Being Ethical: How process drama assists pre-service drama teachers to reflect on professional ethics.

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Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

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Abstract

This research thesis focuses on the experiences of pre-service drama teachers and considers how process drama may assist them to reflect on key aspects of professional ethics such as mandatory codes or standards, principled moral reasoning, moral character, moral agency, and moral literacy. Research from higher education provides evidence that current pedagogical approaches used to prepare pre-professionals for practice in medicine, engineering, accountancy, business, psychology, counselling, nursing and education, rarely address the more holistic or affective dimensions of professional ethics such as moral character. Process drama, a form of educational drama, is a complex improvisational group experience that invites participants to create and assume roles, and select and manage symbols in order to create a fictional world exploring human experience. Many practitioners claim that process drama offers an aesthetic space to develop a deeper understanding of self and situations, expanding the participant’s consciousness and ways of knowing. However, little research has been conducted into the potential efficacy of process drama in professional ethics education for pre-professionals. This study utilizes practitioner research and case study to explore how process drama may contribute to the development of professional ethics education and pedagogy.
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Keywords

The following is a list of keywords that appear with this thesis or are associated with the thesis topic. These words have been listed for cataloguing purposes. Key words that apply to this study are drama education, process drama, professional ethics, professional ethics education, virtue and character, moral agency, and moral literacy.

Abbreviations

QCT – Queensland College of Teachers
QSA – Queensland Studies Authority
QCS – Queensland Core Skills Test
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Chapter One: Introduction

This research thesis focuses on the experiences of pre-service drama teachers and considers how process drama may assist them to reflect on key aspects of professional ethics such as mandatory codes or standards, principled moral reasoning, moral character, moral agency, and moral literacy.

The initial impetus for this study emerged from my conversations with pre-service drama teachers at a major Queensland University. My academic position from 2002 to 2006 involved the preparation of drama specialist teachers for practice in secondary schools. The pre-service teachers spent several weeks in secondary schools as part of their four year double degree in education and drama. On returning from their fieldwork they frequently shared stories from their recent practicum, displaying positions similar to other pre-professionals such as:

1. Ethical uncertainty: they felt uneasy and recognized that they were being confronted ethically but were unclear as to what to do
2. Ethical dilemma: they could see the right course of action but felt that the morally right choice of action was beyond their control or beyond the boundaries of their current role or experience
3. Lack of ethical recognition: they expressed anxiety or elation at their experience but did not recognize the moral or ethical component of the situation. (Elkin, 2004, p. 1)

My conversations with students revealed that while they had been exposed to some course content on professional ethics for teachers, this was usually delivered in a lecture format, leaving them with only a limited understanding as to how to apply this information. This prompted me to question how I might enhance pre-service drama teachers’ understanding of professional ethics through another form of pedagogy. From this starting point, my inquiry led me to consider how process drama might contribute to the development of more effective professional ethics education. My key research question emerged: Does process drama assist pre-service drama teachers to reflect on professional ethics?
A series of sub questions developed:

- How do pre-service drama teachers currently encounter professional ethics in their course?
- What key aspects of professional ethics do pre-service drama teachers need to understand and apply?
- What current forms of pedagogy are used in professional ethics education for pre-professionals?
- Which forms of pedagogy are more effective?
- What claims have been made about process drama and learning?
- Has process drama been used in professional ethics education?

**Personal Context – Myself as Researcher**

My interest in this research question and empathy for pre-service drama teachers is not surprising given my own professional background. I am a drama educator, having practiced in secondary schools, community, workplace, and higher education contexts. In 2002 I commenced work as a fulltime academic in the University’s Creative Industries Faculty lecturing and tutoring in drama education, drama curriculum, applied performance and process drama. Alongside my teaching and lecturing commitments my practice expanded to create, in collaboration with my colleagues, interactive drama-based professional learning programs for the University’s Human Resources division, as well as other faculties and external bodies such as Queensland Health. This experimentation into the broader applications of educational drama, combined with my personal background and conversations with my students, has informed the scope of this research. This study utilizes practitioner research, action research and case study to explore how educational drama might contribute to professional ethics education for pre-service teachers.

**Professional Ethics and Teaching**

Strike and Ternasky (1993) identify three domains in which ethics can be applied in educational settings:

1. as part of the process of deliberation and reflection on educational policy
2. the domain of moral education
3. the domain of professional ethics.

It is on this third domain that this study concentrates. Professional ethics is a branch of applied ethics and for teachers includes the consideration of issues linked to punishment
and behaviour management, due process in discipline, intellectual freedom, rights and responsibilities, equity and inclusivity, privacy and confidentiality (Beckner, 2004; Strike & Soltis, 2004; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005; Duignan, 2006). In 2007, the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) (1) launched its professional standards requiring teachers “to know and understand their legal and ethical responsibilities”, to value ethical conduct and commit to “enhancing the reputation of the profession” (QCT, 2007, p. 16). To supplement these professional standards the QCT recently released a draft Code of Ethics based on a “framework of ideal” underpinned by the following virtues: integrity, dignity, responsibility, respect, justice and care (QCT, 2008). Despite this focus on ethics in professional standards for teachers, ethics education in teacher education programs in Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America have been neglected (Strike & Ternasky, 1999; Freakley & Burgh, 2000; Campbell, 2003; Reiman, 2004; Carr, 2005; Carr, 2007). Pre-service teachers face a profusion of ethical choices on “almost an hourly basis” (Nash, 1996, p. 64) as they attempt to discover “what it means to be a teacher and what kind of teacher they want to be” (Sinclair, Munns & Woodward, 2005, p. 213). Yet, many teachers carry out their daily work without being fully conscious of the moral and ethical implications of their actions (Campbell, 2004, p. 1).

**Professional Ethics and Drama Teaching**

For drama teachers, professional ethics can be challenging due to the *relational* nature of drama pedagogy (Aitken, Fraser & Price, 2007), and the specific content and purpose of drama education. Key global aims from the Queensland Drama Senior Syllabus require drama students to:

- engage in aesthetic learning experiences and understand the diverse role of dramatic arts workers in cultures past and present
- become adept in using the languages and symbol systems of drama to make and communicate meaning
- symbolically represent the world they live in and deepen their understanding of symbolic representations
- appreciate the complex function and purpose of drama
- recognise the diversity of traditional and present-day technologies and techniques to support their learning
- value the range of social and cultural contexts in which drama is made in Australia and internationally

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1 The Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) is an independent statutory authority. Ten professional standards developed through wide consultation in 2006 outline the knowledge, practice and values teachers require. The standards define professional capabilities, provide a registration benchmark, and serve as the basis for the design of teacher education programs in Queensland.
• engage with, appreciate and value the contribution of Australian drama, including its Indigenous and multicultural drama styles.
(Queensland Studies Authority (2), 2007, p. 3)

Drama educators aim to heighten students’ aesthetic response, a significant component of aesthetic learning and experience, connected to how we perceive and know the world and our relationship to it (Bundy, 2003, p. 180). The drama teacher works with students and the art form to build meaning, as the syllabus rationale describes:

Drama explores and celebrates the human presence within real, imagined and mediatised worlds. It connects students to their own creative processes and provides opportunities for them to imagine themselves as others exploring beliefs, feelings, behaviours and relationships across diverse situations.
(QSA, 2007, p. 1)

School-based curriculum and assessment in Queensland gives teachers freedom to choose relevant material and to pursue students’ interests. This has many positive benefits in terms of student engagement. However, theatre and drama have a long and often radical history. Drama teachers sift through theatrical styles, play texts, and contemporary performance to find ‘suitable’ and ‘appropriate’ material, often guided in their choice by the cultural mores and tolerance levels of the school in which they are situated and the developmental level of their students. Still, drama deals with the human condition or ‘presence’, social issues, celebration and conflict, which students, schools and parents might find confronting or incongruent with their world view. Several recent local incidents illustrate the contentious territory of drama teaching such as: play texts banned by schools and student performances cancelled due to their ‘controversial’ themes. Drama teachers frequently deal with ethical dilemmas related to intellectual freedom, rights and responsibilities, equity and inclusivity, privacy and confidentiality. Conflicting agendas can exist between the expectations of schools and their communities, as well as the purpose and nature of the art form, the power and intensity of aesthetic engagement and the relational aspects of drama pedagogy. For pre – service drama teachers therefore, a knowledge and understanding of professional ethics is crucial in assisting them to effectively navigate this complex educational landscape.

Professional Ethics Education and Process Drama
Just as discourse in ethics and moral philosophy has shifted in response to changing social and cultural forces, the boundaries of professional ethics have expanded. No longer

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2 The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) is a statutory body of the Queensland Government that provides Preparatory Year to Year 12 syllabuses, assessment, reporting, testing, accreditation and certification services for Queensland schools.
purely about knowledge of and adherence to a mandatory code, professional ethics for teachers in particular has broadened to meet the challenges of an ever changing educational environment (Barnett & Hallam, 1999, pp. 138 –139). This has influenced pedagogy in higher education as practitioners search for a more holistic form of learning that may assist pre-professionals to develop cognitive, affective and conative understanding of professional ethics. Ethics educators from a range of professions such as human services (Nickols & Belliston, 2001; McAuliffe & Ferman, 2001), business (Whitehouse & Ingram, 2000), allied health (Keefer & Ashley, 2001; Jensen, 2003; Hill, 2004), and education (Reiman, 2004; Abowitz, 2007) have trialled different approaches. In an effort to develop pre-professionals’ moral reasoning or judgement, moral sensitivity or enhance ethical behaviour practitioners have applied: problem-based learning, simulations, field work and internships, discussion-based experiences, narrative approaches, critical self reflection, case study, and experiential approaches.

Drama educators in schools and other artistic contexts found that process drama offers an aesthetic space to develop a deeper understanding of self and situations, expanding participants’ consciousness and ways of knowing (Bolton, 1979;1984; O’Neill, 1995; Taylor, 1998; Neelands, 2002; Hatton, 2004). Process drama is a complex improvisational group experience that invites participants to create and assume roles, and select and manage symbols in order to create a fictional world exploring human experience. Participants together with the facilitator shape a sequence of episodes, simultaneously assuming the function of audience, performer and playwright, becoming “percipients” in the fictional dramatic context (O’Toole, 1992, p. 148). While process drama is frequently used in primary and secondary classrooms and tertiary settings in Australia and internationally (O’Neill & Lambert, 1990; Taylor, 1998; Wagner, 1999; Bowell & Heap, 2001; O’Toole & Dunne, 2002), there are no documented trials of process drama linked to professional ethics education.

**Thesis Structure**

This thesis takes the reader on the research journey over nine chapters to explore the central question: *Does process drama assist pre-service drama teachers to reflect on professional ethics?*

*Chapter One* introduces the research focus, my personal context as researcher, and the scope of the key research question. Key concepts and existing research in ethics, professional ethics education, moral development, and process drama relevant to this
study are outlined in Chapter Two. Data collection methods are explained in Chapter Three including the study design and theoretical paradigm underpinning the central research question. Chapter Four introduces the study participants and documents the ethical concerns of five pre-service drama teachers prior to the process drama workshops. Chapters Five, Six and Seven describe each process drama from three different perspectives: the practitioner, the participant, and the critical observer. The five participant case studies from Chapter Four are revisited in Chapter Eight; their responses are analysed together with the overall reflection of all participants. This analysis chapter links existing theory to significant themes emerging from the study. The final chapter presents a concise summary of the findings and considers possibilities for further exploration of the key question.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction
This chapter gives an overview of key concepts in ethics, professional ethics, moral development and process drama relevant to this study. Research into professional ethics education in higher education contexts is described and the effectiveness of current teaching and learning approaches considered. The final section of this chapter defines process drama, outlines the learning claims made about this participatory and educational form of drama, and identifies gaps in the research literature.

Ethics
Ethics is complex, because it involves the “study of human conduct” (Rebore, 2001, p. 5). Defining one set of universal, immutable rules or principles that may preside over an ethical life has proven illusive despite the foundational work of Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Kant, Hegel, Hume and many other philosophers (Sterba, 1998; Wringe, 2006, p. 25). Traditionally two main positions, deontological and teleological, have been adopted to explain different conceptual viewpoints on morality, “one concerned primarily with action and its rightness and wrongness and the other with the ends or goals of action and their goodness and badness” (Johnson, 1994, p. 6). One teleological view is the consequentialist approach, often linked to utilitarianism, or ends-based thinking. This theory, derived from the writings of two English philosophers Bentham (1748-1832) and Mill (1806-1873), holds that the rightness of an action can be determined based on consequences and a commitment to the “principle of benefit maximization” (Strike & Soltis, 2004, p. 11). The best decision or choice is the one that results in what is intrinsically valuable or of the most good or the greatest benefit to the most people. Therefore, outcomes or consequences decide the morality of our actions. However, Consequentialism is often criticized because it fails to attend to the needs of the individual and its lack of focus on either short term or long-term results (Duignan, 2006, p. 81; Haynes, 1998, p. 15; Jarvis, 1997). This approach presumes that the greatest good can be discovered independently of any ideological or conceptual structure. Critics have rejected consequentialism because they believe we cannot always predict the outcomes of our actions, therefore the end is often unknown and uncertain. Therefore, the morality of an act cannot rely on its repercussions.
Deontological, non-consequentialist theories, also described as a duty-bound ethic, require the application of human rationality and the same principle or moral law, universally. For example, if stealing is wrong for me, than it is wrong for everyone, therefore ‘do not steal’ becomes a compulsory rule or ‘categorical imperative’. Kant (1724-1804) described his imperative as, “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law” (Kant, 1993, p. 30). Kant believed it was our duty to follow this golden rule and apply equal respect for all. This involves treating others as ends rather than means by considering their welfare rather than our own gain, and considering that all people are free, rational and responsible moral agents, therefore all deserving of equal treatment and opportunity no matter what our interests or ability (Strike & Soltis, 2004, pp. 15-16).

While there are many ethical theories, of relevance to this particular study is contemporary thinking on ethics and the impact of “the state of modernity, post modernity and the philosophical forces currently at play” (Jarvis, 1997, p. 29). The most important feature of post-modern ethics is the belief that universally shared moral values and objective moral truths do not exist, and that many theories of the world are constructed representations (Haynes, 1998, p. 148). Scholars have dismissed traditional universalistic ethics for rigidly separating morality from personal interest (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Tronto, 1993, p. 27). Instead feminist thinkers developed an alternative ethics framework based on the “ethic of care” which rejects Kant’s deontological autonomous, impartial ethics of duty and the image of the cool detached and rational decision maker (Nodding, 1984). An ethic of care concentrates on communication, responsibility, receptivity and responsiveness (Nodding, 1984, pp. 1-5). The ethic of care has gained traction in the service professions such as health and education due to its focus on creative practice and contextualized ethical decisions (Duignan, 2006, p. 80; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 74). Sevenhuijsen (1998) explains how an ethic of care can be distinguished from a universal ethic in four ways: “it is concerned with responsibilities and relationships rather than rules and rights; it is bound to concrete situations rather than being formal and abstract; it is moral activity rather than a set of principles to be followed”; and finally the ethical subject is positioned differently in that the moral agent must remain situated, embedded in concrete relationships, making decisions on action based on specific circumstances (cited in Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 75).
Professional Ethics for Teachers in Schools

It is difficult to ignore the centrality of ethical behaviour in teachers’ work, the importance of relationships and the larger moral purpose driving education (Brock, 1998, p. 1; Hostetler, 1997, pp. 195-196). A professional ethic for teachers must fit the nature and purpose of their work which is primarily relational, “because a teacher teaches something to someone, is in dialogue with someone and is responsible for someone” (Totterdell, 2000, p. 133, emphasis in original). A growing body of research internationally and in Australia concludes that the quality of teachers has a direct impact on student achievement and learning (Ramsey, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Rowe, 2003; McCormack, Gore & Thomas, 2006). While it is difficult to provide a single list of competencies, research indicates that quality or “expert” teachers are knowledgeable, understand how students’ learn, are well prepared, challenge students, are capable, passionate, highly aware of contextual influences, and interact with students and the school community in a respectful way (Hattie, 2003).

- Codes of Ethics and Professional Standards

In a bid to define ‘quality’ and provide a framework for practice, professional standards have been adopted as a “policy mechanism” (Mayer, Mitchell, Macdonald & Bell, 2005, p. 160), providing guidelines that define the profession, provide legal protection, and clarity about acceptable moral conduct (Lovat, 1998, p. 6; Preston, 2001; Duignan, 2006). However, standards or codes have been criticized when they are: adopted as a status symbol; used to cover any misconduct contingency; sold as immutable “holy writ”; or diminish personal responsibility by undermining the capacity for an autonomous and reflective ethical response (Preston 2001, p. 218-219). Other writers have questioned if knowledge of codes or standards means that the individual will act ethically or assist in the recognition of an ethical dilemma (Strike & Soltis, 2004, p. 1; Carr, 2005; Carter, 1998, p. 1; Keefer & Ashley, 2001, p. 378). An ethical framework defined by a totality of rules, norms and principles encourages active technical practice but divests individual responsibility, discouraging active ethical practice (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 69, my emphasis).

Lyon’s research describes the “dilemmas of teaching”, how the intricate web of a teacher’s work relates to both ethical and epistemological issues, how a teacher’s stance towards knowledge, assumptions about knowledge and ethical values are central to their
professional life. Lyons describes the real-life and specific ethical dilemmas teachers
encounter as “practical conflicts” that:

…involve the self, usually include the teacher’s relationship with students, and are
considered ongoing or recurring. They demand deliberation, attention to detail and
new kinds of creative resolutions, ones that attend to all elements and people
involved.
(1990, p. 168)

Ethical dilemmas faced by teachers therefore, cannot be solved purely with the
application of a mandated professional standards or codes. The scope of professional
ethics has expanded as “post modernity offers the possibility to re-personalize ethics and
assume the responsibility which comes from facing and making choices, rather than
following universal codes or laws” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005 , p. 70). Increasingly
teacher educators now advocate for the development of pre-service teachers’ moral
agency and character.

- **Moral Agency**
  Totterdell calls for a professional ethic for teaching that is driven by moral purpose,
which promotes a baseline of comparative standards of ethical conduct, integrity and
encourages moral agency (2000, p. 137). A moral agent is aware of external influences
but functions autonomously, knows the difference between right and wrong, is critically
self aware and mindful of their conduct, and has the capacity to apply this knowledge in
all of their professional relationships, their decision-making and their personal life
(Cooper, 2003, p. 199; p. 46). Similarly, Sockett, equates the moral teacher with the
professional teacher and defines moral agency as the state in which “a person considers
the interests of others, does not make discriminations on irrelevant grounds and has a
platform of principles or virtues which he or she believes and on which he or she acts”

- **Moral Character and Virtues**
  Current discourse linked to professional ethics for teachers particularly focuses on the
significance of virtue ethics, moral character and the development of practical wisdom
(Campbell, 2003; Hill, 2004; Carr, 2005; Cooper, 2003; Carr, 2007). According to
Aristotle, the search to be a virtuous person of good character involves the application of
two types of virtues, the moral and the intellectual (1980). Moral virtues include
truthfulness and justice, liberality, pride, good temper, courage and temperance, or “an absence of extremes” (Haynes, 1998, p. 150).

Brock (1998) and Carr (2007), echoing the ideas of Aristotle (1980, p. 139), argue for phronesis or practical wisdom for teachers, a space for the teacher to apply situationally sensitive judgment combined with virtuous character and not just obedience to a rule or a system. A virtue approach to professional ethics invites teachers to “incorporate their developing professional selves into each successive ethical decision” (Hill, 2004, p. 145). The teacher takes personal responsibility, examines their intent behind each action and experiences moral freedom or agency as they reflect on their own answer to the central question of virtue ethics “what kind of person should I be?” (Cohen, 2004, p. 49).

Campbell in her book The Ethical Teacher rejects idealized codes and instead claims ethical knowledge as central to teachers’ professionalism. Ethical knowledge for Campbell involves two aspects: firstly being aware of the morals a teacher may be encouraging students to adopt and secondly, an awareness of how the teacher is aspiring to model ethical conduct (2003, p. 115). Therefore, the manner and style of the teacher are critical in how the teacher “expresses in actions” their virtues, values and commitments (Chubbuck, Burant & Whipp, 2007, p. 109). Similarly, Hansen (2001) calls this “moral sensibility” an attentiveness or orientation that influences the “way a teacher thinks and acts” (p. 33, emphasis in original), a particular unifying way of seeing both attitudes towards students and the profession “reflected in both thought and emotion” (Chubbuck et al., 2007, p. 110). Carr describes a similar concept, the “virtuous agent”, guided in their action by both principled judgement and motivated by emotion or the affective (2007, p. 376).

Moral strength and integrity can grow and develop through a continuing narrative of choices however feeling and intuition are central to the formation of moral character (Nash, 1996, pp. 61-62). Carr agrees with these interconnected aspects of professional ethics and the need to attend to the affective:

…the compelling appeal of virtue ethics is that it shows precisely how the often distinguished and separated cognitive, affective, social and motivational aspects of moral life may be coherently re-connected. On the one hand, unlike many other cognitivist accounts, virtue ethics recognises the relative impotence of abstract ethical principles and the need to root moral agency in motivationally effective states of emotion and affect. (2007, p. 378)
Nash offers a useful synopsis of the five dimensions of moral character as: the aggregate of moral characteristics that distinguish one person from another; the practice of certain virtues and avoidance of vices; the complex amalgam of intention, thought, action, disposition, intuition, and feeling; formed in communities with their defining personal, historical, political, cultural and professional settings and structures; and lastly how it is nourished by the appropriation of normative stories with their unique moral vocabularies (Nash, 1996, pp. 61-62). Schools present their own unique structures, workplace cultures and normative stories that impact upon the beginning teacher’s formation of moral character. Many professionals want to live authentic, continuous lives “where their professional lives are co-existent with the personal” however this is not always possible when professionals are confronted with norms, structural differences, values, skills, and rewards transmitted in the workplace (Nash, 1996, p. 85).

In summary, several writers in this field (Nash, 1996; Campbell, 2000; Cooper, 2003; Hill, 2004; Carr, 2007) advocate for a supplementary professional ethic for teachers that includes: a knowledge of and adherence to an agreed moral code or agreed professional principles often present in professional standard statements; the development of moral agency; and moral character supported by a platform of personal virtues. It is interesting to note that the QCT Professional Standards for Teachers (2007) and QCT Code of Ethics (2008) have also embraced this supplementary view of professional ethics, including a dual emphasis on shared principles and moral character by specifically outlining the personal commitment and virtues required by teachers.

**Professional Ethics Education in Higher Education**

The first literature search for this study was conducted in 2005 and a second level review completed in 2007. Key journals, library catalogues, data bases and the web were reviewed using the key search term professional ethic/s combined with each of the following: ethics education, professional training, ethical inquiry, moral reasoning, affective, cognitive, aesthetic, pedagogy, character education, virtue ethic, teacher education, process drama, ethical dilemmas, and moral education. The search was limited to studies that had occurred from 1995 - 2007 and uncovered nineteen specific reports focusing on pedagogy (3). The literature scan also uncovered several key texts

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3 The term pedagogy in this study is used to describe forms of instruction, teaching methods or teaching styles defined as “any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another” (Watkins & Mortimore, 1999, p. 11) or “the principles, practice or science of teaching” (Hallam & Ireson, 1999, p. 71).
documenting approaches to ethics pedagogy particularly for human service and education pre-professionals. This material was analysed to ascertain how the practitioner defined professional ethics, desired learning objectives, specific learning and teaching methods, and the effectiveness of these approaches.

- **The Aims of Professional Ethics Education**

Teaching and learning approaches adopted by professional educators in medicine (Mann, 2006), psychology (Nickols & Belliston, 2001), business (Whitehouse & Ingram, 2000; Griseri, 2002), pharmacy (Angel & Simpson, 2007), accounting (Armstrong & Owsen, 2003), allied health (Keefer & Ashley, 2001; Bebeau, 2002; Jensen, 2003; Elkin, 2004; Hill, 2004), human services (Nash, 1996; Cooper, 2003), and education (Reiman, 2004; Abowitz, 2007) demonstrate a learner centred orientation, a constructivist approach and attempt to build a shared understanding of professional ethics with their students. However, not all practitioners agree on what professional ethics education should entail. Current practice aims to achieve a range of learning outcomes for students such as improving: ethical sensitivity or empathy, knowledge of codes or standards or moral theories, ethical judgement or reasoning, moral decision-making, consciousness and ethical willpower, or perception or reflective powers (McAuliffe & Ferman, 2001; Davidson, Garton & Joyce, 2003; Elkin, 2004; Hill, 2004; Abowitz, 2007).

Approaches to professional ethics education can be determined by where the authority or basis for decision-making rests. In some learning contexts the theory or principle “is applied to the situation in a way that is ‘outside-in’; that is, it comes from the ‘outside’; the theory is imposed from without- for example, objective rules, duty, rights, or constraints of utility” (Cohen, 2004, p. 49). Specific learning objectives with an ‘outside-in’ approach concentrate on the development of a more “sophisticated background understanding of the purpose of principles and rules and the way they ought to be interpreted” (Cooper, 2003, p. 40). Whereas a virtue ethic approach applies the basis for authority from the ‘inside-out’, moral behaviour flows from a person’s character (Cohen, 2004, p. 49). An ‘inside-out’ approach aims to produce autonomous moral agents with internalized and personalized ethical principles, and “lingering moral memories” (Nash, 1996, p. 60) that they will apply as habit “even when no one is watching” (Coles, 1989, p. 198). Some pre-professional educators believe that both orientations have merit and ethics education “should prepare them to tolerate the ambiguity and uncertainty that are
inevitable in practice” (Elkin, 2004, p. 2). This belief links to earlier research conducted by Donald Schön and his support for an approach to professional education that develops professional artistry rather than technical rationality (1987). Professional artistry or the “competence by which practitioners actually handle indeterminate zones of practice”, in unique, uncertain and conflicting situations, became the focus of Schön’s research and prompted the exploration for a more appropriate form of professional education based on reflective practice (Schön, 1987, p. 22).

Learning to be Moral
Professional ethics education overlaps with theories connected to human moral development, identity formation, social psychology and adult moral education. Morality is learnt in communal relationships through our contact with significant others and significant encounters (Preston, 2001, p. 212). All learning comes from experience, either primary or secondary mediated experience (Jarvis & Parker, 2005). As babies we learn through primary experience, pre-consciously through the body what it means to be loved and cared for. These early preconscious feelings are the basis for our future feelings about morality (Jarvis, 1997, p. 195). Cooper argues that this body-based understanding is crucial to the future development of symbolic capacities, “The meaning of many ethical terms only become available to us after we have experienced the bodily sensations that serve as experiential foundation for the abstract terms” (2003, p. 9). We can only be gentle for example if we have a body-based understanding of what it is to feel gentleness (Cooper, 2003, p. 9). Research in developmental psychology has demonstrated that it takes time to build our moral understanding (Kholberg, 1981) and that “moral functioning is multi-dimensional” (Reiman, 2004). Berkowitz (1997) identified seven aspects of moral functioning: moral emotion and sensitivity, moral reasoning, moral values, moral character, moral identity, and meta-moral characteristics such as social orientation, self control, compliance and self esteem. While this study cannot explore all aspects of moral functioning in depth, some of these are more frequently applied in professional ethics education. The development of principled moral reasoning in particular has been the central focus of many ethics education courses for pre-professionals.

Principled Moral Reasoning
There is sufficient evidence that ethics education in higher education does impact in a positive way on the development of some aspects of moral functioning and particularly capacities linked to moral reasoning, ethical decision-making and problem-solving for
professionals (Allegretti & Frederick, 1995; Self & Olivarez, 1996; Baldwin & Bunch, 2000; Reiman, 2004). Moral reasoning occurs in the presence of a problematic issue, in an attempt to “bring moral principles and specific judgements into harmony, consistency, or alignment” (Cohen, 2004, p. 25).

The work of Kholberg (Kholberg & Turiel, 1971) lies at the core of this practice in higher education, with his levels of moral reasoning used as both a planning device to inform the development of pedagogy and a tool to measure increased capacity for principled moral judgement for pre-professionals (Bebeau, 2002). Kohlberg’s six stages of moral development build on the earlier work of Piaget and proceed through three levels from concrete thinking, through a conventional level towards a capacity to work with abstract ideas and universal principles. This approach focuses on encouraging pre-professional students to acquire and refine their ability to apply the principle of justice to ethical dilemmas. Researchers claim that teachers who demonstrate principled moral reasoning are more student-centred in their approach, open to other perspectives and viewpoints, more objective, adopt humanistic or democratic views of discipline, view their role as facilitative and maintain better relationships with their students (Chang, 1994). While Kohlberg’s moral development stages have been criticized as being too male specific, too lock step, too culturally biased, or linear, his work has been defended with his theory described as, “the linchpin for studying morality on the inside, and it is the major work on moral judgement” (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau & Thoma, 1999, p. 6). Kohlberg believed that perturbation or conflict is needed for developmental growth to occur to assist individuals to move from one level of moral reasoning to the next. Interventions can cause dissonance, can be painful and promote change when “personal experiences force accommodation of diverse and conflicting viewpoints” (Cummings, Muddux, Maples & Torres-Rivera, 2004, p. 19). Connections exist with other writing about the impact of emotions both positive and negative and the resultant “boundary experience”, discomfort or uncertainty that presents opportunity for personal learning and growth” (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005, p. 420).

**Specific Learning Approaches in Professional Ethics Education**

Specific teaching and learning methods used in professional ethics education tend to fall under the following broad categories: discussion or conversation-based; case study; experiential; or combined approaches.
• Discussion-Based
Discussion-based approaches dominate many ethics education programs which often include ethical decision-making frameworks, moral theory, codes of ethics or professional standards being applied to scenarios. At the heart of this approach lies conversation. Nash takes this a step further and calls this ‘moral conversation’, used as a key dialectical process in his professional ethics course:

…whereby an assortment of ethics texts, languages, and perspectives – representing sometimes opposing and sometimes complementary points of view – are put in respectful confrontation with each other so that a fuller truth may emerge and our own meaning and vocabularies might be enlarged (1996, p. 31).

