



# **Drama teacher education, partnerships for transforming the future:**

**exploring the concept of building a Guild of  
Drama Educators**

**Laura A. McCammon | Debra McLauchlan | Robin Pascoe**

IDEA 2010 Belem Brazil



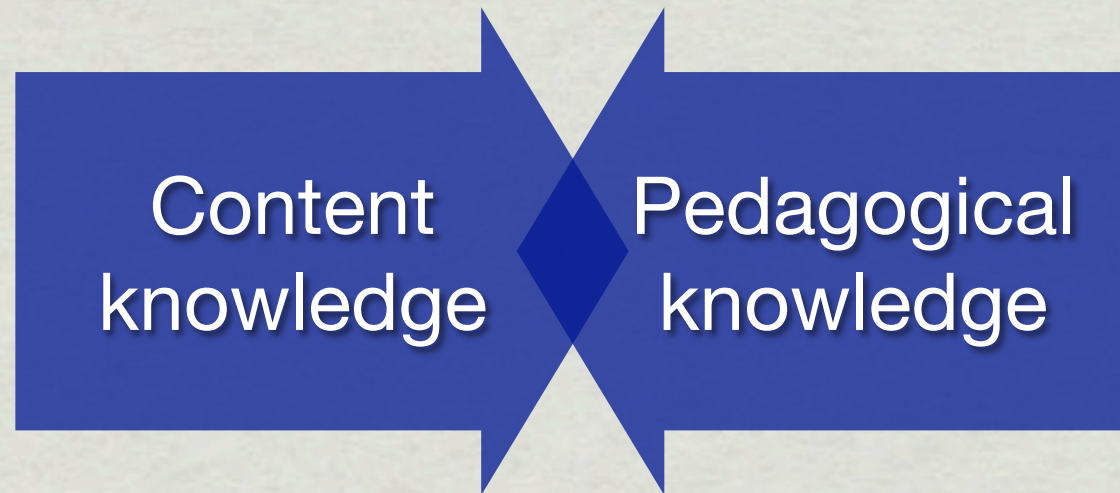
# Focus

- \* The concept of drama teacher education as catalyst for ***creating communities of drama educators*** – drama education as an induction into a community of drama educators.



# Pedagogical content knowledge

(Shulman 1986)



**How the content of drama  
is organised and  
represented for teaching,  
learning and meeting the  
specific needs of  
particular communities of  
learners**

*Formulating the  
subject of drama to  
make it  
comprehensible to  
others*



# Three perspectives Three contexts



*LAURA*

**LAURA MCCAMMON  
ARIZONA UNIVERSITY**



*DEBRA*

**DEBRA MCLAUHLAN  
BROCK UNIVERSITY**



*ROBIN*

**ROBIN PASCOE  
MURDOCH UNIVERSITY**



# Research on Drama Teachers

Laura A. McCammon,



# DRAMA TEACHER EDUCATION: TEACHING AND LEARNING *through & from* COMMUNITY

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**Murdoch**  
UNIVERSITY

DISCOVERERS WELCOME



# FOCUS

- **Drama teacher education as catalyst for creating communities of drama educators**

- **Creating a shared learning community within a group of students**

- **Teaching from community - belonging to a drama education community and bringing that community into focus through the design and implementation of the drama teacher education programa**



# TEACHING DRAMA EDUCATORS THROUGH COMMUNITY

- **Creating communities of drama educators**
  - **Teacher–learner partnerships - drama learning contract**
  - **Open and receptive minds in drama ensembles**
  - **From practice to theory - embodied learning**
  - **Collaborative performance projects as basis for learning to teach drama**
  - **Self incorporation and identity - agency as a drama teacher**
  - **Reflective and reflexive awareness of sources of pedagogical decisions:**
    - **values, beliefs and understandings**



