquired' by memorizing grammatical rules and completing exercises rather than communicating in it. The grammar translation method was an ineffectual method for the teaching of English for the majority of Japanese students.

As well as learning a second language, I used my first language to make sense of my tremendously exciting experience. I kept a diary and wrote letters daily. It guided and focused my future plans.

On my return to Australia I completed qualifications in TESOL but for numerous reasons I returned to teaching in a high school. This time, however, with my recent qualifications in TESOL, I returned as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. It was less demanding with smaller and less behaviourally demanding classes. The school was located in a high socio-economic suburb. In many ways it was your ideal school but it was at this school that my self-esteem, as a teacher, plummeted. My boredom turned to anger. I resented the confining, hierarchical atmosphere of a school where I felt treated like a child. I hated the obsession with testing, marks, assessment tasks and supposed 'accountability'. The dominating ethos of the school was public examination success rather than pedagogical innovation. I clashed with staff, resentful that they did not share my more expansive and imaginative views of teaching English. I felt discontented, disempowered and desperate to escape teaching. My burnout as a teacher was occurring.

My crisis as an educator was caused from two fronts – disempowerment from being in conflict with the school's ethos and disempowerment as a postgraduate student. It was sobering to be a student where I felt stress and insecurity in the formalised, competitive, structured courses that decided your 'fate' by a specified date. I learnt best in courses where I felt valued as a learner. For other courses I jumped through the hoops, listened while lecturers lectured, occasionally asked a few questions, wrote notes and then madly rushed to the library to borrow books to regurgitate what I believed was expected.

My career reached a crisis in 1989 when complete disenchantment engulfed me. I perceived being a teacher to be a mediocre, mindless and stultifying career choice. I no longer wanted to be a teacher. I longed for other professional opportunities. Perhaps graduating from school to university and returning to school, as a teacher, left me dissatisfied as if there was nothing else I could do?

Writing distance learning materials

In 1992 I left teaching to become a writer of learning materials for students enrolled in distance education. Writing learning materials was challenging, rewarding and provided many enhancing professional opportunities. I felt an immediate rise in my status and self-esteem as I saw my materials published. It provided opportunities for me to feel and think as a 'real' writer. It confirmed everything I knew about the personal growth model of English – writing was a process, demanding constant rewriting for publication. I needed to talk my way to meaning to clarify partially formed thoughts. Often it was collaborative where I needed an empathic editor to guide, encourage and support my ideas. My best writing reflected intense personal involvement.

My four years away from face-to-face teaching allowed me to reassess my strengths as a teacher. I developed more realistic expectations about the nature of work - that no work environment is free from the intensity of interpersonal politics revolving around power, status and personality. It takes leadership to override them. My fear of returning to teaching focused on the interpersonal world of ego, jealousy and lack of validation between peers. Working cooperatively and creatively with peers who did not share my vision was my most difficult challenge.

I had opportunities to write formal business letters, memos, newsletter articles. Suddenly I reflected on my glib attempts to teach 'letter writing' as a teacher in a school. Teaching the form was emotionally and cognitively vacuous. The powerhouse of writing development occurred in real contexts, with real people and real purposes. Invariably my formal writings for communication for publication were edited by managers who were privy to the broader political context that I lacked access to. Editing, as an adult form of 'correcting' could also be used as a way to exert power and subordination.

As well as learning to write learning materials, I was inducted into new types of spoken and written language in this curriculum orientated environment. I had opportunities to present at workshops, conferences and seminars. These presentations developed into

highly polished performances that were interactive, lively and entertaining. They modelled how I wanted to teach English – providing a variety of listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks in a variety of groups. As I received positive feedback from them, my confidence as a teacher was renewed. My ultimate performance was when I rehearsed every step, movement and word in preparation for a conference presentation. If I could achieve these highly polished and effective teaching performances at conferences, I could achieve them as a teacher in the classroom. My self-esteem as a teacher was reaffirmed.

Towards my fifth year as a writer of learning materials I began to feel restless and less motivated to write learning materials. The internal mirror between myself and my students had weakened by my absence from the classroom. I needed to write authentically to students. I also felt twinges of hypocrisy when I lectured on the importance of teaching yet feared returning to teaching myself. Again, there were other subtexts, but in mid 1996 I faced a turning point in my career where I made the decision to return to teaching in a school. To ‘hedge my bets’ I also applied for several non teaching positions. As I wrote my officialese justifications of myself as a teacher, it sharply contrasted to my own inner search to find my identity as a teacher.

Learning to teach drama

As I struggled with my decision of whether to return to teaching, I attended courses on drama and theatre in education [University of Sydney, M Ed program, 1995]. Teaching and studying drama in education required new ways of feeling, thinking and responding. Initially, I emotionally resisted participating in many of the drama activities because I felt vulnerable performing in front of others. I felt threatened because drama often demanded relatively instant and public displays of creativity. I preferred more quiet reflective spaces, with time and pen in hand. I also lacked experiences in understanding the relevance of doing drama games, warm ups and relaxation activities. I found the teacher’s verbal instructions confusing. I felt agitated, irritated and uncomfortable participating in drama enactments that left me feeling emotionally manipulated as Boal’s

Theatre of the Oppressed did. Drama required enormous amounts of trust. Unfortunately I had a traumatic experience, at an English teachers' conference in 1986 where a group of invited high school students enacted a crisis begging the teacher participants in a workshop to call an ambulance. As I had lost a brother in a car accident, the enactment blurred with my personal tragedy and shattered my trust with drama.

Discovering performance as a clown

Attending the course 'Theatre-in-Education' (University of Sydney, 1995) I was asked to examine a live performance intended for young people. Instead events led me to perform my own 'show' to my young nephews and other distant, young relatives in my home. It was a powerful emotional and cognitive experience. This first performance as 'Aunty Ni Ni' (short for 'Ja nine') where I danced in a colourful costume, sang three short songs, performed a simple puppet story, lasted for no more than 20 minutes. It was illuminating both personally and professionally because it took huge amounts of courage to perform in front of family as audience. I had to do it because I knew if I didn't perform, at that moment, I never would. My nephews would soon be too old to enter this child's imaginative world.

When I enthusiastically recounted this initial performance to work colleagues it was met with mild amused interest with an ever so slight tinge of disapproval. For the first time in my career I recognised the need to protect myself emotionally. Being enthusiastic leaves oneself open to criticism. To do this, I needed to protect 'Aunty Ni Ni' as she had taken a lifetime of relationships, experience, coincidence and serendipity to be created. Before she had unconsciously blurred with my 'eccentric teacher self' causing uncontrolled havoc in my classes but 'Aunty Ni Ni' now become a metaphor of an idealised, imaginative persona who became an internal mirror to energise my teaching. Although I chose not to disclose 'Aunty Ni Ni' to the teachers I came to work with in the school, 'she' was intimately related to my teaching. It was fascinating when teachers unconsciously recognised her when they said, "Janine, you look like you're about to do a show" or when students said to me "You're funny".

This enactment was so inspiring it encouraged me to pursue the concept of performing as a clown to young children. A clown was the closest role to describe 'her'. I went on to complete a six week drama course on clowning. This provided valuable insights into preparing and sustaining a role, improvising, responding to the affective and cognitive needs of the audience in real time, as well as confronting my own emotional resistance in the risk taking nature of performing in front of others. The course worked on holding eye gaze and smile as a way to communicate to audiences. This embodied to me what affective attunement and mirroring was (Arnold, 1994). You had to search the audience to find someone who would smile back at you to energise your performance. Suddenly I began to acquire new strategies as a teacher. Often, as many teachers must do, I took on the role of the 'ogre' shouting, frowning and using intimidating 'gorilla like' behaviour. The clown subverts this established teacher role and replaces it with a role steeped in play and humour. Clowning gave me new ways to imagine holding a class's attention through new skills in body movement, voice, facial expression. I began to explore performing as a way to teach especially holding a class's attention, sensing the mood of a class to move the next teaching move on and modulating the emotions of the class to finally 'know' or 'feel' when it was time to move on or when to hand over the performance to my students. This required enormous shifts to challenge my unconscious need to control and dominate – which were ultimately ineffectual. It was fascinating to be in role yet also detached, consciously working towards my next performance move.

The experience of performing as a clown at birthday parties for children aged 2-11 years of age, with adult parents, relatives and friends watching infused me with an incredible sense of joy and energy. It was exhilarating as well as extremely humbling. I felt the magic of creating an imaginative world between myself and my child audience. When returning to teaching in 1997, I requested I return to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) to primary aged children because of their receptiveness to enter a world of imagination, instead of returning as a high school ESL teacher. Perhaps I had finally found the age group I was best with? Returning as a primary ESL teacher was enormously challenging because I had much to learn about children and the primary

curriculum from K-6. I began to teach in a way I had never had as a high school English teacher. I began to actively incorporate song, dance and art into my teaching.

Performing as a children's performer profoundly affected my identity as a teacher. It enabled me to perceive, imagine and dream of new ways of teaching. 'Aunty Ni Ni' touched something deep within myself. Everyone has different selves to express. The metaphor of a clown appealed to me - funny yet vulnerable, outrageous yet shy, joyous yet sad, loved yet rejected. The clown epitomised the hope and freshness of a child's view of the world, the optimism and the promise of a future and yet the vulnerability, despair and fragility of young children's lives. In a spark of magic, laughter and self expression, the clown and her audience have a chance to change.

Entertaining, as a teaching strategy was extraordinarily powerful. "The traditional link between Drama, theatre and entertainment has possibly done a disservice to the power of Drama to educate people . . . One problem is that education is still seen too narrowly as something which occurs mainly through listening, reading, writing and computing. All too rarely is education recognised as occurring most powerfully and most enduringly through social enactments" (Arnold, 1991). This is what performing as clown offered – a powerful social enactment.

Clowning energised my flattened, weary teacher soul and reminded me of how I once felt as a beginning teacher. Clowning renewed my confidence and invigorated the narrow, institutional role of 'teacher' that I had been enculturated into. It provided fresh insights into the nature of teaching and learning and confirmed the vitality of psychodynamic pedagogy as a theory to support my teaching.

Performing as a clown was a mirror for me to reflect upon on my teaching and enriched my artistry as a teacher. It provided an important cognitive-emotional dynamic to spiral me into more creative teaching. Performing to children also provided emotional and cognitive insights into teaching drama.

In February 1997 my wish was granted and I returned as an ESL teacher in a Sydney primary school. To my surprise, on arrival at the school, I was told I would also teach a Year 1 class each afternoon. Since 1998 I have taught ESL full time, teaching different students in different classes in different contexts - individuals and small groups of ESL students; classes for short periods of time once a week or occasionally. It was varied and provided a wealth of teaching opportunities to reflect upon. As I had never taught in a primary school, or indeed a Year 1 class, it was my knowledge of English and Drama education and my experience as a children's performer that guided me.

Not long into my career as a teacher I lost belief in the importance of being a teacher and the act of teaching. Knowledge was not enough to sustain belief in my teaching. Psychodynamic pedagogy validated my feelings as a teacher and provided fresh understandings about the complexities of student-centred pedagogy which were both cognitive and affective. It gave me the theoretical resolve to overcome my recurring disenchantment that came with working in a school. Teaching, like drama, requires 'belief'. I had to be both emotionally and cognitively engaged in my teaching to be an effective teacher.

This thesis is a story about myself as a teacher and the journey I travelled on, as I worked to understand, strengthen and improve my teaching. The only teacher I could change was myself. Yet this was thwart with psychological, cognitive, emotional, physical, genetic, social and family complexities. Probably the hardest changes were the smallest ones, such as varying, softening and lowering my voice to effectively manage a class or student. The only way I could develop as a teacher was to search for my own internal validation instead of seeking it from others. I wanted to be energised by my teaching rather than feeling drained and demoralised.

Writing student learning materials in the Pacific

There is an addendum to this story of returning to teaching. Although I returned as a teacher to a school, I also gained a consultancy to write English learning materials on an educational project in the Pacific requiring two seven-week visits a year. This released me from many of the arduous, demoralising aspects of teaching that I feared and provided valuable reflection time on my teaching. I had an escape valve from the pressures of teaching.

The experience of working in a developing country with few resources emphasised that the greatest resources were the teachers, their students and the quality of that relationship.

Running workshops for teachers provided opportunities to mirror my teaching. The workshops were repeated to different groups of teachers, thus enabling them to be continually refined. I felt energised and could distance myself to see how to teach in abundantly creative ways. Conducting these workshops for teachers seemed easier compared to when I was immersed in the reality of teaching children in a school. Techniques that I struggled with, such as collaborative group work seemed somehow much clearer. With plenty of time and in role as the 'expert' or guest/consultant/visiting teacher I was very creative and energised by my 'performances'. To implement them day-to-day was a different matter. Teaching daily in a school was a different experience where I could easily become immune to fresh, energetic and spontaneous teaching.

Historical background

This study is an integrated approach dealing with the English and Drama education (Britton, 1972; Moffett, 1968; Wagner 1976; Taylor 1995). Psychodynamic pedagogy extends these studies by integrating the learner with the learning. In this study the learner is the teacher.

This thesis argues that it is the quality of the relationships that emerge between the teacher and students that is central to effective teaching and learning. Often discussion of language development, literacy and learning are externalised from their embedded reality – that they occur through relationships of meaningful dialogue. Language learning occurs through meaningful dialogues that arise from meaningful relationships. The skill in teaching is being able to create these enabling dialogues. Roslyn Arnold argues that they are created through empathy.

Children learn to talk through dialogue. The longer the utterance, the more developed the thought (Moffett, 1968). Spoken language is an important precursor for reading and writing. When teachers establish, maintain and extend dialogues with and between students this is when language learning is most effective.

“One of the unique qualities of dialogue is that the interlocuters build on each other’s sentence constructions. A conversation is verbal collaboration. . . . Inseparable from this verbal collaboration is the accompanying cognitive collaboration. A conversation is dia-logical – a meeting and fusion of minds even if speakers disagree. . . . I would like to advance an hypothesis that dialogue is the major means of developing thought and language. The qualifying of thought and elaborating of sentence structures develop together. Outside the classroom this development through vocal exchange occurs all the time, but in the classroom it can be furthered deliberately by creating kinds of dialogue in which questioning, collaborating, qualifying, and calling for qualification,

are habitual give-and-take operations. Adjustive feedback by no means requires an adult always, but an adult may be necessary to establish the necessary characteristics of the conversation. If interlocutors do not really engage with each other, pick up cues, and respond directly, or if they merely listen out the other and wait for their turn to speak, nothing very educational will happen.” (Moffett, 1968:72-73)

Language is a process of social engagement. Vygotsky outlines his zone of proximal development of scaffold cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1988). Arnold extends this to emotional scaffolding.

Arnold argues for quality, nurturing, empathic relationships for effective teaching and learning (Arnold, 1994). It places personal expression for language and literacy development as central to English and drama education. The focus of English teaching is about the deep, experiential purposes of language (Moffett, 1994; Britton, 1972; Graves, 1990; Wilkinson 1986; Watson 1977). Psychodynamic pedagogy confirms the teaching of English as a subject dealing with self-esteem, self expression and self development (Moffett, 1994). Psychodynamic pedagogy validates the intuitive, insightful and reflective teacher who promotes literacy and language development through empathic, human relationships (Arnold, 1994).

Roslyn Arnold’s theory of psychodynamic pedagogy developed from her study of the psychological processes that students experience during writing development (Arnold, 1991). This study documents a group of students’ improved writing through empathic responses between peers through a letter writing project. Literacy development is enhanced through nurturing and empathic relationships which enhance positive self images of oneself. It is through empathic relationships that children develop the necessary sense of self and others so critical in writing development. Self-esteem and self concept are critical. Arnold demonstrates with long term empirical evidence on the role of psychodynamic approaches for writing development (Arnold, 1991) and in particular ‘authentic’ writing.

There is much debate over what the subject English is. The approach I have taken is to use students' experience, literature and the integration of the skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and enacting and literature as the focus. My goals as a teacher since 1997 have been to implement drama as a learning medium through story. My approach to teaching English focuses on the personal and psychological rather than a social and cultural view of language (Halliday, 1996).

Language, as an integrated system, is intimately related to the physical, cognitive and emotional dimensions of a learner. Language is coded with thoughts and emotions.

English education asserts the power of the narrative. Narrative shapes our understanding of the world. We live through stories, we tell our stories, we listen to others stories. Our imaginative life is based on stories. We learn empathy through stories. I tried to tell a story to my Year 1 class each afternoon by memorising a story, retelling and embodying it. I tried to rehearse the story before performing to the class.

My goal was to actively incorporate drama as a major strategy for teaching English. Although I focused on drama as a process I began to explore the performance notions, particularly where older classes performed repeated items to a variety of younger audiences. Drama could teach much about the concept of audience.

Language development occurs when learners communicate with a variety of people, to a variety of audiences, for a variety of reasons, on a variety of tasks. It is writing for real purposes to real people that is the generator for language growth. Drama and discussion are important for developing multiple perspectives, both as preparation, during and after writing. Britton (1972) describes the role of participant or spectator as affecting language choice. The whole language approach is based on the premise of the ineffectuality of breaking language into decontextualised units.

Cooperative pair and small group work is embedded in English practice because it involves talking and listening, the precursors to writing, reading and thinking. It provides audiences where students have a chance to relate to one another. It provides an alternative to the whole class 'moving as one' orchestrated by the teacher/conductor.

James Britton expressed the critical role that language plays in constructing reality (Britton, 1972, Kelly, 1955). Humans use language to make sense of their experience. It is not the experience but the reflection upon the experience that matters. Cognitive and language development are intimately linked with experience. This led to the importance of journal writing as reflective practice.

Psychodynamic pedagogy acknowledges the powerful learning that occurs prior to formal schooling and argues that teachers must implement these naturalistic methods into the realities of institutionalised schooling. Early infant studies show how the carer uses empathic responses to assist an infant's language and emotional development.

Infancy powerfully affects a person's emotional and cognitive development. The research on how children learn their first language through interactions with significant others is important in psychodynamic pedagogy (Stern, 1985). Daniel Stern's work on the infant's development of 'self' and how this concept of self is laid down before language and is developed through the parent's affective responses. The development of an infant's sense of self is embedded and developed through relationships with significant caregivers. Heinz Kohut, (1985, 1977) a psychotherapist describes the development of a cohesive self emerging through empathic responses by parents and significant others. Self image emerges through relationships. We all depend on others to establish and maintain our different self images. Empathy is a type of observation which involves cognitive choices about how to react to your client. Counselling and therapeutic situations have much to offer teachers in their understanding of how to respond to students' emotions (Kohut, 1971; Stern, 1985). My role as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher allowed me to work with small groups of students and individual students and thus provided ready opportunities to empathically attune.

Psychodynamic pedagogy acknowledges and celebrates teaching as a highly creative profession. It validates the powerful psychological benefits of imaginative teaching, steeped in play. If children lead rich imaginative lives this leads to more developed rational thinking. Likewise, if teachers lead rich imaginative lives, this will lead to more thoughtful, engaging teaching. Graves (1990) advocates the need for teachers to be intimately linked with their own literacy.