• Case Study
Case studies are frequently used in professional ethics education (Nickols & Belliston, 2001; Keefer & Ashley, 2001; Nash, 1996). Students are typically required to systematically examine the case study, prescribe actions that the primary moral agent should take and justify their reasoning or judgement based on the ethical framework they are being asked to apply (Davidson et al., 2003, p. 216). Cases aim to present contextualized dilemmas, stimulate doubt, discussion, and encourage students to develop a common language of ethics, with a shared understanding, common reference points, and frameworks for analysis (McAuliffe & Ferman, 2001, p. 3).

Case studies are commonly used to help bridge the gap between theory and practice and have been found to produce greater gains than the didactic lecture method (Davidson et al., 2003, p. 217). Case studies have been less effective when they are oversimplified and uncontextualised, exaggerate the notion that morality is always controversial, are more about poor professional standards, or analysis degenerates into discussion about professional etiquette rather than ethics and moral philosophy (Coope, 1996). Pre-professionals adopt only a limited perspective of moral dilemmas if they are positioned as moral judge or critic in relation to the case study rather exploring the viewpoint of the primary moral agent (Keefer & Ashley, 2001, p. 394). Some practitioners argue that cases need to be compared, analysed, critiqued and linked with other pedagogical approaches such as field placement (McAuliffe & Ferman, 2001, p. 4). Case study is sometimes combined with experiential learning methods such as the “viva defence” which aims to improve communication and critical thinking skills (Davidson et al., 2003, p. 216; Elkin, 2004). Pre-professionals are presented with a case, explain what they would do in response to the dilemma and defend their actions when questioned. Nash found that
professionals gained more from case study analysis if they wrote their own case based on an ethical dilemma they had directly experienced (1996, p. 64).

**Experiential**

Ethics educators have searched for interactive or experiential learning modes to provide pre-professionals with more engaging, affective and cognitive experiences that encourage “thinking for ethical action” (Nickols & Belliston, 2001, p. 5). Experiential approaches include field work or real-life experience obtained through secondments or internships. Many professions are still taught through the apprentice and master model, through observation and the copying of practice (Mann, 2006, p. 147). Ethical issues are discussed with supervisors as they may arise, however the effectiveness of this method has been challenged. These “osmotic” approaches are not extensive, are time limited, include unsuccessful attempts by supervisors to deal with dilemmas based on their own lack of awareness of ethical issues and do not provide clear frameworks that could be applied to future problems (Handelsman, 1986). Pre-professionals can be limited to “apprenticeships of observation” (Grossman, 1989, p. 204). Instead, educators working with pre-service teachers advocate for a “cognitive apprenticeship” that provides opportunity for the modelling of the cognitive and meta-cognitive process of experts, allowing beginning teachers to access the “knowledge in-action” of expert teachers (Ethell, 1997, p. 23).

Other experiential learning modes such as roleplay and interactive performance have been trialled in undergraduate professional ethics education courses (Nestal & Tierney, 2006; Jensen, 2003). Typically, students receive pre-prepared scenarios and re-enact these events or key conversations. Scenarios often link to case studies and aim to engage students with the perspective of the key moral agent or in clinical simulations, with the experiences of the patient (Nestal & Tierney, 2006; Jensen, 2003). Jensen in her study of physical therapy students found that clinical roleplay sessions placed the student at the centre of a “lived experience” and fostered deeper reflection on ethics beyond previous work based on the analysis of a paper cases or media clips (2003, p. 11). Other ethics educators have sought to integrate discussion, case study and experiential teaching and learning approaches in courses for pre-professionals.
- **Combined Approaches**

Some practitioners combine many of the teaching and learning approaches documented above in dedicated semester long ethics courses for professionals (Abowitz, 2007; Cooper, 2003). Nash succinctly summarises his approach developed over twenty-five years of teaching ethics to pre-service teachers and counselling students, when he states: “It is through background beliefs that one can know the good life… it is through virtues or moral goods that one can lead a good life… and it is by rules and principles that one can defend the good life” (1996, p. 166, emphasis in original). Nash integrates discussion, reflective writing and case study to develop pre-professional’s capacity to interweave three moral languages (1996, p. 166). Nash teaches the first language by asking students to explore their personal metaphysical basement or the “zero level of beliefs” that guide them as they make sense of the world (1996, p. 40). Students make this private world public, clarify and write about their foundational beliefs, and describe their own “tacit dimension” (Nash, 1996, p. 37). This centre of subjective thought provides a unique reference point and personal moral vantage point though with ethical conflict can be perceived. The second moral language looks at virtues and moral character, while the third moral language requires students to learn and apply principles related to their profession (Nash, 1996, p. 40). Combined this approach aims to assist professionals to learn “how to reason, feel, intuit, care, philosophize, defend and act in character” (Nash, 1996, p. 162).

Increasingly practitioners have focused on the building of ‘communities of inquiry’ in professional ethics education, ‘learning communities’ in which knowledge is actively constructed (Cooper, 2003; Abowitz, 2007). This shared approach has been defined as a “collective pursuit of knowledge and understanding” that is purposeful and inclusive, a place of shared knowledge, communication of ideas and critical dialogues about those ideas (Watkins & Mortimore, 1999, p. 8). Approaches to ethics education appear to be continually evolving in response to the expanding nature of ethical issues faced by professionals.

**Professional Ethics Education: Future Directions**

Professional ethics education should equip professionals with the skills, knowledge and awareness to face new challenges. Ethics educators support a renewed emphasis on the development of moral sensitivity to assist pre-professionals to identify ethical issues (Hill, 2004) and the importance of developing their skills in sustained, critical reflection.
(Reiman, 2004, p. 147). Mann (2006) advocates for an approach to ethics education that promotes and encourages reflection, including reflection in and on-action as developed in the earlier work of Schön (1987). Other professional educators believe that students need to develop ethical inquiry skills, higher order thinking skills, deep thinking, and particularly critical thinking skills to work ethically (Preston, 2001; Freakley & Burgh, 2000; Newman & Pollnitz, 2001). Mann takes this further and suggests that professionals develop their capacity for critical literacy to read encounters as a text, with each text containing information about roles, power relationships and attitudes (2006, p. 175).

Totterdell believes there is a need to develop a pedagogy to address professional ethics to assist beginning teachers develop a “worthy mode of being – one that requires them to ‘be’ (self identity) as they should want to be (professional image) in any concrete situation or in response to the immediacy of any contingent and specific moment” (2000 p. 137). Similarly, Walkington calls for teacher educators to shift their focus from the functional socialization of pre-service teachers to one that concentrates on developing the long term professional identity of the future teacher through individual mentoring and the promotion of reflective practice (2005, p. 53). Learning to be ethical is a complex, integrated process requiring a range of learning approaches however most ethics educators agree that the capacity for reflection is essential for professionals.

A More Holistic Approach to Professional Ethics Pedagogy

The Four Component Model for ethical behaviour and the development of moral literacy claims that four integrated inner psychological processes give rise to outwardly observable behaviour (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma & Bebeau, 2000). These include:

- **Moral sensitivity**: interpreting the situation, considering how different actions would affect others involved, imagining cause and effect chains of events and being aware there is a moral problem

- **Moral judgement**: judging which action would be most justifiable in a moral sense

- **Moral motivation and identity formation**: the degree of commitment to taking the moral course of action, valuing moral values over other values and taking personal responsibility for mutual outcomes

- **Moral character**: persisting in a moral task, having courage and resilience to carry through.

Three of these components link to affective dimensions of professional ethics such as moral character, agency or motivation, sensitivity and virtue. Both cognitive and affective learning are required to develop an individual’s moral literacy, yet, there are very few
studies across a range of disciplines documenting attempts to address the affective aspects of professional ethics education (Griseri, 2005; Geijsel & Meijers, 2005; Carr, 2007). Most pedagogical practice in higher education concentrates on one dimension of moral literacy, the development of the capacity for moral reasoning or judgement (Bebeau, 2002; McAuliffe & Ferman, 2001; Cummings et al., 2004; Reiman, 2004). Teaching and learning methods are predominately based in reading, discussion, case study analysis, conversation and debate. Few ethics educators consider how “hot cognition” (Callaghan cited in Nash, 1996, p. 70), the combination of feeling, intuition and emotion, unconscious reasoning, motivation and character, contribute to ethical decision-making of professionals (Griseri, 2002, p. 386; Mann, 2006, p. 420). Professional educators have yet to explore “whole-person learning strategies that fully engage the learner” (Yorks & Kasl, 2002, p. 176)

Drama and Aesthetic Engagement
Courtney defines four closely related modes of human thought that overlap and mingle to create whole thought: cognitive, affective, psychomotor and aesthetic (1995, p. 13). Cognitive thought ranges from the acquisition of knowledge, to classification, application and synthesis. We emphasize this mode when we think in specific items or facts and in abstractions like beauty and morality, or with a specified logic. Affective thought includes emotions and moods while psychomotor thought extends from muscular or motor skills to those requiring neuro-muscular co-ordination. Aesthetic thought is based on feeling, “We emphasize this mode when we imagine, choose, judge, distinguish what we like from what we appreciate, and use intuition, insights and hunches” (Courtney, Booth & Martin-Smith, 1988, p. 13).

There has been some exploration of aesthetic engagement and experience in the practice of professional ethics pedagogy. Literature, music and visual art have been used to provoke an aesthetic mode of thought, experience and inquiry that aims to “engage students in critical, creative and imaginative searches into moral situations, into their own moral thinking, and into social and cultural contexts that shape who they are and how they live” (Abowitz, 2007 p. 287). Few educators have explored the aesthetic dimensions of drama in professional ethics education. Courtney claims that immersion in dramatic improvisation is holistic for the participant in that it interweaves all four modes of thought and transforms them into dramatic action, symbols and metaphor:
Drama is holistic in its educative effect. As a unity of imaginative thought and dramatic action, it produces positive changes that transform the way we think, the way we learn and feel, and our moral and ethical attitudes, and it can result in a change of consciousness. (Courtney et al., 1988, p. 177).

Drama and theatre have long been perceived as agents of change capable of reflecting images of human behaviour and offering a way of shifting understanding. O’Toole considers that drama is principally about creating models, “models of behaviour and action that can be practiced and performed safely” (2002a, p. 49, emphasis in original). Models of human behaviour can be active, realistic and experienced first hand through participatory forms of drama offering an aesthetic way of knowing through “oral, kinaesthetic, visual and aural dimensions, and sign systems” (Queensland Studies Authority, 2007, p. 1). Process drama is one form of educational drama that aims to combine dramatic elements and conventions to provide a cognitive, affective, kinaesthetic and aesthetic experience for the participant.
Process Drama

Process drama combines the spontaneous and investigative aspects of drama, drawing upon the metaphor and symbols of ritual, theatre and performance to shape an artistic experience “through negotiated processes which the participants control” (Haseman, 1991, p. 19). This interactive improvisational form immerses the participants in a fictional ‘as if’ context. Other drama-based approaches such as roleplay are frequently used in communication courses and other workplace training (Cotton, 1996; Begley, 1998; George, Schwager & Canavan, 2000; Dawson, 2001; Chetwynd, 2002; Dean & Fornaciari, 2002; Boylan, 2006). However, process drama, unlike roleplay often used in training contexts, “evokes an artistic response from participants” (Haseman, 1991, p. 19). The creative practice of drama educators such as Bolton (1979), Heathcote (documented in Wagner 1999), and later practitioners Burgess and Gaudrey (1985), Haseman (1991), O’Toole (1992), Taylor (1998), Neelands (2000), Bowell and Heap (2001; 2005), O’Neill (1995, see Taylor & Warner, 2006), have contributed to the current form and structural components of process drama. O’Neill describes process drama as an improvisational activity that utilizes the elements of drama such as role, tension, mood, symbol and focus, to explore a fictional dramatic encounter (1995). The drama evolves through separate scenic units which organically link to the exploration of a central question or theme (Taylor, 1995, p. 13). Process dramas are unrepeatable, temporal and may extend from thirty minutes, to two days or beyond, in real or cyber space (Carroll, 2004; Davis, 2006). Simons captures the complexity of process drama in her description from her doctoral study:

In process drama participants develop knowledge using the same meaning–making processes that they use in everyday life: they interpret body language and voice qualities, read emotions, explore subtexts, respond to what they think other people want, manipulate symbols, use a particular values base to make a decision, choose from alternate actions and realise the consequences of the choice. They do so in a fictional world they create together. (2002, p. 25)

Process drama is dependent on several preconditions, firstly, the willingness of the participants to creatively collaborate and secondly, their commitment to enter the fiction and ‘suspend their disbelief’. Another critical element is the creative and artistic function of the facilitator who operates as playwright, director, actor and teacher, an enabler of both the art form and the “meaning generated through it” (Bowell & Heap, 2005, p. 60). It is the facilitator who determines the initial frame of the drama or launches the “pre-text”, suggesting time, place, roles and future tension, creating an arc from which relationships to the dramatic action can emanate (O’Neill, 1995, p. 22). The facilitator
proactively weaves the units of action, selecting dramatic conventions, working with the participants both inside and out of the action (Taylor, 1995, p. 13). Despite this initial structure or dramatic framing, process drama remains an “open work” (Eco, 1989; Haseman, 1991), meaning that the outcomes and overall content are not predetermined. The practitioner aims to work artistically rather than technically (O’ Neill, 1995, p. 65, my emphasis) and must be able to “release themselves from their lesson plan” (Taylor, 1995, p. 13, my emphasis). The participants are bound by the fiction but free to explore content, perspectives and issues emerging from their collective improvisation.

**Learning and Process Drama**

Several educational drama theorists and practitioners agree with one of the earliest researchers in this field, Gavin Bolton, and his premise “that change in understanding” is the most significant learning outcome attributed to drama participation (1979, p. 45). More recently Hatton wrote that “drama can provide the aesthetic space for possibilities to emerge through the interplay of divergent voices and offer changes in ways of knowing” (2004, p. 114). Courtney claims that new understandings are possible as “dramatic structures and dynamics operate through the fiduciary contract, by putting ‘ourselves in someone else’s shoes’ and seeing things from another’s point of view” (Courtney et al., 1988, p. 178). Nicholson agrees, believing that drama enables the participant to both identify with the views and feeling of others and simultaneously recognize difference, explore ambiguities or “dramatic situations which are troubling, unfamiliar and unsympathetic” (1999, p. 86). Neelands claims that change and transformation occur during drama experiences, as participants “are asked to imagine themselves ‘differently’, to behave ‘differently’ – to take on roles and characters which take them ‘beyond’ themselves” (2004, p. 50). O’ Neill, similarly states, that stepping into a dramatic world gives the participants the opportunity to “slip the bonds of our identities and participate in other forms of existence” and that when they return across the threshold of fiction back to reality they will be “changed in some way” (1995, p. 151). Research conducted by Morgan and Saxton found that process drama offered a potent means to generate deep understanding, an affinity for creative complexity, and an aesthetic space for participants to become reflective thinkers-in-action, “who will understand the complexities of working co-operatively and collaboratively” (1996, p. 234).
More recently research into the efficacy of process drama in primary schools revealed that learning in and through process drama is dependent on the effective management of relationships. Aitken, Fraser and Price (2007) researched the complex constellation of relationships that exist within the process drama encounter, finding that “concerns with embodiment, use of space, passion, emotion, empathy, and modelling that are core to relational pedagogy, have also long been central to teaching in drama” (p. 2). These findings highlight the importance of the relationship between the facilitator and the participants and the significance of care, passion and empathy demonstrated by the teacher for students (Aitken et al., 2007, p. 2). Bundy’s research supports these findings that the process drama facilitator must establish and sustain trust for the participants to aesthetically engage:

Once trust is achieved, it has a multiplying effect. The more participants trust the work and their individual responses, the more open and honest they become which in turn enhances their trust in the work and in other members of the group. This results in increased perceptions of dramatic integrity and further openness to engage in the dramatic action. (Bundy, 2003, p. 179)

Other relationships are embodied during the process drama, through the interactions in the actual teaching space. In addition to their relationship with their peers and the facilitator, the participants work in association with the dramatic medium, with the content and contexts of the drama, with the elements of drama, with role and the shifting frames of each episode (Aitken et al., 2007, p. 2). Yet another relationship exists between the fictional “What if” world and the “What is” world (Edminston, 2003). Participants move in and out of the dramatic action, oscillating between action and reflection, making links between the real and the fictional (Aitken et al., 2007, p. 3). This is known as ‘metaxis’. First described by social activist and theatrical practitioner Augusto Boal, metaxis is concerned with the duality of experience for the participant or "the state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different autonomous worlds" (1995, p. 43). O’Toole considers metaxis to be a key tension in participatory forms of drama such as process drama, existing in “the gap” between the real and the fictional context (1992, p. 166). O’Toole points out that, “suspension of the rules of the real context in order to enter the dramatic fiction is never total”, therefore the real location or setting of the drama and prior relationships including the participants’ real status is never truly forgotten and can at times dominate or overtake any other tension created (O’Toole, 1992, p. 166). When metaxis occurs, learning in the dramatic or the fictional context can connect either directly to the content of the drama or to learning in other contexts. O’Connor found that when these permeable membranes between the fictional and the real collapse, moments
of deep reflection can occur (2003, p. 277). The nature of the participant’s relationships
with the facilitator, dramatic world, and the real world impacts upon their engagement
with the process drama and significantly affects their learning outcomes.

The facilitator aims to engage the participants aesthetically. Bundy’s research (2003)
reveals that three key characteristics must be simultaneously present for aesthetic
engagement to occur: animation, connection, and heightened awareness. Animation is a
feeling of stimulation or exhilaration that may occur during or after the drama when the
participants feel the drama had truth or value for them personally, heightening their sense
of self and relationship with the world. Connection involves the participant pondering
ideas or concepts before or during the drama at a metaphoric level (Bundy, 2003, p. 180).
Significant learning can occur in the dialectical thinking that “requires the participants to
respond to the idea that emerges for them as they form an association between the events
of the drama and their real world existence” (Bundy, 2003a, p. 2). Heightened awareness
is demonstrated when participants “cease to focus on the direct action of the drama” and
start to consciously focus on the idea of the drama and how this connects with the greater
social world. Aesthetic engagement does not occur through pure chance but instead can
be planned for. McLean (1996) provides a framework as to how drama educators can
intensify aesthetic engagement through the consideration of form, context, content and
strategies such as co-artistry, use of creative constraints and the importance of “formally
structured” reflection (p. 57).

Process Drama and Professional Ethics Pedagogy
Hatton claims that, “Drama’s potential to deconstruct and reconfigure ways of knowing
and being is now the basis of much recent research in the field of drama in education”
(2004, p. 114). This statement is particularly true in relation to the use of process drama
in primary and secondary education settings in Australia and Internationally (Bowell &
Heap, 2005, p. 60; Andersen, 2004). Process drama has been used for a range of purposes
including; raising students’ awareness of gender stereotypes (Davis, 1998), exploring
issues of reconciliation (Lubbers & Ballin, 2003), teaching dramatic form and concepts
related to attachment and loneliness (Lawson & O’Neill, 2003), developing foreign
language speaking skills and cultural understanding (Kao & O’Neill, 1998; Marschke,
2005) and improving critical literacy skills and understanding of literature (O’Mara,
1999; O’Mara, 2003; O’Mara, 2004; Exley, 2006). Taylor in his book Redcoats and
Patriots (1998) documents the experiences of his primary age social studies class with
process drama. Taylor’s study applies practitioner reflective practice to explore how process drama enhanced learning outcomes for the participants through collaborative artistry, hard work and the power of the art form to “probe human nature” (1998, p. 112). He discovered that the process drama structure, the ownership of the group and the enabling function of the process drama leader could impact upon participant experience (Taylor 1998, pp. 144-152). Of particular interest to this study was research conducted by O’Connor (2003) who completed his doctoral thesis collaborating with mental health practitioners to investigate, how process drama assists people to reflect on their attitudes and behaviours associated with mental illness. O’Connor found that process drama was a powerful and sophisticated pedagogical tool that enabled “refraction” rather than reflection, often illuminating ambiguities and complexities, shining and bending light into new places (2003, p. 277).

A search of the literature using terms linked to moral or ethics education, drama and process drama uncovered some studies. Moral education has been explored in the primary classroom through the use of literary narratives, fairytales, story drama or play texts (Winston, 1998), in secondary classrooms (Basourakos, 1998; 1999) and through Theatre in Education performances in schools (Winston, 2005). However, no research was located during this literature review documenting the application of process drama in the field of professional ethics pedagogy.
Chapter Three: Research Design

Aims of the Study
This study aims to explore pre-service drama teachers’ experience of process drama and how this might assist them to reflect on aspects of professional ethics. The purpose of the study is not to measure or evaluate the success of the process drama or ‘test’ the theories that surround drama education. Instead I am interested in the experiences of the participants. They are key informants and stakeholders contributing to the study through their reflections on their dramatic experience.

The Research Design – An Overview
The research began with my initial observations and informal interactions with pre-service drama teachers in 2004. Next, I conducted a preliminary literature review to help “sharpen the question” and clarify the problem (Yin, 2003, p. 9). I began to think about how the research should be designed and searched for a direct method of investigating the key question:

Does process drama assist pre-service drama teachers to reflect on professional ethics?

My next step was to design and deliver three process drama workshops each exploring ethical dilemmas in a secondary school context. These took place on campus at a major Queensland university. Volunteers for my study were obtained from current students, with whom I no longer had a teaching relationship. They were fourth year students in their final semester with only the education component of their course to complete before moving into their first teaching position in a secondary school. These pre-service drama education students were familiar with the process drama form and highly competent at improvisation.

The pre-text for each process drama emerged from the experiences and concerns of the participants based on information they gave in interviews conducted six weeks prior to the first process drama. The process dramas involved the pre-service drama teachers improvising with me during the workshops to create three different fictional worlds. Each process drama session lasted approximately two and a half hours. The participants discussed the drama in a focus group immediately after each workshop. The process dramas were spread across a six week period, at fortnightly intervals. After each drama
the participants were encouraged to individually write reflections and responses to their experience in an online reflective journal.

**Motivation for the Research**

Any research involving human experience is never truly objective or value free (Kincheloe, 2003). I cannot ignore how my own personal context, values and desires may impact on the research design, selection of methodology and subsequent findings. Consequently, it is important for me to outline my personal position and context in relation to the research. I wish to improve my practice as both a teacher educator and drama practitioner. While I have been leading and designing process dramas for several years, I have not had the opportunity to thoroughly analyse my creative work. I am curious about the reflection that may occur within process drama and its potential value for the pre-service teachers who volunteered to be involved in the study. I hope this experience will be of benefit to them, building their awareness of the moral and ethical dimensions inherent within their future interactions with colleagues, administrators, families, carers and students. Lastly, I am motivated by a broader goal that findings from this study might contribute to the development of more effective pedagogy in professional ethics education.

**Philosophical Paradigm**

The exploratory, broad, open ended question framing this study, aims to elicit understanding and meaning about the participants’ experience through the application of process drama. The key part of this question, “to reflect on”, focuses on the subjective experience of participants. The study therefore needs a philosophical paradigm or world view that supports and provides space for reflection. Resonances exist between this key question and the phenomenological school of philosophy with its emphasis on interpretation and experience (Merriam, 1988; O’Toole, 2006; Creswell, 2003). Developed in the first half of the twentieth century by philosophers Husserl and Heidegger, this disciplinary field is concerned with the study of experience or consciousness. It focuses on the subjective or the first person and how things appear to us in our experience (Schwandt, 2001, p. 150). The very nature of dramatic expression demands that many practitioners of applied drama/theatre and drama education work in the paradigm of phenomenology “based on personal perception and response” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 30). This is communicated and understood through a sensual language – “it is ‘felt’, ‘sensed’, ‘intuited’, ‘realized’ and ‘known’” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 30).
The concept of *Verstehen* (Weber) is central to phenomenology. Adopting this concept requires the researcher to stand in the shoes of the participant, attempt to interpret their feelings and understanding to see the meaning of action from their point of view (Schwandt, 2001, p. 160). What the participants reflect on and how they reflect on professional ethics, taking account of the meanings they attribute through their experience of process drama, is of deep interest to me as the researcher. Adopting this research stance required me to consider the pre-service teachers, not as the object of my observations, but as the subject of the research.

**Research Paradigm**

Applying these tenets of phenomenology, this study requires a research paradigm that values the significance of context, individual perception and construction of meaning. While positivism draws from the observable, scientific, measurable and empirically testable, rational, logical, value free, neutral, detached methods of investigation associated with the natural sciences (Kincheloe, 2003, pp. 71-90), constructivism, rejects this stable, external notion of reality, and maintains that “human thought cannot be meaningfully separated from human feeling and action” (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 49). Pervading this research design, therefore, is the constructivist research paradigm with its “relativistic view of human behaviour, seeing it as inescapably dynamic and shifting, unable to be positively pinned to a spot” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 32). Using a constructivist lens, I have attempted to “understand the multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge” (Robson, 2002, p. 27) and built an interpretation based on both my experience and the reflections of the participants. The research design and analysis integrates the complex dialogue that occurs between my experience, observation, participant data, prior knowledge and pre-existing theory. A clear synchrony exists, between phenomenology, constructivism and the process dramas which lie at the centre of the study and their “aesthetics of interaction and representation… use of multimodal dialogic forms that incorporate aural, oral, visual and kinaesthetic and symbolic modes of ‘conversation’” (Cahill, 2006, p. 62).

**Research Design and Methods**

These underlying paradigms of phenomenology and constructivism influenced my research design or the “specific route to travel” (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002, p. 2). Where we stand in relation to our research and the participants in our research is a key methodological factor. In fact it was my observer-participant positioning which
influenced my choice of methodology (O’Toole, 2006, p. 34). The primary foci of my research question relates to process drama, professional ethics education, and what happens at a personal level for the pre-service drama teachers and for me, as the facilitator. For that reason, my own experience and professional practice cannot be separated from the experiences of the participants. When they reflect, I too reflected on their experience of the process dramas we jointly constructed. O’Connor believes that the practitioner should fully participate, “reflective and human centred activity such as drama needs to generate research which is reflective and humanistic with the teacher actively engaged in the dramatic frame” (2003, p. 101). While there is a focus on interpretation and the participants’ experiences, I collaborated in the action as a practitioner, “engaged in artistic processes and decisions” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 57), entering the improvised fiction or ‘dramatic frame’ with them to engage with the problem of professional ethics education.

The *bricoleur* (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17) is someone who employs the materials at hand and actively constructs their methods from the tools available rather than accepting one single methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 4). Like the bricoleur I used the ‘tools’ at hand, naturally occurring and emerging from the study such as reflective practice, action research and case study. My reflection and actions are intertwined with the experiences of the participants. My “observer-participant positioning” as the researcher (O’Toole, 2006, p. 33), is not at the centre of this study, instead, the participants’ learning and reflection about professional ethics lies at the centre. Therefore this study marries seeking to understand through spirals of action research, with bounded case study, and the experiences of the curious and passionate practitioner.

**Reflective Practice versus Practitioner Research**

A combined interpretive and experiential inquiry approach within reflective practitioner case study is not uncommon in drama education research (O’Mara, 2006; O’Connor, 2003). Reflective practitioner case study is defined as a “personal contextual case study of the research practitioner’s own construction of meaning, purpose and significance of his or her practice” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 57). Reflective practice however, “is not a singular concept” (Bundy, 2006, p. 52). There is ‘reflective practice’ and then there is ‘practitioner research’. This is an important distinction in relation to the design of this study which begins by focusing on a specific issue, and then through a spiralling process of action and reflection, attempts to explore the participants’ experience of the process drama form.
Methods utilized in this inquiry are more aligned with the explanation of practitioner research frequently used in the education discipline (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2005; Macpherson, Brooker, Aspland & Cuskelly, 2004; Goodfellow, 2005), than with the notion of reflective practice described by some applied drama researchers, when “reflective practitioner researchers are concerned with documenting and understanding the tacit and known knowledge base which enables reflection in-action to occur” (Taylor, 1996, p. 28). Common to most definitions of reflective practice, is a more generalised objective for the research and a concentration on the practitioner’s learning. Reflective practitioner research is particularly concerned with Schön’s theories of ‘reflection in-action’ and ‘reflection on-action’ (1983). I made decisions in-action, on my feet during the drama workshops but was unable to document this immediate reflection or decision-making therefore true reflection in-action cannot occur due to the complex dynamic of my own participation. The ephemeral nature of reflecting in-action is difficult, particularly for the drama practitioner who enters the workshop space as both facilitator and participant. Most of my reflection as a practitioner is reflection on-action, after each of the individual workshops. Therefore my study is more closely aligned with definitions of practitioner research, described as “cooperative, collaborative, constructivist, action orientated, evidence based, authentic and participatory and often involves experiential inquiry” (Goodfellow, 2005, p. 48).

**Practitioner Research and Action Research**

Practitioner research has been documented over the last seventy years and aims to provide the opportunity for educators to inform their own practice (Lewin, 1946; Carr & Kemmis, 1986). McWilliams (2004) considers the following research forms to be hybrid versions of practitioner research – local inquiry, industry focused research, action learning, problem-based inquiry and the most common, action research. Action research has been used as a tool for the practitioner to support the concept of learning itself as a research process and research as the basis for teaching (Stenhouse, 1975). Action research is a form of personal inquiry but it is conducted collaboratively involving individuals in relationship to each other working towards agreed goals (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). Collaboration is a key consideration in action research as it essentially involves participants “as the concept of interacting is central to understanding one’s practices” (Creswell, 2005, p. 561).
This study incorporated aspects of action research in the research design moving through the following steps of planning, first action, invention, observation, reflection and re-planning before the spiral begins again (O’Toole, 2006, p. 51). Engaging in this dialectic action research spiral involved me identifying an area of focus, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data, and developing an action plan (Mills, 2003). The initial semi-structured interviews conducted with participants, for example, provided valuable contextual information to develop the pre-text for each process drama. Action research differs from case study in that it is a “deliberate” planned intervention allowing for a “self-consciously focused examination of changing practice” (Freebody, 2003, p. 86). It is situational as it aims to diagnose and solve a problem in a particular context (Burns, 2000, p. 347). This study deliberately aims to address a problem - my students’ perceived lack of understanding of professional ethics - and then to investigate if process drama can offer them a reflective space to enhance their understanding.