# CREATING COMMUNITIES





# CREATING COMMUNITIES

*From  
practice*



*To  
Theory*





Enter here

**Making your own original drama**

**Participating as an audience**

**Making drama scripted by others**

Improvising Drama

Engaging with drama

Actor

Director

Reflecting on drama

Dramaturge

Designer

Making informed judgments about drama

Manager  
Stage manager  
Production/  
Front of House

Producer  
Entrepreneur  
Finance/Publicist

Devising Drama

Writing Drama

**Drama in Performance/Drama as an arts language**

**DRama Elements**

**Drama Processes**

**Drama Skills & Techniques**

**Drama Conventions**

**Drama Genres/Forms**

**Drama of our times and places**

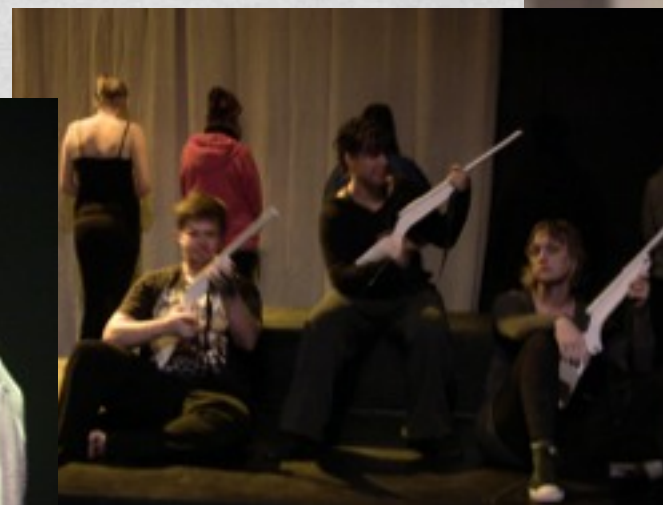
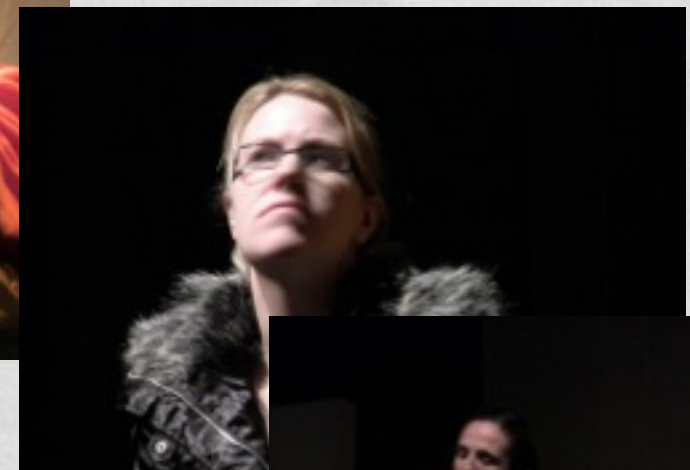
**Drama of other times and places**

*values about Drama*



# Creating communities through performance

## *The Prisoner of Time*



Group devised drama project - from the Year 12 drama syllabus



# TEACHING DRAMA EDUCATORS THROUGH COMMUNITY

- ***Coming into this unit I didn't really know what to expect. I just thought that I would teach drama because it would be a bit of fun and would complement my media teaching but I have learnt that drama teaching is so much more. The comradeship in a drama class is much stronger than in a media class. I want to pass this enthusiasm on to students and get them excited about the process of drama because I found the process almost as fascinating as the performance.***