Psychodynamic pedagogy recognises the complex, intrapersonal nature of the learner and the critical role that emotions, in a dynamic relationship with cognition, play in that learning. This study examines a teacher as a learner and how a teacher's intrapersonal relationships impinged on the continuous process of learning to teach. As such, the issues of teacher morale, self-esteem and stress management relate to this study.

Psychodynamic pedagogy describes both the enthusiasm and energy of teaching as well as downward spiral feelings of despondancy and inertia. Much attention has focused on the cognitive side of teaching but little has been placed on the emotional. Teo describes teacher stress (Turney, Hatton, Laws, Philips, Teo, 1993) but neglects the feelings behind successful and unsuccessful teaching when stress is caused. There is little research on the emotional energy of the classroom that psychodynamic pedagogy theorises about.

Emotional memories are the conscious, subconscious and unconscious emotional templates developed in infancy, described by Daniel Stern as Representations of Internalised Experiences Generalised (RIGs) (Stern, 1985). These emotional templates, developed in preverbal infancy continue to be modified throughout one's life and are our feelings and reactions. Arnold argues that reflection can modify these RIGs (Arnold, 1994).

Teachers use language to instruct, explain, model, assist, praise and control. Like some parents, some teachers run constant verbal commentaries, evaluating what the student says or does in the class. Teachers often control who will speak, when, to whom and on

what topic. Children need language to express, experiment, investigate, hypothesise, create, control yet this is often denied in classrooms where the teacher dominates the language. Children need to use language in active and participatory ways if they are to learn.

Terms such as 'interactive learning', 'student-centred learning', 'experiential learning', 'democratic classrooms' (Dewey, 1924; Bruner, 1972) describe the processes and outcomes of psychodynamic pedagogy. Psychodynamic pedagogy takes it a step further and explores the psychological processes that arise during these outcomes. There are familiar well researched statements about how to promote the needs, interests and abilities of the learner. Cognitively I've understood these dictums but emotionally I failed to feel their psychological impact. How does it feel in an enacted sense? How do I transform theoretical knowledge into my teaching behaviour? What are the emotions involved in a truly student-centred negotiated curriculum? Psychodynamic pedagogy unpacks the psychology of good teaching and learning. It explores the psychological aspects of interactivity and what happens emotionally and cognitively to learners when they are engaged in authentic activities. This thesis attempts to describe them. Arnold argues that the reason why classrooms have not changed radically enough to reflect reforms is "because teachers are not sufficiently confident or informed about the complexities of classroom dynamics" (Arnold, 1991:13).

Psychodynamic pedagogy is child centred interactive pedagogy. "Child centred pedagogy is predicated upon the empathic attunement of educators" (Arnold 1993:64). Student-centred interactive pedagogy has not occurred because the necessary transformations that need to occur within the teacher have yet to be supported institutionally. This thesis describes how psychodynamic pedagogy, as a theoretical framework promoted student-centred language learning.

Why hasn't drama been used more as a learning medium? "For all the advances in knowledge which have been made in psychology, sociology, linguistics and curriculum development, drama is not the central focus of most schools or learning institutions, yet

its devotees can argue persuasively for the educative value of Drama especially in promoting cognitive, affective and language development" (Arnold, 1993).

Teachers bring their own unique histories to their teaching. How we teach is influenced by our past experiences as teachers and learners. Connell describes the social and class impacts on teachers (Connell, 1985). Psychodynamic pedagogy explores the complex psychology of the teacher and in particular the teacher's intrapersonal relationships.

Nature of teaching

The question of what it means to be a teacher pervades this study. As Roslyn Arnold's study of writing development shows (Arnold, 1991), students are unique and complex learners with feelings, personalities and ways of being. Yet teachers' emotions have been a neglected area in the study of teacher development. This study explores the intrapersonal relationships that identified and shaped one teacher.

It is difficult to make sense of the overwhelming varying internal psychic reality of school life because teachers work in 'fractured realities'. Realities rapidly shift to new emotions, physical states, students. Each classroom is a microcosm within microcosm of varying realities. It is a job of constant and often competing interruptions, activities and demands. Teaching is an improvised performance orientated profession which demands teachers shift their practice continually to respond to their students in the classroom.

Teachers must operate in two worlds - the world of children and the professional world of adults. Navigating these two worlds can be difficult and contradictory. The world of children value play. Becoming an adult is to value work. Play is not trusted in the world of adults.

The thesis integrates theories of language and literacy development with how it feels to be a teacher and teach in the pressured, institutionalised environment of a school over several years. It describes the complex, conflicting, competing and often contradictory

experiences of teaching. Psychodynamic pedagogy provides the necessary theoretical framework to understand the emotional and cognitive factors that impinge on daily practice.

Methodology

This is a longitudinal study of myself as a teacher/researcher reflecting upon my thoughts and feelings as a teacher in the actualities of teaching English as a Second Language in a primary school in Sydney. It builds on Roslyn Arnold's research which demonstrated improvements in Year 5-8 students' writing (Arnold, 1991).

Roslyn Arnold states, "My interest in this approach which I have termed 'psychodynamic' derives from a search to understand what happens at an interpersonal and intrapersonal level in pedagogical contexts" (Arnold, 1994). Although my rejection of teaching, earlier in my career, was substantially caused by my lack of interpersonal skills with peers, this study limits itself to the intrapersonal world of myself as a teacher because the most important thing I could do to develop as a teacher was to understand my own complex teaching self.

The purpose of this research was to:

- implement psychodynamic pedagogy in classroom settings and in particular implement drama as a learning medium whose outcomes are student-centred
- strengthen my belief systems in the arduous task of teaching. Without belief in the critical role that I played in students' learning, I focused on my professional dissatisfaction with the limited opportunities of working in a primary school and the many unsatisfactory working conditions I worked under
- document my continuous improvement teaching English and drama that psychodynamic pedagogy supported, validated and inspired.

The self narrative methodology is part of a movement which validates teachers' stories as transformative of practice.

The methodology follows a phenomenological approach and was chosen because this is an appropriate method to study psychodynamic pedagogy. The methodology uses embodied learning and introspective writing, as both the process and record of

experience. It is not raw experience. It is an integrated and connected piece of research based on my daily experiences as a teacher in the challenging and rewarding task of teaching as a permanent teacher in a school. The reflective process undertaken since the beginning of the project became a mirror to energise and improve my teaching.

Describing lessons that captures the essence of the teaching and learning over time is difficult. How can I account for the accuracy of what happened? How can I remember the details? What is pertinent to this study is that psychodynamic pedagogy, as a theory was integrated into my daily teaching. Psychodynamic pedagogy acknowledges the process of teaching, embedded in feelings. Reflecting upon my teaching, I scaffolded for powerful teaching. The more reflectively I wrote about my teaching, the more I learnt about my teaching. The reflective writing supported and guided my professional reading. This reading, in turn, informed my teaching both cognitively and emotionally. It comforted me emotionally, especially on days when my teaching had not gone well. It guided and inspired me to experiment with good teaching practice. My practice in turn scaffolded questions for my professional reading. Clarity emerged the more I reflected through the process of writing and talking about my teaching. This document is the evidence to my increasing ability to reflect, refine and thus improve my practice.

This thesis emerged through writing exploratively, expressively and reflectively. Writing has a life of its own, spiraling into unknown futures, to make present realities. It materialises through a process of constant change – editing, conferencing, sequencing, rewriting, planning, rereading. I had to write my way to meaning, reflecting upon my embodied learning. After writing extensively and exploratively, I then had to integrate, clarify and synthesise these experiences, thoughts and feelings into coherent arguments in an ever expanding document. There was tension between writing exploratively and privately for self and publically for an external examining audience.

An important factor in writing this thesis has been my empathically attuned supervisor, Associate Professor Roslyn Arnold, who scaffolded both emotionally and cognitively through her attuned listening and her belief in my work. The role of the supervisor as

'corrector/judge' can be detrimental. So much learning is about 'readiness to learn'. Different learners (and in this case, I am the learner) are ready to learn at different rates. Experiencing this, allowed me to trust that my students would indeed come up with the 'goods' in their own time through empathic attunement.

Psychodynamic pedagogy requires self scrutiny (March, 1997). It promotes excellence in teaching because it is an enabling theory that guides teachers to examine their own fears and weaknesses in non-threatening ways, as they are intimately related with issues of self-esteem and self validation. Psychodynamic pedagogy enabled me to confront my fears as a teacher that had been so debilitating earlier in my career.

This is a narrative of a teacher in the institutionalised environment of a primary school over a two year time period. By nature, schools are institutions reflecting historical, social decisions on organising a mass of people. A school is an institution that carries power, status and accountability. Being a teacher belongs to a culture with sets of expectations. These need to be navigated.

The data collected are my reflections on being a teacher in what I perceive as the difficult institutional world of a school where I often felt disheartened. It focuses on my career and in particular significant teaching moments, incidents, lessons and feeling states between 1997-1998. The data collected are my intrasubjective dialogues about the process and nature of teaching. As an observer and participant of my teaching, I reflected on how teaching ideas were formulated, modified and finally actualised. I observed highly successful teaching moments and failed ones, empathic and non-empathic states, classes whom I was affectively attuned with and others who resisted affective attunement. I observed how my feelings impacted on being a teacher and teaching. It describes how psychodynamic pedagogy validated, nurtured and sustained my creativity in teaching.

Psychodynamic pedagogy embraces the whole being of a teacher. It stresses the importance of a teacher's physical, emotional and cognitive states. The physical cannot

be separated from our emotional and cognitive selves (Damasio, 1994). High energy levels are required and these must be astutely monitored to prevent burn out.

It was easy for me to feel tired and demoralised by innovative teaching. Teaching is vulnerable to burnout. Teachers need breaks and protection from burn out. By focusing on the emotional-cognitive dynamic teaching can be re-energised.

How does one tease out the web of multiple classroom interactions with the cacophony of responses, questions, comments, requests, admonitions, praise and other talk and actions to find a negotiable, meaningful account of what happens? My interest centres on 'significant moments' (Arnold, 1994) - moments when a cognitive-emotional dynamic occurred. Psychodynamic pedagogy theorises about these significant teaching and learning moments in the classroom. These are highly energised states, for both the teacher and students. They occur when there is a dynamic between thinking and feeling states.

This thesis aims to describe the complex nature of teaching and how psychodynamic pedagogy inspired, guided and informed my journey as a teacher. It focuses on my daily experiences as a teacher, as I struggled, succeeded and failed in thousands of interactions with hundreds of students over two years. This thesis attempts to identify significant moments when feelings of success, achievement and engagement occurred between my teacher self and my students. It reflects upon those significant moments when something 'happened' to both myself and my students, characterised by an emotional cognitive dynamic.

This thesis explores significant moments when teaching is deeply enjoyable, creative and empowering and how an emotional cognitive dynamic energised my teaching.

What were some significant teaching moments between 1997 -1998?

1. Making bottles of lemon juice for Fathers Day
2. Reading the picture book *The Whalers*

3. Teaching in role
4. Learning to use puppets
5. Playbuilding the story *Yamuna* and performing it to younger classes.

The most profound learning occurs in the undefinable spaces that exist in the hearts and minds of the teacher and students. Psychodynamic pedagogy describes what happens during those 'magical moments' of deeply engaged learning. This thesis reflects upon those moments during 1997-1998. This thesis demonstrates the implementation of psychodynamic pedagogy in a school setting. It sees teaching as an act of learning. Teachers need to understand their own complex psychological, linguistic, cognitive and emotional factors as they teach – that is, how they learn (Graves, 1990). After all, a teacher is only a learner, trying 'to learn', how to assist children learn. As a teacher I had similar vulnerabilities and needs as my students. Teachers have interior monologues about their teaching yet these are often not easy to articulate or find a forum for their complexities to be fully analysed (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991).

This self narrative reflects on the rich teaching experiences that happen each school day and over a year. Often these experiences evaporate before their rich insights can be recognised, enriched and preserved. Teaching is an instantaneous, ever flowing verbal response.

This description is a snapshot of lessons and observations about my thoughts and feelings while teaching. The teaching events described were never repeated. I changed, my students changed, my resources changed and the mood of the class changed. I moved on and did other things with the children. Also I continually scaffolded my teaching to learn new things. Every teaching moment was a unique moment in time. It was impossible to experience the same teaching experience twice. What remained was my commitment to student-centred learning.

As an ESL teacher I taught in flexible and varied groups. Sometimes I withdrew small groups or individual students from their classroom or worked alongside the teacher and students inside their classroom.

Often the teacher is described as if s/he is external to the teaching act. In this study the teacher is integrated into the act of teaching. This reflective, autobiographical approach includes both my identity as a teacher and my teaching.

This self narrative describes myself as a teacher immersed in the complex and intensely personal and emotional world of a school. It reflects on my feelings and thoughts about my teaching during 1997-1998. It examines the nature of day-to-day teaching as I struggled to lift my teaching to higher levels. It seeks to describe my teaching as a participant and an observer.

Teaching is a 'joint construction' between the teacher and students. It is a two way process. The significance that teaching is a relationship that mutually impacts upon the other has not been fully acknowledged. Psychodynamic pedagogy describes the emotional spaces created and negotiated between the teacher and students.

This study is based on everyday teaching experience or

“... situations in which learners have formed an intention to learn from their experience. It is also limited to learning which is intended to be applied in a way that has meaning to: reflection after the event but what needs to be done is to promote reflection throughout the experience” (Boud & Walker, 1991:11).

If teaching experience is not valued, then what is? The act of teaching is most critical for student learning and teacher development, yet this is often a neglected area.

“... experience is always more immediate, more enigmatic, more complex, more ambiguous than any description can do justice to” (Boud & Walker, 1991:11).

To describe teaching, to describe what happens in a lesson is multifaceted and extremely complex. It is extraordinarily difficult to describe teaching experience, yet tremendously powerful, as a teacher, to attempt to articulate partially formed thoughts and feelings that underpin it. This thesis is a reflective piece of research. Arnold argues that when we are able to label a cognitive and affective dynamic we are in a powerful learning state.

“Normal development involves modifications to those generalised interactions laid down consciously and unconsciously throughout early childhood and life” (Arnold, 1994). This thesis, as a piece of introspective writing, is the modification of my emotional memories of teaching. As I wrote this document it guided and informed my present teaching revisiting past experiences, to realize present and future possibilities.

This thesis attempts to capture the essence of being a teacher who empathically responds in the real time of teaching. Writing this document supported me in the actualities of teaching, Monday to Friday, term to term, year by year. This reflective practice allowed theory to be integrated with practice. I constantly evolved new goals, limits, systems, attitudes, approaches, routines, ways of preparing and ways of protecting myself.

When I wrote reflectively at the end of each teaching day in early 1997 it was initially difficult because I was physically tired with a sense of ‘fractured reality’ from the bombardments of emotions. I could not make sense of what had happened because I was in a state of shock. Gradually the incoherent writing lessened the more reflectively I wrote and the more accustomed I was to teaching. Reflection provided the problem solving tools to deal with my complex, contradictory emotions as a teacher and the demanding cognitive and emotional challenge of implementing drama in education. I developed commitment towards my explorative, expressive writing as it was integrated with teaching. As I wrote it, it mirrored into my teaching, nurtured my ‘self’ as a teacher and strengthen the belief I needed to sustain me in the arduous and often demoralising, institutional and hierachical environment of a school.

A central belief to psychodynamic pedagogy is the value of embodied learning. That is why drama can be such a powerful teaching medium for teachers. So much of teaching is drama. I took on a role, I improvised trying to respond to the dynamics of the moment.

Learning about drama education was both cognitive and emotional. I had to learn the cognitive tasks of how to improvise, how to structure play for learning and how to extend the potential of drama as a learning medium. At the same time I had to deal with my emotions involved in these drama concepts. Through enactment the necessary emotional-cognitive dynamics energised and spiraled me into implementing drama as a learning medium.

Often it is said, that an argumentative discourse such as a thesis demonstrates cohesive arguments that build upon the other. However this is not how my mind works. It took me time to internalise the argument that this thesis presents. The process of writing this document emerged through constant brainstorming that was initially incoherent and difficult for others to read. I had to 'waffle' both through talking and writing, before I could write coherently. However, through the different stages of writing, the same arguments kept surfacing. Through continual rewriting the clarity and depth of ideas emerged. The more I edited it, the more I refined my thoughts. My private, explorative writing developed my thinking. The writing scaffolded itself, where once ideas were created they were quickly dismantled with a new idea to take their place. This thesis developed as the spiral metaphor described in psychodynamic pedagogy where you climb a spiral staircase unable to see the next step but with each step, a new argument is created.

As I wrote this document I found difficulty in locating, sequencing and building upon ideas. A breakthrough occurred when I was able to decentre and restrain from assessing this document. My role as a writer was to 'turn up' (Cameron, 1995) and just write, without self judgement and trust that my voice would emerge. Once I accepted that it was an evolving document, imperfect with each print out, this allowed it to grow and develop.

Embedded in this study is a teacher's voice. Writing this thesis developed, strengthened and articulated my voice as a teacher. The introspective nature of writing this thesis and professional reading comforted, reassured and soothed my deflated feelings when lessons did not go well or when I felt alienated and disempowered from the attitudes of other staff members.

This document is introspective by nature, having been reworked and rewritten and constantly edited to encompass different time spans and perspectives. A metaphor for writing this thesis might be baking bread. At certain times I needed to leave it alone to rise. The writing went through different stages of emotional commitment and physical states. I had to balance the demands of writing of this document with the demands of full time teaching. I had to have breaks to re-energise, otherwise I felt overwhelmed by physical and mental tiredness. I often felt tempted to throw it away because I felt it wasn't 'good enough' but I kept working on it until I felt like 'I owned it'. Another metaphor might be of weaving a fine mat where I weaved ideas together, reweaving the many patchy sections before I could see the dominant patterns.

Implementing psychodynamic pedagogy in the classroom

Psychodynamic pedagogy asserts that learning can be enhanced when an emotional and cognitive dynamic occurs through differentiating those feelings and thoughts (Arnold, 1996). This thesis explores how this cognitive emotional dynamic, within a teacher, can lead to improved teaching.

Teaching is cognitively and emotionally demanding. As a teacher I could not be sustained by the cognitive side of teaching. Without responding to my emotional needs as a teacher I entered despondent and ineffectual states. When I was emotionally and cognitively engaged in my teaching, my practice improved.

Cognitively, teachers need theoretical positions. These need to be implemented in split second realities. These must simultaneously be navigated through emotional states of both the teacher and students. My most insightful teaching occurred when I was able to 'think on my feet', teaching in the instantaneous flow of time, initiating, manoeuvring, shifting the teaching moments so that I was both a participant and the observer of my own teaching.