As the action researcher I have engaged in a cycle of self reflection to examine my own practices, deliberately reflecting on what I can do to improve, reconstruct and find solutions to practical issues (Creswell, 2005, p. 560). The practitioner can enter the research at any point on the spiral in the iterative and dynamic process (Schmuck, 1997, p. 562) and spirals back and forth in a nonlinear pattern “between reflection about a problem, data collection and action” (Creswell, 2005, p. 561). I acted, reflected on my actions, and modified my practice in light of my learning from one process drama to the next. This approach to research challenges the idea that research is separate from action, that the researcher is isolated from the researched and the control and ownership of knowledge (Freebody, 2003, p. 87). The creative and participatory practice of process drama sitting at the heart of this study links to the aims of action research:

Action research emphasizes the idea of knowledge generation as creative practice that evolves through dialogue. It recognizes knowledge not only as an outcome of cognitive activity, but also as embodied; that is mind and body are not perceived as separate entities but as integrated. Knowledge is arrived at and exists in, feelings and multiple sensory modes. Consequently knowledge exists as much as ‘in here’ as ‘out here’.
(Mc Niff & Whitehead, 2005, p. 17)

Case Study
Action research often incorporates case study technique. O’Toole succinctly describes case study as when we “choose a particular group, person or teaching context in order to investigate a phenomenon we have noticed, or a hypothesis we would like to test” (2006,
In this study the pre-service drama education students are the group in focus. Case study has been defined by several writers (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1998, p. 19; Creswell, 2005, p. 439; Yin, 2003) as occurring when a how or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events; it involves intensive, meaningful, holistic description and analysis of a single unit or bounded system which could be an activity, an event, a process or individual. This study is interpretative and exploratory in that it aims to gain a deeper understanding about the potential of process drama in assisting pre-service teachers to reflect on professional ethics. Therefore the unit of analysis for this study is the three process dramas and the participants’ experience of these events.

This study involving pre-service drama teachers is a “bounded” case study in that it occurs within a defined place and time. Each of the three drama workshops are contained within a fictitious dramatic framework by roles and contexts providing clear framework or boundaries for the improvisation (O’Toole, 2006, p. 46). Together the three process dramas form a collective case study (Creswell, 2005, p. 440) providing further insight into the problem of professional ethics education. In addition to the three process dramas, five other case studies are overlaid. The ‘unit’ for analysis in these five cases are individual participants. These five case studies were selected once all of the data had been collected and were representative of the overall background, experience and reflections of all participants. Analysis of the specific experience of five individuals provides a rich description of the participants’ experience linked to the central research question with its focus on the subject’s reflection.

**Qualitative Research**

Kincheloe argues that we have a better chance of developing rigorous and complex scholarship if we apply the lens of various disciplines and research methods that exist in the humanities, social sciences and pedagogy (2003, p. 249). Bounded case study, collective case study, action research and practitioner research methods are all members of the same qualitative methodological family (Freebody, 2003, p. 88). However, these research approaches have their critics. Some consider that they are analytically light, with reports consisting of little more than “collages or fragments of observations, interviews and documents with commentaries that link each fragment into the ongoing narrative worked up by the researchers” (Freebody, 2003, p. 88). Others have criticized practitioner research as “flabby new humanism…sans theory” (McWilliams, 2004, p. 114), as “little more than picturesque journeys of self indulgence” (Brooker & Macpherson, 1999, p.
207), or victory stories of celebration, journalism rather than research. Action research may be too “tidy” with its rigid description of research phases that lack responsiveness, flexibility or may not address the demands of the actual study (Burton & Bartlett, 2005, p. 38). Case study has often been maligned for a number of reasons linked to the concepts of rigour, validity and reliability. Critics point to a “lack of systematic procedures”, that reporting appears to lack objectivity, is biased, that the unit of analysis or focus may be unclear or that the research cannot provide for scientific generalisation (Yin, 2003, p. 105).

Many proponents of qualitative research argue that these positivist criteria such as rigour, reliability and validity do not address the epistemological orientation of interpretive and constructivist research (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002, p. 2). Rigour has become a highly contested notion with its suggestion of stiffness and exactness (O’Toole, 2006, p. 37). Many qualitative and constructivist researchers call for more appropriate and flexible criteria such as credibility, plausibility, resonance and transferability (O’Toole, 2006, p. 37). Qualitative research stresses the validity of multiple meaning structures, “the socially constructed notions of reality”, and “situational constraints” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 8) and holistic analysis as opposed to the “criteria of reliability and the statistical compartmentalization of quantitative research” (Burns, 2000, p. 4). In designing this study I considered the essential characteristics of qualitative research summarised by several writers in this field (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Neuman, 2003). My inquiry and key question are open-ended and exploratory with the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning about process drama and professional ethics education. As the researcher I am involved as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. The research design required me to form an intimate relationship with the subjects. Fieldwork was required to collect data. The process dramas took place on campus in the ‘natural’ setting for pre-service teachers and focused on the interactive process. The research design was collaborative, participatory, inclusive and sensitive to the participants.

**Ethical Clearance**

Full ethical clearance was obtained for this study through the University research centre (Number: 4047H). All of the participants received written documentation about the project, the aims of the research and a list of initial questions for their first semi-
structured interview. The participants completed a written ethical clearance form prior to their first interview which guaranteed that pseudonyms would be used (See Appendix E).

**Crystallization**

Linked to these positivistic criteria of rigour, reliability and validity is the term triangulation, which means “to fix ones’ position from two known bearings” (Burton & Bartlett, 2005, p. 28). However, this term has been rejected by many qualitative researchers due to the notions of “fixed’, incontestable navigation points (O’Toole, 2006, p. 137). The term “crystallization” (Richardson cited in Guba & Lincoln, 2000, p. 5) is more indicative of the way in which qualitative criteria such as credibility, plausibility and resonance are applied in this study. In this study crystallization occurred through the inclusion of a variety of data collection methods and sources of evidence to gain as many different perspectives or angles as possible to investigate the research question. Yin identifies that a good study will use as many data sources as possible as each has inherent weaknesses that when combined complement each other (2003, p. 85). This study overlaid the bounded cases of the three process dramas with the five case studies focusing on the participants’ reflections. Another perspective was added through my personal reflections as practitioner and the documentation of the experience. The structure of each process drama was recorded in a written and audio visual form. Artefacts from the process dramas provided other valuable reflective material and included pre-text materials and written items generated by the participants in role.

Issues around trust, accuracy and detail are significant for the qualitative, constructivist researcher. Truth is constructed through the research, it is not “out there to be discovered”, instead knowledge arises from the dialogue between the researcher and the participants and “the researcher becomes the conduit for giving space to the meaning of the participants’ voices” (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002, p. 7). Ensuring that the participants’ views have been accurately heard, documented, and that all voices have been considered was important to the integrity of the research design. I was mindful of the way power was applied in the study, my relationship with the participants and the representation of their voices in the study. To ensure that the study was responsive to their needs, the participants each completed a 30 – 45 minute interview. These were taped and transcribed and common themes and concerns identified. These semi-structured interviews provided rich contextual data about each of the participants and creative material for the development of the three process drama workshops. These conversations built trust with
the participants, encouraging open dialogue about their future experiences. The participants create a complex and “unique set of social relationships within drama or theatre education”, therefore the, “whole creative sequence needs to be studied” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 46, emphasis in original). The inclusion of a pre-drama conversation provided an opportunity to obtain data on the first component of the creative sequence.

My active observation, participation and playing within the dramatic frame with the participants, brought me closer to the data. While concerns about proximity and potential bias are mentioned by critics of qualitative research, this closeness gave me greater insight into the phenomena. There are many positives that this presents to practitioner research. I was part of the group, I knew them well, they felt safe and comfortable and I was just as exposed to the form as they were. As this study is interested particularly in the experiences of the participants, direct contact was crucial to the study. O’Toole states it is the participants who can provide the “most directly authentic data, particularly about their behaviour, feelings, attitudes and thoughts during fieldwork” (2006, p. 107). I sought to maintain a balance in the study between group data collection methods, and individual perception and meaning making. I was conscious of allowing space for ‘silent’ voices in large focus group situations to have the opportunity to comment on the experience privately. To address this, participants were invited to complete an individual online written response to specific focus questions a week after each of the dramas.

As an observer/participant, I can’t be neutral or distanced, however there is value in being able to gain some distance from the research. Distance was achieved through a combination of approaches as interviews alone cannot always be accepted as reliable observation of a phenomenon (Freebody, 2003, p. 67). Each process drama was filmed by an impartial third person, a professional camera operator, employed to capture the action and experiences of the participants. This provided another vantage point and opportunity to distance myself from my participant/facilitator role. Time also assisted in the distancing, allowing me to return to all of the data to view the experience with a greater capacity for reflection and analysis.

Data Analysis
I took a poststructuralist view of the term ‘text’, that everything, life experiences, events and relationships and so on is a text (Schwandt, 2001, p. 149). The research ‘text’ in this inquiry includes the dramatic workshops, their construction and the conversations and
data that were generated in relation to this phenomenon. I attempted to conduct “a reading” of the whole text. To do this I needed to get inside the text, to collect all of the text, to systematically organize it and look at the many meanings or perspectives embedded (Neuman, 2003, p. 76). I began this process by looking at the whole text, then parts of the text and then looked again, to delve below the surface to discover how emerging themes might relate to each other.

Analysis of the data began with the pre-drama interviews conducted with each participant. With each iteration of the action plan, data was generated. Interview transcripts, video documentation and artefacts provided a rich, thick, textured and complex text to unravel before weaving these threads back together again. Freebody warns that the family of research including case study and action research are “empirically omnivorous” and that in developing findings the researcher must avoid a collage but instead go the next step and apply rigorous analysis to avoid description (2003, p. 89). Again the term crystallization provided direction for me as a researcher. I was mindful that a “true crystal shows its impurities in its areas of cloudiness and seams and fault lines of alien compounds that run through it” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 148). In reporting the research I avoided telling a victory narrative, but instead mined the data, read between the lines and looked for impurities and fault lines to help illuminate the study. This is often termed as negative data or the data that is significantly absent (Neuman, 2003, p. 457), data that seems to contradict or challenge other interpretations.

It is easy to be seduced into discovering what I expect to find, whereas credible research listens to the “other” and to “the data”. Using my key question as a guide I open coded all of the data using computer software Envivo 7, looking for patterns, themes and contradictions. Key themes emerged and using the process of thematic analysis these were grouped and categorized to develop new understandings and theory from the data. Therefore my study uses a grounded approach to data analysis. “Grounded Theory” is a theory induced from the data through systematic data collection and constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Cutcliffe, 2000). While pre-existing theory and my first literature review sensitized me as a researcher to orientating questions that needed to be examined during the research, the concept of ‘resonance’ linked the “data together and outside the project by finding echoes of commonality and convergence with other texts, and with other contexts beyond the project” (O’Toole, 2006, p. 37). In chapter eight, key themes emerging from the case studies, practitioner research and action research spirals,
were analysed in light of pre-existing theory linked to professional ethics education and process drama. I have attempted to “dance the data”; the participants’ reflections and my practitioner observations “are repeatedly interwoven until a sophisticated understanding is developed” (Ezzy, 2002, p. 25). This final synthesis informs the findings for this study.
Chapter Four: The Participants

“Maths teachers don’t get hugs”

Eighteen pre-service drama teachers - four males and fourteen females - volunteered to participate in this study. Most were enrolled in the four year double degree in education and drama and all were hoping to work in Queensland secondary schools after graduation. One was completing a postgraduate diploma in education with a focus on drama teaching. Sixteen were full-time students and two were part-time. The participants ranged from twenty to twenty-eight years of age. Twelve had graduated from high school and came directly into the degree, two had completed an undergraduate degree, and four had travelled or worked before coming to university. (See Appendix F for a complete list of participants and their attendance)

The participants met with me on campus, from mid to late June in 2005 for a semi-structured interview prior to the process drama workshops. Eighteen is a large sample; therefore I selected five participants as case studies to allow for a closer analysis of their experience. These five cases were selected after all of the data had been collected and all participants’ reflections analysed. They represent the diversity of the group and the range of different viewpoints on the process drama experience. They are also representative of the age, gender and background mix of all participants. Chapter Four introduces Leigh, Phillip, Maree, Zoe and Megan in greater depth before summarizing the emergent themes of all of the interviews. Drawing upon the dialogue documented in interview transcripts, this section uses the pre-service teachers’ own words to provide a fuller description of their teaching expectations and concerns about professional ethics. For the purpose of distinguishing one speaker from the other, “I” below indicates questions or statements I made as interviewer and “R” means respondent. All real names used in the transcripts have been deleted or replaced with pseudonyms.
Participant Case Study One: Leigh

Leigh was twenty-three years of age at the time of our interview. After an unsuccessful first semester as a school leaver, she had travelled and worked overseas for two years before re-enrolling in the drama teaching degree. Surrounded by teachers in her family for most of her childhood she had “education on the brain” (Leigh Interview, 16 June 2005a, l. 24). This combined with her “dramatic inclinations” (Ibid. l. 25), led to her studying drama education. She saw drama teaching as a more stable profession than acting and therefore more aligned with her family’s career expectations:

I: So was drama a strong subject area for you as a student when you were at school?
R: Yes, yes. From about grade 10 I knew that this was the course I wanted to do at uni. But the other option was just to pursue straight theatre studies.
I: Okay, and why didn’t you go down that angle?
R: There were a couple of things, one was the family thing and the fact that my parents probably would have killed me if I had tried… (Ibid. l. 27-31)

Throughout the interview she questioned her own professional boundaries, described the problem of being close to her students in age and how she had experimented with her levels of self disclosure over her last two school placements:

My first high school prac I was freaking out because there wasn’t that much age difference between me and the grade 12s and I was going out with a younger guy at the time and he had only just graduated from high school himself and I’m thinking, this is weird! And I was going, how do you make sure that you’re the one in charge and that you’re not there like, talking to them on a social scene because they’re going you know, I went to this party on the weekend and I’m like hey, me too! Oh, wait, I did go to a party but I don’t need to tell you about it. But the first prac was actually easier to establish a line between friendship and professional because the kids were very different from me, from a completely different way of life so I didn’t relate to them on a friendship level. I was just… a teacher to them and they didn’t want to get to know me on a personal level, most of them. But the problem with that one was that most of them worked at a local shopping centre. So I would run into them at the shops and walking down in my daggiest and go, ooh, hello, you didn’t see me just walk out of the bottle shop with a bottle of rum. Like… laugh, I was just like this is really bad, there’s no escape… (Ibid. l. 120 – 131).

Leigh questioned where personal and professional lives should start and finish. Another theme linked to disclosure emerged during Leigh’s interview regarding degrees of honesty. She wondered how honest she could be with parents regarding their child’s conduct and level of achievement. She valued honesty and saw this as a virtue linked to being professional but was grappling with how honest a teacher could be or why other staff may be dishonest with school administration:

R: … she’d give them cigarettes… I was talking to her early on in the prac about one of the students who had come from a very poor background that he was a
regular smoker and I was like, oh I don’t even know how he affords cigarettes and she was like, well sometimes I do give him some because he is short on money. Gosh!

I: A teacher aide?
R: It’s a teacher aide.
I: Did the admin know about it?
R: Um… she… she worked almost exclusively for my supervising teacher who relied on her for everything and wouldn’t hear a bad word about her um… and this supervising teacher was a very powerful influence within the school so no one wanted to upset her. And a few of the other teachers at the school knew about this but didn’t want to say anything for fear of upsetting the other teacher.

( Ibid. l. 247 – 261)

Leigh identified power relationships in the school and how these influenced staff actions. She questioned the morality and legality of what she had observed and simultaneously projected herself into the situation, wondering what she would do. She believed that she lacked the assertiveness to take action as her opinion doesn’t matter (Ibid. l. 178), and at this stage she was more concerned with fitting in and establishing positive relationships with staff and students. She didn’t want to be perceived by her secondary students as aloof and instead wanted to be identified as a “cool teacher” (Ibid. l. 153). She wanted to connect with the students and engage them in learning and drama believing that “if you can get in with one, you’re in with the lot of them” (Ibid. l. 152).

Participant Case Study Two: Phillip

Phillip twenty-one years old at the time of our interview had enrolled in university directly from school. He spoke passionately about his future desire to give time to his students (Phillip Interview, 29 June 2005a). To counteract his own negative experiences at school, he wanted to make a difference, to be a better teacher and “give back” (Ibid. l. 12). Phillip described how stressful the school context could be; new students, constantly changing classes and shifting group dynamics, coupled with conflict between staff, often resulted in teachers having “nervous breakdowns” (Ibid. l. 205).

At Phillip’s school, extracurricular events had left his supervising teacher tired with little time for guidance or supervision. Phillip welcomed this accidental chance for more responsibility and the opportunity to test his organisational skills. During his interview he was critical of his lack of behaviour management strategies and described his negative experience with a new student due to her reluctance to participate in practical clowning exercises:
I had one student who was a complete pain. She came from a very tough area, this was her first week into [sic] the school, I didn't know that, I assumed she’d been in another class because I have kids coming and going all the time…. [I] don’t know their names … She came into the classroom, very rough, very tough to begin with so I thought okay, this is your approach to the class, you don’t know me, I don’t know you but that’s how you’re going to react, fine. This is clowning. She said, “I’m not going to perform in front of these people”, “I don’t perform in Drama”. So a conversation between her and I erupted about what you have to do and she got quite frustrated with me that she threw a chair at me because I was being volatile towards her. (Ibid. l. 98-107)

Phillip believed that his degree had not equipped him with enough behaviour management strategies to deal with those students who refused to work in class. He questioned how he handled the incident, described what positive strategies he employed once she returned to the class a week later, and analysed the overall effectiveness of discipline procedures of the school. Phillip demonstrated greater concern about discipline including issues linked to compliance, control and respect.

Maintaining positive professional relationships was important to Phillip and he described the tension that existed in one staffroom between teachers. He experienced conflict directly with other staff members during his last practicum when he was accused of spreading gossip about another teacher. He became upset and felt he was having a “nervous breakdown” during a lesson he was supervising. He went to the Deputy Principal’s office seeking support and mediation (Ibid., l. 267-287). His experiences in school were mixed, both negative and positive. Mostly, he was impressed by the loyalty of the staff and their kindness in time of stress:

… where we are at the moment, everyone helps each other no matter what. You know, one of the teachers was having a nervous breakdown, oh sorry, another teacher having a breakdown on a separate day with her year 8 maths class. My supervising teacher sits beside her in the staffroom and she said well I’ve got a spare, you stay here, I’ll take your maths class. So her and I [sic] toddled off to supervise this grade 8 maths class, which this teacher was having a problem with. The teacher having the problem sorted herself out and came to the classroom because every lesson is a double so 35 minute lessons so you have the 70 minute lessons and she came for the second part of the lesson. And we stayed with her for the whole lesson and the next day we both, myself and her [sic] got a box of chocolates each on our desk because we helped her through a tough time and that’s what the staffroom was about. I’ve felt included as a staff member… (Ibid. l. 245-254)

Phillip wanted to feel included as a member of staff despite his pre-service teacher status. He admired those teachers who demonstrated professional behaviour and believed that he
drew predominantly from his commitment to students and personal beliefs to guide his actions during his practicum:

I: … so, do you think your University course has prepared you to deal with moments like that? With a student like that? In that situation?
R: I don’t think… in part the University degree might have, but I think it’s more my approach and my personal belief and value in catering for students, trying to motivate them in as many ways that they can, but more to the point that they have confidence and have self-worth.
(Ibid. l. 140 -143)

Throughout this interview Phillip demonstrated his understanding as to how character and virtues influenced his choices as a beginning teacher. However, he appeared to be grappling with aspects of moral sensitivity or the ability to identify what is ethical in the complex student-teacher interactions he experienced.

**Participant Case Study Three: Zoe**

During her interview, Zoe openly recounted her “bittersweet” practicum experiences and discussed how she had been personally confronted by her contact with staff and students (Zoe Interview, 24 June 2005a, l. 273). Aged twenty-five at the time of the interview, Zoe had completed an undergraduate psychology degree; however it was a critical examination of her own values and beliefs that had brought her to drama education:

> I found psych incredibly fascinating and it’s wonderful to investigate the human mind, I really truly felt that psych was divorced from the actual experience of being human and, but it was so much more focused on biology and statistics and scientific reasoning that it really did um… displace the person from the actual mind so that’s why I thought, no I really need to take a year of soul searching to decide where I’m going to go and what I’m going to do and when I left school originally, I couldn’t decide whether I wanted to be a drama teacher or a psychologist but because I was too afraid to audition because I was a bit chicken then, I ah… thought no, I’ll just be a psychologist and then when I came to that year I thought no, I’m going to be a drama teacher. (Ibid. l. 27-34)

Her explanation of drama’s value in schools linked to her own experiences of drama. Her understanding of how drama assisted her in identity formation and the expansion of her world view was evident in her teaching practice during her first practicum. Her supervising teacher was absent and Zoe was asked to take a senior drama class she had never met, for a double lesson. She chose to run a process drama exploring terrorism. She described what happened during the lesson and post-drama reflection:

> .. Some of them [Year 12 Students] were crying and we had a really long de-brief afterwards, we actually ended up taking up the whole of lunchtime with a de-brief um… laugh. And it was really good because I saw some of those kids who didn’t know, from the first few minutes of just interacting with them, knew who the cool
kids were. Knew who had their little facades up, because everybody does. But they
had really come to a point where they were reflecting on life from the perspective of
a Muslim woman who had just taken them as hostages, but they were very
reflective. I was shocked at the amount of reflection that they, the level that they
were able to achieve. (Ibid. l. 239-245)

Zoe believed drama education offers a way to connect and engage students in deeper
learning yet, realised that the material was risky, controversial, hard hitting and impacted
on the emotional state of the students. In another section of her interview Zoe questioned
how teachers and particularly drama teachers are positioned to build stronger relational
bonds with students and the boundary issues this raised for her. She explored this aspect
of professional ethics during her interview:

R: Well there’s a point at which you go, is this substantive conversation or is this
violating the student? Right? Um… I had one instance, this is why I learnt to
really define it, which was good. I had one instance where um… a student was
telling me about their father that was in jail for um… raping the mother.
I: Was he telling you during the class?
R: Just outside of the class. But I wanted to stop him from continuing because it
was such a huge disclosure and I didn’t want him then to feel vulnerable
around me and shut off from anything that we were doing in class because he
felt like I knew too much about him. So um… and then the student burst into
tears um… not because I said don’t talk, I didn’t say it like that, I just… well
he burst into tears and I said to him, I said would you like to go and speak
with the guidance counsellor and he just looked at me and he said what is the
point of me speaking to her? (Ibid. l. 273-282)

Zoe saw this moment as a significant and important encounter that teachers cannot brush
off under the guise of maintaining “professional” relationships which she perceived as
cold and distant and concerned chiefly with matters of curriculum rather than care (Ibid. l.
112). Zoe refers other students during her prac to her supervising teacher, to the school
nurse and school counsellor. She is confronted by the negative disposition of some of the
other staff and believed they were “burnt out” (Ibid. l. 174) but also unprofessional in the
level of care and positive regard they demonstrated. Through her previous youth work
and contact with ‘at risk’ young women, Zoe was sensitive to signs of self harm,
depression and changes in student behaviour. Her psychology degree and youth work
background informed her approach to teaching and ways of relating to students. Zoe was
concerned with defining the boundaries of care and questioned how attached students
should become to their teachers. She mentioned light-heartedly during the interview that
“maths teachers don’t get hugs” (Ibid. l. 263) whereas drama teachers do. These relational
aspects of drama pedagogy presented greater challenges to her emerging sense of
professional identity. As a drama teacher she attempted to define her own boundaries in
her interactions with students and classes:
R: …I’m going to be their teacher so I need to be able to allow them to not be attached to me in an emotional way because that’s unfair to them as much as they might like that and might need an attachment figure, I can’t be that person because I won’t be there. Does that sound too hard?
I: No.
R: So I just, I know that I have the capacity to draw someone into me if I had… decide to orchestrate that which is not something that I can do and it’s not me, I’m not that sort of person but… because I’ve seen other people in Psych do it and I hate that, I think that’s really manipulative. Um… but I recognise that ability and I try and stop students from disclosing too much and then feeling vulnerable and out in the cold because that’s virtually where they are.
I: Yep.
R: … So with the hug, and on the last day, I didn’t worry about hugs because they all just crowded me so I couldn’t resist them so they were like, big group hug and that was lovely, I just didn’t worry. (Ibid. l. 324-335)

Forming and breaking emotional attachments concerned her. In Zoe’s view, the appropriateness and boundaries of physical and emotional contact were not defined in the preparation of pre-service teachers. She was critical of the drama and education double degree and believed that the course had not adequately prepared pre-service teachers for the emotional encounters that can occur with students in crisis:

R: … I found that even in the behaviour management subject which is where I expected ethics to be covered, … they had this tiny little slide about it and that was it. There’s no examples there’s no…
I: Case studies?
R: No - just, nothing. It’s basically, don’t sleep with your students which is common sense which as much as, you know, I always question common sense, we’re not questioning that one, that’s pretty understandable. You don’t have relationships with your students in that kind of way. But it doesn’t address things like how do you stop students from becoming your friend because they love you so much.
(Ibid. l. 256-263)

Participant Case Study Four: Megan

Megan, aged twenty, at the time of our interview had come directly into the drama and education double degree from secondary school (Megan Interview, 27 June 2005a). She was motivated to pursue teaching by her positive leadership experiences as a school cadet and her success in assisting a school friend with learning difficulties. Midway through the interview Megan began to question me and I felt compelled to depart from my interviewer role. I had tried to avoid giving any opinion, influencing the interviewees or leading their thoughts in all interviews. However, Megan questioned me about a statement I had made to her tutorial group a year earlier when I had provoked some debate about the teaching of certain topics in school, and had specifically written a comment on her assessment:
Megan had been asked to develop a process drama for her year nine class during her practicum. Her supervising teacher suggested a drama that looked at issues linked to rape. Instead, Megan decided to develop a drama that looked at suicide, because she believed she had more resources to distance the student’s experience. She described how the drama affected one student:

…One student, Adam, his uncle had died and um… I was doing a reflection thing where they got to write like, in role, saying goodbye to the student like it was, we’d just watched the scene from *Alabrandi* where she ripped up his thing and I’m like, we say goodbye, I want you to say goodbye and I want you to say what this person meant to you and this sort of thing because this person has passed away. Um… and he chose not to because he didn’t, because he felt that he was saying goodbye to his uncle and he didn’t want to do that and I said that’s fine, you know, if you want you can go outside and XXX my pre-service teacher, she went out… my prac teacher went outside and had a chat with him and all that kind of stuff and the next day he brought her chocolates to say thank you and it wasn’t that his mum brought chocolates, he went and brought the chocolates to say thank you to her. (Ibid. l. 345-353)

Adam was emotionally affected by the drama and had to withdraw. Megan saw this as a positive outcome for him, believing the drama had acted as a catalyst for Adam to disclose his grief to a caring adult. Yet, she did not feel equipped to counsel or support this student fully. Had her supervising teacher not been there, she would have referred Adam to the guidance counsellor. Megan’s questioning of my position on dealing with material specifically mentioning suicide in schools prompted me to examine my reasoning further. I tried to explain how my decision to focus on this topic would be influenced by my understanding of the school culture, my knowledge of recent events in students’ lives, my personal risk threshold and my understanding of the debate about effective strategies for suicide prevention among counsellors and psychologists. Megan explained how only four years earlier, her final year twelve monologue had looked at youth suicide. Her teacher and the school administration watching the performance had all been supportive therefore based on her school experience she did not see this topic as problematic.
Megan linked our discussion to another incident that occurred during a university tutorial. She and her university peers believed a drama education tutor had pushed a friend too far by reducing her to tears while exploring themes from the play *Medea*:

We thought I wouldn’t do that. I mean its taking advantage of someone’s for dramatic purposes; I think we all thought it was kind of wrong. Yes, it really benefited the Drama and everyone was really impacted by it and everyone was just like, wow! But at what cost? … I think that was wrong. Um, I wouldn’t push my students that far.

(Ibid. l. 322-327)

The question of how far drama teachers should or do go to emotionally engage their students and for what educational purpose formed one of the major themes of our interview/conversation. Through out her interview Megan reflected on these complex questions of student protection, reasoning with herself and me in an attempt to find a consistent position and determine what appropriate content for secondary drama classrooms might be.

**Participant Case Study Five: Maree**

Maree enrolled in university straight from school and was twenty-two years of age at the time of our interview (Maree Interview, 20 June 2005a). Maree told me about her inspiring school experiences and how this motivated her to help others and to pursue effective relationships with young people through a career in teaching:

I’m Catholic, I was bought up in a Catholic family, XXX is a Catholic school and they were really supportive … they really helped develop those beliefs in a wonderful way and the founder of XXX´ is XXX and she said, “women in time will come to do much” and I believe that strongly, and she said do good and do good well and have strong faith, I have a strong faith and I understand that other people have their own faith but my faith is important to me. (Ibid. l. 41-45)

Through her connection with the church she had worked as a camp counsellor on camps designed to assist ‘at risk’ youth. She drew upon her training and experience in church organised camps and applied this to how she interacted with students in schools. Through her church ‘youth worker’ training she learnt about “Child Protection Policy” and the duty to disclose potential harmful information if a young person confided in her. She found little in her university course that provided her with information about professional ethics, codes of ethics, virtues, moral reasoning or principles and standards and instead drew upon her personal values and faith for guidance.
She valued the relationships she built with staff and students and saw this as key to effective drama teaching stating that without this, learning can be blocked (Ibid. l. 195).