***(Dylan)***





# TEACHING DRAMA EDUCATORS FROM COMMUNITY

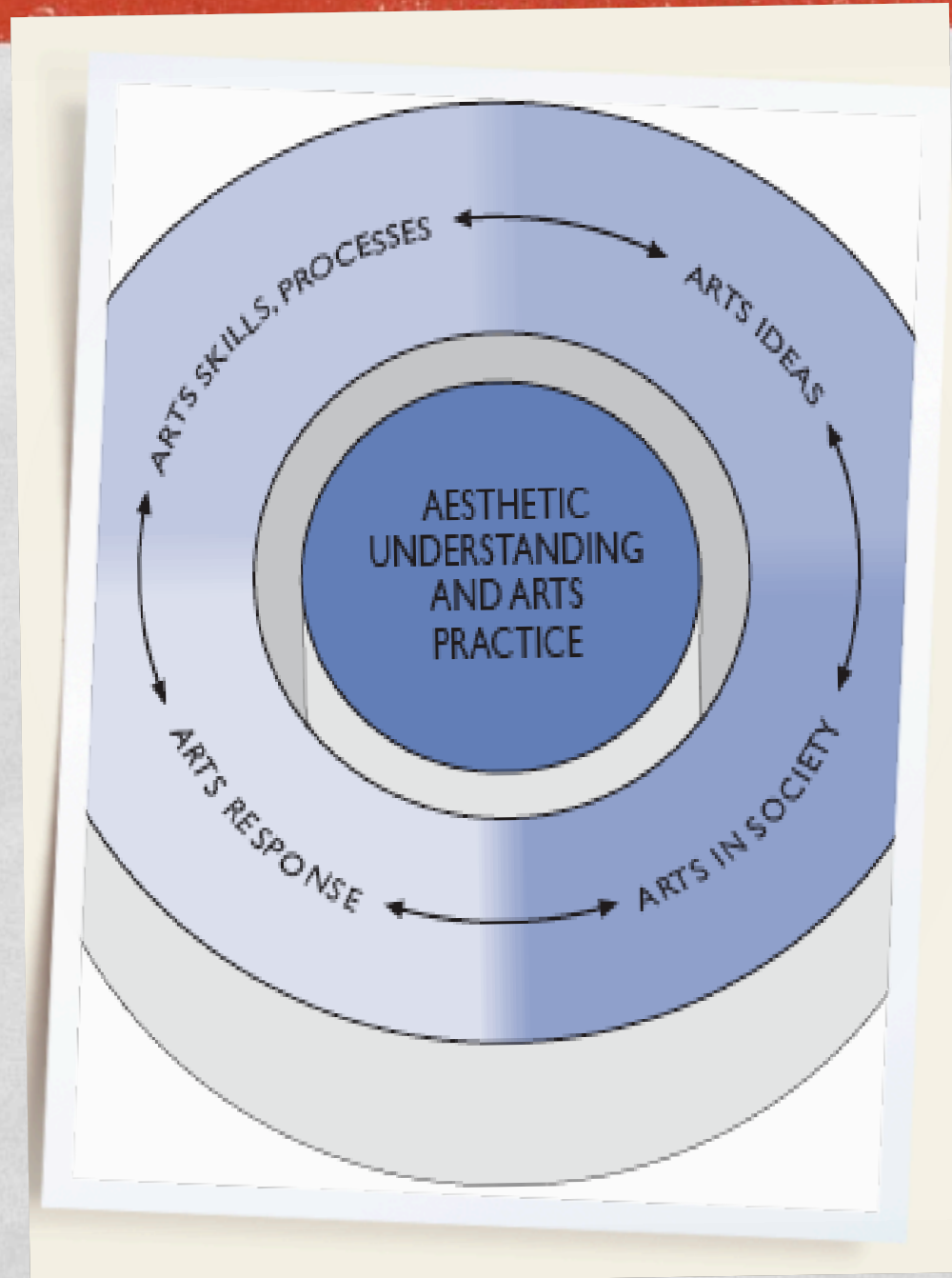
- **Teaching through stories**
  - **drawn from my own experiences**
    - **my own teaching of drama**
    - **my professional roles (as Chief Examiner/Curriculum Writer/ etc.)**
  - **connecting students to their own community**





# CONNECTING

## The Arts



- ~ Aesthetic Understanding
- ~ Arts Practice
  - ~ Four outcomes
    - ~ Arts Ideas
    - ~ Arts Skills and Processes
    - ~ Arts Responses
    - ~ Arts in Society

The Western Australian Curriculum Framework: [www.curriculum.wa.edu.au](http://www.curriculum.wa.edu.au)