Planning and presenting lessons are highly cognitive skills. They require complex decisions about sequence, timing, selection of activities, space, resources, rationales and goals. Sometimes I momentarily panicked and entered a stunned state not knowing how to move the lesson forward because I didn't feel I had 'anything' ready or know what to 'do'. This often happened at the beginning of the lesson. All my plans suddenly seemed too difficult or I simply forgot them in the urgency of the present moment. Often they were hampered by my detailed lesson preparation or lack of preparation. During these times I offered bland, busy work that had little learning value for my students. I should have been more honest to my class and admitted I had run out of ideas, allowed them 'free time' or listened to their suggestions of what to do. Initially (August, 1997) I was

not ready for this level of honesty. I had to 'let go' of my dependency on my written plans to move into an enacted state and improvise the next teaching move. Teaching is highly cognitive but equally it must respond to the emotional dynamics of the classroom that occur in the present moment. Improvisory skills assisted me to respond to the emotions of the class.

The breadth of my experiences in education allowed me to recognise that teachers do make a tremendous difference in the lives of the students they teach. Yet in the day-to-day reality of teaching with the miniature of realities, within realities - locks and keys, smelly classrooms, graffitied walls, children crying in the playground, reminders for playground duty, this can easily be forgotten. Without belief and enthusiasm in the importance of teaching, I spiralled downwards into despondent, ineffectual states.

Teaching is full of poetic moments. Yet often they escaped me, so intent was I on coping with my day as a teacher. I experienced one such poetic moment on my return to school after an absence. I was told (August, 1998) to attend the Zone Athletics Carnival. My duty was 'crowd control'. Once there, I watched a teacher, who had been teaching for many years, organise the student athletes on the field and I thought about the years of devotion he had put into his teaching. So much of what being a teacher is about is constant supervision of students. Unless one maintains one's belief in the importance of teaching, the job can become mindless and boring. As I watched the zone carnival I marvelled at his energy and commitment to this event, which I found so alien, not being sports minded. It was wondrous to see these young children competing as young Olympians. Perhaps I found teaching tiring, difficult and stressful because of the constant pressure to perform? Perhaps as I grew older I became more physically tired especially when the student cohort remained the same age? Teaching, like parenting, requires enormous physical and emotional energy devoted towards children. I looked at the children's faces as we returned to school on the bus and was struck by how important they were and yet how demanding. They had the future before them. What happened to them today, would affect their future. The profession of teaching demands that teachers give of themselves to the care and nurturing of these young minds. Teachers, next to

primary caregivers, profoundly affect children's lives. At the same time I wondered whether I had enough physical energy, enthusiasm and commitment to sustain a career of another fifteen years? I wondered whether teaching would always satisfy me professionally?

The essence of the cognitive-emotional dynamic is the need for teachers to 'connect' emotionally in meaningful ways with their planning, practice and reflections upon practice. When I was emotionally engaged in teaching a story/ poem/ song and the students were engaged emotionally and cognitively in responding to that story/poem/song that is when an emotional-cognitive dynamic had a chance to spiral for both myself as a teacher and for the students whom I taught. If teachers are emotionally and cognitively engaged, this will spiral them to enhanced creativity and thus improved learning outcomes for students. "The core of that argument is that effective pedagogy is enhanced by contexts in which there is an engagement between thinking and feeling, at personal, interpersonal and intrapersonal levels" (Arnold, 1994).

An example of teaching based purely on cognition failing, was when I agreed to teach a class 'writing'. It soon became obvious that no such 'thing' existed. As a teacher I cognitively knew about the teaching of writing but before I could teach 'it' I needed time to develop a relationship with the class, a purpose and audience. Writing involves trust or making the space emotionally safe. When my Year 1 class (1997) wrote a thank you letter to a businessman who had donated foam rubber sheets for our Easter rabbit ears we felt emotionally uplifted. I went into role as the businessman receiving their letters and reading them demonstrating how their writing was read by a 'real' audience. When students wrote authentically, their writing became powerful, insightful, reflecting the nuances of personality and meaning. This was evident on another occasion when students wrote and received simple messages from students from another school.

The most powerful learning occurred when I was emotionally involved in a task. I had to build my own emotional commitment to a task before I could expect students to do so.

Mirroring

Mirroring is where one interlocuter influences another's behaviours, actions, feeling states. Emotions are 'mirrored' between the two interlocuters. One interlocuter copies it and 'returns' it. Mirroring is achieved through eye contact, smile, facial expressions, voice, movement and postural alignment. Performers, such as clowns are highly skilled at mirroring smiles to an audience. When I taught Year 1 (1997) I consciously worked to establish strong eye contact and then smiled at individual students especially when greeting them or encouraging them to actively participate in a performance or activity. Through this simple technique I felt I made contact with students in deeply personal ways. From mid-1998 I actively worked to greet students by their names as I met them in the playground and together we would play the game "Good morning . . . wait, I haven't forgotten your name . . . it's . . . ?" The children enjoyed this simple interaction and actively sought it. One of the most rewarding aspects of teaching were my affirming relationships with my students and how they mirrored affect towards me. Mirroring is a two way process that affects both parties and thus the students' smiles of delight made me feel happy too. Perhaps teaching is at its most difficult when conflict and stress is mirrored between the teacher and student?

The psychodynamic teacher mirrors behaviours she wants the class to adopt. I became powerfully aware of the negative power of mirroring when I put on a teacher 'tantrum', yelling at my Year 1 class as a strategy for classroom management (1997). Soon after this, I watched in awe as one emotionally needy six-year-old child performed the 'same' tantrum to another student. I was shocked at how similar this child's 'performance' was to mine. It reinforced to me that it was not the style of control I wanted to develop.

Sometimes I could laugh at how ridiculous I sounded as the 'ogre' teacher, yelling at the students. Or was it just accepting this as one of my roles as a teacher? When a student said to me "I like you Miss Kitson because you're nice to the children" I knew I wanted to develop this caring and nurturing role.

Always present was an unconscious agenda to use authoritarian language of “I will tell you what to do and if you don’t listen, I will yell at you”. When I heard one student cry out in distress, “Please be happy!” in reaction to my authoritarian tones, that I rarely used on the playground, it was a jolt for me to change.

Mirroring stress and relaxation

I worked to implement fitness and relaxation to help me cope with the physical and emotional stresses of teaching where I dealt daily with large numbers of students, who had complex emotional needs and histories, many of them behaviourally challenging, in confined spaces, with often high noise levels.

When I felt stressed, I mirrored stress to my students. Relaxation/meditation helped break this cycle. It helped reduce the pressure, guilt, tension, stress, anxiety I felt. The relaxation enabled me to be flexible and responsive during the real time of teaching particularly when teaching drama demanded that I feel relaxed. Simply breathing deeply could shift my emotions where I calmed myself and so able to calm my students.

Schools are extremely busy places. Teachers must deal with multiple and competing demands of planning, administrating, presenting, assessing, reporting, supervising in the midst of interruptions, changes to routines, requests from other teachers, special activities and events. Teachers must respond to many whole school activities, events, competitions, information and other administrative demands. These all contribute to teachers’ stress. The challenge was to turn these plethora of opportunities into enhancing learning opportunities rather than feeling overwhelmed by them.

I often felt anxious facing behaviourally difficult classes knowing that some students would actively seek to challenge my authority. It was hard to be empathic in these situations but with time I gradually began to realize I could change these negative attitudes by my reactions to them. Probably what I learnt in 1998 was to calm myself, to breathe deeply to resist panicking when a class appeared chaotic and uncontrollable. When the children

were noisy and uncontrollable I plummeted in my self image as a teacher. However I was pleased when I remained calm and spoke to the class in slower and deeper tones during these 'uncontrollable bouts' (April 1997). I had difficulty in guiding students with appropriate behaviour (August, 1997). Often at the end of the school day in 1997 I felt numb with exhaustion. Often I felt overwhelmed being a teacher. It all seemed too hard. Likewise I remember joining an excursion to a museum where the students' boundless energy exhausted me, as they literally ran to each exhibit. I needed stress management techniques to cope with the demanding emotional environment. For a while I painted classroom displays and backdrops for students' work as a way to unwind. My relaxation exercises enabled me to respond to the children and enjoy following their leads. I attempted to walk each day to be physically fit to cope with the demanding physical and emotional nature of teaching. Stress stopped my playfulness and creativity as a teacher (Tyler, 1991: 2).

For a time I conducted a daily fifteen minutes aerobics/fitness/dance with a composite Year 3 and 4 class with an audio tape of music and aerobics instructions. As I demonstrated the moves in front of the class I consciously smiled at each student. They returned the smile and I felt the power of this. We became absorbed in it (Slade, 1954). When I tried to run short relaxation sessions I found it a difficult verbal task because it required that I too be relaxed. I needed to close my eyes, speak slowly and lower my voice to create a scenario such as when the children closed their eyes to imagine themselves flying on a magic carpet.

I tried to use relaxation activities to calm my Year 1 class each afternoon where they lay to listen to 'rainforest music' (1997). My challenge was to decide what form the relaxation should take such as students quietly reading and be consistent about it.

When I felt relaxed I was able to enjoy the offers made by my students. I read poetry with Nain Sok, a NESB Year 6 Korean student, and together we acted out a poem. I allowed my 'Reading Group' to paint as a reward then wrote quietly in our journals. I helped a class interview an elderly lady who had attended the school as a young girl and

later we wrote notes about the interview. I helped Slijaa, a Year 4 girl in the library at lunch time, search for information on dolphins, finding an encyclopedia entry of a picture about dollars which led to talk about some coins she had – one from her home country, Yugoslavia.

Psychodynamic pedagogy acknowledges the role that feelings play in the cognitively difficult task of teaching and learning. My hypothesis is that teachers need to be sufficiently aware of their own feeling states to challenge those which impede good teaching and promote those which spiral them into more successful and satisfying moments of teaching. I achieved this through reflective and introspective writing. *Over time learners become increasingly independent of external validation. Learners become increasingly self directed, self affirming and critically aware* (Arnold, 1996).

Teaching a Year 1 class, for the first time, confronted me with questions of how children learn to read and write. Some could already read and write, whilst others had yet to learn. Yet students varied in their ability to read and write. What fascinated me was how they could deal with sophisticated reading materials on some days and not on other days. In December 1997 I brought in a local newspaper article about how the school had won first prize in a community street parade, as well as the ‘crowning’ of the local teenage ‘Queen Magna’ for my Year 1 class. It was beyond most of Year 1 students reading ability yet by scaffolding questions to answer in pairs they were amazingly accurate in their answers.

What constantly surprised me was how some activities worked whilst others didn’t. It seemed related to how I scaffolded the activity and whether the activity matched not only students’ cognitive states but their emotional states. Sometimes my instructions were too complex or confusing. Often I was thrilled by my teaching ideas such as preparing matching, prioritizing, sorting, sequencing activities, yet it appeared to baffle students as to why I asked them to do the activity. They lacked interest in my pedagogical cleverness. Likewise my assumptions were challenged when I responded in detail to students’ work but recognised that this meant little to the Year 1 students. They

challenged my high moral ground as a teacher which often placed my teaching ideas before my students' learning.

Affective attunement

Thirty students bring a kaleidoscope of emotions to the classroom. On any one afternoon teaching Year 1 in 1997 I had agitated, excited, silly, tired, enthusiastic and sick children. The first thing I had to do when I entered the classroom was to assess students' emotional, physical and cognitive states to begin to understand how to empathically respond to them.

Affective attunement is the rapport established between the teacher and students. It requires attentive listening and skilled non-verbal language – “postural alignment; eye contact; repetition of words/phrases; requests for elaboration” (Arnold, 1996), intonation, pace and knowledge of how to alter the space dynamics of the classroom.

What did I need to improve in my teaching? I needed to know when and how to vary the tone, pitch, speed of my voice. I needed to know how to respond when students' behaviour angered or upset me and when to display calm or 'acted' out anger. Often decisions occurring at an intuitive level, in split seconds, could be wrong as when I misread the emotional state of a student who literally climbed up a tree, refusing to climb down, after I had spoken severely to him.

Teaching required constant problem solving, particularly when students are so different and need to be responded to in different ways. I found it hard to be empathic when I had to deal with uncooperative, defiant or disruptive students. I made a significant step when I stopped punishing students with lunch time detentions, which required my supervision, energy and time and which were ultimately ineffectual in modifying students' negative behaviour. Over the three years at the school it seemed to me that the best thing I could do was to withhold reacting to rude, uncooperative behaviour and instead focus on her/his positive behaviour. This did not mean to ignore the antisocial behaviour. I needed to

withhold judgement and look for the cause of the behaviour rather than emotionally reacting to it. I needed to give the student 'time out' to his/her negative emotional energy and move the child onto a new emotional level and thus avoid reinforcing negative labels on the child. I needed to provide the child with 'time out' and to restrain from my emotional involvement which tended to be judgmental. Minor shifts occurred when I began experimenting using humour as an alternative form of control. This became easier with the younger K-3 students, enhanced by my two years at the school. I lacked tolerance to older Year 4-5 children yet this tolerance remained equally vital.

Teachers need skills in recognising and valuing their students' emotional states if they are to teach empathically. When teaching, I had to decentre myself to internalise my audience and so manoeuvre the next teaching move. I had to learn to recognise where the class was emotionally and cognitively at, to be able to alter my teaching activities and thus mirror the appropriate emotions to the class. I needed to scaffold tasks cognitively and emotionally. This required subtle awareness of pause, voice quality, movement, eye contact, timing, pace to monitor levels of interest and change the activity if necessary. The resources, strategies, the activities that I introduced, patterned the emotions and thoughts of a class. That is why stories, poems and songs and drama are so powerful – they can 'pattern' the emotions and cognition in powerful ways.

Teaching involves constant problem solving from simple administrative procedures such as locating keys, storerooms, equipment, resources to highly cognitive ones of deciding what and how to teach amongst the infinite possibilities of good teaching ideas.

Teaching in the playground – learning to be affectively attuned

The language outside the formalised classroom is rich in possibilities. Whilst on playground duty some students were desperate to talk and be listened to by a teacher. Increasingly, I became convinced that the most important thing I could achieve as a teacher, was to be 'there' emotionally for those students who needed me and listen. Perhaps this is the most demanding aspect of teaching. I had to learn to recognise and

make instantaneous decisions on how to respond to these emotions in order to realize their full educational potential. It is the teacher's ability to extend the conversational dyad for more than two turns that is an indication of a developing language user (Moffett, 1994; 1968). I became conscious of these dyads when talking to students in the playground. When I could extend the conversational dyads for at least 2-3 turns I felt I was beginning to develop my empathic attunement. What children taught me in the playground was invaluable to my understanding of their needs, interests and personalities. A small group of Year 1 students would follow me up to the library at lunch time. There I would read to them, watch them read or support their reading. I established different relationships with the children during this informal non-teaching time engaged in literacy. It provided opportunities to talk and relate to the children as individuals, difficult to achieve when relating to a whole class. Assisting in the library at lunchtime in 1997 was profoundly insightful because I began to follow the students' lead rather than 'leading the dance' (Stern, 1985, 1977).

My challenge as a teacher was to monitor, vary, limit and control my talk. Increasingly, I became aware of how my language outside the classroom, in the playground, differed to the way I spoke inside the classroom. I had difficulty transferring this warm, friendly and casual way of speaking into the classroom. As soon as I entered the classroom I seemed to use a more formal register. I seemed to unconsciously need to control the talk inside the classroom. I felt anxious when I faced a whole class at the beginning of a lesson, particularly when I perceived difficult students awaiting to challenge my authority.

Whilst standing, facing two queues, as students lined up at the canteen, I made up rhyming poems about lining up eg "Stop, stop, stop. Go to the end of the line if you want to buy something". The kids visibly enjoyed me playing with language. It was lovely to be spontaneous with them instead of falling into the awful, screeching teacher-in-charge mode. Happiness mirrored between us.

In March 1998 I experimented with miming as I supervised the queues at the canteen during one of my lunch time duties. I communicated non-verbally, initially to eat my

lunch in peace. I was fascinated to observe how much I could communicate nonverbally. Moffett also says it's a way to centre one's 'self' (Moffett, 1994). This led me to experiment giving instructions nonverbally in class. What was critical was learning to listen empathically to the children. Sometimes I took my puppets who would instead 'talk' to the students in the playground. Whilst on canteen duty, I occasionally carried my popular crocodile puppet, 'Crocy' which the children reacted and responded to. Using puppets helped me shift my language to speak imaginatively to students. "Where is 'Crocy'?" a student might ask. "Oh, I had to take him back to the zoo" I replied. I began to develop more nurturing and playful relationships with the children in the playground first using puppets and mime whilst on playground duty. Children increasingly showed me warmth and friendship, talking and wanting to be with me. I felt overwhelmed by the friendship that so many young children so willingly offered. It made me realize how little poetic and imaginative language I used with my students in the classroom. I was 'stuck' speaking the language of instruction, information and evaluation in the classroom. As I worked to affectively attune myself with the children during playtime this assisted me affectively attune in the classroom.

Engagement

Some of the most challenging and interesting discussions come when teachers ask questions to really listen with interest to children's ideas (Warren, 1992:16). Rarely did I ask questions where I listened intently and with commitment to students' replies. This became strongly apparent when I interviewed students for their stories to be published in a book I was writing (April, 1998). I hung onto every word that the students said because I had a vested interest in their responses. Their agenda became my agenda. This contrasted to when I asked questions to the whole class with little commitment to students' replies. When I went into role I also hung onto every word that students said in order to move the drama forwards.

I would argue that psychodynamic pedagogy is connected to a deep sense of personal identity, grounded in purposeful and meaningful tasks. 'Belief' is created when teachers

and students are psychologically committed to a task. When this occurs, teachers and students can generate language far beyond their capabilities. When I asked a Year 4 class to read some reports written by Year 6 students it was like 'switching on the lights'. The Year 4 students suddenly engaged with the texts. My teaching excelled when I created tasks that had meaning for both myself and my students. My challenge was to affirm the meaningfulness of literacy and design a rich literary and artistic environments for real purposes and for real audiences (March 1997).

When people talk about things that matter to them (September, 1998) their facial expressions and voice quality clearly indicate their involvement. This was evident when I recorded students' voices onto audio cassette. It was a powerful way to engage students in 'real' listening in the classroom. It was such a simple activity yet it profoundly touched those who spoke and listened. It was fascinating to watch the subtle changes of expression on their young Kindergarten faces which showed curiosity, interest and delight in hearing their own voices. Listening to familiar voices on cassette seemed to touch the listeners in a deeply personal way. It was as if I captured how they thought and felt. The challenge was to develop and sustain 'meaningful dialogues'. When we talked about things that mattered a different dynamics emerged.

Teachers need to be emotionally involved in their teaching to model creativity to their class. Teachers have abundant opportunities to be creative – they read stories, poems, write stories, act out stories, sing, paint, dance amongst many other creative pursuits. Psychodynamic pedagogy affirms this creativity and argues that this is the inherent nature of the cognitive-emotional dynamic that is so energising.