Maree described how she focussed on building rapport with students:

I think because I was new, I wanted to make sure that… I find it hard… with such a small class, if I got up in front of them and they didn’t know who I was, I felt that they would be like, who are you, why are you teaching us, what reason do you have to teach us? You know, that sort of thing. And if I told them who I was and why I was there and then sort of like… help them like… share who I was so they knew who I was and I knew who they were and we could sort of connect on the same sort of, a similar level then I’d get more response and more involvement from them. (Ibid. l. 186-194)

However building relationships with students had sometimes proven problematic for Maree. She described her experiences during an earlier practicum at another school when she believed she was too friendly and disclosed too much personal information and how students exploited this:

I: Would you say that’s different than other prac’s you’ve done?
R: laugh no. Well, the one before that I was at um… XXX at XXX and there I think oh I’ve shared too much of myself because in the first few weeks they started calling me XXX because we were talking about what we had on our senior jersey and I said XXX and the year 12’s started calling me XXX which I didn’t really have a problem with and then they started pushing it and the year 12 coordinator told them to call me Miss XX and they thought that was a joke. (Ibid. l. 202-212)

It was evident throughout her interview that she was exploring the boundaries of her own comfort zone in terms of defining a personal and professional identity appropriate to the culture of a specific school. However her vulnerability was revealed through her concern over the “kitten heel” incident:

I’m a bit of a klutz and um… they, the stupid XXX College ground has these dumb grounds where you trip if you’re wearing kitten heels, it’s awful. Laugh. I did it a few times and I’d trip and I’d look over at the girls and one of my senior girls, year 11 and 12’s would be like I saw that Miss XXX and I’d be like, don’t tell everyone! So they were like, they were nice, they all said hello and I’m not sure whether that’s just the clientele um… but that was nice. (Ibid. l. 198-201)

Maree questioned if she could trust the student who witnessed her fall, if this would change the students’ perception of her, and if she was permitted to be clumsy in this unfamiliar professional context.

Summary of Pre-service Drama Teachers’ Ethical Concerns
In this next section I have deliberately focussed on supporting evidence from all of the participants including the emergent themes of the participant case studies already
documented. Three overall themes emerged from an analysis of their interviews, concerns with issues linked to: professional identity, privacy and confidentiality; respect, acceptance control and power; and lastly equity and inclusiveness.

- **Professional Identity, Privacy and Confidentiality**

Many participants were concerned with the *right thing to do* but equally concerned with the *right way to be*. They questioned how they looked, how they were perceived, if they belonged and if staff and students had accepted them. Linked to this formation of their professional persona was their exploration of boundaries and relationships with staff and students and their quest to find a comfortable level of self disclosure. Age was an issue in several of the interviews particularly for those pre-service teachers who enrolled in university directly from high school (Megan, 2005a; Leigh, 2005a; Michael, 2005a; Cathy, 2005a; Ruth, 2005a). Because of their youth, in many cases only four years older than their students, they felt it was harder to establish clear boundaries, that parents and staff would not respect them and that school students doubted their capacity to teach (Leigh, 2005a; Barbara, 2005a). Several participants mentioned the generation gap existing in staffrooms, how they had little in common with teachers and felt more aligned with their secondary aged students (Jenny, 2005a; Liz, 2005a; Barbara, 2005a). For some participants, privacy about their personal life and particularly their sexual identity concerned them. As a gay male completing his field work in an all boys school Michael was concerned with how he would be accepted, what he could disclose of himself, what students may already know about him in a small city, and how homophobic the school culture may be:

> I had a big problem with the gay thing because I just didn’t want to be treated differently because I am gay and I don’t think it’s an important part of my life like, it’s a part of who I am but it doesn’t really inform who I am and how I operate, it’s just one part of who I am. (Michael Interview, 24 June 2005a, l. 135 - 156)

Many of the participants in the study felt their personal integrity and character had been tested in the school environment. Teachers had often invited them to join in on unprofessional behaviour. The pre-service drama teachers named unprofessional behaviour as: staff who did not care (Zoe, 2005a); teachers complaining about their colleagues (Jenny, 2005a; Michael, 2005a); and poor communication between staff (Cathy, 2005a). Jenny felt that her professionalism and loyalty were tested during her practicum when other staff complained to her about her supervising teacher:
Well, the teacher I was with in my last prac in XXX, she’s lovely, really lovely, got a heart of gold she’s just very um… kind of ‘scattery’ and things like that but um… and she’s, I think she’s 45 or so, so she’s been teaching for a long time and the staff don’t really like her, she kind of, like she just kind of talks a lot to bug them and not many of the students do and I found myself in a really odd spot having staff say stuff to me all the time and students come up and say stuff and even on some of my evaluation things from students they said we don’t like our teacher… I don’t know why they were saying things to me because I mean obviously I’m going to stick by her because she’s my teacher and she’s showing me you know, all these things running in the class and you know, my loyalty is with her but then all the staff are like, join our side.

(Jenny Interview, 23 June 2005a, l. 173-185)

- **Respect, Acceptance, Control and Power**

A second strong theme emerged from these pre-drama interviews related to control, power and classroom management. Several pre-service drama teachers mentioned their concerns about maintaining control and establishing respect with their students (Ruth, 2005a; Leigh, 2005a). They often felt torn between their own loyalties, if they should stay true to their personal beliefs, enforce the policy or rules of the school or question the effectiveness and ethics of forms of discipline used in schools (Phillip, 2005a; Skye, 2005a; Diane, 2005a).
• Equity and Inclusiveness

Ethical challenges linked to equity and inclusiveness posed significant dilemmas for some pre-service teachers during their practicum. Skye described how a Ukrainian student with little English was required to complete an oral assessment task after the recent death of his friend in a car accident. She questioned the timing and the purpose of the task:

On my last prac there was a student and he was um… from the Ukraine so English is his second language, or third or fourth language, he can speak a whole range of them and they were doing a poetry unit and they had to do a 10 minute presentation analysing the discourses and critical literacies and everything of the poems and um… because English was his second language, that was going to be a challenge enough as it was and he’d recently had, they could chose any topic they wanted and he recently had friends die in a car crash and this was only, like so recent that it was only a couple of days ago sort of thing and he was expected still to do this 10 minute oral presentation in a language that’s not his natural language and he chose to do it on teenage death in car crashes and I think he went for… 7 or 8 minutes and the rest of the class weren’t there to see it, he was doing it, he had to do it after school in front of myself, another prac teacher and three other teachers plus two year 8 boys who were on detention and he got a D+ for it. I just, I didn’t think it was fair. I think, he didn’t analyse it as in depth as the other students did but he did meet the task criteria, he did analyse it and give his opinions on it, he did say what the discourses were and everything and because it was such an emotional topic to him as well, I, it was only a couple of days after his friend’s just died, I think that he should have either been given an extension into the exam block or they should have allowed for, I don’t know. (Skye Interview, 23 June 2005a, l. 254-269)

Issues linked to assessment and equity were raised when students with mental health conditions were still required to complete tasks or were carried by other group members but received similar results (Diane, 2005a). Assessment posed several ethical challenges for teachers, equity in terms of completion time, extension polices, agreed standards and the appropriateness of tasks (Maggie, 2005a).

Implications for Process Drama Design

In summary, the pre-service teachers were frequently challenged ethically in their interactions with students, with supervising teachers, or other staff. Their experiences were varied, influenced by a range of factors: the culture of the school; the complexity of the teaching and learning environment; the stability of staffing; personalities of their supervising teachers; the range of social issues confronting school students; and the expectations of the pre-service teachers themselves. This suggested the development of process dramas exploring these contexts and ethical dilemmas based on, “a situation in
which two or more courses of action (moral choices) are in conflict, and each action can be plausibly defended as the 'good' one to take" (Nash, 1996, p. 65).

My next task therefore was to design and implement three process drama workshops each focussing on themes emerging from the semi-structured interviews. Initially I decided to select focus themes for the first two dramas. **Process drama one** looked at themes related to control, acceptance, power and respect in schools. The second drama explored the concept of boundaries and ‘the fine line’ between ethical and unethical relationships with staff, students and the handling of information. Tied to this are issues such as privacy and confidentiality for all members of the school community. **Process drama two** also investigated the purpose of drama education and the special demands placed upon the drama teacher to maintain student safety, manage student disclosure, emotional engagement and maintain a supportive learning environment.
Chapter Five: Process Drama One

“Rowan’s Story”

“At what cost?”

Practitioner: Past Tense
Tensions frequently exist between different ethical decision-making frameworks and issues faced by teachers such as reward and punishment, due process in discipline, rights and responsibilities, equity and inclusiveness (Strike & Soltis, 2004; Duignan, 2006). On the evidence of the pre-drama interviews with the participants, I was interested in developing a process drama that explored issues linked to expulsion and the tension between competing loyalties: loyalty to personal beliefs, school policy, to the rules, to student welfare, colleagues or the union. I decided to create a student-centred drama and place a fifteen year old student at the heart of the first process drama. The design for this drama, “Rowan’s Story”, was informed by my previous practice in process drama at the university and particularly the work of practitioner Cecily O’Neill (1995) and her structural phases within the process drama such as enrolment, context building, injection of tension and reflection. Using this planning approach I decided to take the participants through a series of dramatic frames, oscillating between building the dramatic context, developing the narrative, injecting tension and other dramatic conventions, allowing for deeper reflection through a more poetic or abstract response. I was conscious of each frame building on the next and attempted in my planning, to think how each frame could incorporate contextual material or roles built by the participants. I pieced together the separate frames trying to imagine how the sequencing and juxtaposition of these may impact on the participants’ experience.

Critical Observer: Present Tense
The critical observer is me, the practitioner, watching the video of the process drama. So what do I see and hear in the twelve frames of the process drama on August 18, 2005?
Frame One
Fourteen pre-service drama teachers - three males and the eleven females - and one practitioner are moving around the teaching space. Resources clutter the room including an overhead projector and a television monitor. The practitioner doesn’t smile, looks tense, pensive and seems to be checking her notes as the students enjoy a game of “Rabbit in a Hole”. She gives short clear instructions as she explains the activity; she appears authoritative, business like. At one point the practitioner gives a few teaching tips as the participants query the rules of the game. She seems to be wearing two hats, drama teacher educator and process drama practitioner. The participants laugh as they trick each other and decide who will be accepted or excluded in their chasing game.

Frame Two
The pre-text for the drama is introduced (See Appendix A). The participants examine three letters, identify the facts contained in them and then record these on a butcher’s paper flip chart. They discuss the letters as they read, point to words on the page, reading sections aloud to each other. The group work quickly and appear focused, cooperative and confident with the task. Soon several facts appear on the whiteboard: Rowan Findlay, fifteen years of age, Northfield High School, expelled, possession of cannabis… he appeals. The participants keep referring to the documents looking for more facts and add the name of Rowan’s parent or guardian and note that this name differs to Rowan’s surname. This pre-text introduces the facts surrounding the central incident and introduces potential roles for the drama such as Rowan’s guardian/family and the school Principal. The letters suggest future questions and tensions to be explored. How will his appeal be received? What will happen to Rowan? Why has the school responded in this way?

Frame Three
The participants sit with their eyes closed in rows on the floor and the practitioner, holding a clipboard in her hand, begins a visualisation speech enrolling them as year ten students:

I want you to imagine a large school hall. A musty smell hangs in the air, remnant from being shut up over the long, hot school holidays. The school crest and motto, “Learning for Tomorrow” looms at the front of the hall. It hangs above the stage framed by faded blue velvet curtains. It is 9.15 am on a humid morning in early February and over 250 year ten students are seated on the polished timber floor. Form teachers are hovering near each line, marking rolls and checking uniforms. I want you to imagine that you are a year ten student at Northfield...
She addresses them in role as Mrs Jackson, the Year Ten Co-ordinator. She is warm, motherly and at times condescending. The participants begin to react to her and interact with each other as year ten students. At one point Mrs Jackson stops her welcome speech to check if a student is paying attention. Maree defensively replies, “I wasn’t talking”. The group begin to fidget more and look disinterested as Mrs Jackson explains how the school rules have been determined by the parent and citizens association, the student council and staff, and are not simply “plucked out of thin air”. At the end of her address the year ten students are asked to stand and move off to their form class. The practitioner freezes the action and asks the participants to close their eyes again. The participants do this quickly and unquestioningly. They appear comfortable with this dramatic convention. She taps individuals on the shoulder and asks them to voice their “Year Ten Assembly” thoughts. The thoughts shared range from disinterest such as Cathy’s response “blah, blah blah” and Diane’s “When are we getting air conditioning?”, to Megan’s “I really want to get a good job so I had better behave” to Michael’s more social year ten thought, “Yeah, Zoe’s pretty hot!”.

**Frame Four**

The fiction moves back in time. The participants assume a blanket role as Mrs Jackson. It is Rowan’s enrolment interview and he is now thirteen. Two volunteers, Maree and Jack, assume the role of Rowan and Karen Simons, and answer the questions posed by the group. Facts and details about Rowan’s home life and aspirations for the future are built by Maree and Jack as they jointly negotiate roles and explore aspects of Rowan’s personality. Mrs Simons is Rowan’s legal guardian, as his parents are overseas for an indefinite period. Rowan is shy, subdued and is interested in sport, particularly soccer and cricket. Rowan has experienced some bullying at his previous primary school and is hopeful that he has friends attending Northfield.
Frame Five
Moving forward two years, the group construct the events that occurred on the day Rowan, now fifteen years old, is found with cannabis in his possession. They create a freeze frame for a specific time during this day. The noise in the room rises and the small groups appear animated and engaged in discussion as they negotiate and build a physical image of what transpired. The energy in the room builds, however, when the small groups present the different images to each other this energy dissipates. The viewers are asked to assign a caption to each image. The presenters seem to lose focus and Zoe’s group laugh at the group’s interpretation of their image. There is a disparity between what the group imagined, created and how the remainder of the participants are interpreting the image. It is difficult to determine one role from another. The practitioner adjusts the convention and asks the participants to attach lines of dialogue to specific roles with each freeze frame. However this does little to add to or clarify the contextual details of the unfolding narrative. The convention fails to build the contextual details needed for this phase of the drama.

Frame Six
Frame six establishes clearer contextual details and explores teacher attitudes towards Rowan, his academic achievement, and relationship with staff in the school. All of the participants assume the one teacher role in a dramatic convention called role circle. The practitioner takes on the role of the Deputy Principal, who is stressed and is rushing off to a meeting. The Deputy Principal quickly finds out the details about the incident from the ‘teacher’. She challenges the witnessing teacher: “Are you sure it was him?”, “Is there any doubt?” Some defend Rowan, some mention his love of cricket but agree that he is guilty. He was seen holding the drugs in his hand. Other students fled the scene but could not be identified. The Deputy Principal ends the role circle with the line, “Well send him in and let’s see what he has to say for himself”. This role circle advances the drama and creates contextual material for the next improvisational frame.

Frame Seven
In pairs the participants improvise a scene between Rowan and the Deputy Principal just prior to his suspension. Several of the participants in role as the Deputy reinforce the policy and procedures of the school. The camera zooms in on one pair of participants. Maggie as the Deputy reminds Ruth in role as Rowan that he signed an agreement that he would abide by the school rules. Maggie lectures Rowan, “It’s not just about you Rowan,
this effects the whole school”. The participants swap roles several times. One pair finishes the scene while the remainder of the group observe. Diane in role as Rowan receives his suspension pending expulsion letter. Diane struggles to commit to the role. The scene ends quickly.

Frame Eight
The group negotiate the contextual details of the next scene and decide questions they would like the scene to explore before each pair simultaneously improvise the scene when Rowan informs his guardian that he has been suspended. The group appear to enjoy the conflict of the home scene and engage in the improvisation with great energy. The noise level rises, different groups approach the scene in different ways. For some it is confrontational with much yelling, for others it is calmer and more probing. The camera zooms in on Ruth as Karen the guardian and Jack as Rowan. Their improvisation is gentle and supportive as Rowan explains, “I was just holding it”, he tells her about his friends and draws on his previous portrayal of Rowan earlier in the drama, as the shy and insecure boy just trying to fit in. Karen comforts him and says, “We can do something about this.” The practitioner asks each pair to describe what happened in their scene. Michael’s describes their improvisation as a “battle”. Maggie describes her scene with Liz and how they explored the underlying reason behind Rowan’s involvement with drugs, how Rowan deflected blame and claimed that his guardian “did not know him”. This reflection on the dramatic action provides an opportunity to further explore the impact of expulsion on Rowan. The policy and procedure of expulsion is pondered by some members of the group. Jack quotes a specific legal clause from the Education (Provisions) Act 1989 included in the pre-text material, and questions if Rowan’s “misconduct is so serious that suspension of the student is inadequate to deal with the behaviour.” He questions the school’s interpretation of the Act and if his expulsion was legal.

Frame Nine
After the group take a short break, the participants mill around the room spreading gossip, rumours and whispers to explore the attitudes or those at the school towards Rowan. The practitioner steps into the rumour mill and challenges some teachers in role as a student, “I heard Rowan Findlay is coming back, we can do whatever we want around here”. The teachers are dismissive and evade directly answering the student’s questions. This frame
brings the drama back to the school context and assists in preparing the participants for the next dramatic frame.

**Frame Ten**
The frame shifts to a large general staffroom at Northfield. The participants develop their own teacher role, they choose their subject area, their attitude towards teaching, the time they have been in the school, and if they are a member of the union. This whole group improvisation starts with Mrs Jackson pouring wine for all who want to toast the birthday girl, Skye. The group appear animated and some participants quickly take on caricatures of various teachers; they talk about their piles of marking, the difficult year tens and the final year twelve Queensland Core Skills (4) test with their colleagues. Skye becomes the focus and tells her colleagues about her impending birthday weekend at the Gold Coast and her lovely husband. Some debate if they should be drinking or not and some participants - Jack, Ruth, Megan - don’t pick up a cup. Zoe in role as an experienced and opinionated teacher dismisses any concerns, and justifies their small indulgence of “less than 5 mls”. As the celebration continues Donna Jackson, the Year Ten Co-ordinator, mentions she just overheard that Rowan Findlay is coming back to school. Various teachers debate his return with either for or against positions emerging. Zoe in role is outraged and says “I have no rights, no authority, nothing …nothing matters any more”. The practitioner as Mrs Jackson assumes a strong anti-Rowan stance believing that his return will undermine her credibility as year level co-ordinator enforcing the rules. Maree in role as a younger Physical Education teacher mentions the school motto from earlier in the drama “Learning for Tomorrow” and points out the lack of compassion the school has shown towards Rowan, with expulsion offering him a limited future. The debate in role is often heated and passionate with several alternate perspectives explored in relation to the rules, student welfare and power and status issues for teachers. The frame ends with a final toast to the birthday girl Skye.

Out of role the practitioner asks the group if they would go on strike over this issue. The practitioner asks this significant question as she drags the wine table away. This seems imposed and occurs very quickly giving the participants little opportunity to negotiate or understand what this may mean. She then informs them that the school votes to go on strike. The transition to the next frame appears contrived and overly directed by the practitioner.

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4 The Queensland Core Skills Test (QCS) is a state wide aptitude test used to calculate tertiary entrance scores. All year twelve students who require a tertiary ranking must sit the two days of tests in mid August.
practitioner. The action of the staffroom built considerable energy and interesting material yet the participants had little opportunity to reflect on the scene or the idea of industrial action prior to moving to the next frame.

Frame Eleven

“The media game” is a ritualistic slanging match between the teachers and the members of the media. The participants must push through a tangle of arms before they can exit the school. As they do this the media bark rapid fire questions at them. This is loud and playful and some participants try to defend their position, others say “no comment”, many look perplexed as they try to get through the maze of tangled arms and reach their car. The physical barrier of the arms slows the moment down and forces each teacher to be confronted over and over again. The teachers struggle to answer the media, they seem uncertain and their faces almost searching for what they should or should not say. They are repeatedly bombarded with similar questions such as: “Will you be going out on strike?” “What kind of student is Rowan Findlay?” “What do you think about students smoking dope at a school?” Responses vary, however, Diane reacts strongly to the media repeatedly stating, “He’s a good kid!”

Frame Twelve

The participants write a letter to the editor from a perspective of their choice - teacher, parent, community member, Rowan, or Rowan’s peers. Letters are exchanged and the participants read out significant sentences. These demonstrate a range of different perspectives on expulsion, student welfare and community attitudes. Some of the shared material includes:

“Students need boundaries to know what is right and wrong”
“I believe Rowan had learnt from his mistakes and as a community we need to be supporting him”
“As a parent I’d like to know that my child is going to be safe at school when I drop them off in the morning”
“It’s about time the Education Minister grabbed the bull by the horns and expelled this student”
“I think all students deserve a quality education, but at what cost?”
“After all isn’t it all about inclusivity?”
Frame Thirteen

The participants create a dramatic statement in response to the drama. Some creative constraints are imposed such as the scene must occur in a school context and explore the implications for Rowan or for the school. There is much laughter, playfulness and discussion as each group negotiate and build their scene. Maggie talks to her group as they plan and shares her belief that “there will always be drugs in school”. Diane expresses her view that zero tolerance is an inappropriate policy for schools.

Three reflective scenes are performed for the group. In the first scene Megan, Jenny, Cathy and Skye assume the role of year seven students revealing their chosen high school. They are outraged that Cathy will be attending Northfield. Rumours about Northfield High School are shared, with the gossip becoming more and more exaggerated until the anxious twelve year old comes home to tell her mother that they have drugs for sale at the school canteen and as a subject at Northfield High. Another satirical scene depicts the results of inclusiveness gone too far. We see how one student is constantly accommodated by Northfield. Despite stabbing her primary school teacher, engaging in self harm, her poor literacy levels and being an alcoholic the school continues to bend over backwards to cater for her needs. The third group explore Rowan’s future life. It is a school reunion and Rowan has gone on to become a champion cricketer however they still label him the “drug guy”.

Participant Post-Drama Reflection: Past Tense

Immediately after the drama the participants reflected on their experience and explored a wide range of topics including the purpose of education, the teacher’s role, media contact with staff, union membership, school reputation, teachers contradicting school rules, student labelling, confidentiality and the impact of school policy. A pattern emerged in their reflection where the participants would begin by commenting on a specific incident in the drama, talk about their response during the drama before connecting this to a story, event beyond the drama or personal belief. This occurred several times as described in the examples below.

Maree and Maggie argued that teachers need to take a more holistic view of the student and that care and opportunity is fundamental to education. Maggie asked the group to consider the viewpoint of the parent and questioned why drug offenders are more harshly treated by schools. She explained how if students cut themselves, are depressed or
attempt suicide the school will do all they can to support them however drugs are seen as infectious or a sign of slipping school standards. She argued that we could interpret Rowan’s action as a call for help rather than a flouting of school authority. She pointed out his repentant attitude and how at no point during the drama was he aggressive or disrespectful of those in authority. The group nodded in agreement and supported her view that each case needed to be looked at individually. Diane stated that rules or zero tolerance should not always apply. Zoe believed that teaching is “bleeding into parenthood” and argued for clearer professional boundaries linking her experience in the drama to events occurring at her last practicum.

Several participants connected the events of the drama to real experiences they encountered during their recent time in schools. Diane described how her supervising English teacher wrote a letter to the local newspaper about a similar event to “Rowan’s Story”, and openly signed her name. This prompted further discussion about whether or not teachers should talk to the media. Megan explained that she felt a certain loyalty to the school she worked for and would not therefore speak openly to the media. Phillip revealed that he could not ‘engage’ in the drama because it was too close to a real event he had encountered during the previous year. He kept thinking of the actual real context and could not suspend his disbelief enough to engage in the fictional story. Diane explained that she could not engage for the same reason as she was reflecting on recent real events at her practicum school and her own brother’s expulsion. Skye pointed out the hypocrisy of teachers drinking alcohol during the drama, a banned substance in state schools, while they discussed their attitudes towards Rowan possibly returning to the school after being expelled for possessing a banned substance. Ruth and Megan chose not to drink for this reason, while others realised alcohol was banned in schools but decided to conform and fit in with their teacher colleagues.

Reflection in the post-drama discussion concentrated on loyalty and strike action. For most of the participants the idea of union membership and what this may entail was very new to them and many were still considering if they would or would not go on strike. Maggie joked with the group that the last time she had union membership was “when she worked at Kmart”. Jack explained that his father had strong union connections and he felt this informed his views and responses during the drama as he imagined his father calling him a ‘scab’ if he did not follow union directives.
Participant Online Reflection: Past Tense

Over the next week the participants reflected on the process drama individually. This occurred using the University's online learning site, a very familiar digital environment to the students. Firstly these written responses were openly coded using analysis software Envivo 7 before stronger relationships and patterns in the data emerged. Overall three broad themes existed in the participants’ writing after the process drama “Rowan’s Story” reflections on: the wider impact or consequences of expulsion as a response to drugs in schools; their own beliefs, degree of agency, and professional versus personal loyalties; and thirdly their participation in the drama and the process drama form.

- Consequences

Several participants reflected on the impact or consequences of expulsion for Rowan on, the school, families or care givers, staff and the community. Many reflections showed evidence of principled moral reasoning, applying the fairness test or weighing up the benefits for the school or Rowan. Skye considered the universal application of rules and how the total context should be considered in terms of justice:

> The drama did raise some ethical dilemmas for me. Throughout the drama I was thinking about the fairness in allowing a student come back to school when they have essentially broken the rules, what message does this send to other students in the school, and past students who have been expelled for the same reason? But on the other hand if you have one rule that applies to everyone, is that really fair? Everyone is different and every situation is different. So the dilemma for me is do you look at these cases on an individual basis or do you apply the same rules to all?  
> (Skye Online Reflection, 2005b)

Other participants applied principles more aligned with an ethic of care in their reasoning process and advocated for Rowan’s return to school and development of clearer support structures for schools including partnerships with external agencies to ensure the best possible treatment for young people. Diane felt that students needed to be treated with compassion: “…students need to know that you treat them as individuals and that you care. It might just make a difference”, (Online Reflection, 2005b). Jack took an even broader perspective and questioned the fundamental purpose of education. He saw the decision to expel Rowan as short-term and reactive rather than proactive:

> Working in private enterprise, there is an emphasis on dealing with problems by conducting root-cause-analysis to find the source of the problem rather than implementing short-term quick fixes. In the instance of the process drama, I think what you will find the root cause is that not enough emphasis is being placed on education. Effective education. (Jack Online Reflection, 2005b)
Jack connected his experience in his current working role, with his experiences of the drama and revealed his own personal philosophy on effective education. Liz chose to look at Rowan’s treatment applying the principle of inclusivity. She would support the school but only if they were inclusive:

The other ethical concern that stood out for me in the drama was the notion of the student returning to school after he had been expelled. Regarding the individual circumstances of the student, I felt as though the right thing to do would be to redeem the student based on his appeal, as this constitutes for inclusive practice, and the student would benefit. Yet, would the school benefit from this? What really opened up my mind to this choice is the way we, in role as parents, teachers and the media, dealt with the situation - in a negative way, condemning the action. This was, for me personally, very interesting, and for a tiny moment I was unsure what I would do as a teacher in a situation like this. I know that I would support the school though, no matter what decision it made, as I believe that the school would choose inclusive action. (Liz Online Reflection, 2005b)

- Beliefs and Agency

Some participants reflected on their own beliefs, degree of agency and aspects of moral character. Two participants were concerned that they were fence-sitters, still wrestling with their professional and personal allegiance (Zoe Reflection, 2005b; Barbara Reflection, 2005b). Barbara described her position:

This drama made me realise that I had already made a somewhat subconscious decision to be a fence-sitter… until the letter writing component I had not made a decision on whether it was good or bad, right or wrong for Rowan to be let back into the school… during the media thing I was just thinking I have to get through ‘no comment’ I don’t need to jeopardise my job, my place in the school, I don’t need to risk ostracism from fellow staff members for choosing the ‘wrong’ side. (Barbara Online Reflection, 2005b)

For Maggie the drama consolidated her personal beliefs about the aims and purpose of education:

What the drama did highlight, but that I am already aware of is the huge possibility that I will come into conflict with other teachers on ways of teaching and/or views of students and their behaviour that I completely disagree with. It will be important at that time to hear their views and aim to see where they are coming from and sometimes agreeing to disagree, without necessarily having to change my views on the issue. I see my role as a teacher to guide students into adulthood with a firm vision of themselves and the world by informing them. I do not believe expelling a student ‘informs’ the student in any way of how to make changes out of unacceptable behaviour. (Maggie Online Reflection, 2005b)

Maggie confirmed her beliefs about the “role” or duty of a teacher. Several participants questioned what they might do in the same context and where their loyalties or duty
would lie. Skye was grappling with the tension between her personal and professional opinion and if she would feel safe enough to express that in the workplace:

I always looked at the student and at times I’ve either agreed or disagreed with them, but I’ve never gone so far as to wonder how these cases would effect the schooling community in the future. Also I’ve never really considered the fact that as a teacher at a school and an employee of Education Queensland, that I am obliged to support them. I’m just so used to sharing my own opinion, I never considered that doing so in the future in cases like this could result in me losing my job or placing the school in a bad light. (Skye Online Reflection, 2005b)

For others there was an emerging realization that their choices and actions could have wider implications. Maree’s process drama experience enabled her to see her part in an interconnected whole and raised her consciousness of the potential influence of her future teaching role:

One important thing that was present in this drama for me was the effect that your choices can have on the wider school community, at the admin level right through to the teacher-student level…everything that you do with your students has some connection to elements outside the classroom. For this reason you have to follow policy and consider what you tell to your students and know that every action has a further reaction. This isn’t new information for me but it is an important fact to be continually reminded of and in many ways this drama did this. (Maree Online Reflection, 2005b)

Maree saw following policy as integral to professional practice. Megan revealed how her beliefs about unions are informed by her personal background and relationships within her family. She remained undecided and debated the merits of union membership:

In regards to my future teaching practice, I had always assumed I would join the union, my brother is a big supporter of the union (even though his trade doesn’t have a union) so I’ve always been aware of the benefits of the union (as well as the negative, Mum doesn’t like them!), but yeah I’ve always kind of assumed that as a teacher it would be an association I would be apart of…and this drama kind of reinforced that for me, because when even the education department doesn’t stand up and support school-based decisions which are made ‘apparently’ for the good of the school community, students and teachers alike, who will stand up for them? However, I think Diane made an excellent point during the unpacking of the drama where she asked ‘what happens when you don’t agree with your union?’ (Megan Online Reflection, 2005b)

Megan’s response revealed her uncertainty as to her personal stance. For many participants like Megan, the drama raised more questions and presented aspects of professional ethics they had never considered.
• **Process Drama Form**