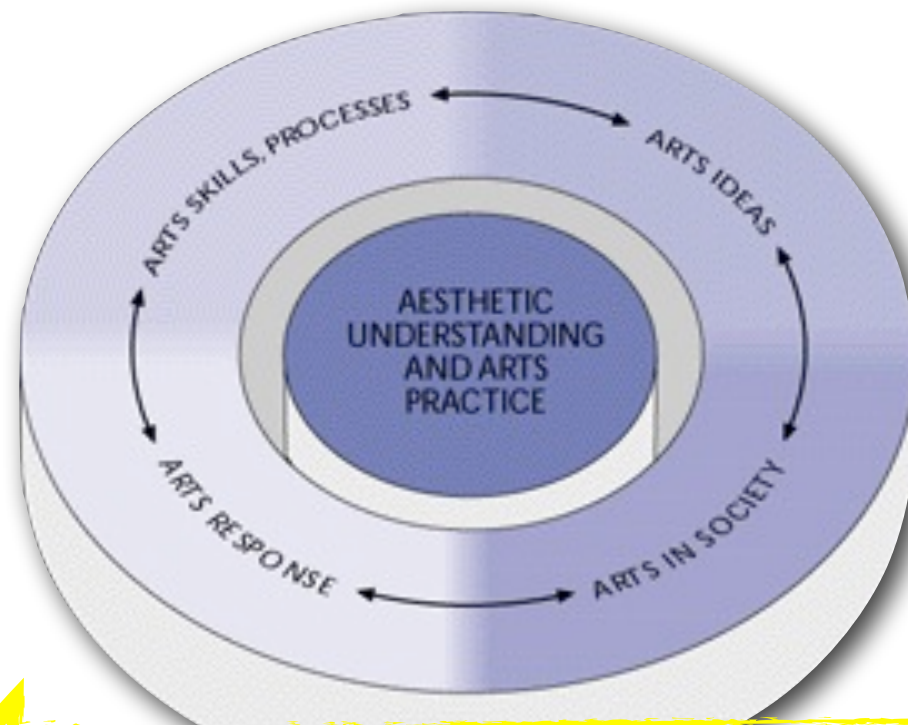


# UNDERSTANDING THE ARTS IN THE CURRICULUM



## • Aesthetic understanding

- students appreciate and critically respond to arts experiences with enjoyment
- students understand questions about the values and attitudes in the arts



## • Arts practice

- students explore and develop ideas and feelings through use of a range of skills and knowledge of arts techniques and processes in dance, drama, media, music and visual arts (and combinations of art forms)