Empathy

Empathy is a powerful tool in human learning because it can modify another's affect states. Unlike affective attunement, empathy is not just mirroring back the affects but making decisions on how to modulate the affects, either soothing or intensifying them (Arnold, 1994). I taught empathically when I recognised and responded to students'

feeling and thinking states. To achieve this I needed to resolve my own feeling states especially when I felt stressed, nervous, tense or agitated. Some classes were harder to be empathic than with other classes. Some classes resisted me emotionally and feared emotional involvement with me. With some classes I struggled to break the unresponsive 'wall' between us. On some days I just couldn't engage my students. Perhaps it was accentuated when I was physically or emotionally tired. I needed to monitor both my physical and emotional states.

“ . . . empathy includes both affective attunement and the cognitive capacity to judge how best to respond empathically to another's feeling state” (Arnold, 1994).

“ . . . empathy encourages us to decentre, to experience feelings beyond those immediately accessible and to make appropriate cognitive judgements whether to soothe or intensify the feelings as we engage with other persons abilities not sufficiently credited in effective teaching repertoires. Being successfully empathic requires sophisticated abilities involving attunement, reflection, decentring and introspection (Arnold, 1994).

Empathic attunement is the ability to 'read' students and seize learning opportunities that suit their feeling and thinking states. This contrasted to the way I had been taught to teach – write a lesson plan about my goals or agenda and 'teach it'.

Working individually and with small groups of students provided unique opportunities to develop empathy as a psychodynamic skill. Working with small groups of students taught me to follow students' lead and use the resources of the present moment and place. The challenge was to do it consistently, over time, with whole classes.

The pressure to 'control' a class interfered with my empathic attunement. It was often the smallest of changes in my teaching behaviour that were the most difficult and most

rewarding as when I began to speak to a class in authentic or imaginative ways instead of the stereotypical control language that I unconsciously adopted as a teacher. Perhaps teachers' talk is inhibited and constrained by the institutional nature of schooling that unconsciously coerces them to take on roles of dominance and control? I frequently talked too long to whole classes and wondered how I could reduce this 'teacher instructional talk' and to vary my talk to include singing, reading a story, role playing, performing puppet plays.

One of the challenges in developing as an empathic teacher was knowing how to respond - what to say, how to say it, how to use my body language particularly with students in conflict with their peers or with myself. A shift occurred when I talked to a class about their restless behaviour after a yoga class (1998). It had been taught by a visitor to the school. The children had been unfocused and silly. As I relaxed myself to discuss their behaviour we were able to reach a consensus that their behaviour was inappropriate. It was these split second, subtle moments of change that were breakthroughs for me as a teacher.

Initially my preparation focused on generating teaching ideas. Affective attunement is the skill that teachers need to be responsive to the real time of teaching. Empathy is the ability to know what to accept from students and how to empower students with tasks and audiences that involve them emotionally. The more empathic I became, the more responsive I was to the ideas so enthusiastically offered by the students. Year 1 students constantly brought in books and toys for 'News' when I taught them in 1997. My challenge was to grasp what students offered me - their experience, their writing, their suggestions, their talk and empower it.

Empathy is realised through careful, attentive listening. I had to improve my listening skills to develop empathy. I needed high levels of concentration to empathically listen to children as it was physically, emotionally and cognitively tiring. "Every word that a teacher utters is important" (Britton, 1972). I worked hard to listen to students and recognised what they told me was always important. To do this, I had to stop my

incessant adult urge to qualify, correct and evaluate. Likewise I had to teach other students not to interrupt the dialogue. “Who am I talking to?” I would ask an interrupting student.

A priority after the teaching day was to write reflectively but often at the end of each afternoon, teaching Year 1 class (1997) I felt so emotionally exhausted that my writing was fractured, disjointed and unintelligible. Regardless, the process of writing reflectively developed my empathic attunement.

Spiral

Psychodynamic pedagogy uses the spiral metaphor to describe heightened and downwards movements of energy, commitment, belief and enthusiasm as a teacher. It is intimately linked to the physical states of tiredness or well being (Damasio, 1994). It involves risk taking to let the undefinable energy of that class emerge. Like a sensitive performer, an empathic teacher can put aside her own agenda to let another energy take over.

As a teacher I had to withhold my own emotional needs during the school day to focus on the emotional needs of my students – especially when dealing with fractious, irritating, difficult students who needed abundance of reassurance, consistency and patience. “In all these fundamentally significant processes, one partner in the dyad has to put aside self needs in order to attend to the other” (Arnold, 1994). That is why teachers need to acknowledge their own emotional states during non teaching time. My feelings were constantly impacting on my teaching and I had to manage them. Psychodynamic pedagogy articulates the need for teachers to monitor their own, as well as their students’ emotional and cognitive needs’ that arise in the real time of teaching.

When the children mirrored to me high levels of satisfaction, my commitment to teaching was enhanced and energised me. My disenchantment as a teacher occurred when the mirroring process between myself and my students became blocked. Often this occurred

when I focused on dissatisfying interpersonal relationships with colleagues which led me to spiral downwards emotionally (March 1998).

When lessons didn't work I felt it intuitively. Likewise good lessons had a feeling of momentum, pace, variety and movement with a variety of emotions (Arnold, 1994). During one lesson with my Year 1 class (1997) we began with a relaxation, followed by singing. I read a book aloud that a student had brought to class. I took the class outside to look at a painted backdrop of the whole school's excursion in the corridor. We listened to a recorded interview with one of the most proficient speakers in the class, about the bushwalk; we returned to the classroom; the students watched me draw a student's face on the blackboard. "Who was it?" I asked. Once they guessed which student it was from the class I asked this student to tell the whole class what she had done during the walk. I wrote it down on a speech bubble coming from her face. In this way I modelled what I wanted students to do - draw pictures of themselves writing their thoughts in a speech bubble. I encouraged students to write drafts before rewriting them on coloured paper. Then they cut them out and glued them onto the large painted backdrop, climbing up a cupboard to achieve this. The principal coincidentally visited the class and that further motivated the class to write. I asked students to read each others' work. There was movement in the classroom. Finally the writing took shape.

In preparation to meet a small group of teachers from Canberra who came to observe the ESL program (March 1998), I went into role as each of the five teachers (whom I had never met) entering the classroom to meet their student 'buddy'. I had organised for each of my Year 4-6 students to take one of the visiting teachers on a tour of the school. It was an extraordinary lesson because it spiraled. It felt I was taking each moment infusing it with interest and learning. I then read a bilingual English and Chinese picture book to the class. Joy glowed on Dennis' face. Dennis was a Year 5 Chinese speaking boy who was learning English and who I often had difficulty engaging his interest. I felt I was developing as an empathic teacher when I responded to the cues from the students and went along with their needs and interests. The children were setting the curriculum. My role was to 'map it', know where we were going and be able to extend the horizons.

Systems and routines – thinking about the spiral

Psychodynamic pedagogy describes teaching as a spiraling activity – where the teacher and student negotiate the curriculum in the present moment.

Routines make explicit the expectations of the teacher. They establish fairness and consistency. It is difficult to achieve quality teaching all the time and routines and systems can provide the guidelines of what and when to do whatever. Routines and systems are explicit indicators of the teacher's agenda. Yet there seemed a tension between routines and improvised teaching. Sometimes routines assisted, other times they hindered. Often systems and routines were too time consuming or cumbersome or boring to be sustained. Increasingly psychodynamic pedagogy enabled me to develop my skills as a spontaneous, improvisory, reflective teacher. My lessons increasingly included elements of 'play'. They aimed to be child-centred. Some older primary students found it unsettling, compared to a more conventionally structured approach. It worked better with younger classes from Kindergarten to Year 2. As I became more confident in modulating the emotions and keeping the momentum going through varying activities, the more proficient I became in contrasting 'time out' meditative tasks that required little thought with high energy activities. My lessons increasingly spiraled to revisit earlier lessons, texts, tasks in various groups and purposes.

Gradually I became more proficient in responding to the present, fluctuating moment/momentum of the class [November, 1997]. Teaching is an unpredictable endeavour. My plans were often usurped and the class took me off into unexpected tangents. I felt increasing reluctance to plan in detail because it imposed my agenda onto my students rather than working towards a mutually agreed one. Responding to student requests and suggestions energised my teaching, as Wagner describes how Heathcote's improvising energised her teaching (Wagner, 1976).

As a 'smorgasboard teacher' teaching different students, different classes at different times it was more difficult for me to set up systems and routines in a classroom. I did not need to develop routines and systems in the same way that a classroom teacher might. My role as a support teacher was to be flexible.

Simple things are complex. It has taken me years to understand, internalize and develop the simple but important things as a teacher such as the simple greeting and farewell of the lesson which are so crucial to assess where the students are emotionally and to finish in emotionally positive ways. Or even the simplest classroom management techniques such as keeping a classroom tidy, collecting the scissors, handing out the glue and collecting students work were challenging. I needed clear, consistent and simple routines with enough time to complete them. It was searching, experimenting new ways to achieve this, that was the challenge of teaching.

Sometimes I felt 'blocked' with no idea of how to move the lesson forward. The routine five minutes relaxation, followed by singing provided an important structure for me when teaching Year 1, in 1997.

I had to face the complex cognitive and emotional issue of rewards and punishments on my return to teaching. I constantly experimented with developing new strategies for classroom management. My first one was a 'WOW' Book' and an 'O NO Book' listing student achievements and areas to improve in. This evidence of student behaviour grew into an informative list which later assisted me write my comments on students' progress. The students approved of the 'system' where if they were named three times, they would receive an award at the end of the week. I proposed that it should be four times. The Year 1 students rejected this idea and it was fantastic to observe six-year-old students arguing strongly and articulately why it should only be three times.

I tried to involve students in decision making by a simple 'hands up' vote. So successful was it, that my Year 1 class (1997) began to ask, "Can we vote?" on whether they wanted to do the activity or not. Gradually I began to internalise the students' requests,

suggestions and ideas to move onto a new activity. In 'Reading Groups' in 1988 I began to let the students choose what they wanted to do. Sometimes I would write their choices on the blackboard for the group to vote on. I had to resolve the tension between offering students freedom to choose their learning activities and then demanding that they follow my plans. Often students resented it when I reverted to exerting my control and authority over the group when I had given them so much freedom earlier to follow their learning inclinations. There is enjoyment, security and predictability in routines but these routines need to be mutually negotiated if they are to be sustainable and successful.

When children requested to repeat an activity such as singing a particular song, this validated my teaching. Initially I found it difficult to teach the same topic twice because I felt as if I wasn't doing my job properly and often it was tedious. Some lessons also felt as if they had come to a natural conclusion. Increasingly, however, I began to recognise the need to repeat or revisit a topic, activity or strategy in new ways.

The successful management of classroom requires levels of control over student movement, noise and activity. My problems as a teacher were that my classes were characteristically noisy. I had to learn performance skills of voice, movement, pace, pause, stopping the class to repeat a request, praise whilst remaining calm yet firm. This was difficult when I went off into eccentric clown tangents. My strength, yet weakness as a teacher was my ability to excite students but unable to control this excitement. The excitement resulted in silly, off task student behaviour. I needed to manage the excitement I mirrored to my students. I needed to modulate calming states with high excitement ones. I needed to develop a range of emotions to mirror and thus modify my students' emotions. I needed to modulate the high excitement activities with calm and quiet activities. Psychodynamic pedagogy allowed me to shift my practice to speak enthusiastically towards students instead of 'whinging/ nagging/ bullying' them. To achieve this I needed to write reflectively about it.

I needed to acknowledge how I felt emotionally and physically prior to, during and after each teaching day. Whilst teaching, I needed to put aside my own emotional needs to

attend to the emotional needs of my students yet it was obvious that my emotions remained integral to the emotions of the classroom. When I felt tense, tired, anxious I tended to speak authoritatively. This also seemed to happen when I lacked confidence in supervising activities that I lacked expertise or experience, such as supervising sport, playing games or organising a theatrical performance.

I wanted to write poems, stories and plays with and for my students. On one occasion in 'Reading Groups' I wrote a poem about the waves and acted it out. Then we made fish figures out of foam and wrote short poems about fish to glue them onto the back of the foam fish. The students enjoyed the 'artistry' of making the foam mobiles to display their poems on. When I acted as an editor, interweaving students' writing into one text I felt we were creating powerful and meaningful texts. My goal was to create authentic contexts where both teacher and students become collaborative partners in the writing and learning.

'Empathic lapses' are realities in the teaching landscape (Arnold, 1994). It is impossible for teachers to be empathic all the time or achieve quality teaching especially when teaching in an institution over extensive periods of time. During these times of empathic lapses teachers need to attune to their own needs. On some days I struggled to show patience, acceptance and empathy.

Some lessons clearly did not work as when I allowed a small group of students to play soccer in the classroom in order to scaffold a newspaper article about soccer so that the students could write about the game. I knew I was making a mistake when my patience ran out and I yelled at a student. Later the students worked harmoniously together. We went to the library and read with such excitement and curiosity. It was wonderful.

In March 1998, I felt disillusioned, demoralised and physically tired. My 'teacher self' entered a flattened state. It was triggered by an insignificant criticism by a colleague. Instead of taking it in my stride, I spiralled downwards emotionally. Feelings of despondency, that I had felt earlier in my career, resurfaced. I felt overwhelmed by the

demanding workload. During this time I lost belief in the importance of teaching and being a teacher. Perhaps I had opened myself too much and left myself emotionally vulnerable? Perhaps it was because I had neglected rehearsing? Perhaps I had become immersed in the interpersonal world of staff politics rather than focusing on the children and my teaching? Perhaps I sought validation from my peers, who had their own survival to deal with, instead of finding my own internal validation? Perhaps I listened to what other teachers and parents thought of my teaching rather than listening to my own reflections that confronted, analysed and understood many of the difficulties I faced in my teaching? When I experienced this flattened emotional state I had to patiently work it through before I could teach empathically again. I needed quality reflection time and professional reading to reaffirm and validate my belief in the value of being a teacher.

My work as a teacher could be all consuming. It was essential that I placed limits on the amount of time I spend with students and my preparation. Yet more and more school preparation dominated my life as 1997 progressed. Often it was counterproductive, ineffectual and resulted in stress. Writing this document was often more supportive than preparing a detailed lesson plan. I had to trust myself that I would, indeed, come up with the 'goods' in that moment I faced that class ready to make the first move in the 'dance' (Stern, 1977); that I would develop my internal resources to relax, improvise and seize the learning opportunities of the moment to improve my teaching.

Group work as scaffolding for empathy

Returning to teaching I had to refresh my skills using group work. "Group discussion should be a central learning approach from kindergarten onwards. It is a major source of that discourse which the student will transform internally into thought" (Moffitt, 1968:94). Using small cooperative group work requires complex spatial, timing and management skills. Effective pair and small group work requires time, practice and strategies to create a variety of groups with varieties of tasks and purposes. It can be time consuming to prepare and requires emotional and physical energy.

Teaching using group work required that I think mathematically. I could divide the activity into sections; I could divide the class into similar sized groups; I could devise various ways to form and change or rotate groups; I could set different activities for different groups or ask all groups to do the same activity. Activities had to be ‘weighted’ so that the tasks were of similar or varying difficulty depending on the group; I needed to be clear and precise in giving instructions; I needed to know how to occupy groups who finished before other groups or how to speed up groups; I needed to think about the composition of the groups – who was working with who and why I chose that combination and what they were working together on; I needed to monitor the work of the students; I needed the appropriate resources for groups to interact with.

Likewise group work required complex emotions. I needed to feel relaxed to run small group discussions. I needed to know when to keep my distance, listen and monitor the group work and when to actively participate.

Pair and small group work encourages interactivity amongst students. As such it encourages students to talk. This easily resulted in noise, creating a sense that I had lost control, swirling in chaos. I needed to establish consistent routines for group work. This took time to internalise and then make explicit and thus negotiable with my students.

As a English teacher I had conceptualised group work with desks joined, facing each other to make a square. Behind the desks, the students sat with pen and paper in hand writing during their group discussion. Drama provided me with the concept of the circle with no desks or chairs, with children sitting on the floor and interacting with each other without writing. Drama provided new ways of assisting group work eg warm up exercises, co-operative drama games, mirroring pair work games and instilling collaborative goals.

The interface between teaching and curriculum is a complex one. I needed confidence to reject the impossible demands of the extensive primary curriculum. There is enormous pressure of “so much to teach but not enough time”. Perhaps teachers feel they ‘have’ to

cover topics and so have little time to build upon the needs and interests of the students and encourage them to process their thoughts and feelings through language? Learning through talk requires quality time but I often felt pressurized to move on and abandon this crucial scaffolding. It seemed that the cognitive curriculum 'wagged the teaching tail'.

Planning was never neat, sequential or predictable. No matter how much I planned, the actualities of teaching created new demands and expectations. I found planning a 'program' for my Year 1 class (1997) difficult because I couldn't predict where I was going. Any planning soon became redundant. I tried to timetable different subject areas but I found difficulty teaching them as isolated subjects in separate time slots.

A psychodynamic model is not content, subject or curriculum driven. It is responsive to students' feeling states. This requires teachers to improvise, build relationships and solve problems in the present moment. My teaching increasingly became like a spontaneous spiral where ideas mirrored between myself and my students.

Rehearsed preparation

Increasingly I attempted to rehearse, as a way to prepare. Instead of writing handouts I began to rehearse songs, stories as part of my preparation. Rehearsing prepared me for the actualities of teaching. To develop my empathic responsive, improvisory teaching I needed an internalised repertoire. To achieve this I needed to embody my preparation.

Many necessary and expected jobs as a teacher are trivial, require little thought but are extremely time consuming. My first year returning to teach (1997) seemed as if I were physically on the run, constantly preparing activities for thirty children and decorating my classroom with their work. It was labor intensive teaching. When I could design simple, highly effective activities that required little preparation time that's when I felt my skills as a teacher were heightened.

I found an exercise book in the school holidays (January, 1998) where I had designed interesting activities for students to copy and complete. For a second, I wondered why I had never used it? The answer was obvious - because it had no relevance to the children I eventually worked with. Increasingly I found teaching in organised, premeditated ways difficult. Rich opportunities would arise that were so much more worthwhile to follow.

My written cognitive lesson plans rarely transferred into the actualities of teaching. The biggest shift in psychodynamic teaching was to move to “embodied learning” where I began to prepare lessons by rehearsing them. I had to ‘let go’ my dependence on lesson plans to improvise and respond in the real time of teaching and provided fresh and imaginative ways to visualise teaching possibilities. When I shifted from my reliance on cognitive preparation to enacted preparation it was tremendously energising.

I had to acknowledge and confront my own learning. To be a storyteller was initially frightening – I had to put aside the book and turn it into a living embodiment. Likewise when I told or acted out a story I had to be confident to overcome my nervousness when students did not listen and talked to one another.