Some participants specifically described how the process drama had enabled them to develop greater awareness, confirmed existing beliefs or challenged their perspective and current levels of tolerance. Assuming multiple roles allowed Michael to look at a range of attitudes and motivations linked to the one incident. This experience helped him clarify his own beliefs and values:

> The drama made me realise and think about what different people were involved (Principal, teacher, parents, community members, the media) and what interest they would have in this particular issue. I could more effectively understand where people stood on the issue and make a more logical decision on where I stood personally and professionally. (Michael Online Reflection, 2005b)

Barbara experienced a similar discovery during the drama with her position on expulsion becoming clearer during the writing in role convention utilised during the drama:

> When I tried to start writing I realised that my own opinion was strong inside of me - that Rowan needed to be back at school and that the school (and indeed the education system) needed to recognise the issues facing our students – and start to deal with them rather than just pushing kids away saying ‘this is wrong so you can’t be here.
>  
> (Barbara Online Reflection, 2005b)

Several participants believed that the drama did not give them new knowledge but instead raised their awareness or confirmed their current impressions. “Rowan’s Story” confirmed for Liz much that she already knew:

> The drama didn't really raise anything new for me in regards to schools or education or professional relationships, yet confirmed my impressions of these things. It confirmed the so-called myth that schools are judged by the stigma they hold based on students’ behaviour and attitudes. It confirmed the fact that teachers gossip about anything and everything that happens around them. It confirmed that all teachers, just as they are all different people, have differing points of view when it comes to ethical dilemmas such as expulsion, drugs and peer pressure. It also confirmed my suspicions that students could appeal to schools and that there have been cases where they have succeeded and been accepted back at school following this appeal. (Liz Online Reflection, 2005b)

There are echoes of similar positions or a consistency with previously stated beliefs in the participants’ reflections, the roles they assumed during the drama and their comments in the discussion immediately following the drama. Maree, for example, was consistent in her belief that teachers should take a more holistic view of student welfare and achievement in her interview (Maree Interview, 20 June 2005a), she assumed the role of the caring physical education teacher in the staffroom scene (Drama One Frame 12) and again supported this viewpoint in the post-drama discussion. For others there were greater
shifts in understanding. Skye’s participation in the drama enabled her to develop greater empathy for students who make negative choices and a deeper understanding of the interconnected aspects of students’ lives:

A good thing, I took away was understanding or at least the ability to realise that there are reasons for students’ behaviour. Students have lives operating outside the classroom and what happens outside and in the school can influence their behaviour. It doesn’t mean that the student is bad, just that they made the wrong choice. I’ve always been very intolerant of drugs, and just viewed people who took drugs as being weak, but this drama really opened my eyes as to the difficulties some students face when trying to fit in at school. (Online Reflection, 2005b)

The process drama offered a safe space for some participants to explore, see and understand different positions. Skye described how she deliberately played the opposite viewpoint to her own beliefs in order to gain a better understanding of the issues from different perspectives (Online Reflection, 2005b). Cathy also assumed a range of roles with the desire to understand new perspectives (Online Reflection, 2005b). Barbara welcomed the opportunity to explore difficult situations in a safe space without penalty of failure:

I found the process drama to be really beneficial in that respect... a safe opportunity to explore those sorts of situations and interactions without the pressure of it being real! Without the pressure that comes with the possibility of saying the wrong thing or dealing with the situation inappropriately... I know that is what terrifies me as a beginning teacher... and I assume it scares others too! (Online Reflection, 2005b)

**Practitioner Reflection: Past Tense**

Overall, “Rowan’s Story” explored the “multiple realities” of teaching (Sinclair et al., 2005) and presented an educational environment of “super-complexity” (Barnett & Hallam, 1999, pp. 138 – 139). The participants’ reflections were insightful and demonstrated a connection to professional ethics and particularly evidence of principled moral reasoning - considering consequences, applying principles such as justice, inclusiveness and an ethic of care. The participants discussed where their loyalties lay, what duty may dictate, and attempted to clarify their personal beliefs. There was however an overall position of critic or judgment assumed in many of their online responses. They were judging the school, the policies, and the school’s treatment of Rowan. The events of the drama, how Rowan was treated, remained external to them, distanced and dependent on the application of external rules, policy or principles.
The tension between the participant’s real context and fictional context affected several of the participants. At one point I noticed Diane choosing not to play Rowan, at another time she was uncommitted to the improvisation (Frame Seven). During the debrief she stated that she could not fully engage in the drama. She disclosed that her own brother had been expelled. The tension of her real world context with the fiction world impaired her ability to suspend her disbelief enough to accept the fiction. Phillip too could not engage in the fiction due to his real-life experience. For these two participants the fictional and their personal experiences were too close.

Not all of the frames of the drama enhanced participant engagement. I focused too much on building the narrative of the drama, particularly the narrative in my head, rather than the participants. I was too intent on building engagement through the development of contextual details, telling Rowan’s story in a linear fashion and did not allow for enough exploration of ethical issues through the drama. I lacked clarity as to the actual ethical dilemma at key moments within the total drama and missed opportunities to slow these ethical decision-making moments down. For example at the end of frame ten when the drama shifted to explore the concept of striking and industrial action; this was a dilemma moment when the participants could have explored the ‘best’ course of action in more depth, yet I rushed this transition. The group could have decided if the school would go on strike and if Rowan should have been expelled at all. These dilemma moments needed to be slowed down, framed clearly, analysed and examined, and allow the participants individual choice. I missed valuable opportunities for symbolic reflection through the use of dramatic form and tried to cover too much in the drama.

One aspect of the process drama did seem to connect with the participants. This was evident in the post-drama discussion and in several individual written reflections. The question of union membership seemed to challenge and engage the students more. I started to think why this occurred. The framing of the drama and more specifically the positioning of the participants in relation to the ethical questions emerging from the drama was at times unclear. They played a multiple of roles to look at Rowan’s case however it was the roles that specifically focused on the teacher’s decision-making, to strike or not strike, on individual choice that prompted the more personal reflection, the more animated discussion, the questioning of, “What would I do” and “Who am I?” “Am I a person that values the union, would I join a union and then conform with a union position even if this contradicts my personal view?” This ‘inside-out’ reflection
demonstrated the potential for process drama to also enable reflection linked to an internal decision-making authority of moral agency, virtue ethic or character (Cohen, 2004 p. 49). This practitioner analysis impacted upon the structure for the next drama and particularly the selection of the central role.
Chapter Six: Process Drama Two

“The Secret Life of Us”

“It’s a really fine line”

Practitioner: Past Tense

How to respond when school students disclosed sensitive information concerned several of the study participants (Zoe Interview, 24 June 2005a; Megan Interview, 27 June 2005a; Barbara Interview, 24 June 2005a; Maggie Interview, 17 June 2005a). Personal information is often shared in the drama classroom and some supervising teachers protect student confidentiality by making a class rule: “What is said in the drama classroom stays in the classroom” (Jane Interview, 23 June 2005a). However, is this always true? Can teachers maintain confidentiality? When are teachers required to pass on personal information and to whom? How and when do drama teachers elicit personal information? Based on these concerns and questions I designed a process drama that explored:

- ethical practice when student disclose information about potential harm either to themselves or others
- disclosure, privacy and confidentiality issues between staff and students
- safety and protection in the drama classroom.

After reflecting on the effectiveness of the first process drama, “Rowan’s Story”, I developed a shorter drama. I wanted to be more open to the participants’ experience and allow room for the drama to build through negotiation, rather than drive my own narrative. I wished to function more as “an artist within the experience” to engage the participants in “significant experience” and to “discover ends through action” (O’Neill, 1995, pp. 64-65, emphasis in original). I aimed to provide more opportunity for reflection through dramatic action and smoother transitions from one frame to another. Therefore, I planned the conventions up until frame eleven but beyond that I was open to how the drama might take shape. Other objectives influenced my planning. I wanted to explore what might occur if I enrolled the participants as the central moral agent, placing them as the key deliberator confronted with ethical dilemmas. Lastly I wanted to identify key decision-making moments and slow these down for more analysis and reflection.

Critical Observer: Present Tense

Frame One
Nineteen people occupy a small square shaped room: four male and thirteen female pre-service drama teachers, the practitioner and the practitioner’s research supervisor. The practitioner is playing an energetic name game with the participants. The room is too warm and the practitioner quickly moves the participants to an activity requiring less movement and introduces the concept of disclosure through a game. Participants record three facts about themselves on a card however one of these must be false. Some participants hesitate and glance sideways before writing (Megan; Michael). The group laugh, appear relaxed and seem to enjoy the activity as they intently listen to each other and try to identify the “lie”. This activity parallels the future fictional action of the drama and explores what we choose to conceal or disclose about ourselves. However the tension of this real context task and the later fictional context might have been enhanced if the participants were asked to reveal “secrets”.

Frame Two
The practitioner introduces the pre-text for the drama, a poster advertising a school performance (See Appendix C). The drama is set in a fictitious high school called White Ridge State High School, a year eleven drama class are preparing to present an original play entitled, “The Secret life of Us”.

Frame Three
Members of the school community share their response to the poster through the dramatic convention, “thought tapping”. A soundscape builds: student voices, parents, and teachers, all expressing positive or negative attitudes towards the impending performance. Cathy remarks, “Oh drama students!” representing the negative attitude that some students, staff and parents have towards the arts.

Frame Four
Participant engagement with the process drama increases through the negotiated establishment of the central role, the drama teacher. Working in small groups, the participants discuss their initial ideas. They frequently refer to the poster pre-text and the title of the performance, “The Secret Life of Us” as they form their description of the drama teacher. The practitioner takes time to negotiate this role, collecting ideas from
each group before putting details to the vote and recording these on a flip chart. Some participants argue for a male teacher but they are out voted. The group reach consensus after some passionate discussion, yells of “no” and “yes” and decide that Jasmine Jacobs, “Miss J” to her students, is 25, in her third year of teaching but has only recently begun at this school. She arrives each day on her very cool Vesper scooter. She has a strong rapport with her classes however some staff and students find her overly passionate, energetic and confronting. Her teaching methods are controversial and she likes to “push the boundaries” (Michelle). Miss J strives to make learning relevant and “context rich” (Alex) for her drama students.

**Frame Five**
The participants explore how the year eleven students perceive their new drama teacher. This frame enables the participants to build their individual student role and consolidate their attitude towards the school, their teacher and the subject of drama. There are four separate year eleven ‘friendship pods’. Each small group share their spontaneous improvisation with the remainder of the participants listening in. Attitudes from the year eleven students vary, with some positive about their new teacher, hoping she will make drama fun and interactive as Leigh states, “No more boring reading of plays”. Other students are negative: Liz is scared of the workload; Jack thinks she is too “full on” and a “nutter”; Barbara doubts the new drama teacher will help her achieve her career aspirations, “I just want to learn more acting stuff”; Ruth is happy because she can sit back because Miss J “comes up with all the ideas” for their group work; and Skye is not amused with the level of energy demanded because the only reason she enrolled in drama was “because you get to lie down and do all that meditation crap”. Some think Miss J is trying to be too friendly (Ruth; Michelle; Skye). Alex describes her as “pretty touchy feely” while some of the students decide they like her (Cathy; Maggie) and even admire her as Diane expresses through her complement “I like the dress she had on today”. The participants draw on their recent real world experience of different students in secondary schools to this short improvisation, reflecting their varied levels of interest and motivation for the subject of drama.

**Frame Six**
The whole group form a “Year 11 C Drama” photograph that will appear in the program for their performance. The participants represent their relationship with each other and Miss J through their use of space and non – verbals. Some who lacked respect for Miss J
in the previous improvisations continue to mock her in this image. Those that love drama and enjoy her classes sit very close.

**Frame Seven**

This tableau is used as a transition into dramatic action as the practitioner subtly moves into role addressing the year eleven students as Miss J. She introduces a written assessment task (See Appendix B) and explains how this monologue will be included in their production. She emphasizes that this is for assessment and encourages the year eleven students to draw from personal experience. Some students question this and the drama teacher defends the task, “Artists frequently draw on personal experience as the basis for their work”. Megan asks how secretive it has to be. Miss J responds that they need to feel comfortable with what they reveal however, “we want to present a truthful show”.

The participants appear confident with their student role and freely interact with each other. Random lines of dialogue can be heard: “This is too hard!”; “What will I write about?”. There are varying degrees of motivation and commitment to the task from students of the year eleven drama class. Some lie around, some socialize and others begin to write. These responses in role align with individual student attitudes already demonstrated in previous frames of the process drama. The classroom noise rises, conflict begins to build between some year eleven students and the practitioner stops the dramatic action. The participants write their monologue from the perspective of their year eleven student role.

**Frame Eight**

Eight of the student monologues are read to the group. In between each monologue the group chant, “What is said in the drama classroom, stays in the drama classroom”. Megan’s monologue explores what lies behind the student’s “good girl” facade and describes her secret risk taking at parties. Maggie’s monologue looks at issues linked to identity, depression and loneliness while Skye’s writing in role described the effects of teenage binge drinking and her negative home life:

> I’d give anything to have a normal family. To be noticed at all. I went out last Saturday and drank till I was totally off my face, spent an embarrassing night throwing up in my boyfriend’s backyard and then walked home at 4.00am in the morning. Nobody said a thing. (Skye Writing in Role, 2005d)
Barbara’s monologue discloses her role’s hopes and dreams to become an actress and her recent winning of the “Dolly Cover Girl” contest. Jack and Maree explore similar themes, the pressure, responsibility and monotony of juggling school, family responsibilities and work. Zoe assumes the role of “Stacey” and describes her negative home life:

As I get closer I can hear my mum screaming at the new one that she “loves”. Every week, someone new, maybe not every week but it feels like it … it’s usually some stupid bum who tries to take over my “home” – if that’s what you’d call it. I suppose I am the one who takes care of my little brother, I sign all the school slips, I do all the cooking, all the mom stuff… I’d like to know what it’s like to be sixteen.
(Zoe, Writing In Role, 2005d)

This frame effectively explores the varied experiences of year eleven students and how the private world of students might be disclosed in a drama classroom.

Frame Nine and Frame Ten
These two frames investigate how personal information revealed in the drama classroom may be handled by the year eleven students and if what is said in the drama classroom actually stays in the drama classroom. In pairs, the participants improvise a scene set after the drama lesson and then report back the content on their conversation, out of role. Some students were embarrassed by what was revealed in class and concerned about how this information will be revealed to family and friends (Diane; Michael). Some participants were considering how they could “get out of this”, the public performance or the subject (Ruth; Michelle; Liz; Jane). Others were critical of their peers, and “bitching” about the bragging of certain students and questioning the accuracy of the personal stories (Michael; Barbara; Maggie). Others were concerned as to what the teacher would do with the information, if she would return to the staffroom and gossip or perhaps use the material in her next book “The Secret Life of Sixteen Year Olds” (Phillip; Maree; Zoe; Skye). They questioned if this was teaching or therapy (Zoe; Jane). They felt that the performance was more like reality television genres such as Big Brother (Alex) or Oprah (Skye), than drama. Several mentioned safety and protection as key considerations and made the observation that the information had not stayed in the drama classroom (Ruth; Jane; Liz; Zoe). However, of particular interest, was the lack of discussion or support shown to each other about any of the difficulties the ‘students’ revealed in their monologues. This was actively avoided by the year eleven students (Phillip; Skye; Jack; Michael).
Frame Eleven

After the group return from a short break, Michelle volunteers to ‘hot-seat’ Jasmine Jacobs. Miss J answers the questions posed by the remainder of the group. Michelle’s depiction down plays some of the exaggerated elements of the earlier role description, clarifies the role and re-engages the group with the fictional world of the drama.

The hot-seat moves into a modified forum theatre (5) approach (Boal, 1992) where the group rework and comment on the action of the scene in an effort to solve the problem. The participants decide the following contextual details. It is the end of lunch and Miss J is preparing for her next class, when Maree in role as a year eleven student comes to seek help for her friend, ‘Stacey’. Maree is worried that she may be experiencing violence at home and is in danger of self harming. This extends on the ‘Stacey’ role and information introduced in the drama classroom through the monologue from frame eight. One frame of the drama builds on the next with the participants layering contextual details and injecting further tension into the process drama.

Miss J struggles with how she should handle the information disclosed to her by the student and seems confused as to what her course for action should be. It is not long before the participants stop the action and begin to suggest alternatives for Miss J to explore. The group give feedback to Michelle, still in role as Miss J and analyze the scene in terms of how the problem could be handled. Jack believes that there is an ethical duty to disclose information to other staff if Miss J believes the student is in danger however this is complicated in the scene because the information is coming from a secondary source. He describes how Miss J may be personally challenged because she wants to maintain a climate of trust and confidentiality in her drama classroom. The group debate the reality of the situation and Diane doubts if a teacher would have the time to deal with this issue. Leigh stresses the importance of reassuring and supporting the student. Zoe is concerned that the year eleven student knows that the teacher is legally bound to disclose information about student welfare to the school counsellor, nurse or administration if that student may be at risk. Some participants are surprised at this and were unaware that this was a legal requirement for teachers (Megan; Barbara). The group make several

5 Developed by activist and theatre director Augusto Boal, Forum Theatre is an interactive performance involving actors presenting a prepared scene. Spectators stop and intervene in the dramatic action to prevent the protagonist from being oppressed and to find more positive actions. This form aims to encourage the spectator to become a ‘spect-actor’, to enter the dramatic space and assume the role of the key protagonist. For a more detailed account see Boal 1992, pp 224 – 247.
suggestions until Maggie volunteers to replace Michelle as Miss J and enact some of the
group’s ideas. She tries to ascertain the facts, comforts the student, suggests several
options to the students but then warns the student that she may have to inform other staff
or authorities if she believes that Stacey is in potential harm. The group interrupt the
scene several times to suggest how Maggie may more effectively address the student’s
needs. The group are focused and engaged, offer many suggestions and want to continue
to trial alternate actions for Miss J.

**Frame Twelve**
The participants work in pairs to record on a card one possible option Miss J could take
either during or after the scene just explored. They appear focussed and debate the best
course of action before recording their ideas and placing their suggestions in a box.

**Frame Thirteen**
Working with a new partner each pair selects a card from the ‘options’ box and develop a
prepared scene exploring how this may manifest. Each scene is performed before the
group and then the strategies discussed for their potential effectiveness in assisting Stacey
and how ethical this action may be for the drama teacher.

The first two groups show very similar scenes but with very different outcomes. The
scenes involve Miss J and Stacey and take place in an empty classroom. Miss J uses the
monologue or assessment piece as a starting point to talk to Stacey and offer her any
support or assistance. In the first version devised by Michelle and Jane the scene results
in Stacey agreeing to go to the guidance counsellor with Miss J. Stacey is thankful for her
assistance explaining that she really wrote the monologue about her home life to finally
tell someone. In the second version, devised by Diane and Barbara, Miss J’s concern is
brushed off, any conflict at home is dismissed by Stacey and she informs her drama
teacher that she wants to change out of the subject into Science instead.

The contrast of the two scenes provokes debate as the participants assess which scenario
would be more realistic in terms of student behaviour and their willingness to seek help
(Megan; Michael). Barbara points out the possible long term implications and questions if
Stacey would want to report any abuse given what may happen if she and her brother
become clients of Family Services. Jack responds to the second scenario, rises onto his
haunches, leans towards the group and argues that Miss J has fulfilled her “legal”
responsibility by offering Stacey support. Jack points out that Miss J can document this
conversation and inform the administration that Stacey refused any further assistance. Jack strongly expresses his opinion about the obligations and boundaries of a teachers’ duty, projecting himself into the fictional context, “I hate to say it, but it’s not my job, as negative as that sounds”.

Other scenes explore different strategies including Miss J seeking assistance from different members of staff, a fellow drama teacher (Liz & Maggie), and the guidance officer (Michael & Maree; Alex & Zoe; Leigh & Ruth; Jack & Megan). The last scene explores what may happen if the student Stacey attends an interview with the guidance officer (Skye & Phillip).

The sharing of each scene prompts substantive discussion about privacy and confidentiality, the ethical handling of student information in schools and if students should be named in discussions with colleagues. Diane is concerned that this practice labels students and negatively influences teachers’ perceptions. The group are concerned about student welfare and protection however other discussion focuses on the importance of documentation and the protection of the teacher (Ruth; Zoe). Several participants mention that these scenes assist them in their understanding that they are not alone, that colleagues are also unsure, and that it is acceptable to be uncertain and seek support (Leigh; Skye; Liz). The scenes allow the participants to model and explore ethical practice and discuss the appropriateness of policy, certain lines of communication or procedures. However for other participants these scenes highlight the need for teachers to see students’ needs as unique, how a student’s personality, individual circumstances and the school context might influence their future behaviour if they were confronted with a similar situation (Maggie; Barbara; Zoe).

**Frame Fourteen**

In this reflective frame a thought tapping convention is applied to explore the impact of the year eleven performance, “The Secret Life of Us”. Eyes closed, standing around the poster, the participants take on a role as a member of the school community who attended the event. Some of the short reflections include:

“This school is full of delinquents”
“I can’t wait to do year eleven drama next year”
“I wonder if those stories were true or fiction”
“A bit raw”
“I didn’t realise binge drinking was such a problem for teenager”
“Angst ridden teenagers, how unusual”
“I’ll need to talk to my kids about that”
“I’m so glad I came”
“Miss Jacobs will be sacked now”
“That was good to get off my chest”

This convention enables the group to express a range of possible positive and negative perceptions of the performance from the school community.

**Frame Fifteen**
The participants stand along a continuum, at one end if they personally would create a similar performance with their students and on the opposite end if they would not. The participants are divided with Alex and Cathy standing at opposite ends of the room while the remainder of the group select a position in between. Alex is adamant that Miss J’s practice is “reckless”, he questions if this is counselling or therapy rather than drama. He argues that fiction must be used and the same issues could be explored through the use of existing play text such as “Black Rock” and “X-Stacy” (6). Cathy argues that she would temper the task to include fictional elements to protect student confidentiality but that there is value in this work, the exploration of issues relevant to the class is significant and should not be ignored. Many of the other participants have similar arguments. Michelle’s response is of interest as she keeps shifting her position, moving physically up the line, closer to Alex, arguing that teachers need to be careful about the issues they ask students to deal with. Others in the group argue that no matter what stimulus material is used in the drama classroom whether it is play text or student devised work, students may disclose personal information at some point and the drama teacher needs to be prepared for this eventuality. The group begin to talk over the top of each other, several giving emotional responses (Alex; Jack; Barbara; Michael; Diane).

**Participant Post-Drama Reflection: Past Tense**
Immediately after the drama the discussion oscillated between the nature, value and purpose of drama, the impact of drama on students, and the responsibilities of the drama teacher working within a school system with its own legal and procedural demands. Maggie believed the drama explored two different issues: what content the drama teacher should deal with in the drama classroom; and how far they should go with the use of personal information. Others believed the drama dealt with student disclosure and what the “right” procedure for teachers is in this situation (Liz; Rebecca; Maggie). Barbara

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6 *Black Rock*, a play text written by Nick Enright, explores issues of mateship and violence towards women. *X-Stacy* by Margery Forde explores the impact of a drug overdose, rave parties and subsequent teenage death on a family. Both plays are frequently studied in Queensland Schools.
believed it is a “balancing act” between caring for the student, “providing a supportive” relationship and following the procedures of the school.

Much of the post-process drama discussion weighed up the negatives and positives of student devised work exploring personal experience. Some participants argued that if students are experiencing these issues and drama assists them to speak out and seek help, then that is a positive outcome (Jack; Leigh; Skye; Maggie). Some participants had concerns about safety, consistency of care and support no matter what the issue (Michelle; Michael). The group discussion grew louder as several participants reacted to Alex’s statement “It is our job to educate students, not to know what is going on in student’s home lives”. Leigh argued that, “Perhaps we do need to know”. Skye questioned the role and duty of the teacher and asked, “Who is going to help the student?” when teachers may spend more time with a student then parents. Michael was adamant that he did not have the skills to deal with students sharing sensitive personal information. Jack connected his experience from the process drama to his recent reading about similar performance work by practitioner Richard Sallis with boys in a private school in Melbourne and how the telling of true stories opened up discussion and communication with parents. However he ended his comment with the proviso, “if it is set up properly”.

Diane and Maggie related the events of the process drama to real-life experiences in their respective practicum schools. Diane described how students at her school were asked to write fictional monologues, instead wrote real stories and then shared them with other classes. Maggie described a performance she attended where the students shared personal and real information. The student devised performance was “shut down” two weeks prior to the public showing by the school administration. The students protested, wore black tape across their mouths and protest t-shirts with the word “Silenced” displayed. The first year teacher involved was forced to make cuts to the original performance prior to the administration allowing the performance to continue. Maggie described the positive and emotional audience response, “...everyone was sobbing, it was absolutely phenomenal…it was amazing” and how when the show finished, the students gave a dedication and red rose to their parents. This brought a sigh of recognition and admiration from the group.

Despite the discussion that occurred during this debrief, in the closing moments as the group were about to leave Maggie asked the practitioner what the “rules” were, what the
right thing to do in this situation was. I was reluctant to impose my own beliefs but explained that according to Education Queensland’s *Student Protection Policy*, any hint of students being under the threat of potential harm meant that teachers were compelled to report information. I issued reference and information sheets I had prepared to provide more information linked to student protection for those that were interested.

**Participant Online Reflection: Past Tense**

Discussion about these issues continued in the participants’ online reflections. However, a week later, the participants’ personal position and ideas were more defined. Three key themes emerged from an analysis of all of the participants’ written responses. The first concerned the ‘fine line’ or the subtle boundaries of the teacher’s role, relationships and responsibilities; the second theme specifically looked at the purpose of drama, the preconditions necessary for learning in the drama classroom and appropriateness of curriculum content; and the third theme focused on safety, confidentiality and the ‘right’ communication procedures both for the student and the teacher.

- **The Fine Line**

Several participants referred to the ‘fine line’, the almost invisible line between ethical and unethical relationships with students. Alex attempted to define the line (Online Reflection, 2005c), Liz wanted to know how to “walk the line” (Online Reflection, 2005c), Leigh and Michelle wanted to know what the line actually is (Online Reflection, 2005c). Others like Zoe were content to acknowledge that the line is ambiguous and that it is “not black and white” (Online Reflection, 2005c). Skye questioned the boundaries of the teacher’s role, responsibilities and what “the job” really entails:

> This is difficult… The teacher is in a position of power over the student. I hate to say that, but it’s really the truth. So the relationship needs to remain professional. However for some students, sadly the teacher may be the closest thing to a parent they have. The teacher needs to be supportive, caring, someone the student can come to if they need help, a guide, a mentor, an inspiration (wow that’s a lot to live up to), yet remain a person whom the student respects. You can be friendly with students, but you can’t really be friends with them. It’s a really fine line…this question is hard.
> (Skye Online Reflection, 2005c)

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7 *The Student Protection Policy* outlines the responsibilities and commitment of Education Queensland to providing a safe and supportive learning environment, preventing and responding to harm or risk of harm for all students. Four categories of harm are addressed: harm caused by a school employee; harm caused by another student; harm caused by someone outside the state education institution environment; and student self-harm.
Skye grappled with her own emerging teaching identity, the power imbalance and the “fine line” between caring and being too friendly. For other participants the line between a student’s home and school life was unclear. Several participants questioned if drama teachers should be probing or exploring students private life at all (Alex Online Reflection, 2005c; Michael Online Reflection, 2005c). Parameters for “duty of care” were explored in other reflections:

Prior to the process drama, I was aware of the notion of disclosure if a student comes to you as a teacher and identifies an issue of abuse, etc. What I have an ethical dilemma with is when it is ”hearsay”. What is your duty of care as a teacher when the abuse, etc. is just rumour? Do you have the responsibility to interrogate the ”victim” to open up the dialogue? As a future teacher, I want to ensure the safe welfare of all of my students but unless I am approached directly by the student themselves, where does my responsibility as teacher end and the responsibility of school administration/counsellor kick in?

(Jack Online Reflection, 2005c)

The boundaries of duty, accountability and responsibility were explored; however the process drama seemed to raise more questions for Jack than answers.