These are integrated not separate modes



As audience, social and cultural commentator and critic



As creator, maker, performer, artist



# RATIONALE FOR THE ARTS FOR **ALL** STUDENTS

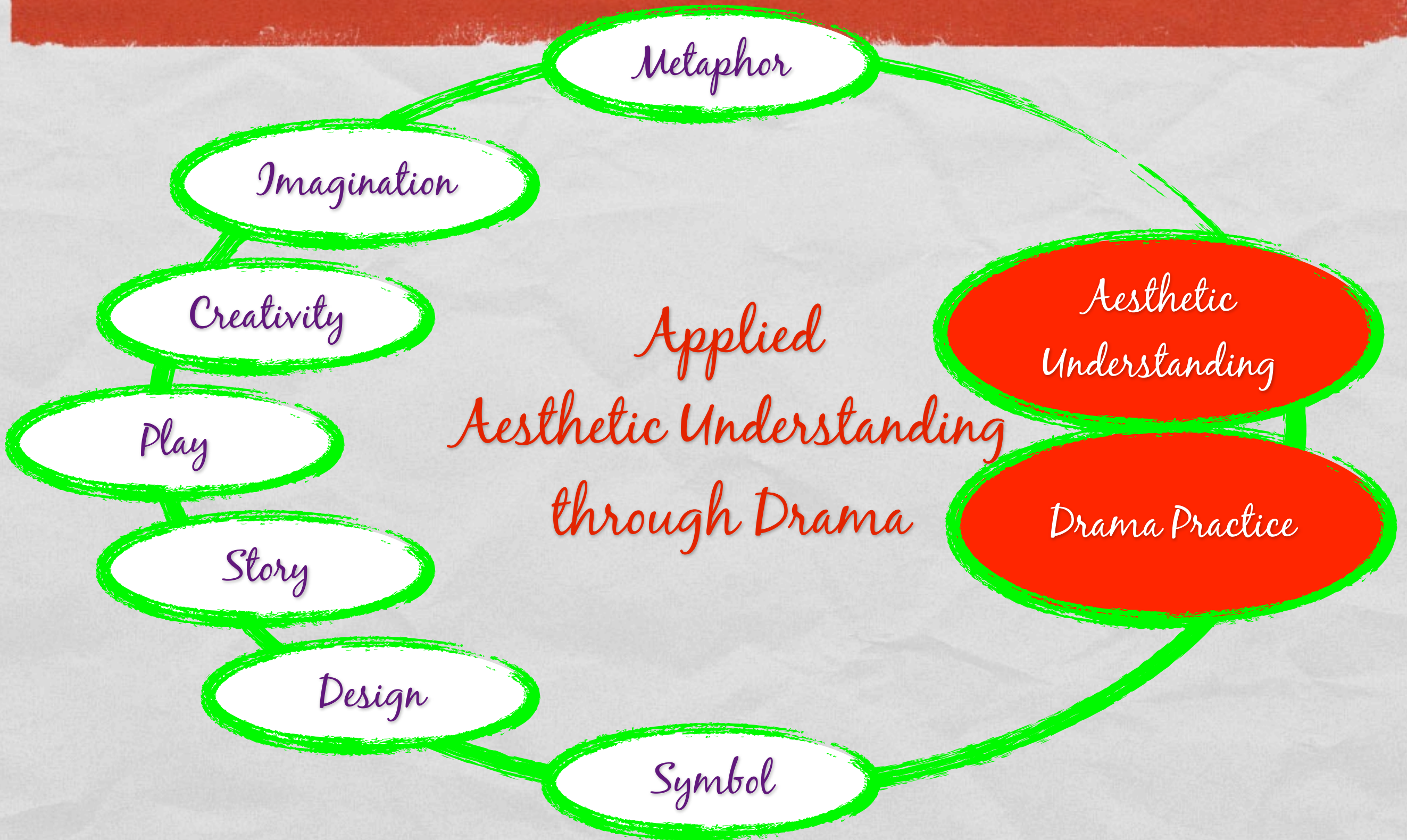


- **The arts and the life of the community**
- **The arts and communication**
- **The arts and values**
- **The arts, creativity and satisfaction**
- **The arts and life skills**





# BUILDING MODELS





# DRAMA ELEMENTS

Role and character

Situation and human interaction

Voice

Facial Expression, Gesture & Movement

Space and Time

Language and texts

Symbol and metaphor

Audience

Dramatic tension

Curriculum Framework (1998)



What it's all about...

The connections when students

PLAY imagine  
create

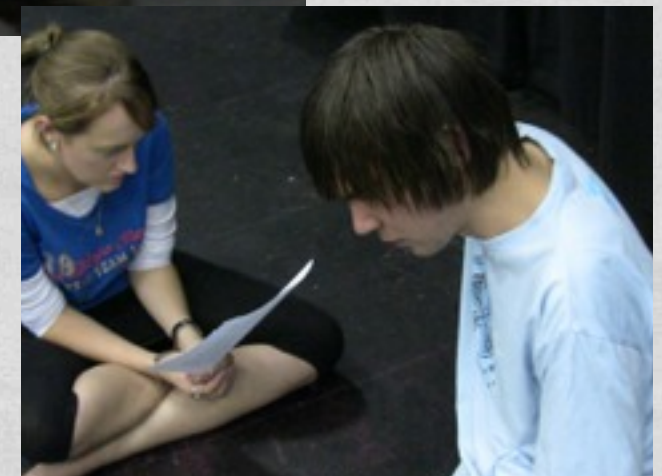
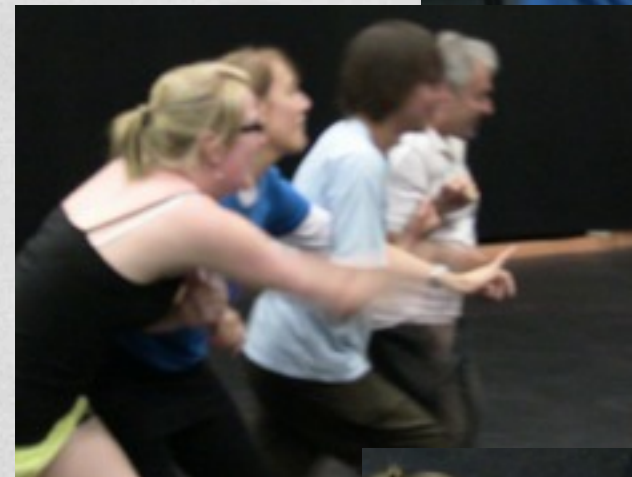
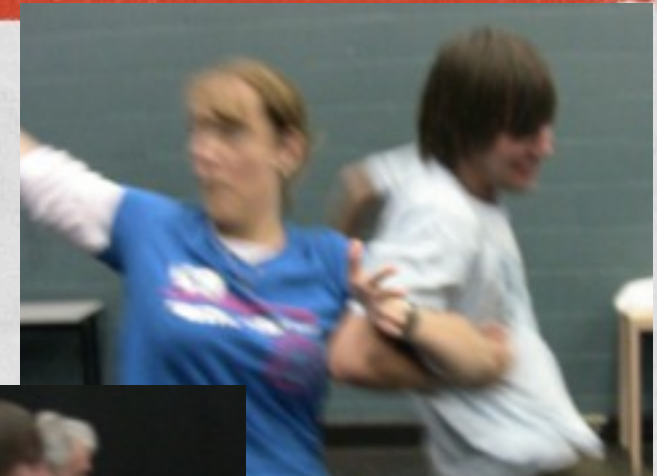