Empathic attunement is when a teacher responds to a student’s emotional state providing appropriate learning activities. Central to this, is realigning relationship groups for pairs and small groups where the teacher does not dominate the talk. One of the most challenging demands of teaching was resolving the interpersonal conflicts between students in the classroom and playground. Not only was it learning to be an empathic teacher, it was teaching students to be empathic to one another. Involved in this was learning to work with different people which is what group work is inherently about. I had to teach students skills on how to cooperatively play and work together. Later I wrote puppet plays that mirrored back to students their interpersonal conflicts. When I gave a group of Year 1 students some costumes and props for the story *Snow White* and told them to go off and ‘play it’ they returned arguing because they could not share the costumes. My problem was that I so desperately wanted students to work together, I

often failed to signal it was a privilege and withdraw the privilege if they displayed off task behaviour.

I began to reward students with opportunities to play informal and formal games, after I seized the learning opportunities that they offered. An example was when I let students draw pictures on the blackboard about the ocean. A group of Year 4 and 5 students seemed to love drawing on the blackboard. I wondered how I could develop this? We brainstormed words and slogans about protecting the ocean. We then wrote and drew fish on paper.

The unconscious

Teaching is deeply emotional and is intimately affected by unconscious views relating to childhood, knowledge, authority, play and relationships (Barnes, 1988). Theoretically psychodynamic pedagogy acknowledges the powerful influences of the unconscious upon a teacher's practice (Arnold, 1994). Teachers need to be aware in order to challenge or support their unconscious teaching behaviours that mitigate or support student-centred interactive pedagogy.

How the classroom was arranged affected my teaching. Often there are barriers of space to 'break'. The simple task of moving furniture takes time and is an obstacle to overcome. I often felt blocked when students sat at desks facing me unable to move them into groups (August 1998). I felt more in tune with the children when I sat with them in a circle on the floor. Occasionally when I worked outside the classroom in corridors, halls or the playground it offered freedoms from the constraining nature of the classroom which seemed to position me centre 'stage' where I demanded students' attention. At other times there are relationship barriers to break with some students who only wanted to work with their friends. One of the biggest challenges is to assist students work through their interpersonal relationships with other students.

In my first few weeks returning to teaching I was surprised with how angry I felt towards a six-year-old child. I was helping a Kindergarten class walk down a stairwell, with one student intent on jumping two steps at a time, a dangerous activity for such a young child. I told the child not to do it but she deliberately did the opposite. I was surprised by this feeling state.

How I felt intimately affected my classroom management skills. When I felt anxious I raised my voice and used a higher pitch, coded with insecurity. Noise, movement, interruptions, off task student behaviour and constant student requests for attention triggered it. I began to experiment with new ways to quiet my class to gain their attention. It made a difference when I could vary my voice, contrasting it with quieter, louder, faster, slower tones as well as keeping my silence. I watched other teachers effectively control their classes by mirroring movements, songs, clapping rhythms or reading a story in quiet and calming voice. It was learning a variety of diversionary tactics to shift students' emotions rather than raising my voice that was ultimately ineffective in focusing students' attention.

Sometimes I taught for short periods of time. In classes where I felt welcome I often entertained them while awaiting their teacher's arrival. As a support teacher it was easier to 'play' with the children unlike the classroom teacher who had to control the large whole class over a school year. Playing with the children required tremendous physical and emotional energy. As the 'guest teacher' I had more energy to play with the children, taking on roles, entertaining and storytelling to them.

I worked to develop more playful relationships with the children. To do this I had to overcome unconscious adult mistrust about play and how it relates to serious work. 'Work' and 'play' are seen as two oppositional forces (Atkin, 1991:6-7).

I felt anxious talking to a whole class because this often became an opportunity for children to chatter, call out, tune out or for difficult students to challenge my talk – especially older Year 5-6 children. However I often gave inconsistent messages allowing

children to talk when I was talking. I found it extremely difficult to pause and wait for the class to stop their chatter. If students called out during a whole class discussion the focus of control broke, yet calling out was an important cue for the teacher to know how to move the lesson forwards.

An insight occurred when I took a group of ESL children outside to sit on the playground benches to read a multilingual book (March 1998). On this occasion I recognised I had internalised my role as a 'chairperson at a meeting', rather than the expert, dominating speaker. My role was to encourage children to listen to one another to develop their viewpoints but not to take on my views.

Douglas Barnes highlights how the 'teacher question, student reply, teacher evaluation, teacher moves on' pattern dominates classroom discourse and argues that teachers need to promote small group discussion as an alternative discourse form (Barnes, 1988). Perhaps teachers unconsciously placed themselves in a dialogic relationship with the whole class, treating the whole class as a singular unit? In many ways I was 'stuck' orchestrating the class as one. Often this was unconscious and thus extremely difficult to challenge. Psychodynamic pedagogy provides a framework that can assist teachers to challenge this dominating discourse pattern through reflective and introspective practice.

There are implicit pressures to 'give' students 'something' to occupy their time and thus 'be taught'. Occasionally I was tempted to issue busy work to have an emotional break from the constant pressure to perform as a teacher. I remember craving this with the Year 1 class I taught each afternoon in 1997. I had returned to school after an absence of three days, sick with a heavy cold. I wanted a non-stress lesson so I prepared some handouts on the story of *Snow White* for students to work individually on. It did not however achieve the desired affect of keeping students quiet and occupied. Some children naturally experienced difficulty and needed assistance. I planned to call individual students up to show me their work but I couldn't manage it. They all clustered around me. I felt frantic and inept. I scribed on the blackboard the requests for words and phrases as they called out "How do you write this word?" The sheer management of

thirty six-year-old children was extremely difficult. With no prior experience teaching a Year 1 class I had to confront simple yet fundamental classroom management questions like 'How do I stop children getting out of their seats to ask me questions all the time?' At more complex and profound levels I had to confront questions like 'How do you get students to listen to each other?'

This concept of 'giving' students something to 'do' extended to homework. I felt pressured to organise homework to appease anxious parents. When I requested my Year 1 class write an account of *Snow White* for homework, I felt committed to writing one too. The next day I handed it out to pairs to read. I was surprised how well they could read it. Setting up a context for reading assisted reading.

Often I ran out of ideas of what and how to teach. Creative, innovative teaching was much harder to achieve and sustain. Making learning fun was cognitively challenging. It was not a simple task. I needed simple activities to settle students especially when they came in hot and restless each afternoon. To survive teaching Year 1 in 1997 I needed time fillers. At first I could only think of mundane ones such as completing a cloze from the blackboard about a daily event or copying words. At those times I felt 'stuck' not knowing what to 'do' with 'them' with a pressing urgency to occupy them as the noise and off task behaviour increased incrementally the longer they had nothing to do. Increasingly I began to question using handouts, even the time consuming ones I designed and wrote myself. It was often more profitable to rehearse a story, poem or song than prepare labor intensive handouts which only seemed to last a few brief moments.

Enthusiasm

Psychodynamic pedagogy asserts the importance of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm originates from the Greek which means 'of the spirit'. Enthusiasm is what both exhausts and gives energy to teaching. Without enthusiasm I found teaching tedious. Yet enthusiasm required high levels of emotional and physical energy that needed to be monitored to

protect teachers from emotional and physical exhaustion. Enthusiastic teachers are committed to making teaching and learning enjoyable, meaningful and engaging. It was when I became enthusiastic about children's ideas rather than my own that I developed as a psychodynamic teacher.

Reflection

Deep reflection is a process involving intra/inter subjective dialogue (internal conversations about one's own thoughts and feelings" (Arnold, 1996).

Writing reflectively helped make sense of the hundreds of teaching moments during the day, mirrored my achievements when there was little external validation, soothed my emotional states and enabled me to problem solve.

Teaching does not occur in pedagogical vacuums. What comes before, during and after is important. Reflection allowed me to articulate, build upon, review and learn how to move the learning forwards.

Reflection soothed my feelings when it was obvious that my lessons had not gone well. If a lesson 'failed' it didn't necessarily mean that my ideas weren't sound but that I needed to persevere, refine, modify and develop them. Immersed in teaching it was often difficult to decentre and see what was happening. Writing reflectively assisted me analyse, understand and problem solve about unsuccessful lessons rather than feel overwhelmed by them.

I had to overcome my own anxiety when students did not work, seated at their desks, with pen in hand, quietly musing over their 'work'. I focused on the oral side using drama because I knew this is critical in writing development. I also knew how hard it is to write.

Psychodynamic lessons

The book, *The Whalers* (Mumbulla, 1997) was nominated for the 1997 Best Picture Book and deals with the issue of reconciliation, which the school had been exploring. *The Whalers* (Mumbulla, 1997) set on the South coast of NSW deals with the special relationship between killer whales and the Aboriginal whalers. The killer whales would call the Aboriginal people when other whales were near shore. I had mixed feelings about the book, because I had been positioned to think of hunting whales as a negative environmental act. I did not feel comfortable with Aboriginal people described as the 'killers' of whales. Psychodynamic pedagogy challenges the teacher to reflect on her/his own emotions and thoughts. In this case I tried to understand why I 'resisted' this picture book. I didn't like the Aboriginal English used but when I read it aloud I had to acknowledge its flowing rhythm. Perhaps I found the issue of reconciliation confronting?

I asked students to sit on the floor with their workbooks and pencils. They sat in three groups – one group was the killer whales, another the whales and the other the Aboriginal whalers. The groups listened as I reread the story and attempted to write notes about their particular group. The students seemed to enjoy this but it was too difficult for the students to do and for me to manage.

What was psychodynamic about this lesson? I was emotionally and cognitively committed to it. As I rehearsed *The Whalers* (Mumbulla, 1997) I was able to read it in different ways. I had to deal with my subtle, yet definable negative emotions. I had to solve the problem of using the one picture book amongst thirty students.

It was interesting to walk past the Years 1-2 classrooms the following year after I had taught a Year 1 class. There was no one way to do anything. With time to distance myself, it all seemed so simple – tell stories, perform puppet stories, write, read, talk and listen about stories, poems and songs and act them out.

Increasingly I began to respond to my students' needs, interests and aspirations in my Year 5 & 6 'Reading Group' (1998). When children tired, I let them rest or changed the activity to re-energise them. I integrated drama into the lesson, slipping into role, acting out a photo. I improvised teaching strategies moment by moment such as twirling a ribbon stick around. The game was whoever twirled it had to talk on a topic for as long as possible.

I began to develop improvisory responsive teaching with my small group of second phase ESL students when we had 'spiralling conversations'. The conversations went off in unpredictable directions. Significant learning occurred in insignificant, fleeting moments of time where I responded like a ping pong player allowing the students to initiate or bat the ball to me while I stood ready to respond or hit the ball back. It appeared unstructured with occasional 'dead ends' but I was eliciting the language from the children. Promoting quality oral interaction in the classroom are essential to a psychodynamic model, "the talk of young children is the direct precursor of their later thinking" (Britton, 1972:139). I began to make up simple games on the spot. When we played a game one Year 5 student who rarely spoke, shouted to others telling them how to play the game. We played the game twice. Then the group tired. I tried another tangent but couldn't sustain their interest, so moved onto a new activity. I worked hard to finish the lesson on a positive note despite frustrations during the lesson. I tried to encourage pair and group discussions. The children made choices; we sang a song; we did a drama; I grabbed a resource to use in that moment, in that space. I reflected on these lessons and began to identify moments when it 'worked'. I needed to develop these skills with a large whole class but I felt I was beginning to achieve it with the small groups I worked with.

Gi Dong, a Year 5 Korean student with little English, came in and we reread the poems and the interview/play we had written together (September, 1998). With a puppet and the shark foam cut out, we acted a dialogue between the shark and the puppet and performed it to a younger class. It was well received. Then we wrote another play and performed it.

As I taught I began to develop internal dialogues such as, “This isn’t working” or “How much longer can I push this idea?” This dialogue indicated that I was becoming more empathically attuned. Increasingly I understood the need to accept when students were not ready, to let them rest, move on, change the activity and return when they were ready for it.

The beginning of my development as an empathic teacher was when I actively involved students in decision making about many aspects of the lesson. These decisions ranged from the simplest of decisions, like where to display their work, to complex, ethical problems of how to resolve a problem in a story. When I asked children for their input into decisions I had to accept their decisions.

Psychodynamic pedagogy theoretically underpins student-centred interactive learning. “Learners need to feel empowered, rather than overwhelmed, in the process of learning” (Arnold, 1994:16). Student-centred teaching is based on a relationship. It takes time to develop. It requires ‘letting go’ and trusting students to provide you with the directions for teaching. Teachers need to listen, respond and act upon students’ requests.

Often I worked intensively with individuals or pairs of students. On one occasion I took Nain Sok, a Year 6 Korean NESB student, to the school library where we looked up an encyclopedia on oceans. As I read it, I simplified it, writing simple notes and cloze passage on the spot, covering words with small pieces of paper. I asked Nain Sok to rewrite it. Then we wrote rhyming words to create an acrostic out poem.

Occasionally I was asked to teach a class at short notice. On one occasion I was asked to teach a Year 2 class. I had earlier visited the class with my crocodile puppet and told them I would return with ‘Crocy’ to “teach them”. While searching for three picture books in the library about crocodiles I met another class (Year 5/6) who I began to spontaneously interact with. In the library there was a display of photos of teachers and a short piece each teacher had written about her/his favourite book. I used this display as

the impetus. Coincidentally the class's teacher's favourite book related to crocodiles in the wild. This allowed me to use my crocodile puppet to respond to her comments.

With the Year 2 class, I divided a piece of paper into three columns telling the students to write the word 'crocodile' on top. I had a vague idea of getting the students to cut the columns into word cards for the students to later interact with but this idea didn't work. I asked the students to write three words to describe a crocodile. As they did 'Crocy' roamed the classroom saying "I'm soft, cuddly, beautiful". This caused a fabulous anti-reaction.

I then showed the class the three picture books I had found in the library about crocodiles and asked them which one they wanted me to read aloud. I wanted to get them into groups so I asked the students to make 'crocodile statues' with at least one boy or girl in it. I repeated this activity because it was difficult to initially achieve. The lack of space in the classroom and the time it took to do it meant students needed to repeat it.

Gradually I recognised the need for simple pair or small group trust activities or games to scaffold the interpersonal skills necessary for effective pair or small group work. In their 'crocodile formations' they then discussed which book they wanted to read. When the children finished their discussions I asked them why they had made that choice. Then we voted on which book to read, with two students counting the students' raised hands. I then read aloud the picture book to the class, using my crocodile puppet to act out the situations experienced by the crocodile in the story.

A class teacher asked me to distribute a note to her Year 2 students requesting that parents bring healthy food for the end of year class party (December, 1997). That was my cue for me to spiral into responsive, improvisory teaching. First I went into role as 'Nina the chief' making a fruit salad and calling out individual students to assist 'me'. Then I went into the role of a 'dumb' parent suggesting a variety of unhealthy food with the students in role as a daughter or son rejecting these suggestions. Then the students rehearsed these role plays in pairs. I then asked the pairs to perform to another pair and choose 'the best one'. I struggled to find ways to select performances rather than

repeated group performances to the whole class. Then I displayed a large poster of some younger children having a picnic. I asked the class what the children in the poster might have said to one another and to mime the photo. Learning to 'manage' thirty students in a classroom, working in groups, in a classroom with little space was challenging. Then they performed their scenarios to groups of kindergarten students who sat and watched and then rotated to the next performance. The students then began to write down the scripts of these performances.

I was delighted by another example of responsive, improvisory teaching when I instructed a Year 2 class to draw columns of a table on an A3 sheet of paper. Students wrote about what they saw, what they did, what they liked on a school bush walk and drew pictures in each column. Then I collected their work and cut the columns up, reissuing their work back in the form of cards. Each group read the cards and sorted them back into the original headings and selected the three best ones. This was the type of interactive handouts I wanted to develop, where students were actively part of the process of producing, writing and interacting with the handouts. It was integrated with their work in the class. I wanted to turn the deluge of student produced material into teaching resources.

When I paired older, competent Year 6 language users with younger Year 4 non English speaking background (NESB) students to plan, draft, write, edit, publish stories, reports and poems it was powerful. I was to use the materials for a book called *My Trip* as part of my work writing learning materials for an education project in Samoa (Kitson & Mulitalo, 1997). Moffett says the biggest determinant on language ability is outside school experience in language. The Year 4 NESB students had social contact with proficient Year 6 students who scaffolded the language for them before, during and after their trips to various destinations. The students also negotiated where they wanted to go for an excursion. I found it extremely hard work to give up my agenda of control. I did not want to listen to one student who proposed a trip which was a four hours drive from our school.

My goal was to respond to the classroom dynamics in real time and know how to develop these dynamics. When I went on the Year 4/6 excursion to Koala Park on the 19th August 1997, it made me reflect on how artificial learning can be in the classroom and the need for real world experience and reflection upon this.

In the last week of the school year in 1997 I taught a Year 2 class and I finally seemed to achieve the empathic teaching I was aiming for. I wanted to be able to think on my feet, improvise, seize the learning opportunities of the present and respond to them. The drama felt successful – where the students ‘did’ what I asked them to. I consciously paced the time to control the students’ improvisations. I varied the activities; we moved about the classroom in various ways. Empathic teaching felt like we mirrored one another, creating a harmony.

Learning to implement drama in education

Psychodynamic pedagogy asserts that drama has the potential to create an emotional-cognitive dynamic in the learner to spiral them to higher learning.

The . . . “distinctive characteristic of drama in education which signals its suitability for psychodynamic learning approaches, is the fact that enactment involves physicalisation through movement and through engagement with others, including an audience sometimes.” (Arnold, 1994).

Likewise this thesis argues that if the teacher engages in drama this will spiral the teacher into higher learning. Enactments can engage teachers’ emotions and cognition to perceive, experience and reflect upon their teaching. Outlined in this chapter are significant teaching moments (Arnold, 1994) when an emotional and cognitive engagement occurred through drama as a learning medium.

What is drama? Drama is stepping into someone else’s shoes, where we use our verbal and non-verbal repertoires to imagine we are another person, in another time, in another place, in another feeling state, in another relationship. It is powerful in that it makes the actor both a participant and observer of her/his enacted experience.

How does one develop a ‘drama’, a ‘drama lesson’, a lesson that incorporates drama? When, where, how and why does a teacher decide to teach drama through mime, trust activities, relaxation, games, acting skills, stories or scenarios? When and why does a teacher choose to go into role, use readers’ theatre or puppets? How do teachers set the agenda for drama when by nature it is participatory and collaborative? How does a teacher decide whether to perform to an audience or not? How ‘big’ should the drama be – a small moment where pairs discuss in roles or a full scale production? When does the teacher change the focus of the drama work for individuals, pairs, small groups, larger groups or whole classes? Teaching drama is complex because it involves infinite

possibilities affected by the nature of the participants, how many participants there are and the space and time available.

Drama teaching is at the emotional 'front line' of teaching'. To teach drama I needed to be relaxed and empathically attuned – able to judge the emotional and cognitive state of the students to make decisions how and when to move the drama forwards. I had to respond to different cues, to let go and find the internal rhythm of the text we were enacting. Every group brought a different experience. Teaching drama is confronting because it requires risk taking for both teachers and students to role play, improvise and sustain dramatic tension. It can deal with emotions that can be unsettling and difficult to control. Successful drama teaching involved the complex skill of sustaining belief in the enactment. I needed to feel relaxed, yet equally physically alert to achieve this. Teaching drama was intimately related to my self confidence.