**The Purpose of Drama**

Several participants argued that drama education should connect with personal experience. Cathy’s argument connects to the global aims and rationale of the senior drama syllabus:

I could see why most people thought the assessment item and the performance itself was a bit touchy to start off with, but I didn’t see it as being something ‘wrong’ or ‘bad’. My argument at the end was that drama is about exploring, reenacting and reflecting on our lives and the world we live in and this performance does exactly that. As drama teachers we need to bring these issues to people’s attention instead of writing a script on it then sweeping it under a rug. (Cathy’s Online Reflection, 2005c)

The value of exploring personal stories through performance was defended:

One of the main reasons I became a drama teacher was because you can express yourself in a safe environment. In fact, my most memorable drama moment was my year 10 monologue where I was able to portray a side of me, through the drama conventions, that I had never been able to talk about before. This was a great experience for me, so I can see the value of using your own stories for inspiration. (Ruth Online Reflection, 2005c)

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8 The duty of care is the common law duty to take all reasonable care to prevent harm to others (that is those to whom the duty is owed). The duty of care may also be phrased in a negative sense – it is a duty not to place others at unreasonable risk of harm. The duty of care is not absolute. The question that should be asked in determining whether the duty has been or will be discharged is: “What would a reasonable person do/have done in all the circumstances?”
Other participants agreed that a relevant and effective curriculum should not be divorced from students’ lived experience. Barbara made connections to other educational policy and curriculum documents and argued for an engaging curriculum:

I think we have a responsibility to help students develop emotionally and socially, which is obviously connected with their personal lives. EQ’s big thing about Productive Pedagogies (9), and especially ‘connectedness’ talk about relevance to students lived experiences and lives outside of school etc, and for high school students especially in Yrs 8-10 their personal lives rule their school lives! If friends are fighting or if someone is being bullied, that is what their entire school week is about, it’s not about Drama or Maths or English. I think ignoring students’ personal lives is a sure path to a traditional curriculum and pedagogy that runs a super high risk of disengagement and irrelevant to contemporary adolescents. (Barbara Online Reflection, 2005c)

- **Student and Teacher Safety and Protection**

For several participants the process drama assisted them to consolidate their own procedures and lines of communication if they were faced with a similar experience. However this was often for the teacher’s legal protection as much as the student’s welfare (Michelle Online Reflection, 2005c; Alex Online Reflection, 2005c; Barbara Online Reflection, 2005c; Ruth Online Reflection, 2005c; Leigh Online Reflection, 2005c; Skye Online Reflection, 2005c; Michael Online Reflection, 2005c). For other participants the drama helped clarify their professional priorities:

Talk to the student in the most approachable and understanding way possible. I wouldn’t ignore it or palm it off to someone else to deal with until I had taken that first step of talking to them and finding out the facts. If further action needed to be taken in terms of an intervention or meeting with a counsellor I would do that – but the student comes first. (Cathy Online Reflection, 2005c)

Other participants questioned the safety of exploring sensitive personal issues and if drama teachers were qualified enough to deal with these safely:

I found that it was the students OWN material which unnerved me the most. I believe that the outlet should be there however I don’t feel that I or many of my other colleagues have the training to deal with the aftermath of what could possibly come out from the material. I think that we [are] responsible for the students mental and physical well being and if you are not prepared for the possibilities of the outcomes then it is wrong to do that to another person, student

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9 The *Productive Pedagogies* were developed in 2003 as part of Education Queensland’s “New Basics” project. They describe a common framework under which teachers can choose and develop learning strategies in response to student background. The twenty Productive Pedagogies are grouped under the following educational objectives: *intellectual quality, connectedness, supportive classroom environment,* and *recognition of difference. Connectedness* aims to ensure that students engage with real, practical or hypothetical problems which connect to the world beyond the classroom.

or not. I think that life experiences add to the drama and that students personal lives give great ‘meat’ to the issues and texts we explore as a class but the fictional context we are given by a text or stimulus item rather than ‘The Secret Life of Teenagers’ where the students mention other students, family members, staff, friends etc. is and can be dangerous. It is a really fine line and I think that it is sometimes hard to make the decision to blur the boundaries however keeping that element of safety is a major priority. (Michelle Online Reflection, 2005c)

Several participants reflected on the need for confidentiality for staff and students, connecting their experience in the process drama to school policy and procedures (Phillip Online Reflection, 2005c; Michael Online Reflection, 2005c). For Skye the process drama and the practice of the drama teacher Miss J presented several contradictions:

Another ethical dilemma for me was the concept of ‘What happens in the drama classroom stays in the drama classroom’. To me, it was wrong to make this statement when in all likelihood it would most definitely not remain true. Students are bound to discuss what they explored in the drama classroom. Yes the teacher needed to try to instil in students that this was a trust exercise and that the trust of students should not be broken by idol gossip in the school yard, but this needed to be done in a more explicit way. Simply telling students what happens in drama stays in drama is not enough, especially when these stories are being developed for public viewing in the first place. Students needed to be made aware of why this was such an important thing, that this was personal, that peoples most precious thoughts and feelings were involved.

(Skye Online Reflection, 2005c)

Trust was mentioned by several participants as vital to learning in the drama classroom. They did not want to break trust with students as they saw this as pivotal to maintaining positive relationships and an integral part of the relational nature of drama pedagogy (Maree Online Reflection, 2005c; Michael Online Reflection, 2005c; Maggie Online Reflection, 2005c). However, personal information shared by the fictional year eleven class did not stay in Miss J’s drama classroom. Her contract of confidentiality with her drama students was impossible to sustain particularly in light of Education Queensland’s Student Protection Policy and the mandatory requirement to report potential student harm.

The process drama prompted connection to other experiences beyond the drama for several participants. Phillip referred to a parent he knew socially who was outraged at the content covered by her son’s drama class based on “indigenous issues” (Online Reflection, 2005c). Zoe connected her response to the drama with her recent school experience, reflecting on how inadequately schools provide care, and her own distrust of processes:
I found this process drama very confronting as it reflected some of my experiences on prac, I got a little too involved and found myself talking over others and blabbing emotionally, cos [sic] deep down, when I was faced with students who had those experiences it was so hard because in my heart I didn’t feel like we were helping them at all, I mean we went to the school counsellor, we organized a youth worker from ‘reconnect’ to come out and do some family mediation and try to work with the student, and the process was left there for me because I left and this made it very unresolved (so I felt as though my issues of having no closure came out in the process drama), and also I don’t have faith in the ‘appropriate’ bodies, I have many friends who work in family services and the issues they face are huge but they are very disempowered by the resources they are given by the government, so although I know some of the ‘legal’ processes that I must abide by as a teacher, as a person, I don’t have faith in those processes. (Zoe Online Reflection, 2005c)

Zoe explains her strong engagement in the drama because she connected her real experiences and feelings of lack of closure from her last practicum, with the fictional experience. Zoe identified with the key moral agent of the drama Miss J and her lack of power to affect meaningful change but questioned if teachers ever do achieve closure because students are referred on and handed to other agencies.

**Practitioner Reflection: Past Tense**

The “Secret Life of Us” process drama both challenged and affirmed the participants’ personal understanding of a number of topics; the aims of drama education, the broader purpose of schools and education, what engaging curriculum may be, the boundaries of the teacher’s responsibility and student protection. Participation in the process drama both affirmed and clarified some of the participants’ teaching philosophies and their commitment to drama education. Others obtained new knowledge about responsibilities and mandated procedures linked to disclosure and student harm. For many however the drama enabled them to analyse the fictional experience, connect this to real incidents or personal experience and apply their new understanding to future practice and behaviour.

This process drama offered concrete and relatively easy roles for the participants to engage with. The fictional world was very close to their real-life roles however this simplicity enhanced the engagement of most of the participants and enabled the group to improvise freely within the fiction. Despite the simplicity of the drama there is evidence of the participants reflecting on several complex aspects of professional ethics. The reflection after “The Secret Life of Us” is richer, personal and passionate. Several participants debated issues and expressed strong personal views during the drama, in the
post-drama debrief and in their written reflections. There is evidence of greater clarity and a stronger commitment to their position in their reflection. Why?

Taking the central role and framing closer to their future professional role heightened most participants’ engagement in the drama. The more negotiated structure of the drama allowed the participants to invent the central role, explore their own interests in greater depth and to reflect through dramatic action as well as discussion. The process drama structure was less concerned with narrative and more focused on decision-making, the moment of ethical dilemma, and building understanding of the central role’s world. This promoted stronger participant identification with the central moral agent. They connected their fictional experience with their real-life experience demonstrating evidence of metaxis, tension between the real and the fictional context, occurring during and after the drama. By concentrating on the teacher experience the participants had a greater opportunity to model and practice future action and explore ethical practice. Most of the dramatic conventions selected allowed the participants to shape the content of the drama and layer their own contextual details to build the tension.

Frames twelve, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen evolved from the participants’ particular interests. The group wanted to explore Miss J’s dilemma further and what might happen if she confronted Stacey, referred her to a Guidance Officer or if Miss J sought more support. This responsiveness in the drama design to the participants’ concerns increased their commitment to investigating the ethical dilemma and enabled them to trial and debate different alternatives. The outcomes of the drama and choices of the central role remained open ended and this ambiguity provided more space for reflection. This flexible approach to facilitation enabled the practitioner to slow the drama down and give more time to the investigation of ‘professional decision-making’ moments. Different perspectives and outcomes could be dissected and analysed by the participants.

Reflection after process drama one, “Rowan’s Story” and drama two “The Secret life of Us” demonstrated evidence of normative consequentialist and non-consequentialist ethical reasoning. The best outcome for the student, benefits for the teacher or the school were considered by the participants alongside thinking about the teachers’ duty, boundaries of care and responsibility. “The Secret Life of Us” promoted a broader range of reflection on principles, rules, duty and moral contracts. However, there is less evidence from either drama of reflection from the ‘inside-out’, on moral character driving
decision-making, apart from Skye’s reflection that teachers need to be “supportive, caring, someone the student can come to if they need help, a guide, a mentor, an inspiration … yet remain a person whom the student respects” (Online Reflection, 2005c).

I was interested in exploring this further and investigating whether process dramas require a different structure if they are to promote deeper reflection about moral character and the central virtue ethic question of “What kind of person should I be?” (Cohen, 2004, p. 49).
Chapter Seven: Process Drama Three

“The Party”

“We can’t pretend to be anyone but ourselves”

Practitioner: Past Tense

Participants’ responses to “Rowan’s Story” and “The Secret Life of Us” covered a number of themes connected to professional ethics including reflection on: the wider impact of rules and policy such as expulsion on students and schools; the “fine line” or subtle boundaries of a teacher’s duties, loyalties, relationships and responsibilities; the purpose of drama education, preconditions necessary for learning in the drama classroom and appropriateness of curriculum content; and lastly, safety, confidentiality, and protection for students and teachers.

The literature review of current practice in professional ethics pedagogy located a concentration of studies that focused on the development of pre-professionals’ principled moral reasoning (McAuliffe & Ferman, 2001; Bebeau, 2002; Cummings et al., 2004). Several critics believe that ethics education programs fail to address the more affective dimensions of professional ethics, particularly the cultivation of moral character (Griseri, 2002, p. 386; Reiman, 2004; Hill, 2004). A moral character or a virtue ethic approach examines the personal qualities and disposition of the teacher and how this impacts upon their professional conduct. Carr expresses this viewpoint succinctly when he states, “we remember teachers as much for the kinds of people they were than for anything they may have taught us” (Carr, 2007, p. 369). Applying the moral language of character involves not only asking what is the right thing to do but “which decision has the most integrity in terms of the kind of person I either perceive myself to be or am striving to become?” (Nash, 1996, p. 63, emphasis in original).

Neither of the previous process dramas encouraged participant reflection on virtue ethics in any depth. In this third drama I was interested in exploring if process drama could assist pre-service drama teachers to reflect on professional ethics and particular the more affective dimensions such as moral character. I decided to look at the concept of boundaries, touched upon in participants’ previous reflections, and extend this further by focussing on the potential tensions between the private and professional lives of teachers.
The third and final process drama, “The Party”, is set in a small community, a place with little escape for any professional from public scrutiny.

In terms of my facilitation and creative design of the drama I wanted to trial what could happen if I was more responsive to the development of dramatic action and contextual material from the participants. Therefore I planned frames one to eight and the final frame in advance and decided to look for opportunities, as the participants built the contextual details, to extend or modify different episodes during the process drama (See Appendix C). I selected a range of dramatic conventions that would be applied only if they were appropriate to the exploration of the ethical dilemma. I planned to look for moments of ethical decision-making emerging in the drama and to slow these moments down. I wanted to experiment with a non-text based pre-text and the use of practitioner in role to establish the dramatic world. My plan for “The Party” incorporated effective structural elements from the previous drama and again placed a young teacher at the centre of the drama as the primary moral agent.

Critical Observer: Present Tense
Observation September 15, 2005.

Frame One
Fifteen participants and the practitioner occupy the room. They are playing an energetic game of Knights, Mounts and Cavaliers requiring a high level of physical contact.

Frame Two
The group recall the qualities, character and disposition of their favourite teacher. The participants share one key quality with the group, these memorable positive qualities include; fun, sense of humour, creative, passionate, encouraging, enthusiastic, knowledge of their subject area, genuine concern for others and wise. The camera zooms in on different pairs as they describe their favourite teacher in greater detail. Diane tells Maree how all the students wanted to be in Mr XXX’s class because he was fun. Maree comments that, “what they do out of the classroom”, as much as in the classroom impacts upon teachers’ relationships with students. Alex describes his favourite teacher to the whole group, a teacher he recently worked with during his practicum, who maintained the respect of students through her consistency, passion for her subject area and her democratic classroom practices. He too mentions the phrase, “in and out of the
classroom”, and regards her consistency in values and behaviour in both contexts as a key reason why this particular teacher was so popular. The practitioner links this discussion to the next frame, informing the group that this drama is about a young teacher with many of these positive qualities, a favourite teacher to many of her students, valued by the school community.

Frame Three
The practitioner introduces the pre-text for the drama in role as ‘Rosemary’, the school tuckshop co-ordinator. The contextual details of the close knit small country town, six hours drive from Brisbane, emerge through a hot-seat questioning convention. Rosemary sits, tea towel in hand, and answers the participants’ questions about ‘Karen’, a second year teacher, who has integrated well into the local community including dating a local, Stuart Cameron, aged twenty-five. His parents Merv and Maureen own the local hardware store and they have another son Michael, a student in Karen’s year twelve English class. Karen will soon be transferring away. Rosemary frequently states, “Such a shame to lose a good teacher, such a shame”. The participants pose a range of questions to Rosemary, building their understanding of the fictional world. However details about Karen’s love life and why she is leaving are left ambiguous. Several unanswered questions suggest future tensions and possible issues for exploration in the remainder of the drama.

Frame Four
The group reconstruct a Saturday in the life of Karen, exploring the private life of the English and History teacher. They initially create a tableau of a moment in time from the day. These are not shared but serve as stimulus for the next dramatic convention. A storytelling circle develops as each small group narrates her activities through the eyes of the third person, describing what they witnessed. Each storyteller listens to the previous group’s representation and negotiates contextual details to build a verbal picture of her activities. The narrative builds as the participants assume various community roles and viewpoints with a particular focus on Karen’s love life. Leigh begins the story circle in role as a local gossip, “it’s a little bit obvious that this is not a platonic relationship”. Karen’s day includes a midmorning coffee with her boyfriend, attending the local football game (Zoe), dinner at the bowling club with Stuart with some “tension in the air” (Megan) before being spotted “rolling on the grass” with three other people later that evening outside the teachers’ accommodation (Ruth). In reality this was a friendly game of touch
football. The narrative has an element of exaggeration, gossip and misunderstanding. This convention successfully explores how little privacy there might be in a small town and how assumptions can easily override fact.

Frame Five
Frame four enables the participants to build a more detailed picture of Karen as a teacher and the nature of her relationship with students from her year twelve English class. The participants in role as a member of Karen’s year twelve class come forward and verbalise their message in Karen’s farewell card. Some of their responses include:

Maree: Dear Miss Morelli, thanks very much for being a great teacher, you were the best, thanks so much for all your love and support, Please stay in touch at smilenshine 4me@hotmail.com. Love Sarah.

Phillip: Dear Miss M, Thanks for the footy tips.

Leigh: (Very shy quiet voice) …thanks for all the help…bye.

Zoe: Great to have someone not so boring in town for a while at least you’ve seen the city lights. Don’t Go!

Megan: Thank you so much for helping me with all of my uni choices. I now have accommodation and I couldn’t have done it without you. I’ll never forget you. Jane

Jenny: Can’t wait for the formal miss. You rock! Jenny

Michelle: Thanks for coming to watch our netball games. Love Michelle and the girls

Cathy: Miss M, You’re the man. You should call us sometime. Later. Jason.

These statements paint a picture of Karen Morelli’s disposition as an approachable, helpful, generous, popular and caring teacher with strong interpersonal communication skills but also suggest the sexual nature of one student’s perception of their favourite teacher. Cathy’s portrayal of Jason also includes a lewd gesture suggesting his sexual fantasies towards Miss Morrelli.

Frame Six
In this frame the participants explore a moment in Karen’s teaching day when she is sexually harassed by a small group of year twelve students. Cathy is asked to build on the role she assumed as Jason in the previous frame. Jason is hot-seated and reveals that he thinks “Miss Morrelli is hot”. He describes how he waits for the bus each afternoon
after school with Chrissio, his best mate “who’s really popular with the ladies”, Dammo the sidekick who the “girls just want to be friends with” and Johnno the captain of the football team who “all the chicks like but he’s got a girlfriend”. Cathy selects various participants to assume these roles and moulds a tableau of the boys at the end of the school day waiting for the bus.

Alex volunteers to play the role of Karen on bus duty. Karen is harassed by the male students, her clothing and “nipples” commented upon. The scene is improvised in front of the remaining participants until the scene is stopped and the potential outcomes discussed. Several options were explored in a modified forum theatre convention to investigate how Karen might deal with this situation. Alex in role as Karen assumes a strong assertive tone and orders the boys to board the bus choosing to ignore their inappropriate sexual comments. The boys refuse to move. The group stop the action, discuss the boy’s reaction to tactical ignoring and decide to explore what may happen if Karen confronts them. Zoe assumes the role of Karen and tries to use humour, reason and then flattery to convey that the boys do not intimidate her. Zoe, in role as Karen, puts her hands on her hips and says, “Wow Jason…you know that I can take a joke but that is disrespectful …you know the rules”. Jason responds, “Should I take you out to dinner Miss, to make up for it?”. Zoe replies “You’re a lovely guy Jason, but I don’t think that would be appropriate”. This version of events sparks animated debate from the participants, they talk over the top of each other, Zoe tries to explain her thinking in the moment, “I tried to elevate him, to diffuse the situation”. Leigh supports Zoe’s approach, “I like how you tried to show them that they did not intimidate you”. The group are adamant that the sexual tone must stop or it will escalate and brainstorm several options to address the student behaviour. Alex stresses that Karen needs to go “higher up” to obtain support and that she “needs to protect her reputation”. Maggie wants Karen to take a more assertive response and to challenge the students further while Michelle argues that this really isn’t the “time and place”.

Both Zoe and Maree recount real events of stories that happened to them on their recent school practicum. Zoe describes how a group of Samoan male students called her “Girlfriend”, how she dealt assertively with them and they desisted. Maree shares how some students addressed her by her first name and tried to walk with her to the tuckshop each day until other staff intervened and demanded that the students call her by her last name and maintain a more respectful distance. The group continue to argue about the
merits of several options before the practitioner contributes to the discussion, challenging their suggestions, questioning how Karen may diffuse the situation rather than “fuel the flame”. The practitioner asks the group to find other strategies and for them to consider, “What would your favourite teacher do?” Generally the group agree that they would choose a more appropriate time to speak with the key student and enlist the help of other senior staff to prevent further harassment. Through the dramatic action, context and reflection out of role the participants are able to explore issues related to power, choice, and how a teacher’s moral character or disposition may be communicated in any encounter with students.

Frame Seven
The practitioner introduces a second pre-text, injecting further tension into the drama - an invitation to Michael Cameron’s 18th Birthday party. Working in pairs the participants improvise a scene when Karen is confronted by a member of her year twelve English class with invitation in hand asking her if she will be attending the party. The ‘Karens’ are non-committal and most evade responding to the invite. Participants in role as Karen disclose their position at the end of the scene in a thought tapping convention: Leigh says, “Sounds like fun, I’m going”; Zoe says, “No, I don’t want to blur the boundaries”; Maggie says, “I’ll go if the other teachers are going”; Philip firmly states, “Fun but No!”.

Frame Eight
This frame explores the issue of attendance at the party further. Stuart and Karen discuss if she will attend Michael’s 18th birthday party or not. Alex and Barbara improvise this scene in front of the group and several issues emerge. Barbara in role as Karen isn’t sure how she will relate to the students present at the party, particularly if she observes them drinking underage. Most of her year twelve English class will be there including one or two boys who recently harassed her during bus duty. Alex in role as Stuart wants her to support his family. They negotiate if she could come for a just a short time, if she could stay mainly in the house with his family rather than the young people outside. Karen’s final decision is left ambiguous and there is room for the remainder of the group to consider which action she might take. At the conclusion of the scene the participants enter the performance space and state their position as Karen. They are divided, with Phillip firmly stating he would not attend, quoting from a document or legal statement he has memorised that, “whenever there is a student present teachers must demonstrate a duty of care”. Leigh at the other extreme says she is going to stand “by her man”, talk to
the students and have a “good time”. Several other participants select a more middle ground; attending the party for a short time and then leaving (Michelle; Ruth; Liz). Megan assuming the role of Karen is adamant that she will attend the party and states, “There is no sense in hiding, I live in this town and this is who I am.” The slowing down of this decision-making moment allows space for the participants to stand in Karen’s shoes and reason what the ‘right’ course of action may be from her perspective.

Frame Nine
Half of the participants are enrolled by the practitioner as the school Principal with concerns about some of the rumours they have heard about Michael Cameron’s party. The Principal has been contacted by the police for any information about an assault that occurred that evening to a year eleven student. It is the next Monday after the party and the Principal seeks information from Karen due to her family contacts. The Principal has a second issue to discuss with Karen. Applications for transfer are due very soon, “Has she any thoughts on her commitment for next year?”. The remainder of the group are enrolled as Karen. The participants simultaneously improvise this scene in pairs around the room. The camera zooms in on Leigh in role as Karen. She saw very little at the party, leaving early, she is uncertain about her future in the town and finishes the scene with the promise to give her plans for the following year some consideration.

Frame Ten
This frame explores the question: If Karen remains or leaves the town how does she want to be remembered or known as a teacher? In pairs the participants take turns to assume the role of Karen. Karen is interviewed in a ‘true confessions’ hot-seat convention. These short hot-seats appear very focussed and quiet. Several of the ‘Karens’ appear uncertain if they want to stay or go, if they can thrive in this town where there is no reprieve from public scrutiny (Barbara; Michael; Diane). Out of role the participants question what she may do: Maggie says, “How would she survive long term?”; Leigh questions, “Does she ask for a transfer or is she given a transfer?”. Others pursue a romantic angle, contemplating if Stuart would follow her (Liz; Megan). The participants are distracted by the narrative at this point and struggle to focus on the more significant part of the framing question, “how would she want to be remembered?”. The framing question needs to focus on only one aspect. This convention needs modification and may have worked better as writing in role, set in another time or location or a third person convention where community and school members describe what qualities they remember.
Final Frame Eleven

In the final frame of the drama the participants respond to their experience during the third drama by creating a dramatic statement about what they found significant. Two of the scenes spark strong discussion amongst the participants.

In scene one, Barbara and Michelle each stand on a chair balancing on one foot, their hands outstretched to the side. They stare into the distance, appearing unbalanced and directionless. Randomly they call out various roles from their daily lives, mother, daughter, Telstra customer, teacher as they teeter from side to side. They try to find their balance and seem to almost place both feet on their individual chair however they never quite reach equilibrium before ending the scene.

In scene two, Ruth, Liz and Megan use the song “pop goes the weasel”. Ruth sits and sings in the centre, winding an imaginary box beside her. Megan pops out of the first box, and says “Ruth Smith likes to go clubbing, has a boyfriend, enjoys having a good time, likes to party...” before Ruth contains her and pushes her back down. Ruth then winds up a second box on the opposite side from which Liz pops out at Miss Smith, the model teacher, who prepares her lessons long into the night and espouses several pedagogical theories with a very serious and dedicated demeanour. She too is pushed back into the box. The song and the winding starts again until eventually both boxes explode and they argue with each other as to who the real Ruth Smith is. These two personas; Ruth Smith and Miss Smith are eventually subdued and the central Ruth ends the scene walking away with the parting comment, “I hate boxes”.

Both scenes stimulate discussion amongst the participants about duty and the search for an appropriate professional and personal persona. They debate how much of themselves they can expose in a professional context. Several participants try to articulate their position. Michelle explains, “We want to apply the same boundaries to all of the roles that we play, we can’t pretend to be anyone but ourselves”; she cannot cease to be herself or expose aspects of herself and her personal attitudes in her professional role. She qualifies this with the comment that she would remain mindful of “protocols”. Zoe believes that teachers need to become comfortable with areas of “non disclosure” and decide how much they want to reveal about themselves. Barbara expresses her fear regarding how unpractised she feels for her future teacher role, “I don’t know who Barbara is as a teacher”. She refers to the balancing scene described above and points out
that she knows how to be a daughter and a Telstra customer but “teacher” is so new to her. She does not want to copy teachers she encountered during her recent practicum and “put on her teacher face” instead she wants to be more authentic and find what works for her. Maggie passionately expresses her view that no matter what career; “You must be true to yourself, you need to know yourself, I would not want to be anyone but myself, because I like myself”. Alex discloses how unready he feels to be a teacher stating, “I don’t want to be mature”. Leigh links the discussion to her recent teaching experience in a private drama college and claims that finding your manner and persona as a teacher comes with practice. She concludes with, “I am going to be exhausted if I have to act all the time…students just see through it”. Liz describes how when permitted “to be myself” on her first practicum she receives chocolate and flowers. However when she completes her more recent practicum, she is forced to portray a different, less credible, teaching persona, and “got nothing!”

Participant Post-Drama Reflection: Past Tense

Two different types of reflection emerged during the post-drama discussion. In the first participants linked their experiences during the process drama to events in their real lives or stories that had been told to them. In the second, they reflected about their future role, the boundaries they may apply and how they want to be perceived by the community. This linking of the content and experiences from the process drama to real stories included: Diane describing her brother’s visits to a teacher friend in a small town and how he would sneak in under the cover of darkness to avoid gossip; Liz describing her discomfit when she was working as a bra fitting specialist in a lingerie shop and a student she was teaching on practicum required service - she refused explaining to the customer why she felt inappropriate. Alex encountered some of his students underage drinking at the races and, intoxicated himself at the time, confiscated their beers and then brushed off the student comments at school the following week. Jenny described how a drama teacher kissed a past student at a year twelve party and how staff and students lost respect for this teacher.

Despite the participants’ earlier discussion about their desires to maintain their sense of self and personal freedom, their discussion started to swing towards the consideration of boundaries and other perspectives such as, “you need to be yourself but tweak it a little” (Leigh). Michelle related how the drama brought back “so many memories”. She shared
several positive “favourite” teacher stories from her adolescence growing up in a small town. She explained how she loved the teachers who were involved in the community, who drove them around and who they sometimes drank with at the pub but then her reflection became more critical as she realised how some of their choices and actions were perhaps inappropriate, “now that I can think professionally”. Participants reflected on their future choices and actions: Maggie admitted that she would not wear her “mini” skirt to school; Maree acknowledged that she had begun to disclose less of her personal life at school; and Megan described how she curbed her tendency to flirt in a school context. The group discussion shifted to how teachers need to maintain self control, consider the impact of their actions and avoid extremes such as getting “shit faced and dancing on the table at the pub” (Leigh). Overall most participants ended their post-drama reflection with agreement about the importance of maintaining student, community and self respect through their actions and moral character both in and out of the classroom.

Participant Online Reflection: Past tense

Most of the participants reflected on their experience of the overall research project in their final online reflection, only two participants specifically commented on “The Party” drama. Jenny made the following comment about the final drama:

I found that I connected with the last drama the most. I guess being a young female teacher having the issue of senior boys who are taller and stronger than me they can often try to intimidate or try to act ‘bigger’ than me is very real. I feel that I was highly engaged during this drama therefore gaining a much stronger and deeper understanding about how to handle this issue if it is to arise. Also I feel confident that I can confidently handle that situation so it is not to ‘fuel the flame’ but instead put it out. (Online reflection, 2005d)

Jenny’s written response related to frame six in “The Party” process drama which explored Karen’s experience of sexual harassment. Jenny benefited from practice in how to “handle” this situation, how to diffuse the immediate circumstances and the exploration of other preventative or disciplinary strategies. Her response provides evidence of metaxis, the power of the tension between the real and the fiction, to foster deeper engagement and reflection by participants. She identified with the central moral agent, a young female teacher and engaged in the drama because it felt “real” to her, connecting with her actual experiences in a school context.

“The Party” drama provoked thought about intimate aspects of identity, issues of acceptance and social exclusion in some communities. The delicate balance between freedom, self expression and community expectations was explored both during the
drama and post-drama in some participants’ reflections. Michael’s experience of the
drama prompted him to question how his physical safety may be at risk in a potentially
homophobic community:

This drama taught me to be especially careful in what information I revealed
about myself if I was placed in a country school. I really came to the conclusion in
the end that I would not be able to be placed in a country regional school due to
my sexuality. I believe my sexuality to be only part of my life and that it really is
an issue (my sexual life/personal life) that has no place in the classroom. By being
in a country town I feel that such an issue will place me physically and
emotionally in danger. On the issue of mixing private and school life I think this
drama taught me that for me I should keep these both separate. (Online reflection,
2005d)

Michael’s process drama experience consolidated his views, reinforced his stereotype of
country towns as violent places with little tolerance for difference and prompted him to
re-evaluate the boundaries of his private and professional life.

Practitioner Reflection: Past tense
Reflection during and after “The Party” process drama showed evidence of the
participants considering several aspects of professional ethics linked to moral character
such as defining a teacher’s distinguishing characteristics, how teachers may embrace
some virtues and avoid certain vices, and the impact of community structures and norms

The more negotiated structure of “The Party” process drama allowed for specific ethical
decision-making moments to be examined in greater detail and for contextual elements to
be expanded. This open planning approach heightened my awareness as a practitioner
and forced me to give greater ownership for the direction and content of the drama to the
participants. For instance, I had no intention of including any issues linked to sexual
harassment however one of the male student characters created by Cathy made sexually
explicit actions about the central role ‘Karen’ towards the end of frame five. The drama
sidetracked for about fifteen minutes during frame six to explore these student attitudes
further yet this ‘detour’ added an unexpected layer to the drama, establishing a more
complex picture of community norms and values that later influenced Karen’s decision-
making. I participated in frame six in a different way by challenging the responses of the
participants, injecting a form of expert knowledge (Ethell, 1997, p. 23) as I questioned
how the teacher could diffuse the situation and address the behaviour of the students in a
more effective way. The specific manner and style of ‘Karen’s’ interactions with the
students was scrutinized and evaluated for its future impact and ethics. This detour, as
reflected in Jenny’s online feedback (2005d), became one of the most helpful and engaging aspects of the drama for some of the participants.

This detour meant that frame ten developed in response to the participants’ interests. At the completion of frame nine, the scene with the Principal and Karen, the group were questioning what she may do. Frame ten allowed them to explore this question however the choice of convention could have been more effective. The exact focus of this frame was unclear and therefore the real question of, “How do I want to be remembered?”, which linked to the deeper themes of the drama was hijacked by the narrative. Had I greater clarity myself as to what this frame needed to explore; I would have selected a more appropriate dramatic convention or possibly added another frame after this to achieve this aim. I was mindful of O’Neill’s work and her point that the practitioner needs to be able to “release the lesson plan” (Taylor, 1995, p. 13). The plan still needs to be there, the creative work of the process drama practitioner needs to occur prior to the process drama in order to ensure that each frame contributes to the whole experience and concentrates on the more significant questions raised by the drama. Openness and responsiveness are crucial however of equal importance is the artistry and clarity of the practitioner, which only comes with pre-planning. ‘Detours’ off the plan should be explored but the plan must still exist for aesthetic engagement to occur.