# TEACHING DRAMA EDUCATORS THROUGH COMMUNITY

- ***I have a sense that in this course we are in the drama classroom as much as we are in the university through the stories told. I have a sense of how important my networking with other drama teachers will be if I am to survive in this drama teaching game.***

*Aliensui in her reflective journal*





# TEACHING DRAMA EDUCATORS THROUGH COMMUNITY

- ***I am happy to admit to feeling a bit worried... as scary as it is to admit for the first time I have doubts about my ability to meet the criteria for “successful teacher”. But I tell myself “Toughen up, girl” because I am going to be successful. I can see the way forward and it’s through my mates. I am not alone.***

***Aliensui in her reflective journal***





# **DRAMA TEACHER EDUCATION IS A JOURNEY**

- **What do drama teacher education students need for their journey?**

- What do they need for a sustainable and generative career in drama teaching?

- **They need to create in their own classrooms a sense of community**

- **They need a sense of belonging within a community - to not see themselves as “Lone Rangers” but as part of the whole**





Remember why we are here...

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# How drama teachers see themselves

Debra McLauchlan





# Common Notion of Self-Identity

10 years plus

- ✱ **All perceive themselves as teacher-artists. All label themselves both performers and directors.**
- ✱ **All view teaching and directing as two separate skill sets that they had to learn.**
- ✱ **All believe that drama teachers need to know about and be skillful in theatre techniques of performance and directing.**
- ✱ **All hold common attitudes: passionate about theatre, hold high expectations and believe that their students are capable of high-quality work, are immersed in theatre both in and out of school, “willing to sit on the floor in your bare feet” with the class, willing to take the same kind of risks you are asking your students to take.**
- ✱ **All view themselves as somewhat isolated within their schools.**



# Professional Supports

- \* **1. Mentors**
- \* **2. Each Other**
- \* **3. School Board Arts Consultant**
- \* **4. Professional and Community Theatre Groups (drawing on the rich theatre culture in Niagara)**
- \* **5. University**
  - \* **Research**
  - \* **Associate Teaching**
- \* **6. Provincial Drama Teachers Organization**



# Challenges/Strains

- ✱ 1. High demands on time and energy leads to yearly sense of burn-out by end of term
- ✱ 2. Jenn gets so drained by the end of a major production that she feels resentful
- ✱ 3. Need ways to relax and get away from the job
- ✱ 4. Both men reported marriage strains, and Vince said he didn't get to see his children much
- ✱ 5. Jenn reported a strain on marriage although husband remains supportive of her work



# Rewards

- ✱ **From students:**
- ✱ **From the arts community**
- ✱ **From the outside community**



**Drama teacher educators work from within their own communities, drawing on the rich, complex shared history of drama education. They also work through creating communities of learners that model practices and learning approaches we share and value as a drama education community.**



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