When the drama worked it was emotionally and cognitively energising. However it could equally be exhausting physically and emotionally. I felt physically tired after performing in a role.

Learning to teach drama required that I experiment, explore and persevere with ideas when they initially did not work. I had to learn to relax, sustain a role, position an audience, debrief, improvise, seize dramatic possibilities, write role journals. I had to know how to create dramatic tension, use theatrical conventions, balance the demands of process with performance drama. I had to learn how to run drama games, warm ups and ways of preparing the drama for a lesson that might last only forty-five minutes once a week.

No matter how theoretical my understanding of drama teaching, I had to teach it and experience it as a learner to fully understand it. The more I improvised, the more insights I developed in how to 'do it' and so how to improve.

One of my most challenging experiences learning to teach drama was for an assessment task for a course in drama education. It involved enacting a drama theorist (Hughes, 1993). I had to collaboratively prepare, rehearse and perform an enactment with two other students. Working with peers is one of the most confronting and yet most important goals of education and indeed of life. I had to put aside my own anxieties to build relatively instantaneous relationships of trust to achieve this performance. This experience highlights the complex interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships that are at the heart of group drama.

Drama needs scaffolding emotionally and cognitively. Otherwise it can be a flop as when I was thrown into a role play at a workshop where I didn't have time to build belief and it just didn't work.

Heathcote argues that teachers need to mirror belief as they go into role (Wagner, 1976). I found leading a class into the subtleties of belief difficult to achieve. As a resistant drama learner myself, I was impressed when I was led into a drama activity so subtly where I did not need to 'resist' because the drama had begun before I knew it had.

Drama is a powerful strategy for learning because it incorporates physical movement which stops the passivity and boredom of sitting in one place. I asked my Year 1 class to stand and imagine they were coconut trees swaying in the wind. I chose this because I had been sharing some of my experiences working in Samoa. I then contrasted this by asking students to imagine they were banana trees involving a heavier movement – bending at the knees as if carrying heavy bunches of bananas. I was pleasantly surprised to see how much the class enjoyed this simple drama activity. Part of learning to teach drama was pitching the drama to the right level and beginning with very simple movements to scaffold for more complex drama. This was in preparation for some pair work where I labelled students as either banana or coconut trees. "Now all the banana trees talk to the coconut trees". Thinking about the importance of dialogue before writing (Moffett, 1968), I asked two students to perform a dialogue where they talked about the danger of a coconut falling from a coconut tree. Later as a craft activity we made a

coconut tree and wrote a poem about it. I wanted to do pair work where students in role had a conversation between them.

As in all teaching there is the need for clear goals but this was often difficult in teaching drama. Goals are a cognitive demand that I found extremely difficult to achieve in the emotionally assaulting environment of the classroom. It took me time to internalise drama goals which were possible for me to achieve.

Often when I gave instructions my voice lacked confidence, partially because I had yet to formulate the activity. Often my instructions were confused or too complicated. Often it was the simplest of ideas that were the most effective, yet as a teacher I seemed to unconsciously work towards creating pedagogically challenging tasks. For one drama in July 1998 I wanted to deal with the issue of performance enhancing drugs in sport. I prepared some role cards such as "This is your first international match and you feel nervous about playing. You really like the coach and you ask him to help improve your game but the soccer coach is stealing money from the soccer club. He was your hero". Unfortunately it was too sophisticated for the dramatic and language abilities of the students.

Often I panicked and froze, unable to move the drama forwards especially when I attempted to run drama games. I felt anxious about following the written sequence outlined by the drama theorist or teacher. I found teaching drama for the sake of 'drama' difficult. I found difficulty in creating drama scenarios that had little immediate relevance to students or the classroom situation we found ourselves in such as 'Improvise scenes about an eruption of a volcano' or 'Create a conversation between a dog, cat and canary'. When I could create a drama closer to the experience of the students or the context we were in, it was much more successful, such as when I supervised sport and asked the students to form groups to improvise TV sports shows with replay shots; player of the game; the final results; trophy at the end; or when we did a re-enactment of a situation that had occurred during an excursion; or when students role played a

scene requesting her/his parent to sign a permission note as a reminder for a real excursion note.

I felt more comfortable when the drama was embedded in a story rather than beginning with "Let's begin a drama". My focus for the drama was story or to create contexts where students went into role. Literature provided the internal guidance to initiate and improvise drama activities. Nevertheless I experimented with more sophisticated drama teaching, particularly Cecily O'Neill's 'seal woman' drama (Taylor, 1995). However, these techniques did not seem to interest one group of students. They were pedagogically interesting for me the teacher, but not the students. The class simply preferred to have a few students acting out the story with the rest of the class watching as an audience. Every teaching moment, every group, every teacher is different. Teachers have to find their own way. Perhaps I had yet to internalize Cecily O'Neill's complex drama goals? Perhaps I did not have her sophisticated drama skills to make the drama 'work'? Perhaps I wasn't relaxed and lacked confidence in delivering the drama instructions? Perhaps I was too concerned whether I was doing it 'correctly' rather than taking their broad concepts and adapting them to my style, my students and my teaching situation.

Towards the end of 1998, in the final weeks in 'Reading Groups' where I taught a small group of Year 4-5 NESB students, I read the picture book *Our Journey from Tibet, based on a True Story* (Dolphin, 1997). It told a story about children escaping from Tibet to India where they could freely learn about their Tibetan heritage. This story became the vehicle to teach drama. I prepared simple vocabulary items for the children to match with the photos in the book. Then we acted our different situations from the book, as when a driver demands money from the children for driving them to the mountain pass from where they can escape Tibet. I placed time limits on how long I read aloud, to serialise the book. The next day I went into role, placing the students in role. I designed a handout where students matched who said what from the book. The lesson was spontaneous, improvisory, responsive, deeply entrenched in the imaginative space of the book, with the drama mirroring its issues. I felt in these lessons I was beginning to

achieve some of the powerful affective and cognitive dynamics that drama is capable of inspiring.

I did 'lots' of 'little drama' activities embedded in another teacher's class work because I often supervised classes for short periods of time. I remember supervising a Year 4 class in 1998 feeling physically tired and reluctant to throw myself into a drama requiring energy with only about ten minutes to run a drama activity. Teaching drama is cognitively challenging because you have to match the appropriate technique for that particular class, in that particular learning situation, for that particular amount of time. In this instance I placed students in pairs. In role, they were to have a conversation between two of the characters from their class novel, *The Lion, Witch and Wardrobe*. We then reversed roles. I felt unsure as to whether I should have asked students to perform their conversations in front of the whole class. I had to overcome problems of how to teach drama in rooms lacking space. I had to match my energy levels with the emotional requirements of the drama. I had to decide how I would lead the students into the drama. In this case I said we were playing a game. It went well. As I reflected on this lesson it seemed so simple but at the time it wasn't at all simple.

Likewise when I improvised some drama and movement games, as I did one afternoon in 1998, supervising some Year 3 students I felt I was beginning to develop as an empathic drama teacher. The students walked around a painted circle on the asphalt playground and I asked them to imagine they were in different places, in different feeling states finishing by playing a game suggested by the students. Describing this teaching drama sounded so simple but at the time it was incredibly complex.

Drama as a learning medium and drama for theatrical performance have been two polarised views of drama education. The concept of audience in drama is a complex one. Could performing to an audience promote language development because it is a tangible way to internalise the concept of audience? Preparing performances for the whole school paralysed and overwhelmed me because it required students to be controlled, disciplined, cooperative who listened precisely. As well there was pressure on me, the teacher to

ensure that it was not a public 'flop'. Other ways of performing to an audience were the repeated group performances to the whole class but this could become tedious. My most successful drama teaching occurred when small groups of older students performed informally to a variety of younger classes. Sometimes it was valuable to allow students to sit and watch other students perform in class.

Puppets

Teaching with puppets was extremely challenging. To construct a puppet story I had to think imaginatively. The only way I could become adept in the complex skill and art of using puppets was by actively using them to instruct, entertain and discuss ideas with a variety of students in varieties of groupings and by writing stories about them. My students became my teachers in the sense, that by actively performing puppet stories to them, they were teaching me how to develop. Rehearsing alone was very hard but with repeated performances to different classes, my stories improved. Writing puppet stories was hard for me. It was not a simple task. It required different types of thinking and different ways of feeling. My student audience were far more tolerant and forgiving when the story didn't work, than I was when assessing their work.

The development of my puppet skills has been an important aspect of my teacher development. It required psychological shifts to enable me to feel comfortable performing with puppets. I had to embody them with human characteristics, know whether to mask myself in role as the puppet or be in a dialogic relationship with it as myself or with other students. I could take on the following roles. I could be in role as:

- the puppet who talks directly to individual students or groups of students or whole classes. 'I the teacher' disappeared.
- the puppet, as well as being myself, 'the teacher', with the puppet talking to me, individual students, groups or whole classes.
- the puppet who performs a story, in role, but can stop in the middle of the story and go out of role and look at the audience and ask their help to solve a problem.
- the narrator who asks the audience questions to move the puppet story along.

I began using my two-sided puppet 'HapSad' who wore a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other side. I used 'HapSad' to talk about feelings, school and classroom rules. I made up scenarios where 'HapSad' 'talked' directly to the students about issues that mattered to children such as self esteem, friendship and resolving conflict. I began using three puppets, one being the typical student, the other a 'naughty' student and the third the peacemaker. I drafted puppet stories based on students' experiences.

Puppets were cognitively difficult to improvise with. I had to embody them with different personalities, motivations, whilst simultaneously creating distinct and convincing voices and visually interesting movements. I had to internalise how my puppets should talk to other puppets or to the children as audience or to me as the teacher and how to improvise or stage the puppet performances. Once I developed a formula or structure to write the puppet plays I could generate them more easily but it took time to internalise this skill. Finally the structure for a puppet play went something like: Puppet A talks to Puppet B; Puppet A talks to Puppet C; Puppet B talks to Puppet C etc.

I had to imagine a story, write a script and improvise. By performing them students gave me input. I used simple theatres such as hiding behind chairs or merely performing in front of the children with no barriers. Later I wrote more complicated scripts to perform such as the play I wrote, "Will you be my friend?". When I first performed this puppet play to a class they spontaneously applauded at the conclusion. Their response was fantastic. Then students performed the puppet play with several students coming up and hiding behind the barrier while I supported them by whispering to them their 'lines'

The more I developed my stories, the more I offered problems back to the class audience to solve, or to temporarily stop the puppet performance and get students into groups, to discuss how they would solve the problem and then get them to come up and perform their solutions.

Performing a puppet story required different management skills to being a teacher talking to a whole class. It required that I modulate the excitement, listen attentively to pick up

cues to move the story forwards and utilise the comments that the students called out, rather than asking them to raise their hands for permission to speak. When I hid behind a barrier to perform a puppet story, I couldn't see who was calling out. I remember feeling the intensity of the silence as students listened to one of my puppet shows. It was a new and exciting stage in my development as an empathic drama teacher.

Initially I felt obliged, as the teacher, to hold whole class discussions after each performance. I found this difficult and awkward as I could never think of open ended questions to ask. Asking whole class questions also took away from the enjoyment of the performance. Later, as I developed confidence, I began to ask the audience watching what a character should do or what should happen next. The 'puppets' then began to ask the audience direct questions like "How can I teach 'Crocy' a lesson so he will stop being a bully?" I played out their suggestions and then we had to deal with the consequences of them, as when a Year 3/4 class insisted that 'Crocy' be punished and put in a cage for being a bully. Later, I came back and played that he had become even a wilder bully for being kept in a cage. In this simple play to a Year 3/4 class we touched on the deep social issue of incarceration or gaol reform. Together with my students we became co-performers and co-authors of the puppet stories.

Late in 1998 I worked with a Year 1 class to assist a NESB Year 1 student, Shanam. The class had been set a writing task but it was too difficult for her to complete independently, so I suggested that I work with her outside on the carpeted corridor to assist her write a story. As we sat on the floor, I looked around at the students' work displayed on the noticeboards and saw a student's report on crocodiles. As I just happened to have 'Crocy' my popular crocodile puppet with me we began to improvise a puppet story based on this factual text. We structured the story/report together through play. Our purpose and audience was clear – to perform a puppet play about crocodiles to Shanam's class.

When we returned to the classroom I set up a low teacher's lounge chair to be our theatre where we hid behind. We became co-performers dependent upon each other. She held

the puppets above the chair. I whispered to her what she might say. It was a significant moment. We could not see our audience and so had to acutely listen for our cues as we performed our puppet story "The Crocodile".

When we had finished our performance the child's face lit up. Her eyes opened wide in excitement. A smile glowed with joy on her face. She had done it! She had traversed the chasm from failure to success. There was no doubt now that she could write a story. She had demonstrated it to herself and her class that not only could she write one but that she could also perform one. To me this was a clear example of the power of the emotional-cognitive dynamic.

Teacher in role

Dorothy Heathcote's 'teacher in role' is highly psychodynamic (Wagner, 1976). Heathcote's brilliance was taking children's ideas to improvise them into dramatic possibilities. This is the essence of what empathy is – making decisions on where the learning should go, based on the emotional-cognitive states of the students. Her goal was that students understand different people and their motivations. She was an affectively attuned teacher with high energy levels that challenged the perennial discourse problem of the teacher asking the questions, evaluating them and then moving on to ask new questions.

The teacher in role sets up different relationships and thus discourse patterns in the classroom that match language used in the real world. I experienced this when I experimented with John Hughes enactment of the expert in September 1998 with a group of education students (Hughes, 1993). I placed students into groups of police, parents, safety committees. They had to make recommendations about the use of traffic lights as part of work on a poem about traffic lights (Kruse, 1986). To improvise as a teacher in role requires confidence, protection and belief. Heathcote argued that belief is essential for a drama enactment to occur. Once belief is present it allows for an emotional-cognitive dynamic. By going into role I was positioned to ask genuine questions and was

committed to students' replies because by responding to them I had my cues to move the drama forward. This was different to the constraining pedagogical questions where students' attempted to guess my 'answers'. Through role, I could ask 'real' questions and scaffold rich language input. I was mirroring/ modelling dramatic possibilities that I wanted the students to aim for.

On one occasion I went into role as the Easter Bunny entering a Year 1 classroom wearing rabbit ears and munching on a carrot. The Year 1 class was timetabled to do Mathematics. I walked into the classroom seeking their help. "Could anyone help me make some baskets for my Easter eggs?" With no photocopied template, students had to use a ruler to measure and fold the paper to make their own basket. It was complex mathematics for Year 1 students but the children responded in genuine ways eager to measure and make their baskets.

Another role I tried was an elderly woman, reminiscing about her childhood at the school. However, I didn't have enough content or strategies to sustain this role and the students lost interest or 'belief' in it (Wagner, 1976). Initially I found it difficult to place the Year 1 students and myself in a role where we enacted a relationship that could move the drama forward (March 1998).

With my Year 1 class in 1997 I experimented with drama but often it was fraught with difficulties because I did not have enough control over the class. I took them to the hall where I planned to run some drama games but some students would run off and hide or enjoy skidding on the polished hall floors. In hindsight I pitched the drama at too high a level or taught it for too long. I had difficulty coordinating, managing and sequencing drama activities, games and improvisations. It was better when I did little 'bits' of drama and built them up slowly, or when planning exciting drama to run it just before the bell rang for recess or lunch.

One of my initial successes in teaching drama at school occurred when I team taught with a Year 4 teacher. It was based on a story about a young, orphaned girl, Girlie, set in

convict, Sydney. I went into role as Girlie, beseeching the class to help me find my lost parents. The class was placed in role as police. To go into role with another teacher was a delicate challenge. It was risky emotionally. On this occasion when I went into role with the classroom teacher it 'worked' because there was a level of trust between us. We role played two police officers trying to solve 'the case' that the story presented. From a fairly sterile story, set in convict days, about a band of beggar children, we plunged into issues of contemporary homelessness and child protection. Later, I arranged two youth workers and two police officers to visit the class. The children prepared and rehearsed questions for these visits and appeared emotionally and cognitively involved.

A reflection on a lesson where I went into teacher in role as a disabled artist

On one evening in April, 1997 I attended an opening reception of an art exhibition by the Japanese artist, Hiroko Kimura. As a child, the artist, had contracted cerebral palsy and so learnt to paint with her left foot. It was very moving to listen to her as she had great difficulty in the physical act of speaking. Following the speeches and video of her life was a performance of some stylised Japanese dancing. The evening was so inspiring that I decided to use this experience for the basis of a lesson the following day.

I told the class the story about the Japanese woman's struggle and success to paint with her left foot. Then I quietly told them to close their eyes and when they opened them, they would see me as this severely disabled woman. While the students closed their eyes, I put on a Japanese ukata over my clothes, I warned the students that when they opened their eyes, their immediate reaction would be to laugh at me – but to restrain from this, as inside this deformed woman was a kind and beautiful heart.

The children responded well and did not laugh. Two children took on the role of being Hiroko's helpers, fanning her and telling the class to be kind to the old woman. The experience was powerful and I was pleased to hear one child's insightful comments – "just because a person may look strange, it doesn't mean they are".

I should have debriefed the class after the role play but instead we went straight into another activity. I issued the coloured brochure from the artist's exhibition and asked the Year 1 students, to work in pairs and circle all the words they could read. I was amazed to see the large number of words they recognised. Perhaps they just enjoyed the activity of circling words and did not know the words at all? But it sharply contrasted to the simple, decontextualised language work that I had seen taught to this age. I wanted to follow this activity by painting a picture to send to the artist, using student's weaker hand, but they remained so absorbed in circling known words that they told me quite definitely, "No we want to continue".

While they were absorbed in this task, I played some Japanese music on cassette, and still in my Japanese dress, began to dance the Japanese dance I had seen the night before. Informally I invited them to join my dance. I threw away my 'control' nature as a teacher – which not only controls students but also inhibits teachers' potential for spontaneity and joy with the children. The lesson had a momentum where my students and I were emotionally and cognitively engaged. It represented the beginnings of implementing psychodynamic pedagogy in the classroom which involves subtle shifts of emotions to occur in the classroom. It required a level of honesty and openness.

Drama as a rehearsal for a real life event

Psychodynamic moments happen when students, teachers and parents interact, negotiate, and inspire one another. I felt happiest when I negotiated lessons for joint reasons with both students and parents; when we formed partnerships and mutual commitments to literacy (Graves, 1990). The idea developed when some parents gave me some lemons from their lemon tree, after I had admired their lemon tree laden with fruit (September 1997). This led me to the idea of making bottles of lemon juice as a gift for Fathers Day.