Analysis of the participants’ actions and discussion during the drama and post-drama reflection revealed evidence of aesthetic engagement through the simultaneous presence of animation, connection, and heightened awareness (Bundy, 2003a). Participants demonstrated ‘animation’ during the drama, particularly within frame eleven, developing symbolic representations and expressing comments that conveyed a heightened sense of self and a consciousness of their relationship with the world. Participants demonstrated ‘connection’ during frame eleven and in post-drama discussion forming “an association between the events of the drama and their real world existence” (Bundy, 2003a, p. 2). ‘Heightened awareness’ existed during frame eleven and in the post-drama discussion when the participants ceased “to focus on the direct action of the drama” and started to consciously concentrate on the ideas of the drama and how this connected with the greater social world (Bundy, 2003a).

Compared to previous process dramas, this drama allowed for more participant reflection about the ‘self’, about how they would like to be perceived as teachers and consideration
of what they may or may not do in a similar context to maintain their personal and professional integrity. The responses to the symbolic images and metaphoric scenes created by the group in the final frame of the drama were some of the richest and most affective reflections occurring during any of the process dramas. The pre-service teachers debated the deeper aspects of their moral selves and asked the vital virtue ethic question, “Who do I want to be?”. This drama, more than any other, encouraged the participants to look at professional ethics with an ‘inside-out’ orientation. There are a number of reasons why this could have occurred.

Relationships had strengthened over the three workshops with trust building amongst the participants. I had relaxed more in my facilitation style and showed fewer adherences to rigid planning. This supportive environment was evident in the lighter, playful quality of the drama, openness of discussion and higher degree of self disclosure during reflection such as Michael’s very candid and open response about his sexuality (Online Reflection, 2005d) and the discussion about “real” and authentic selves by several participants (Maggie post-drama reflection; Barbara post-drama reflection). Another reason may relate to the specific design of the process drama in terms of framing and roles. The initial frames of the drama significantly impacted on opportunities for metaxis later in the drama. For example, frame two discussions about the participant’s favourite teacher became a sub-current that surfaced later in the drama during: the farewell card comments for ‘Miss Morrelli’ in frame five; the end of frame six when that practitioner asked what their favourite teacher might do in this situation; and again in the post-drama discussion when Michelle described her favourite teachers.

The practitioner’s framing of the drama, the choice of roles, setting and manipulation of space and time, significantly impacted upon participant engagement and reflection. The roles played by the participants during “The Party” influenced the nature and content of the reflection during and after the drama. The closed setting of the drama established by the pre-text forced the participants to examine both the personal and professional dimensions of a teacher’s life. I was concerned by Michael’s reflection that he now felt more threatened and would avoid working in a small town. With more time and the use of more detailed pre-text material stereotypes of country towns could be counteracted. Perhaps the process drama needed to present a counter view of small communities including that of tolerance. By choosing to explore some student responses to Miss Morrelli more than others the drama was dominated by negative and sexual aspects. As
the practitioner I needed to be more mindful of presenting a range of perspectives and maintaining the balance of the drama.

“The Party” drama invited the participants to build and explore the personal and professional life of the central role creating a more holistic understanding of her world. The participants were required to view the context through the eyes of the central role or primary moral agent and analyse her decision-making process several times during the drama. Important dilemma moments in the drama were slowed down, stopped and examined. During these moments the participants embodied and justified ‘Karen’s’ personal position. The framing of the drama forced ‘Karen’ and the participants to find an ethical ‘way of being’ in a range of contexts and find a congruency between her/their personal and professional moral character.
Chapter Eight: The Analysis

“The dramas made it real and really made me think”

This chapter examines the final reflections of all participants in the study and specifically focuses on the experiences of the five individual case studies first introduced in chapter four: Leigh, Phillip, Zoe, Megan and Maree. Throughout the study I have attempted to establish a “dialogue between ideas and observations, between theory and data, between interpretation and action” (Ezzy, 2002, p. xiv). In this chapter this ‘dialogue’ continues as the participants’ reflections are interwoven with my interpretation and pre-existing theory in order to explore the central research question: Does process drama assist pre-service drama teachers to reflect on professional ethics?

Reflection about professional ethics could involve my participants in the study addressing both cognitive and affective dimensions of being an ethical teacher. In this chapter, I explicitly analyse the participants’ post-drama responses, recorded after the completion of all three dramas, for reflection on three key aspects of professional ethics: principled moral reasoning including professional standards, rules or codes; moral character or virtues; and moral agency.

As noted earlier in the literature review, approaches to professional ethics education can be categorised according to where the authority or basis for decision-making rests. Therefore, in the participants’ final reflections, I am seeking evidence of application of theories or principles from the ‘outside-in’; that is, it comes from the ‘outside’; the authority is imposed externally (Cohen, 2004, p. 49). This ‘outside-in’ perspective may include reflection on professional standards, a teacher’s duty, rules, consequences or involve the participants judging certain actions using principles such as inclusivity or justice to justify their position.

Secondly, the pre-service drama teachers’ reflections may originate from a virtue ethic where the basis for authority emanates from the ‘inside-out’; when moral behaviour or ethical decision-making flows from a person’s character (Cohen, 2004, p. 49). The study participants might question aspects of ‘self’, moving beyond thinking about what they should do as a teacher or why and instead consider who they are, applying the indicative question of “What kind of person should I be?” (Cohen, 2004, p. 49).
Thirdly, I am looking for participant responses that show evidence of an increased sense of moral agency. A moral agent demonstrates a higher level awareness of external influences but functions autonomously, knows the difference between right and wrong, is critically self aware and mindful of their conduct, and has the capacity to apply this knowledge to their decision-making in both their professional and personal relationships (Cooper, 2003, p.19; p. 46).

Overall these three approaches – ‘outside-in’, ‘inside-out’ and moral agency - are combined in the Four Component Model of moral literacy (Rest et al., 2000). Moral literacy is an integrated psychological process involving moral sensitivity, judgement, moral motivation, and identity formation and moral character. While some of these components such as character and judgement have been previously discussed, moral sensitivity offers another dimension to professional ethics with its emphasis on empathy, awareness and imagination. I am particularly looking for evidence of improved moral sensitivity or the capacity of participants to interpret a situation, to consider cause and effect, to imagine the affect of certain action on others and an awareness that a moral problem exists.

Another analytical lens is linked to my practice as a drama educator. Many practitioners claim that participatory dramatic forms like process drama offer an aesthetic space to develop a deeper understanding of self and situations, expanding the participant’s consciousness and ways of knowing (Bolton, 1979; Courtney et al., 1988; O’Neill, 1995; Neelands, 2002; Hatton, 2004). Therefore my focus is on how process drama may foster deeper reflection on professional ethics and particularly how aesthetic engagement influences the participants’ responses. My analysis began with the practitioner’s reflection after each drama in chapters five, six and seven. Already there are messages for me about framing, indicating how the design and structure of process drama combined with the choice of roles and pre-text material may influence participant reflection about professional ethics. Yet, the whole complex social cycle of the creative process and participant experience needs to be examined (O’Toole, 2006, p. 46). More insight can be gained as a practitioner by a closer examination of the participants’ overall reflection on their experience.
Participant Case Study One: Leigh

- **Pre Process Drama**
Leigh struggled with personal and professional boundaries prior to the study commencing (Leigh Interview, 16 June 2005a). She tried to determine how honest and open she could be in her communication with staff, parents and students. Leigh believed that building positive relationships with students was crucial to their learning in drama and a measure of her effectiveness as a teacher.

- **Post Process Drama**
Leigh participated in two of the process dramas, “The Secret Life of Us” and “The Party”. She assumed a range of roles and frequently contributed to post-drama discussions. Ethical issues present in “The Secret Life of Us” process drama connected to concerns about personal privacy expressed by Leigh in her pre-drama interview, however she remained unsure as to her own level of self disclosure:

> This drama raised questions which I had already considered – and no-one seems to have an answer for! It’s fantastic for teachers to have an impact on their students, and for students to feel comfortable talking to their teachers. However, what is the line between friend and professional? This is a major issue, I believe, and probably not the major one of the drama, but one which concerns me. (Online Reflection, 2005b)

The first process drama experience provided little guidance for Leigh’s struggle to determine her own professional and personal boundaries. This exploration of her limits emerged again during the third process drama, “The Party”. When Leigh, enrolled as ‘Karen’, is asked if she will attend the eighteenth birthday party of her boyfriend’s brother; she spontaneously replied, “Sounds like fun, I’m going” (Frame Seven Process Drama Three). In the next frame (Frame Eight) she states that she “will stand by her man”, attend the party, talk to the students and have a “good time”. In frame nine, improvising the role of Karen in a scene with the school Principal she states that she attended the party for only a short time and then left. During the final frame she commented that teachers should “be themselves” that it is no use pretending to be otherwise because this would be “exhausting” and that teachers should avoid getting “shit faced” at the pub. Later in the post-drama reflection she adds that teachers can be themselves but they may need to “tweak” this a little (Post-Drama Discussion Drama Three). This drama provided a space for Leigh to experiment, to test different reactions to
the ethical questions posed by the drama but her contradictory responses in and out of role revealed that she has yet to clarify her own position.

Leigh frequently projected herself into the context of the drama and attempted to understand what she may do in a similar situation, however after participating in two of the process dramas Leigh was still confused as “to what the proper code of behaviour is for young teachers” and looking for concrete solutions to guide her future practice (Leigh Online Reflection, 2005d). She believed that her participation in the process dramas overall raised her awareness but failed to provide the answers she was seeking:

> I think the major weakness of process dramas for making people aware of ethics etc. in teaching is that there is no concrete resolution at the end of them. So while they’re fantastic at making us aware of the issues, and making us think about what we’d do, it would be good to have some sort of firm answer to the question to resolve the problem neatly!! Or as neatly as possible anyway! (Leigh Online Reflection, 2005d)

Leigh wanted clearer frameworks for her to judge right from wrong. Leigh demonstrated an increase in moral sensitivity (Rest et al., 1999), a self acknowledged improvement in her ability to see and interpret a situation and to imagine cause and effect chains of events. While she identified the moral problem, she showed a desire for more moral judgement skills or ‘outside-in’ authority to guide her decision-making. Later in the same online reflection she presented a counter view, and considered what becoming a teacher actually meant. She made several connections to the ‘inside-out’ aspects of moral character and a virtue based ethic. The process drama experience raised her awareness as to how a teachers’ personal and professional character are entwined:

> These process dramas emphasised that teaching is about self and ethics. I think it’s essential that all beginning teachers have a better understanding of that. Teaching is not just a job but a lifestyle… therefore I think it’s imperative that teachers are transparent. Trying to keep parts of yourself private isn’t going to work in this kind of situation and being ‘caught out’ with a secret is going to be worse than being open about it to start with. (Leigh Online Reflection, 2005d)

Leigh’s participation in the process drama sparked some initial consideration of a “worthy mode of being – one that requires them to “be” (self identity) as they should want to be” (Totterdell, 2000, p. 137), however, she was still unclear as to her personal and professional boundaries or if she would alter her behaviour in similar school contexts. Leigh’s views are similar to other pre-professionals who wish to maintain a seamless congruence between their professional and personal lives, not wishing to accept the structural norms or values that certain communities and organisations may encourage (Nash, 1996, p. 85). Leigh believed that she would not alter her behaviour as a result of
her experience but felt that process drama presented a space for reflection, contemplation and for seeing issues or incidents in a new way:

I can’t say that these process dramas would encourage me to change my behaviour, but I would certainly be more inclined to look at possible problem situations from different perspectives before taking action. (Online Reflection, 2005d)

Drama practitioners claim educational drama provides opportunity for change in understanding or knowing to occur (Bolton, 1979, p. 45; Hatton, 2004, p. 114). Leigh’s final reflection echoes similar concerns and questions evident in her initial pre-drama interview (2005a). Yet, she is changed in some ways by her process drama experience, as she is more aware of “divergent voices” (Hatton 2004, p. 114), difference and ambiguities (Nicholson, 1999, p. 86). The process dramas provided a sufficiently meaningful context for Leigh to explore some aspects of professional ethics but her response suggests that perhaps more is needed to support her new awareness. Are other frameworks and principles needed to help supplement her reflection? Should process drama be used in conjunction with the application of codes and professional standards? Is a more explicit connection to professional principles and virtues needed in addition to the use of reflection and dramatic experience? This would require more time, resources and perhaps a dedicated University semester-long course. A more supplementary approach to professional ethics combining codes of conduct, ethical frameworks and virtue ethics, might assist Leigh to develop a clearer sense of moral agency and ultimately build greater confidence of her own professional and personal boundaries.

**Participant Case Study Two: Phillip**

- **Pre Process Drama**

Phillip’s initial interview (Phillip Interview, 29 June 2005a) revealed his dominant concern with gaining acceptance in the school community. He experienced conflict in his relationships with his supervising teachers, in staffrooms during his previous practicum, and with some students. He was concerned about improving his behaviour management skills and reducing the possibilities for “nervous breakdowns” to occur, which he described as a teacher feeling overwhelmed, becoming emotional in front of students, losing their confidence and motivation to teach. He wanted to appear professional, to belong, and to maintain control of his own emotions and his classes.
• **Post Process Drama**

Phillip attended all process drama sessions. He rarely spoke during the post-drama discussions or volunteered to assume roles that involved performance in front of the whole group. From process drama one, “Rowan’s Story”, Phillip obtained a greater sense of how he, as a teacher, is part of a bigger interconnected system, and that schools will continue to function despite his own thoughts and actions:

> What I took away from today’s drama is the fact that school life goes on. No matter what events whether you are involved in them or not, the school will always continue to function without you. Events within the school whether reported in the media or the local community, have an effect on so many more people that those directly involved. ie the school could be brought into disrepute because of the decisions made by others, the attitudes of the teachers is all too often unheard. I aim to be a ‘voiced’ teacher and try to be level headed as an ambassador for my school. (Phillip Online Reflection, 2005a)

Despite feeling powerless, Phillip wanted to maintain his own voice, to have his ideas and thoughts as an educator, heard. He was challenged by the content of the process drama which raised other ethical questions for him such as: “Would I talk to the media? What would I say to my students and other parents? How would I act when teaching this student?” (Phillip Online Reflection, 2005a). “The Secret Life of Us” drama provoked a stronger emotive response from Phillip:

> The whole ‘Passing the Buck’ and ‘It’s not my job’ was bantered with throughout the drama. I believe that yes as a teacher when such sensitive information like the information contained in the drama is leaked, that it is that teacher’s responsibility and duty of care to the child to act on that information. The most responsible manner in my eyes is to speak with the guidance counsellor. I am a role model. I am a mentor. I am a guide for my students to aspire to be like. I am not a counsellor. I am not a therapist. I would indeed do my utmost to help that student receive the support and guidance that they need but do not believe that I have to give that student the counselling that may be necessary. (Phillip Online Reflection, 2005b)

In this statement there is evidence of reflection from both the ‘outside-in’ and ‘inside-out’. Phillip explores how responsibility and principles such as “duty of care” may impact upon his actions however he also considers who he wants to be. He wants to be a role model and a mentor but is aware of the structural limitations of the drama teacher’s role and what he cannot be.

Phillip felt affirmed by the three dramas; that his already fixed sense of what is professional and ethical was accurate. The dramas confirmed for him that teachers need to be “diplomatic and level headed” (Phillip Online Reflection, 2005d). In his final
reflection he makes lengthy reference to a University unit “Education, The Law and the Beginning Teacher” which he was studying at the same time as his participation in the three process dramas. This legally-based unit used discussion and case study to explore concepts such as duty of care and student protection. Phillip found connections between the process dramas and his course work, and believed that they complemented one another. Although his enthusiasm for his legal course seemed to outweigh the long term effect of his dramatic experience:

SPB010 [Education, The Law and the Beginning Teacher] has absolutely influenced my practice because I am going to be more hands on when rostered to playground duty, taking students on excursions and camps and when scheduled for Physical Education supervision/s. My relationships with staff and students may be altered because of my newfound knowledge, but I am yet to test this. My professional conduct will mean that I will … be more active and aware of the running of my classroom and the events that occur both within the four walls of my room but within the realm of my school community. (Phillip Online Reflection, 2005d)

The ‘outside–in’ orientation of his legal unit provided regulations and external guidelines to direct his future practice. Phillip was comforted by the rules and ready to implement these in many aspects of his future teaching role. Phillip believed his experience of the three process dramas enabled him to hear a range of perspectives, raised his level of awareness and made him a better teacher:

The dramas have made me more aware of my responsibilities and given me the opportunity to hear other people’s responses and attitudes to such issues. These experiences have I believe made me a better teacher and participant in a school community. (Phillip Online Reflection, 2005d)

Phillip’s actions and reflection during the study demonstrated that the process drama experience mostly affirmed his existing views and ethical position. He wrote about his lack of engagement or absorption with the fictional world in two online responses, feeling that he played himself rather than a role:

The dramas have made me more aware of my expectations and the high standards that I not only set for my students but also for myself. I believe that by setting a high standard I am acting as a leader for other staff and may possibly influence them. The dramas have been organised as such that I have often not been engaged in a role but more as myself. Therefore often I have been involved personally, not fictionally. (Phillip Online Reflection, 2005d)

This proximity of the fictional context and roles to Phillip’s real context inhibited his ability to suspend his disbelief and play roles exploring other points of view. For
example, during drama three he chose to stand at the extreme end of a decision-making continuum stating that he would never attend a student party because no matter where he is his “duty of care” prevails particularly whenever students are present. Phillip’s absolute interpretation of the Child Protection Act (10) guided his decision-making process. Phillip demonstrated little reflection on the ambiguities of the contexts explored; he does not consider Karen’s perspective or personal loyalties to her boyfriend or his family in the final drama. He was invited to think and act as ‘Karen’ might but chose to respond as himself. He preferred a more deontological approach to professional ethics, remaining situationally insensitive, applying rules and principles uniformly.

If professional ethics education, “should prepare them to tolerate the ambiguity and uncertainty that are inevitable in practice” (Elkin, 2004, p. 2), then process drama as a form of pedagogy was unsuccessful as Phillip chose to view most of the ethical questions posed during the drama in a very fixed way. Or did I as the practitioner fail to provide frames, contexts and roles that required, as Neelands (2004) points out, the participants to behave “differently” – to take on roles and characters which take them “beyond” their own experience? Perhaps the process dramas failed to provide the “perturbation” (Kohlberg, 1981) or conflict needed for moral developmental growth to occur (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005, p. 420) Little dissonance occurred for Phillip, nothing to force an accommodation “of diverse and conflicting viewpoints” (Cummings et al., 2004, p.19). Phillip made frequent references to stories and events beyond the drama in his individual written reflections. Bundy states that this ability to transcend the drama and see connection beyond the fiction is a key aspect of aesthetic engagement (2003). However in this case the tension of the real world overshadowed Phillip’s ability to suspend his disbelief (O’Toole, 1992) and freely ‘play’ in the drama. He could not hold the fictional and the real world simultaneously in his mind. This raises questions for the practitioner as to how metaxis can be planned for, managed and exploited to heighten participant reflection and engagement. The school settings for the process dramas were too familiar and affirming, too close to Phillip’s real world. I could have used completely non-school-based contexts, metaphor, symbol or analogy to assist Phillip to slip the bounds of reality, to be other than himself and to come back to the real world “changed in some way”

10 The Queensland Child Protection Act 1999 and the Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000 are based on the principle that every child has a right to wellbeing and protection from harm. The Child Protection Act 1999 defines the role of government and its agencies in protecting children and supporting families in their responsibility to protect and care for their children.
(O’Neill, 1995, p. 151). However, other participants commented on the importance of ‘real-life’ aspects of the dramas and how this positively impacted on their engagement. These conflicting participant responses suggest that the use of fictional distancing must be balanced with the need for participant comfort, their ability to understand the contexts, relationships and the authenticity of the ethical dilemmas presented within the drama.

There are times as the practitioner that I wanted to debate Phillip’s views, to challenge his online reflections and dialogue further. However I resisted and instead felt that the process drama form must do this. It was only through my work in role and the dramatic conventions and contexts that other viewpoints could be introduced. I wonder how I could have engaged him more in “rich moral conversation” (Nash, 1996, p. 31) through the use of role and framing or is this a case of a participant choosing to be affirmed rather than challenged, with a need to find concrete, ‘outside-in’ authority to help them feel more confident in their teaching role? Phillip, more than any of the other participants, displayed the highest frequency of student/teacher conflict during his initial pre-workshop interview (Phillip Interview, 29 June 2005a). He felt the University had failed to prepare him to maintain classroom control and manage student behaviour (Phillip Interview, 29 June 2005a). Perhaps he needed certainty and concrete guidelines rather than ambiguity at this stage of his professional development. The exact cause of Phillip’s lack of deeper reflection or engagement with the process dramas is difficult to conclusively deduce.
Participant Case Study Three: Zoe

- **Pre Process Drama**
Having completed a psychology degree prior to her enrolment, Zoe felt compelled to explore drama education as a career due to the positive impact of drama on her own identity formation (Zoe Interview, 24 June 2005a). Her pre-drama interview focussed predominately on her concerns about student disclosure and if schools and teachers were adequately prepared to meet the emotional needs of students. Zoe was anxious about creating inappropriate attachments or emotional dependencies that could not be sustained in a school context or were outside the responsibilities of the teachers’ role.

- **Post Process Drama**
Zoe participated in all three process dramas, frequently contributed to post-drama discussions and volunteered to play a range of roles during the dramas. Her reflections after process drama one, “Rowan’s Story” demonstrated evidence of principled moral reasoning and her consideration of consequences, rules and policy:

> While we were doing the drama, I was trying to think of what I would actually do in this circumstance and the truth is I don’t really know. The ethical dilemmas that I personally faced were the boundaries between what is right and wrong. That being, if you have stated in your school policy that there is no tolerance for drug use or possession at the school, then to undermine your own policy is to potentially suggest that it has been constructed as a token document? And if you allow a student back into the school when they have brought and used an illegal substance on the school grounds, are you really protecting the rights of all of your students to learn in a ‘safe’ space, I know that drug use does happen in schools and I am not blind to that, but to openly recant your own policy on drugs in the school grounds what does this mean for all students and parents within the community. (Zoe Online Reflection, 2005b)

For Zoe, “Rowan’s Story” raised more questions. She leaned towards an ‘outside-in’ approach or a reliance on policy and rules to ensure the safety of the majority of students. The second drama, “The Secret Life of Us”, prompted her to think about duty, the teachers’ role, professional and personal boundaries:

> I think that you have to be professional but you also have to be a person, the reason students talk to you is because they trust you and whether you like it or not you may be the only positive role model this student has, you may be the only one that notices the bruising or the cuts or ……as much as officially I don’t really think it is the ‘job’ of the teacher to be involved in students personal issues (you do have to build relationship with your students in order to maintain a functional class room), but I think that society has changed and we might have to be flexible with that, I don’t think that there is a black or white answer to that question. (Zoe Online Reflection, 2005 c)
Zoe’s responses after process drama two showed more reflection on the ‘inside-out’ aspects of professional ethics and how the moral character of teachers impacted on trust and relationships with students. She believed that the “job” of teaching was more fluid and required greater flexibility. Her process drama experiences raised her awareness of the importance of maintaining her sense of “self” and her understanding of how she could balance this within community and organisational structures and norms:

Although you have to maintain your sense of self and ‘not care what others think’ you need to be wary of your reputation in terms of being a role model within a community and that even your personal opinions concerning various situations or policies may have wider ramifications due to that role. Seeking the advice of other teachers and professionals can be an excellent stepping stone to solving or mediating an issue that may be difficult for a person to handle alone. You need to know ‘codes of conduct’ and things like the ‘Child Protection Act’ in order to know what legal requirements you as a teacher have to meet/abide by. (Zoe Online Reflection, 2005d)

She saw herself as an autonomous moral agent, operating within agreed principles and policies, part of a wider community of practice that could offer her assistance and help her solve issues. Her reflections combined a dual ‘outside-in’ and ‘inside-out’ perspective on moral authority. The uncertainty of relationships and ethical practice were exposed through her participation in the dramas yet she arrived at a point of acceptance, that with complexity comes ambiguity, and that encounters in educational settings “rarely involve a simple black or white solution or even a solution at all” (Zoe Online Reflection, 2005d). Zoe’s identification of this wider grey zone links to similar findings by O’Connor who discovered that process drama added complexity and the opportunity for “refraction” rather than reflection (O’Connor, 2003, p. 277). Her experiences during the process dramas encouraged her to see an incident from multiple perspectives and to look beneath the surface before acting:

The situations showed me that there is so much more that meets the eye: more emotions, more legalities, more people, more relationships, more policies, more politics, and more DETAILS involved than you originally expect, so I think the main thing it taught me is to examine each situation from as many perspectives as possible, and this is a skill that we all have but it takes a lot of active thought and analysis to tap into that skill and that I think is the key experience that I will use in my future practice. (Zoe Online Reflection, 2005d, emphasis in original)

Zoe’s participation in the study developed her analysis skills, which she will transfer to her professional context. The process drama experience revealed the numerous elements and people involved in a problematic issue or “practical conflicts” that teachers encounter (Lyons, 1990, p. 168). Zoe’s reflection highlighted the capacity for process drama to provide space for phronesis, for pre-service drama teachers to apply situationally
sensitive judgement and to experiment with a range of virtue based responses to an ethical dilemma in addition to the application of principles, rules and consequences (Brock, 1998; Carr, 2007). After completing the dramas, Zoe demonstrated greater confidence in defining role boundaries for teachers and considered how she would apply this new understanding in a professional setting.

Overall, Zoe’s responses showed an increased capacity to apply the components of moral literacy: moral sensitivity, judgement, motivation and identity formation and moral character (Rest et al., 2000). Zoe was highly reflective before she commenced this study, already demonstrating in her pre-drama interview a high level of “moral sensibility” or a considered orientation towards students and the profession of teaching (Hansen, 2001). However, process drama provided another space for Zoe to enhance her moral literacy and explore the complexity of professional ethics.

**Participant Case Study Four: Megan**

- **Pre Process Drama**

During her pre-drama interview Megan questioned how far drama teachers should go to engage their students emotionally and which themes or issues were ethically appropriate for schools to explore with student (Megan Interview, 27 June 2005a). Megan drew on her recent experiences at school, having left secondary school only four years earlier, to guide her in her choice of themes and learning experiences for her students. She selected topics she had enjoyed or tasks she had succeeded in and wished to repeat these experiences with her students, believing that it was ethical and appropriate for her to implement this in her classroom despite any new knowledge or experience that may have challenged this position during her time at University.
• **Post Process Drama**

Megan participated in all three process drama and openly discussed her experience with the group and her written online responses. Megan’s participation in process drama one, “Rowan’s Story”, prompted her to reflect on potential conflicts between her professional and personal loyalties:

> Something that this drama really got me thinking about was the idea of who do I work for, and therefore whose ideas and procedures am I enforcing? Do I support these personally? I found myself being really conflicted with the whole idea, well this is the school I work for and therefore I need to support my school in its decision-making process because I am an employee and the school makes decisions for the good of the school, right? But what if I disagree with the schools decision? (Megan Online Reflection, 2005b)

The reality of how structural norms may impact upon her professional decision-making was new for Megan. The second process drama, “The Secret Life of Us”, introduced information on student disclosure, confidentiality guidelines and reporting requirements for teachers:

> Something that did occur in the drama that really got me quite concerned over this matter was the fact that I didn’t know what to do in this situation. During the drama I went with my first instincts, which was to approach the school counsellor, but the fact that I didn’t actually know that this was the correct step to take in this type of situation was really kind of scary for me, I mean what other correct procedures don’t I know?? (Megan Online Reflection, 2005c)

Megan’s participation in the study introduced new knowledge and raised her awareness that teachers are confronted with ethical choices daily and that in some cases there are mandated codes of behaviour to guide a professional’s actions. In addition to Megan’s ‘outside-in’ concerns about “correct procedures”, connecting her experience to rules and policy, there was evidence of ‘inside-out’ reflection where she began to contemplate the kind of teacher she might be:

> I believe in a professional relationship with students. I can be friendly, but ultimately I am the teacher, they are the student and there is a line between that relationship. (Megan Online Reflection, 2005c)

With each process drama experience and subsequent written reflection, Megan’s confidence and moral position strengthened. Her sense of the “line” defining her professional and personal boundaries became more apparent. Her experience of the three process dramas presented new knowledge, raised her moral sensitivity and gave her analytical or judgement skills to apply to a range of ethical situations:
These process dramas really opened my eyes to the ethical issues the teaching profession has. Before these I hadn’t even thought about them. Seriously, I was completely unprepared to tackle ethical issues, although I believe I would have handled them rather well and in a professional manner, these process dramas have really given me the opportunity to say stop, now what would I do? Why would I do that? What else could I do? Is this the right thing? For me and for the student? I’ve never specifically asked myself these questions, but now that I am aware of it all I believe I will ask myself these questions in the future which will ultimately influence my future practice. (Megan Online Reflection, 2005d)

Megan discovered her own analytical questions that she intends to apply to future practice. These questions demonstrated a stronger sense of moral agency, a critical awareness of the impact of her decisions, actions and choices. Megan’s question; “What would I do?” is important for shifts in understanding and the development of moral literacy to occur. She projected herself into the fictional context and ethical dilemma, identifying with the process drama’s central moral agent. Her question; “Why would I do that?” conveyed her realisation that her sense of self matters, she requires a rationale for her actions and how these personal choices shape her moral character.

Megan’s response suggests that in order to deepen participants’ understanding of the affective dimensions of professional ethics, the process drama design and structure needs to foster and promote “I” questions such as those above. Therefore how participants are positioned in relation to the ethical dilemma is significant. Similar to the findings linked to case study methods, participants need to be able to understand and empathise with the viewpoint of the central moral actor or agent (Keefer, 2002, p. 394). Megan’s reflections demonstrated process drama’s potential to provide a space for critical, creative and imaginative reflection about moral situations through an appropriate and engaging use of dramatic framing. Megan’s process drama experience challenged her thinking about the role of the teacher, juxtaposing her own understanding of professional and ethical behaviour within community and organizational norms.