I showed the Year 1 class the cooking equipment they needed to bring to class to make the lemon juice - jug, bread board, lemon squeezer, strainer, lemon, sugar, measuring cup. I then asked the question, "What equipment do you need to bring in tomorrow to

make the lemon juice?" The students called out the items, with individual students taking it in turns to add an item to the list on the blackboard. Then I quickly rushed the students into groups – telling students to form groups of four (consisting of two boys and two girls) to make a list of who was going to bring what. My instructions were often unclear but on this occasion the students seemed to tolerate it. I wasn't sure what I was really asking them. I left it open but in hindsight my question was "Who would bring what?" Then I placed the children in groups to write their list on a large sheet of paper, sitting on the floor. I felt surprised how engaged the students were in their discussions. Then the students, in their groups acted out making the lemon juice.

In these series of lessons, drama was used as a rehearsal strategy for a real life event – to make bottles of lemon juice for Fathers Day. Making the lemon juice was highly successful because the drama had scaffolded the language and experience of working in groups collaboratively to make the lemon juice. The children enjoyed the 'play' of pretending to squeeze their lemons and became absorbed in this imagined activity. When they performed making the lemon juice to the whole class, the acting was limited but it was intensely enjoyed by the class. Drama empowered the students to talk and take 'centre stage'. This rehearsal/play time prepared the commitment to the task and powerfully reminded them what ingredients and equipment to bring the following day.

A teacher advised me to work outside to avoid the mess involved in squeezing the lemons, so I placed sheets of newspapers on the playground benches towards the end of the lunch break, ready for the class to work in their 'kitchens'. Four parents volunteered to help. Without them I could not have embarked on such an ambitious activity. It was logistically too difficult to achieve alone as one teacher in the classroom with 29 six to seven-year-olds. One mother brought in a bucket which the children poured their squeezed lemon juice into. Later, the parents finished boiling the lemon juice on a stove in the staffroom. I felt endorsed when a parent reported that a child had said "This is fun".

Afterwards, I felt elated “We did it!” The huge logistics of this organisational task was achieved. I felt emotionally energised. The success validated my teacher ‘self’ especially as I imagined other teachers had predicted the lesson would end in chaos. The children were on task in a way I had not seen them before. The drama had prepared them for the activity of making the lemon juice.

Afterwards I set students the task of designing a label for their bottle of lemon juice in small groups. It was noisy and chaotic yet they wrote. I prepared a large label to model the writing of a label. On this occasion, I had high expectations about their writing. The students wanted the blank stickers. I gave them a sticker once they had completed a polished draft.

Later we wrote a Fathers Day card that I had designed which included the recipe for the lemon juice on the back. I recorded interviews with students about their father’s reaction when they received their bottles of lemon juice for Fathers Day.

‘Yamuna’

During March 1998 I had a deeply insightful teaching week, where one teaching web interacted with another. It began teaching drama to a difficult Year 5 class. Teaching this class felt like a battle each time I faced them. I often felt tired mirroring patient, calm behaviour to this class full of desperate, volatile and resistant students.

They would enter the classroom hot and argumentative each Monday after lunch. I struggled to gain their attention. Teaching drama became an opportunity for some to either show off or challenge my authority as the teacher. I could not do what Heathcote does when she placed a chair in the middle of a classroom to be the take off point for a behaviourally difficult class’s improvisation about gangs (Wagner, 1976). I often couldn’t get the class into belief or even past giving my drama instructions before the students became bored and misbehaved. Although their behaviour disturbed me I increasingly

Why was it that I frequently could not get the drama 'off the ground'? I often abandoned drama lessons I planned for Year 5. Why did I meet with resistance? Perhaps some students 'resisted' the drama because it threatened their identity? I became caught in the 'instructional/ disobedience/mucking up/won't listen to me talk' groove unable to start the drama.

However, for successive weeks each Monday afternoon we explored a story called *Yamuna* by Richard Leeson quite successfully. The class's teacher had indicated that the stories from the magazine were too difficult for the students. My goal was to scaffold the story dramatically before reading it.

The story I chose was based on a Sri Lankan story of a girl, Yamuna and her brother who were the children of a king and queen but were taken away as babies. They were found and brought up by some kind gardeners. When they grow older they are offered an adventure which leads them to being reunited with their parents.

I photocopied the small illustrations from the story, sticking them onto cards, asking students to predict what the story might be about. I felt blocked working in their small narrow classroom where the rows made it difficult for me to move. Forming groups with this class was also difficult because of the strong peer pressure to work only with friends which was not necessarily conducive to drama work. The simple task of issuing these cards and placing students into groups seemed extremely difficult.

I decided to work outside in the playground the following lesson. From the difficult working space of the cramped classroom I now transferred the class into an equally difficult open space providing abundant opportunities for further student misbehaviour. Later if I worked outside, I clearly defined the areas where students could move to limit the space for drama. Or I sent small groups outside the classroom as a reward for those groups who cooperated inside the classroom.

I placed students into groups to improvise scenarios similar to the story of *Yamuna*. One group involved an old woman telling a brother and sister where to find treasure. Another group involved a sister expressing her fears to her brother about leaving to search for the treasure. Another group involved the sister rescuing her brother who had been turned into stone whilst looking for the treasure. Because I did not teach whole classes and thus had a flexible timetable, I was able to reward those cooperative students by allowing them to remain behind to rehearse further. The following day I arranged for them to perform their small group improvisations of the scenario to two Year 1 classes. We repeated this and this appeared to consolidate their interest and motivation in the drama.

For one lesson, I planned for students to work in groups to reread responses that other students had written about the characters' feelings. I had prepared a handout, writing the scenarios from the story of *Yamuna* and asking students how the characters would feel (Slade, 1954). I then planned to give each group an object to discuss how it related to one of the characters. I wanted the students to move into the same groups as in the previous lesson but this time join another group to form a larger group.

We worked outside in the playground. This lesson soon turned into a complete failure and I felt compelled to return to the classroom as I couldn't get the class to follow my instructions. Why did this drama lesson so completely fail? Was the lesson too boring? Were the groups too large? Was it because I had avoided doing drama warm up activities fearing that it would only provide fresh opportunities for misbehaviour? Was it because the lesson was after lunch? Was it because it was outside on the playground? Was it because my instructions were confusing? Was it because I had yet to effectively manage this behaviourally challenging class? Was it because the students' written responses were not focused enough to sustain their peer's interest? Was it because there was only one sheet to share in a group of six students? Was it because I was reliant on instructional language to begin the drama rather than 'storying' them into belief?

What interested me was how this disastrous lesson spiralled me into heightened senses of visualisation for creative problem solving. I decentred to allow for an emotional-

cognitive dynamic. What followed demonstrated how yesterdays, todays and tomorrows lessons are inextricably related to one another and how the drama could spiral off into unpredictable and highly successful directions. The difficulties challenged me to problem solve to invigorate my teaching. I had to overcome feelings of inadequacy, embarrassment and humiliation as other teachers looked onto this disastrous lesson where I clearly could not 'control' this Year 5 class. Later I felt exhausted from the blatant rudeness and defiance of three students who were clearly intent on destroying my authority as a teacher. I felt disappointed because I had placed so much energy into the lesson and in a split second of student resistance I felt I had very little to show for it. How could I teach drama to students who resisted, unwilling to enter belief or even listen to me?

I drafted and redrafted my lesson notes for the next lesson preparing a handout but by the time the lesson came I was too physically exhausted to execute it. So much preparation went into that lesson and then suddenly the situation spiraled out of my control. My physical tiredness combined with the unplanned visit of the six Year 9 girls from a neighbouring high school brought a completely different reality to what I had imagined was possible. Not knowing that the Year 9 students were truants, I invited them to join the class. They tutored, directed and acted as an audience for the groups thus motivating the Year 5 students to be on task.

Preparing an item for a performance invariably stressed me, leading to bouts of shouting at the students. What evolved during these drama lessons were repetitive performances to different younger classes that powerfully motivated students and over time built cohesive performances. With each performance to the year 1 class, an improvement was demonstrated. Likewise with each performance I improved my narrating, cueing them in when to perform.

Two Year 2 classes watched the play for a second time but this time the whole plot was revealed and presented. The Year 2 classes seemed an excellent audience to perform to, as they seemed able to predict a narrative structure more readily than the Year 1 class. It

was amazing to see students develop such confidence in their use of language as they improvised the story. Later when I asked them to write imagining they were in role as one of their characters, their writing was powerfully emotive.

Teaching empathically felt like I was a trapeze artist performing at a circus – death defying, yet exhilarating. I would climb the rope ladders to reach the platform. There poised, I stood ready to catch the bar as it swung towards me. I had to make the decision of when to leap into the air to catch the bar, knowing that sometimes, it was inevitable that I would miss it and plummet to the safety net below but to improve as a trapeze artist I had to. When I did catch the bar and complete a full swing it was exhilarating. Yet, I needed to build the momentum of several swings before I could summersault to catch another bar, mid air. It wasn't a single, one off act. It was built upon the previous 'swings' or lessons.

I absorbed the story *Yamuna* so that it became an imaginative space for me. I focused on the creative act of teaching the story, whilst the students focused on the creative act of responding to it. We were both learning in different but complementary ways. Teaching and learning impacted upon the other. When I was emotionally and cognitively involved in my teaching, a different dimension entered the classroom and it became exhilarating.

By the third performance, I felt the spiraling and energising affects that psychodynamic pedagogy describes. One teaching act led to another. I responded to the multivariied challenges of teaching – controlling a class; involving the Year 2 audience to complete a 'responsive thank you card' that I designed where the Year 2 audience thanked as well as gave feedback to Year 5 on their performance. I felt I had achieved a context where the Year 2 students wrote for a real purpose to a real audience. Year 5's enactment and the Year 2 thank you notes mirrored one another. I felt elated with a sense of achievement. It made me aware that my initially deflating lessons had spiraled myself into heightened teaching moments. The lessons changed, evolved and energised. Psychodynamic pedagogy had prepared me for the emotions of the lesson and to grasp the opportunities presented. I had extended the number of communicative exchanges between several

classes to three 'visits'. The 'significant moments' had a chance to spiral to create the powerful emotional-cognitive dynamic that psychodynamic pedagogy describes.

After the successful playbuilding of Yamuna, I was asked to prepare a whole class item for the school assembly. Each week a different class would take it in turns to perform an item in the school hall for the whole school. The teacher asked me to do some readers' theatre but after so much exciting improvisation work and with the term nearing to an end, I lost interest in doing it.

Some improvised drama

In 'Reading Groups' (July, 1998) we improvised building an igloo based on a picture book about this topic. We made snow sledges by turning the classroom desks over but I could not get belief into the drama. In hindsight I needed more dramatic tension – it was hard to improvise about 'something' without a clear reason and purpose for doing so.

On one occasion a group of students and myself improvised being 'cops and robbers' where some robbers broke into a home and stole some money. It was spontaneous emanating from the students. I went into role pushing the drama along. One student was so involved that he initiated making money notes to use in the drama. I tried to shift the improvisation to an earlier time when the bank robber was only a boy to understand how he grew up to become a bank robber (Wagner, 1976). It was great to see one boy who rarely spoke come 'alive' and speak so much.

For 'Clubs' (July, 1998) I taught 'Drama' one hour each Tuesday afternoon for cycles of four weeks when students would move onto a different clubs group. I used *Drama of Color, Improvisation with Multiethnic Folklore* (Saldana, 1995) to enact a story about greed and human cruelty. First I asked the students to imagine they were slowly changing from monkeys to humans. As I didn't sound convincing, the students did not respond well. Then I divided the class – half were the nobles and the other half were peasants. The nobles were preparing to go to the king's magnificent palace for a feast.

They had to walk past the peasants who begged them for food. Unfortunately I focused on following the drama steps rather than letting the rich imaginative possibilities of the story surface between myself and the class. Yet I needed to experiment and practice using these structures such as placing half the class into different roles to develop my teaching of drama.

Later, I did a drama about ten farmers caught in a storm entering a temple (Saldana, 1995). Like the earlier improvisations my timing, belief and voice still needed improvement. I tried another story, with drama activities, about a mother dying but found this too disturbing as a student's mother had recently died. Although teachers have to deal with emotions it was beyond my 'tolerance level' (Wagner, 1976) to cope with such a sensitive issue. I found teaching explicit serious and sensitive themes through drama difficult because it had the potential to unleash so much negative emotion.

Sometimes I was asked to assist students read sterile, simple readers that had little meaning to students with reading difficulties. They were vacuous, nonsensical books that had absurd storylines. Their only rationale were to teach specific sounds of the language. I found it difficult reading these books until I turned them into puppet plays or enactments. By acting them out they were transformed into new meanings. When we performed these stories to younger students they were transformed into amusing stories.

I worked with Year 4 first phase ESL students, Kenneth and Yeechen on their class project (August 1998) about the human body. They chose to research the eye and brain. I asked them to stand in a circle and throw a ball to each other. When they caught the ball they had to talk about their topic. On small sheets of paper I wrote some concepts down from their project eg glasses, skull, guide dogs, central control system and Kenneth, then Yeechen had to pick them up and identify whether they were for the brain or the eye and briefly talk about them. We repeated the activity, this time they wrote their project specific words on cards. Later I went into role as a blind patient placing the students in role as doctors explaining to me the relation between my brain, eyes and blindness.

In early December 1998 I went into role as Cinderella to encourage students to attend a local street parade where the parents was preparing a float with students dressed as characters from this fairy story as a fundraising activity. The most interesting moment occurred when dressed as Cinderella, in an evening dress, I hid in the library awaiting for a Year 1 class to enter. Then I came out in role as Cinderella searching for my shoe, asking "Did anyone know where my shoe was?". The students listened intensely and offered suggestions. When they all yelled out I acted as if I had a headache and the children stopped talking immediately. It was truly powerful learning.

Playbuilding students' stories

My drama work in late 1998 with the two Year 3 classes seemed to be about playbuilding and preparing a group performance for a class.

I was asked to work with a group of students from two Year 3 classes for a short time towards the end of 1998. The classroom teacher was asking the students to write a story about magic and scientists. I chose to enact it and then return the students to show their class.

I rehearsed with six Year 3 students to create, write and perform their play 'The Mad Scientist'. My problem was how to repeat it, revisit it, extend it and improve it. I suggested we mime it through, followed by no action, just focusing on their lines. Their play was about a mad scientist who kidnapped children for experiments. I tried to move the discussion to deeper levels about child protection. After we performed the play to their class I invited the audience to ask questions to the performers. The next day I felt delighted when two of the girls in the class came up to me and said frankly "You know that play you did yesterday – it was really good".

With another Year 3 group we acted out a story about a magic potion in a circle in the small hall. Students told their stories about 'magic potions' in pairs. We played a game,

suggested by the students, as a way to choose which pair would perform first. It was too difficult for me to understand their performances. I laid out a 'stage' area with a few props. Each student came up as the storyteller whilst the next student acted it out. Together we built a story that initially was incoherent and steeped in fantasy.

The group of six Year 3 students performed their story 'The Magic Potion'. We crafted the play together with one student being the storyteller. We worked in a corridor in the school building. We improvised their story and then began to write the script. I modelled to them how to write a script and then handed it over to the group to continue. This was a difficult task for Year 3 and to support them I independently wrote another script which we used to continue the drama with.

I read the script I had written for 3B. Together we workshopped the play – first improvising, then by miming it. The students were so imaginative and enthusiastic. They performed it to a Year 3/4 class after lunch. It was so spontaneous, everyone seemed to enjoy it. The drama 'worked'. We were all emotionally and cognitively engaged in the learning – me in my learning to teach drama and the students in their learning of how to present a play.

3B performed their play to 2T, 3B and 3M (November, 1998). It didn't work theatrically. It was imperfect. However this didn't seem to matter to the children audience watching. The classes seemed to cope better with the gaps of understanding than I did as a teacher. Following this I debriefed the actors. I asked them, "Should Zena have drunken the magic potion to make her happy?" The discussion shifted where the children began to talk about zombies and ghosts. I was amazed and unnerved by their openness and honesty during this discussion. They listened to one another attentively. It was a major achievement. The children owned the discussion and extended it in a way that I could never have done. I tried to share this complex, higher imaginative and thinking skills that this discussion demonstrated with their class teacher but her concern was that the children might be frightened by this discussion, thereby prompting parent complaints. This

reaction made it quite obvious that everything in teaching is political. Perhaps this is why teachers avoid risk taking drama teaching?

Performing and teaching as a children's clown

Alongside my full time career as an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, working in the institutional environment of a primary school, was my voluntary, occasional work as a children's performer. As a children's clown I entertained young children in a variety of settings from family homes, pre-schools, parks, for birthday parties and other social and community celebrations. Since 1995 I performed over twenty shows for birthday parties that involved two to eleven year-old children with parents, grandparents and family friends as audience.

My performing persona 'Aunty Ni Ni' is best described as a clown, although she is her own eccentric identity, somewhere betwixt a clown and a simply bright, colourful and incredibly optimistic person. She uses her facial expressions to show incredulousness, surprise and delight. Although she wears a clown's red nose and colourful costume she does not come from a circus tradition wearing a wig or having a heavily painted white face. She lacks many traditional clowning skills such as acrobatics, juggling, balloon sculpturing, playing a musical instrument or performing magic (Webber, 1996). Rather it is the clown's frailties, joys and human foibles that she explores.

These occasional performances as a children's clown improved my teaching, particularly to affectively attune (Arnold, 1994) with young children from Kindergarten to Year 2. It taught me to 'sense' where my children audiences were emotionally and cognitively and how to empathically respond to them (Arnold, 1994). As a clown I had to work to negotiate/ create/ enter an imaginative world between myself and my young audience. Achieving this as a clown at birthday parties inspired me to achieve this as a teacher working in the formal educational environment of a primary school.

Clowning as a teacher

Performing as a clown fundamentally shifted my teaching. The experience enabled me to begin to understand the power of play as an educational strategy. It taught me to listen attentively to children, so I could appropriately respond to their emotional and cognitive states (Arnold, 1994). It taught me to enter a child's world rather than demand my child students enter my adult pedagogical world. Teachers must confront an unconscious mistrust of 'play' as when I have heard teachers say to students "You don't come to school to play" or "We're here to learn, *not* have fun" (Atkin, 1991). Without rich play, life is sterile. Play is vital for students' linguistic, emotional, cognitive and social development. It is the basis for creativity, imagination and psychological well being. Play is also the basis for literacy development. A clown respects children's knowledge of play.

Clowns, like teachers are often 'centre stage', responsible for the dynamics of the lesson or show. Clowning is similar to the mother-infant interaction that Daniel Stern's research describes where the caregivers use eye gaze, smile, babble as the dominant ways to communicate with their infant (Stern, 1977).

A clown is subversive, reversing the power relationship between adults and children. Clowning, as a theatrical convention, permits the adult to behave as a child. Children are positioned to know more than the clown. As a clown, my goal is to be 'there' emotionally for the children. My work as a clown healthily subverts my typical teacher roles that I often unconsciously adopt – the controlled, morally superior adult, preaching my ethical and moral values and if threatened go into role as a 19th century Dickensian tyrant, significantly raising my voice to coerce students to behave, listen and follow *my* instructions.

As an ESL teacher, working K-6, I carry a bundle of resources - a cassette/CD player, a bag of puppets, CDs, audiotapes and a basket of storybooks, picture books and poetry books. My goal is to teach/perform for any class, anywhere, any time. Clowning

developed my improvisation skills enabling me to respond to student suggestions and use my immediate environment to create enjoyable activities, such as when I rolled over an empty classroom garbage bin to become a hurdle for children to jump over. The Year 1 children responded with relish. I could not have planned such a good physical fitness lesson if I had tried.

Although I do not wear my clown's costume or red nose to school, I occasionally use clown techniques such as mime, exaggerated voice quality, varying intonation, babble, sound effects, visual gags to carry meaning. Language can "get in the way" of learning (Moffett, 1994). I try to seize opportunities to smile, physically align myself to have eye contact, to listen more attentively to my student requests and so improvise my next teaching response (Arnold, 1994). As an ESL teacher, working with small groups of students I am able to do this. It is harder for the classroom teacher with larger classes. It can be done, but it requires energy, freshness and spontaneity – difficult to achieve consistently throughout a school year. Teaching is an emotionally and physically exhausting profession.

A fascinating lesson occurred when teaching a small group of non English speaking students (NESB). I wanted them to make a simple puppet out of paddlepop sticks. I demonstrated making the puppet through babble and exaggerated voice qualities to carry my meaning. The children clearly understood my request. It was a procedure - "First do this, then do that and finally do this". Functional linguistics outlines the verbs needed for this. Yet the clarity and precision of giving these verbal instructions are complex. For the teacher it is firstly a cognitive demand – teachers must know exactly what they are asking but it is often difficult to achieve in the typically emotionally bombarded classroom. I rarely had formulated my intentions for how I wanted the children to achieve my goals until after I had begun to teach it.

A fascinating lesson occurred on the last day of the first school term in 1999. Teaching games was always difficult for me. No matter how much I tried, I would forget the sequence of the game, but on this day, I brought in one balloon and in role as a clown I

babbled, mimed, improvised and engaged my small group of students in a variety of throwing and catching games for one hour, using minimum language. The children understood with incredible perception and accuracy and perhaps as NESB students found it a relief to actively participate without having linguistic demands placed upon them. Clowning stopped my constant chatter as a teacher forever commenting, evaluating, responding and challenging students' talk. It allowed the space for students to become the dominant speakers.

My goal as a teacher is to engage the class, as a performer does, and listen peripherally. When children request, call out, offer suggestions, this is my cue to pick up new ideas, change activities and respond to their requests. As a teacher, I seem conditioned to say "No" to student requests because it is harder to say "Yes" especially with a class of over twenty-eight students. Yet, listening and acting upon students' suggestions is one of the most empowering acts I can do as a teacher. The more I listen, the more articulate the students became in their requests. The longer I listen, the more time there is for those students who understand to fill in the gaps for themselves and others.

Clowning validates the teacher I want to be. It assisted me:

- develop teaching as a performing act.
- recognise and so resist my other teacher roles of enculturation - the 'police officer', 'sergeant major', 'prison warden' and 'judge'.
- develop my performing skills as a teacher. An aware teacher knows how to develop this potential especially when taking on authoritarian roles to manage groups of students.
- extend and develop my nonverbal repertoire which is a powerful paralinguistic resource.
- develop students' intrinsic motivation by validating the child's primary learning strategy - play.
- reduce the stress that is endemic to the teaching profession (Otto, 1986).
- develop my improvisation skills which allow me to find new strategies for effective teaching.

Below are some clown's visual and verbal gags I played as a teacher in the primary school I work in.

- On playground duty a Kindergarten child came to say hello to me. I had my popular crocodile puppet, 'Crocy' with me. I handed 'Crocy' over to a Year 6 student who held it behind me. I looked at the Kindergarten child and told him, "There are no crocodiles in this school" while the Year 6 student 'played' the crocodile behind me. It was a visual disjunction that contrasted to my words.
- As I supervised hundreds of students barracking for their sports team during a swimming carnival, I paced up and down maintaining eye gaze at the crowd and tried to engage individual students nonverbally when I saw them involved in off task behaviour. However, when they responded back to me I pretended I was unable to hear because I had placed tissues in my ear. This humorous ploy diffused any aggressive behaviour.
- As I supervised queues, lining up at the canteen during the lunch break I mimed my instructions that they remain in straight lines and not jump the queues. Children responded verbally as I responded back to them nonverbally. It was liberating to develop my nonverbal cues that were so much more effective than raising my voice to them.
- As a classroom management strategy with K-2 students I improvised 'rhymes' such as "I'm going to close my eyes and count to three. When I open them, you'll be sitting down in one large circle". Students enthusiastically followed my instructions for the first time. Clowning encouraged me to experiment to find new and creative ways to assist my classroom management skills.
- When my job was to keep a crowd quiet I wrote signs such as "BE QUIET" and mimed my demand that they stop talking. It was far more effective than shouting.

Occasionally I played visual gags such as releasing air from a balloon or suggesting I had difficulty walking through a door with my numerous bags or about to sit down on a chair with my crocodile puppet on it. Small, humorous incidents to jolt the children into merriment. Yet this was difficult to sustain. My clowning easily lapsed. Being a teacher is generally a very serious business. Being a clown requires energy, freshness, spontaneity and heightened awareness.

Why is clowning so good for teaching? Young primary children, especially from Kindergarten to Year 2, enjoy it and are receptive to enter the world of play and imagination that clowning offers. Clowning supports psychodynamic pedagogy's view of the importance of emotions in a dynamic relationship with cognition for effective learning (Arnold, 1994). Students are invited to initiate the learning moves. A clown's skill is to respond to those moves.

Clowning challenged me to stop 'teaching' which focused exclusively on my agenda. Instead it challenged me to perform poems, stories and songs to the class and unleash their inherent magic and so let them do their 'work'. As a performer I had to learn to 'let go' and intuitively seek to engage my audience. Although teachers do not have the same time available to polish their performances like professional performers do, they have opportunities to repeat and recycle successful acts.

Clowning as a teacher integrates many ideas embedded in drama in education into the practice of teaching. Clowning focused on the close relation between play, drama and stories. All required an ability to enter an imaginative state of belief and respond imaginatively. We live by stories. They are the basis of our imaginative life. It is through enactment that we create imaginative spaces in our hearts and minds. Clowning as drama and story, invites children to enter a state of belief, essential for many aspects of everyday life such as going to the movies, reading a novel and dreaming about future goals. Clowning was an open invitation to enter this imaginative world of play.

The techniques I used as a clown invigorated my teaching. Much of my teaching, earlier in my career, unleashed too much excitement resulting in student misbehaviour. There is a fine line between children's playfulness and silly, off task behaviour in the classroom. Clowning as a performance skill gave me insights into structuring play for learning and modulating the emotions (Arnold, 1994) necessary for effective learning.

Teaching as a Clown

As the invited clown at a children's birthday party, there is an expectation that I will perform a 'show' with children sitting, watching, perhaps participating. My challenge as a clown is to use my knowledge and experience as an English teacher to promote quality interactive talk in pairs, small groups through story, song and drama.

I was invited to perform as 'Aunty Ni Ni' for Joshua's fifth birthday party (May, 1999) with twenty-five of his young friends, ranging from babies to seven-year-olds, as well as an entourage of parents, proudly watching over their children.

As the invited clown, I scaffolded concepts about the colours red, green and yellow through mime. In unobtrusive, yet imaginative ways, I asked "What is this?" as I mimed the sun, which led to a song about the planets, which led to a mime about the moon, which led to a song about a rocketship blasting off to the moon.

As 'Aunty Ni Ni', the clown, my goal was to make children laugh. I juggled three scarves, dropping one behind me, acting mystified as to where they had gone. This positioned the children in role as the experts because they knew where the scarves had fallen unlike the 'stupid' clown. Some of the best moments happened through facial expression, eye contact and mime rather than language.

I wrote a story about the colours Red, Yellow and Green, arguing over who is the best colour. As I told the story, I stopped to ask the child audience which colour they thought was the best. I accepted all the children's answers and encouraged them to be active and involved as an audience.

I performed a puppet story on the theme of friendship. It involved a moral dilemma. The children had to decide whether they would help the main character who was initially selfish and unlikeable. As I performed this puppet play *Will you be my friend?* (Kitson & Mulitalo, 1998) I asked the children questions, using my eyes expressively, neither

confirming or rejecting the children's answers but more to say "OK we'll see what happens".

The show was planned around a sequence of recorded songs. It had been workshopped through repeated rehearsals. As it was my first visit to the home and my first meeting with the children I needed a tight script to focus the performance and fulfil the unstated expectation that I would indeed perform a show but I also needed to be able to improvise for the unexpected.

In drama terms, I was 'in role', not as a teacher-in-role (Wagner, 1976) but as an 'adult-in-role' as a clown. Although I was not 'teaching in a classroom', I was still asking the following pedagogical questions:

What am I asking you to understand?

Will you enter the imaginative world I am offering you?

At another birthday party for Cale's 5th birthday, I attempted to mime and when the audience could not understand my request, question or instruction there was always one child who did and shouted out her /his answer to the rest of the children.

Clowning is a joyous dimension that has enriched my teaching. As a teacher I have been enculturated into the community of teachers but like all professions it needs enrichment from other professions. Clowning provided the freshness and spontaneity I needed to be a sensitive teacher, keenly aware of the emotions of my child audience/class.

The two roles I play as a professional educator are 'Miss Kitson', the teacher and 'Aunty Ni Ni', the clown - both are committed to making learning fun and meaningful for children.

Conclusion

What are the conclusions to this longitudinal study of being a teacher, teaching English in a primary school? What insights did I discover that can be of interest to other teachers? This thesis argues that the cognitive-emotional dynamic described by psychodynamic pedagogy leads to teacher improvement.

Teaching involves hundreds of thousands of learning moments over time. Students, classes, teachers change, both logistically and intrapersonally. Teaching is not a one off lesson with a one off group of children. Student groups change, new students arrive, students grow and change. School life is meshed into multiple realities of change and growth. So many rich teaching experiences happen and unless reflected upon can become buried in the swarming tides of time. What is captured in this document are some significant teaching moments when 'something happened' whilst teaching between 1997-1998 as I developed as an empathic educator, implementing drama in education.

My evidence that I developed as an empathic educator is my articulation of my practice, developed through reflective writing. Reflection and introspection enabled me to understand my complex, multifaceted feelings and thoughts and thus refine, adapt and improve myself as a teacher. I had to write about, talk about and enact my experiences as a teacher. Nothing in this document is raw data. It has been revisited and refined with time.

Empathy is a psychodynamic principle that describes the sophisticated emotional and cognitive judgements based on another's emotional and cognitive states. To do this as a teacher I had to acknowledge and at the same time temporarily withhold my own variable feelings and thoughts which could either positively or negatively impact on how I responded to students. As well, I had to understand the emotional and cognitive demands of a text, task, activity or strategy. Empathy manifested itself in my complex decision making as a teacher in what, how, when, where, why I chose to respond the way I did. To implement psychodynamic pedagogy I had to learn how to pace, vary, break my ideas

into manageable steps and modulate these activities and consequent emotions of the lesson from high excitement activities to quiet, calming activities through story, drama, puppetry and other symbolic activities. I had to learn to accept students' ideas, resources, experiences, feeling and thinking states to develop the rich learning opportunities that they offered. I had to learn to trust myself when I failed and trust my students that they would indeed come up with the 'goods' in their own good time. Likewise I had to be emotionally and cognitively committed to the stories, enactments and other symbolic activities I offered to enable students to become emotionally and cognitively engaged with them.

Concepts of drama in education particularly teacher in role where the teacher improvises with others responding to move the enactment forward assisted me with my skills as an empathic teacher. I had to learn skills of storytelling, song, puppetry.

As a young teacher I experienced unrealistically high expectations and unbridled enthusiasm that often worked against me. I needed to modulate my emotions as a teacher. I lacked skills in understanding the complex interpersonal nature of the work place which was endemic with issues of power and status. To be a teacher I had to navigate both the child's world of play and the adult's world of work. To develop professionally, I needed a variety of experiences and audiences to talk and reflect upon. Life in a primary school was rich but the opportunities to perform as a children's clown strengthened my identity as a teacher and enhanced my skills for empathy.

Sustaining high energy levels for teaching physically and emotionally exhausted me. I needed to protect myself emotionally and physically. I could not perform high energy teaching every day. I needed to preserve my energy to prevent a downward spiral. When I did spiral emotionally downwards I needed to refocus, decentre, reflect and use enactments as preparation. Teachers need to have 'breaks' from teaching. This re-energised my teaching and spiralled me emotionally and cognitively to imagine, visualise new teaching possibilities. I argue for a more holistic approach to teaching that

integrates the physical, emotional and cognitive. Psychodynamic pedagogy offered ways to develop, sustain and protect my creativity as a teacher.

Being a teacher was a complex experience. I had to constantly articulate and resolve dissatisfaction, enthusiasm, pleasure, lack of energy, joy and difficulties through reflective writing to develop my voice as a teacher. Teachers need to develop their own internal resources and be self validating. Without validation I lost belief in the importance of teaching and wanted to escape from it.

The core of this thesis is that the cognitive-emotional dynamic inherent in self reflective narrative leads to teacher transformation. Reflection focused on what was important - the moments when 'something happened' whilst teaching. My most profound learning as a teacher occurred during subtle shifts of consciousness that may have lasted only a few split seconds such as when I knew my voice was tense and coded with anxiety.

Psychodynamic pedagogy looks at the dynamic between thinking and feeling states and the energising results from it. In this thesis it argues that highly successful teaching requires that teachers work towards the emotional cognitive dynamics in all aspects of their teaching in their lifetime pursuit of how to teach.

I worked to understand my own complex nature as a teacher. I had to acknowledge that teaching was a continuous creative process of learning. Teachers need to be aware, understand and accept responsibility for their emotional states. Teachers need to continually undertake reflective processes to develop as a more psychodynamically attuned teacher and so challenge unconscious resistances that impede their teaching. Teachers need to understand their 'teacher self'. Issues of dependency, trust, self concept, self esteem are all related to language and learning. They need to understand how their complex learning can either counteract or support student-centred pedagogy and especially in teaching drama. Working as a teacher was hard; working as a happy and professionally fulfilled teacher was even harder and yet this was the most important

thing I could be. Teaching is problematic because it is entrenched in a work culture but is written about as a nurturing vocation.

It is hard to decentre and distance oneself from the overwhelming cultural, emotional, physical and cognitive context of being a teacher in a school and teaching. It was difficult to 'hold' moments because they passed by so quickly. I could easily forget I enjoyed teaching. I could easily forget, George, a 7-year child who watched me perform as 'Aunty Ni Ni' at a Christmas Party organised by a child's welfare agency, tell me through his sad eyes, that teachers play a critical role in the emotional and cognitive development of young children's lives.

How does one talk about one's own experience of being a teacher? It is like trying to cross a chasm without a bridge - too wide to cross and too hard to gauge the depth of the shimmering river below. How does one talk about the conflicts, banalities, excitement, list of things to remember, failures, moments of engagement? Teaching, like parenting, deals with the mundane, "I did this, then that, then this wonderful moment happened". Teachers live in this trivial world of the profound. It is the actualities of teaching that are often the least talked part of teaching, yet the most important. Teaching's core activity is to focus on real children in real time. The most important teaching I could do was to have quality interactions with my students. My energy needed to focus on the children in the real moment of teaching.

My development as an empathic teacher occurred when students became the initiators of teaching ideas. Empathy was improvisory as I controlled my emotions whilst responding to the cognitive and emotional cues offered by my students. This provided the 'space' for students' readiness to learn. To be empathic I had to withhold my adult superiority and enter a pact where I would value and respect the child's world of play.

It is important that teachers work with individual and small groups of students. It is harder to work empathically with large whole classes. That is why group work and indeed smaller classes are so important. The essential thing of smaller groups is that

students have more opportunities to be related to empathically. I needed to develop empathic attunement with small groups of students before I began to develop them with the larger, whole class. Implementing psychodynamic pedagogy requires complex strategies for individual, pair and small group work.

The focus of education must centre on enhancing empathic relationships between teachers and students. Schools need smaller classes, flexible ways to teach, timetables, groupings. Schools need massive resourcing to support student-centred teaching.

How can teachers sustain their creativity in the midst of institutionalised and bureaucratic pressures for accountability. I needed to continually challenge subconscious belief systems that were destructive such as the 'martyred, overworked teacher syndrome' that only fuelled feelings of anxiety and stress. I needed to reject imposed knowledge that disempowered me, requiring that I passively conform and forget my most important priority - to provide nurturing environments for my students to develop emotionally and cognitively.

Teachers need to model creativity to their students. I needed to sing, dance, paint, make, act and play with and for my students. This became easier the longer I stayed at the school because I knew the children but harder because I became entrapped in my own institutional inertia and exhausted by the intensity of impinging and unrealistic expectations of school life. My most creative teaching occurred when I was affectively attuned to both my students' and my own emotional and cognitive states. Teachers need to actively seek to enjoy their teaching and share this enjoyment with their students and peers. The spiral that psychodynamic pedagogy describes, spirals the teaching to higher levels of creativity. One creativity idea leads to another. It is collaborative and energising.

Teachers need to recognise, value and celebrate those significant moments when an emotional-cognitive dynamic occurs. They need to trust students' readiness to learn and understand that teaching and learning spiral both forwards and backwards.

Moffett asked "We know how to make the English curriculum interactive but why hasn't it happened?" (Moffett, 1994). My argument is that teachers have been left out of the process. Too much pedagogy ignores teachers' emotional states. Student-centred interactive pedagogy needs teachers who are responsive improvisers, who are empathic to realize the emotional cognitive dynamic within themselves and their students. This thesis argues that there must be an emotional cognitive dynamic to occur within the teacher if significant pedagogical changes are to occur in the classroom. Syllabus documents are full of the need for student-centre interactive learning environments yet this practice remains difficult to achieve and sustain (Arnold, 1994). This thesis argues that change must occur within the teacher before it can occur in the classroom. Teacher development must be about self development (Moffett, 1994). Teachers need to acknowledge, value and challenge their own emotions. Teachers must strive to create emotional-cognitive dynamic in all aspects of their teaching - the preparation, the actual improvised enactments of teaching and the reflection after teaching. It argues that preparation should be characterised by creative acts such as writing stories and poetry, rehearsing and improvising stories, poetry, song and dance and other symbolic activities so that it can be responsive to the unpredictable cognitive and emotional realities that students bring with them to the class. It argues that it needs to be sustained through reflective writing.

The teacher I dreamt of was one who was inspired, challenged and energised by my teaching, thinking and feeling of new ways to problems solve and create collaborative, purposeful literacy tasks for real audiences. The teacher I dreamt of becoming was where I learnt from my students. I recognised my creativity and happiness as a teacher was inextricably linked with my students' creativity and happiness as we both strove to learn. I, learning how to teach; my students, learning how to grow and develop as self validating individual and social beings. This was embedded in language, play, story and drama.

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