Megan’s responses provide evidence of process drama’s capacity to develop participants’ awareness of the intricate web of relationships present in any professional decision-making. It promotes the adoption of an “ethic of care” (Noddings 1984), rather than deontological or consequentialist approach to professional ethics. Process drama, like an ethic of care, focuses on “responsibilities and relationships rather than rules and rights” and creates a space for the moral agent to remain situated, embedded in concrete
relationships, making decisions on action based on specific circumstances (Sevenhuijsen, 1998, cited in Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 75).

For Megan the use of process drama gave her a “body based” (Cooper, 2003, p. 9) life-like opportunity to practice and examine specific ethical choices:

I don’t believe one can learn simply by talking about it, and especially by simply hearing about it. I believe in the experience and the power the experience in our learning! After all we learn from our mistakes don’t we. (Megan Online Reflection, 2005d).

This comment exposed her preference for experiential learning and links to O’Toole’s observation that drama is principally about “creating models – models of behaviour and action that can be practised and performed safely” (2002, p. 49, emphasis in original). The live nature of the dilemma placed her at the centre of a dynamic, holistic interactive experience “requiring involvement in-action and reflection on this action” (Smigiel & Merritt, 1999, p. 632). During the drama Megan was able to trial different conversations or actions with ‘students’, debate the ethics of this behaviour with other participants and have the practitioner challenge these choices further as occurred in the modified forum theatre convention used in frame six of the final, “The Party” drama.

Reflection in and out of role enhanced Megan’s understanding of professional ethics and developed her capacity for moral literacy. She developed reflective symbolic dramatic action such as the ‘The Box’ scene as described in the final frame of “The Party” drama and frequently commented on each drama in the post-drama reflection. Megan often began her post-drama verbal reflection with contradictory statements and assumed a variety of different roles with different attitudes during the actual dramas. However her post-drama online written reflection provided more consistent evidence of her developing moral sensitivity, judgement, and agency (Megan Online Reflection, 2005d). This links to McLean’s finding that “structured reflection” enhances aesthetic experience, validates the participant’s “voices” and therefore should be conscientiously included and planned for by the drama practitioner (1996, pp. 57-58).
Participant Case Study Five: Maree

- **Pre Process Drama**

Prior to participating in the study Maree was confident about her role as a teacher and drew upon her religious values to shape her beliefs about the purpose of education and to guide her professional decisions (Maree Interview, 20 June 2005a). She strove for acceptance, to build and maintain positive relationships with all members of the school community and was particularly conscious of maintaining appropriate levels of self disclosure with her students.

- **Post Process Drama**

Maree attended all three dramas, frequently contributed to post-drama discussion and volunteered to assume several fictional roles over the six week period. Personal background significantly influences our perceptions as professionals and in turn affects our choices and actions in both the workplace and our personal lives. How we see an event or a figure will depend on whether or not we share a background that can “make the figure or event stand out in the same way for each of us” (Cooper, 2003, p. 2).

Throughout the three dramas, Maree frequently played roles very close to her own perspective and the positions she expressed in her earlier interview. For example, during drama one, “Rowan’s Story,” she assumed the role of a young physical education teacher in frame ten, questioned how compassionate the school really was, and how Rowan would be effected in the long term. However after the drama she tried to find a more balanced view, using principled moral reasoning to consider what was right for Rowan and the school:

> Throughout this drama I was thinking about which was the correct choice when it came to this boy. It was his first time offence; he apologized; if the school doesn’t accept him back what will happen to him, where should responsibility for this boy’s education lie? On the flip side however, there were strict policies, there were stakeholders in the community to consider, and then the union became involved. I’ve never had any connection to a situation of this nature so I didn’t know the cause and effect of implementing various actions and I think that it made if difficult for me to comprehend the real issues.  
> (Maree Online Reflection, 2005b)

The drama introduced new contexts and challenges for Maree, beyond her prior experience, and therefore confused her. Later in the same reflection Maree commented on her part in an interconnected whole and how the drama raised her consciousness of the wider impact of her future teaching role:
One important thing that was present in this drama for me was the effect that your choices can have on the wider school community, at the admin level right through to the teacher-student level…everything that you do with your students has some connection to elements outside the classroom. For this reason you have to follow policy and consider what you tell to your students and know that every action has a further reaction. This isn’t new information for me but it is an important fact to be continually reminded of and in many ways this drama did this. (Maree Online Reflection, 2005b)

Maree saw following policy as integral to professional practice. Maree maintained her ‘outside-in’ position preferring to do the right thing and measured her conduct according to external guidelines, rules and policy. There was little evidence in her online responses of her exploring the more internal drivers of professional ethics such as moral character or agency. Maree’s reflection after the second drama, “The Secret Life of Us” again applied an ‘outside-in’ approach to determine the ‘right’ course of action:

Subjects like drama where the space is made safe to share information and trust is necessary, often opens up opportunities where these issues can easily arise, and it is the teacher’s responsibility to know the boundaries and to help the students understand both school policy and ethical issues. It is then also the teacher’s responsibility to gain an understanding on what the school policies are and what legal elements are involved. (Maree Online Reflection, 2005c)

The boundaries must be ‘known’, they are external to her, linked to school policy and external guidelines. Despite Maree’s already strong personal faith and commitment to virtues developed through her church based youth work, she believed she gained a deeper understanding from her participation in the three process dramas:

Finally I do feel better prepared after completing these process dramas, as the issues that we may not have to deal with till after we’ve been teaching for a while became more real. It is hard to know what you’d do in certain situations until you’ve been in the actual situation and these dramas placed us right there and made us consider the flow effect of our choices. I don’t think they will change me as a teacher in my relationships with other staff members as I already felt that it is from them that I will be learning, however I think that it has made me more warier of my conduct around the students. After being involved in XXX Camps where child protection is of high priority there is much I have learnt that has prepared me to be a teacher, but I do understand where the differences are and feel that there should be more weight placed on ethical issues and issues of professional standards in the University situation, especially as they were presented to us in the Dramas as it made it real and really made me think. (Maree Online Reflection, 2005d)

Maree appreciated the live nature of the process drama experience that placed her “right there”, “made it real” and allowed her to analyse the impact of her choices. Her process drama experience both affirmed her current method of relating to staff and made Maree “warier” of her own actions and interactions with students. Her process drama experience
expanded her view that there is still much to learn about ethics and standards, the importance of valuing difference and seeking assistance:

The main thing I took away from these dramas is that I will always be learning as a teacher and more specifically I will always be learning about professional standards and ways of dealing with situations. You can’t always just sit down and say ‘so this is the issue and in the past it has been dealt with in this way so it will work again’, because every issue is situation specific. Each school may have a different process and each student has different needs. Most importantly I learnt that as a teacher you are never alone, there is always someone who’ll be able to give you the help you may need and furthermore dealing with any ethical dilemma on your own is most likely opening you up to greater problems. (Maree Online Reflection, 2005d)

Maree recognised through her experience of the three process dramas that her understanding and ethical knowledge will continue to develop and grow if she remains situationally sensitive. Maree displayed evidence of aesthetic engagement, of connection and dialectical thinking that “requires the participants to respond to the idea that emerges for them as they form an association between the events of the drama and their real world existence” (Bundy, 2003, p. 2). She connected her experience from the fictional drama to the realisation that she will never be alone. The community of learners built through the process drama mirrored the community of practice that Maree will join in a school setting. The consultative and collaborative problem-solving approach modelled through process drama can be translated to her next ethical dilemma in a school setting.

Summary of Analysis
This section of the chapter considers all of the participant responses including those of the five case studies to determine the overall themes emerging from the study. Analysis of all participants’ online reflections after all three process dramas can be summarised under the following two broad themes: participation in the study raised their awareness of several aspects of professional ethics; and secondly, they gained a deeper understanding, new knowledge and confidence in ethical decision-making.

- Awareness
The participants’ responses can be grouped under a number of ‘awareness’ subcategories in terms of key aspects of professional ethics. These included an increased awareness of: roles and responsibilities of the teacher; other perspectives and attitudes towards ethical dilemmas; the possible consequences or impact of certain actions or choices; and lastly the importance of maintaining a professional persona.
Participants gained a greater awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the teacher and the drama teacher, both in and out of the classroom (Phillip Online Reflection, 2005d; Michael Online Reflection, 2005d; Alex Online Reflection, 2005d). Other non-case study participants gained a greater awareness of the specific ethical challenges of drama teaching:

I think that sometimes as drama teachers we get caught up in doing powerful work with students and often neglect to acknowledge if this work is too emotionally dangerous for students to participate in. It made me realise that a lot of students come from home situations where they have already been touched by issues that are emotionally and physically abusive. We have to acknowledge that as teachers we need to address some of these issues but in a safe way. It made me more aware of more closely watching my students in the ways that they interact with each other, myself and the material; then to adapt my teacher style and curriculum to suit. (Michael Online Reflection, 2005d)

The power of drama and need to balance this with safety is acknowledged in Michael’s reflection. Other participants also gained a greater awareness of the impact of their actions, of consequences and the possible “dangers” the unwary teacher may face (Leigh Online Reflection, 2005d; Liz Online Reflection, 2005d). Participants were more aware of the complexity of a situation and the importance of remaining sensitive to the details and nuances of ethical dilemmas (Zoe Online Reflection, 2005d; Leigh Online Reflection, 2005d; Jenny Online Reflection, 2005d). The ambiguity or lack of concrete answers to solve the ethical dilemmas posed by the process dramas was confronting for some participants (Phillip Online Reflection, 2005d; Leigh Online Reflection, 2005d).

This reinforced the importance of maintaining “a professional stance” (Liz Online Reflection, 2005d) including an adherence to their own “expectations and standards” (Phillip Online Reflection, 2005d). For several participants their experiences during the study and the process drama workshops did not inspire them to change the way they related to the school community, instead they felt affirmed by their experience, (Maree Online Reflection, 2005d; Liz Online Reflection, 2005d; Ruth Online Reflection, 2005d). The dramas reinforced their current understanding and practice in schools. Most participants however demonstrated evidence of increased moral sensitivity defined as “interpreting the situation, considering how different actions would affect others involved, imagining cause and effect chains of events and being aware there is a moral problem” (Rest et al., 2000, p. 5). This increased awareness lifted Liz’s confidence:

I don’t think this experience would change the way I would interact with the school community, just make me much more aware of what I can and cannot do, what I should and should not do, and why. If anything, it has made me more confident in that I know now how to deal with a tricky situation in an ethical
and professional manner, instead of making a mistake and wishing I had known better. Now I do know better, and the practical explorations of these dramas have given me that advantage. I really don’t think that if I had to make a choice such as the ones in the dramas that I would turn to the theory presented to me in lectures! I would forget all that. But now I will think back to the process dramas and remember what was effective and what wasn’t, and hopefully this will guide me confidently on the right path to a professional solution. (Liz Online Reflection, 2005d)

Liz feels that she now “knows better” that she has the capacity to “deal” with situations in professional and ethical manner. She believes the “practical” memory of the drama will remain with her longer than information she may have received through other forms of pedagogy.

• New Learning
Several participants developed new knowledge or a deeper understanding of a range of topics linked to professional ethics. These included new understanding of: professional standards; a greater range of perspectives or options and potential problem-solving strategies; specific codes of behaviour or rules related to professional ethics and student disclosure; and lastly the importance of ‘self’ or moral character in professional ethics. Participants obtained a deeper understanding of professional standards, professional and personal boundaries and the importance of working collaboratively in schools to support students:

I think they have given me wider understanding of the role of a teaching when dealing with professional standards and ethical dilemmas within a school context. They have made me question what I believe to be true and just and reconsider my individual and professional positions on certain matters. They made me realise the importance of working with staff as a team in supporting students learning and development. They made me reconsider the issues that I bring into the classroom and the ways I deal with them. They made me conscience of the ways I deal with students – in particular the personal/professional relationship with them and not to go over the boundaries. Process drama seems to be a powerful tool in understanding the ways in which we interact as human beings and educating individuals. (Michael Online Reflection, 2005d)

The process drama experience enabled some participants to see an ethical dilemma from a range of conflicting viewpoints:

These process dramas gave me a much deeper understanding of professional standards and ethical dilemmas. I learnt through experiencing, making choices in the drama, whether it be right or wrong, and finding solutions. The end discussions were a great way to share ideas and experiences, and to really “nut” out the problem/s from many different angles. These dramas got me involved and
made me want to learn and find out more. I got involved in “real” experiences that I know will benefit me in the future. I know that I could not have learnt this material so effectively through a text book. (Alex Online Reflection, 2005d)

Alex particularly noted how the post-drama discussion allowed the participants to “nut” out the ethical issues contained in each drama further. Like many other participants he points out that the “real” experiences involved him and engaged him more than “text book” learning (Liz Online Reflection, 2005d; Megan Online Reflection, 2005d; Maree Online Reflection, 2005d). This connects with prior research conducted in the effectiveness of case study and findings that pre-professionals gain more from contextualised learning (Davidson et al., 2003, p. 217). Process drama combined the positive elements of experiential learning approaches with the rich contexts of case study. Unlike other site specific osmotic or apprentice-based approaches to learning, process drama allows for moments to be slowed down, to be discussed, replayed, manipulated, and explored with the aid of a practitioner and the participants supplying a meta-analysis of the dramatic action.

For some participants the greatest learning was the realisation that the ‘self’ and moral character are key ‘inside-out’ drivers in ethical decision-making (Zoe Online Reflection, 2005d; Leigh Online Reflection, 2005d). For participants like Barbara this discovery increased her level of moral agency:

What I have learnt more than anything from the workshops is really to trust in my own judgment, professionally and personally. Ultimately as an individual I have to live with the decisions and choices I make in life. I had never really thought explicitly about professional standards and ethical dilemmas in teaching because they are scary and I guess it’s easier just to pretend they don’t happen or simply just deal with them when they arise… but what these dramas have taught me is that I am equipped as a person and as a teacher to deal with these situations. My studies and my life experiences have prepared me with the intellectual and emotional tools to be able to deal with problematic situations to the best of my ability, and these dramas made me realise I am capable of more than I had previously given myself credit for! (Barbara Online Reflection, 2005d)

Barbara’s reflection showed evidence of taking greater personal responsibility, examining her intent behind her actions and her enhanced understanding of moral character as she reflected on the central question of virtue ethics, “What kind of person should I be?” (Cohen, 2004, p. 49).
While each of the participant responses and case studies above highlighted different aspects of process drama and professional ethics, one participant response encapsulated the many layers of reflection that occurred during or after the dramas:

Through these process dramas I have been able to think about all issues associated with teaching and how much there really is to becoming a teacher. Through the dramas I have come to understand that teaching is more than just a profession, but it is about who I am and what ethics I hold in and outside my classroom that will affect my career. It is about the choices I make about privacy, pedagogy, collaborative contacts and professional relationships that can determine my future in the education field. I feel that these dramas have highlighted many of the issues that I will face coming into the workforce and it has been good being able to explore these contexts in a fictional setting where there is no right or wrong answer and no devastating outcomes. (Jenny Online Reflection, 2005d)

Jenny’s reflection demonstrated a stronger sense of moral agency, moral character and how process drama provided a safe space to model and trial different choices and behaviour. Clearly Jenny’s sense of moral agency increased through her participation in the process drama and reflection. She demonstrated evidence of critical self awareness, she is mindful of her conduct, and indicates that she will apply this knowledge in her professional relationships, decision-making and personal life (Cooper, 2003, p. 199; p. 46).

Analysis of all of the participants’ reflections from various points in the process drama action research cycle revealed how certain features of process drama contributed to an increased awareness and knowledge of professional ethics. Participation in process drama and the associated written and post-drama reflection raised awareness of several aspects of professional ethics and developed several participants’ confidence in ethical decision-making. Process drama provided a safe space to experiment with different problem-solving strategies and practice analytical skills in response to the ethical issues and dilemmas posed by the fictional contexts. The real or life-like nature of the process drama experience increased the complexity and authenticity of the professional context and the pre-service drama teachers’ capacity to consider other perspectives when analysing ethical challenges.
Chapter Nine: The Findings

The researcher is never finished exploring, searching, examining and theorizing. New depths, complexities, subtleties and uncertainties are continually uncovered. At some point the researcher must stop exploring and write, fixing her or his interpretations in ink…

(Ezzy, 2002, p. 23)

As evidenced in the literature review, this study found that ethical teachers require knowledge of the shared core principles relevant to the profession, the ability to make decisions as autonomous moral agents, and a commitment to the ongoing development of moral character (Nash, 1996; Campbell, 2003; Cooper, 2003; Hill, 2004; Carr, 2007). They need to be morally literate which includes the development of moral sensitivity, judgement, motivation and identity formation, and moral character (Rest et al., 1999).

This final chapter revisits and answers the key research question: *Does process drama assist pre-service drama teachers to reflect on professional ethics?* The findings summarised here are drawn from the data collected throughout the study including practitioner research, action research cycles, case studies and overall participant reflections. These concise findings are based on evidence presented and analysed in chapters five, six, seven and eight.

Prior to their participation in this study, the pre-service drama teachers obtained their understanding of professional ethics from a wide range of sources including ‘common sense’, personal values, religious beliefs, their university course, peers, their supervising teachers during fieldwork, school guidance officers or administrators. Others expanded their understanding of what ethical practice might involve through workplace training and their part-time work as church camp leaders, swim instructors or after-school care co-ordinators. Some participants looked for legal or written guidance present in codes of conduct or child protection legislation. Overall, the participants demonstrated varying degrees of understanding of professional ethics prior to the commencement of this study.
Four Key Findings
Regardless of the diverse participant reflections emerging during this study it is possible to address the central research question and consider how process drama assisted the participants to reflect on these multi-dimensional aspects of professional ethics. There are four key findings emerging from this study: firstly that process drama provided a safe learning space; secondly process drama provided rich and complex ‘life-like’ models for investigation; thirdly process drama provided enhanced learning through multiple structured reflection opportunities; and lastly that the effectiveness of process drama to enable reflection on the more affective dimensions of professional ethics was dependent on the practitioner’s artistic and appropriate selection of dramatic framing, conventions and pre-text.

- A Safe Learning Space
The three process dramas developed for this study provided a safe reflective space to explore a range of perspectives and to hear divergent voices. Building and maintaining trust between participants was vital to the establishment of a safe environment and a key enabler for the group to engage with the fictional world of the drama. Trust was enhanced through the pre-drama interviews, assisted by the relational nature of drama pedagogy and supported by the practitioner’s empathy and care for the participants. With each meeting the group disclosed more personal information, reflected with greater depth and improvised more freely within the process drama, deepening their aesthetic engagement with the work. This finding is congruent with Bundy’s research which found that aesthetic engagement is significantly enhanced by relationships and particularly the development and multiplying impact of trust among members of the group, “The more participants trust the work and their individual responses, the more open and honest they become which in turn enhances their trust in the work and in other members of the group” (Bundy, 2003, p. 179).

Participant responses to the symbolic images and metaphoric scenes created by the group in the final frame of the “The Party” process drama were the richest and most ‘affective’ reflections that occurred during any of the process dramas. In this moment most of the pre-service teachers reflected on the deeper aspects of their moral selves and the vital virtue ethic question, “what kind of person should I be?” This drama, more than any other, provoked reflection about ‘self’ and encouraged most participants to look at their professional motivations, emotions and choices from the ‘inside-out’.
Some participants engaged aesthetically with the dramas more than others. For these participants aesthetic engagement encouraged and strengthened the internalization and personalisation of professional ethics. Bundy’s three key characteristics of aesthetic engagement were simultaneously present during this final frame of drama three: animation, connection, and heightened awareness (2003, p.180). The participants appeared ‘animated’ when reflecting on how this moment in the final frame of drama three had truth or value for them, how at that moment in time they had a heightened sense of self and their relationship with others. The pre-service drama teachers ‘connected’ with the ideas of the drama, at a metaphorical level and formed new associations with their real world existence. ‘Heightened awareness’ occurred during this final frame when several of the participants ceased to focus on the narrative or roles of the drama and instead considered the ideas of the drama and how these connected with the wider social world.

- **Rich and Complex ‘Life-Like’ Models**

Process drama provided space for phronesis, for pre-service drama teachers to apply situationally sensitive judgement and to experiment with a range of responses to an ethical dilemma including the application of virtues, principles, debate about duty and consequences. The process dramas provided a dynamic, holistic interactive experience for the participants to test and model behaviour by placing the pre-service teacher at the centre of a fictional but ‘life-like’ experience, enabling the participants to explore how ethics are expressed in-action and “reflected in both thought and emotion” (Chubbuck et al., 2007, pp. 109-110). Dramatic conventions such as modified forum theatre, embedded within the rich context established by the group, provided an opportunity for the participants to test actions, to debate how these might be interpreted by students, caregivers and teaching colleagues. Behaviour could be dissected and considered in terms of consequences but also in terms of how the teacher was “being” in this given moment (Totterdell, 2000, p. 137). For many participants this time to practice and explore teacher behaviour in fictional ‘lived’ moments was invaluable, something they felt would stay with them, and influence their future behaviour. This finding links to O’Toole’s observation that drama is principally “about creating models – models of behaviour and action that can be practiced and performed safely” (2002, p. 49, emphasis in original).

Process drama enabled the participants to ‘own’ the model. They built the model or the case with the practitioner and collaboratively created the roles drawing on their own experiences and prior knowledge. The process dramas became flexible, three dimensional
case studies, providing complex and rich contextual layers. In the final drama, for example, the group built a more detailed understanding of the norms and structures of the community and how this impacted upon the central moral agent’s decision-making. This rich context provided authentic and ‘life-like’ qualities to the participant’s experience through drama’s unique combination of kinaesthetic, visual, oral, and aural dimensions, and symbolic sign systems.

Process drama provided a platform for knowledge in-action to develop. Process drama participants were positioned as moral agents, they remained situated, embedded, and made ethical choices based on specific circumstances, conditions that link to an ethic of care more than a consequentialist or deontological ethical framework. Process drama therefore, models a more holistic approach to ethics more aligned with an ethic of care, which emphasises communication, responsibility, receptivity and responsiveness (Nodding, 1984, pp. 1-5).

- **Multiple and Varied Structured Reflection Opportunities**

The process drama experience provided a supportive and creative learning platform for group dialogue and for personal sense making. Often it was the opportunity to discuss and debrief the process drama experience as a community of learners immediately after the drama and the individual reflection online that helped participants gain more from the experience. This finding echoes that of McLean (1996) who found that aesthetic engagement can be enhanced and planned for by the inclusion of “structured reflection” (p. 57). The live nature of the dilemma placed the participants at the centre of a dynamic, holistic interactive experience that demanded direct and immediate involvement in action and reflection on this action. This reflection often revealed further nuances and ambiguities linked to professional ethics, creating “refraction”, thus encouraging the participants to shine beams of light into previously undiscovered corners (O’Connor, 2003, p. 277). It is process drama’s capacity to complexify rather than simplify that prompted deeper reflection and illuminated ambiguities. This often occurred when metaxis took place, when the “permeable membrane” between the fictional and the real context collapsed for the participants (Ibid.).

This study found that process drama promoted both an ‘outside-in’ and ‘inside-out’ orientation to reflection. Some pre-service drama teachers participating in this study applied an ‘outside-in’ orientation, a *deontic* search for universal solutions to their
reflection on professional ethics. They analysed the ethical dilemmas raised in each process drama through an external decision-making authority, applying mandatory codes, policies, and principles such as inclusiveness, definitions of duty or guidelines about the teacher’s role. Others looked for external consequences and what was ‘best’ for the student, school or the teacher involved. Several study participants applied an ‘inside-out’ view when they considered the ethical dilemma from the position of what kind of teacher they wanted to be and which virtues they wanted to apply to their decision-making and actions. Most participants reflected using external and internal orientations, achieving a more holistic application of professional ethics, combining the affective and the cognitive to look at a particular dilemma from both perspectives.

It is difficult to conclude why some pre-service drama teachers reflected in a more holistic way and others did not. A few participants searched for concrete external guidelines while others were more accepting of ambiguity, applying a more flexible and situationally sensitive exploration to an ethical dilemma. A probable explanation is that the participants were at various stages in their professional development as determined by their age, previous study, personal background, and teaching experience. Some had positive experiences during their previous field work while others had experienced conflict with students and teaching staff. Therefore each participant had a different motivation for participating in the study in addition to varying personal and professional needs. This varied background experience impacted on the content of the participants’ reflections about professional ethics.

Despite this diversity in background and subsequent varied reflection amongst the sample group several of the participants agreed that their experience of the process dramas raised their awareness and enhanced their knowledge of professional ethics. New learning occurred about topics addressed in specific process dramas such as privacy and confidentiality, forms of punishment and discipline, and boundaries linked to a teachers’ role and responsibilities. For some participants their experience in-action during each process drama combined with their individual post-drama reflection, raised their awareness of moral agency, moral character, and how their choices and actions might impact on students and their career. Some came to discover how a teacher’s understanding of professional ethics is expressed in-action in every interaction on a daily basis. Many commented on how the process drama experienced had failed to provide black and white answers but instead had raised new and necessary shades of ambiguity.
Participation in the process drama had enhanced their moral literacy, particularly moral sensitivity and the capacity for empathy; enhancing their ability to interpret a situation, to imagine the effect of certain actions on others and awareness that a moral problem exists.

Overall, participants demonstrated three different positions in their reflection: affirmed, confronted or changed. The pre-service drama teachers felt affirmed when their participation in a process drama consolidated their ideas and understanding about professional ethics; others were confronted by aspects of ethics they had never considered; and some felt changed by their experience, realizing that their moral character would continue to evolve in response to the challenges they may face in a complex educational environment. Several participants believed they had developed new thinking skills and that they would take this enhanced ability to see and analyse multiple viewpoints to future ethical challenges they might experience in schools.

- **Process Drama Design**

Reflection on professional ethics was enhanced when the design and leadership of the process drama created a safe, supportive and creative learning environment with platforms for dialogue and exploration of the affective domain of feeling and emotion. The framing of the drama impacted significantly on participant engagement and the meaning and reflection generated from and through process drama. The choice of pre-text, setting and sequencing of dramatic conventions influenced the effectiveness of the drama and guided and shaped reflection about different dimensions of professional ethics.

Process drama three, “The Party”, included planning elements that fostered greater reflection on the affective dimensions of professional ethics and particularly moral character. This was due to the appropriate choice of central moral agent. When participants identified with the central role, they were more likely to experience metaxis and the sense that “this could happen to me”. However an appropriate balance needs to be found between role and context identification and fictional distancing in order for all participants to engage and not be hindered by overwhelming tensions from their real experience. When the practitioner adopted a negotiated or more open planning approach which allowed opportunity for the central moral agent to be owned and constructed by the group, the drama was more engaging and this influenced the depth and nature of reflection. This occurred in process drama two and more so in drama three when the
participants built a more complete picture of the central moral agent including their personal and professional life.

When the process drama structure enabled the exploration of the moral agent’s world this helped to identify key decision-making influences and provided a clearer understanding of the actual dilemma confronted by the moral agent. The context creating phases of each drama are crucial and more effective when they build a clearer picture of the organizational and community norms and how these impact on the ethical decision-making and actions of the key moral agent. Specific moments of choice or ethical decision-making moments were slowed down, examined closely, and viewed from multiple perspectives, allowing time for all participants to explore their position and justifications. Reflection significantly enriched the learning of the participants and occurred prior to, during and after each process drama. A variety of reflective dramatic conventions incorporated in the drama design, notably discussion, writing in role and symbolic or metaphoric response, promoted richer dialogue and more personalized contemplation.

The process dramas developed for this study were more effective when the ending or narrative was left open and therefore allowed space for conjecture or for the participants to explore what they may do given the same context. Despite this openness, planning was essential. The creativity and artistry of the practitioner occurred prior to each drama and was continued in negotiation with the group.

**Future Research**

These three process dramas allowed for rich three dimensional case studies to be explored from a range of perspectives. It would be interesting, however, to pursue contexts more distanced from school contexts. The same dilemmas or ethical problems could be explored in settings other than schools. Would the use of these analogies assist those participants who could not engage because the dramas were too life-like to gain more from the experience? The outcomes of this study were influenced by the strong improvisational skills of pre-service drama teachers. A similar study could be conducted with non-drama pre-service teachers or with other pre-professionals in law, medicine or other human services. Despite the intellectual quality of the post-drama discussion some participants wanted greater clarity or decision-making frameworks to refer to and apply to their future practice. While reflection during and after the drama helped contribute to
some participants’ understanding of professional ethics, the rich moral conversation could be enhanced through the introduction of other ethical frameworks, principles or moral theory. Further study could involve the embedding of process drama within other course work on professional ethics. This combination of approaches may address the need for a more holistic approach to professional ethics pedagogy.

Conclusion
Process drama is a useful and effective pedagogical tool which can provide space for critical, creative and imaginative reflection about moral situations. The fictional contexts provided complex and authentic ethical dilemmas for investigation. Participants entered the ‘model’ or the world of the central moral agent, collaboratively analysed and experimented with different choices and actions. Process drama prompted deeper consideration of many dimensions of professional ethics when combined with other reflective tools such as individual written reflection and post-drama discussion. Process drama assisted the participants to develop an understanding of several aspects of professional ethics including ‘outside-in’ or external forms of moral authority including codes, policy, duty, and teacher responsibilities. For some participants the study fostered a deeper understanding of moral character or virtue ethics and how the ‘self’ or ‘inside-out’ influences can impact on their ethical choices and practice. Process drama enabled participants to develop several aspects of moral literacy but in particular it enabled participants to develop moral sensitivity and the capacity to see the complexity of professional ethics.
References


Simons, J. M. (2002). *Enhancing the use of professional craft knowledge in process drama teaching*. University of Western Sydney, Werrington, NSW.


## Appendix A: Process Drama One: “Rowan’s Story”

### Appendix A - Section One: Practitioner’s Process Drama Plan -“Rowan’s Story”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Component</th>
<th>Dramatic Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRAME ONE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Climate Setting</td>
<td>Game: Rabbit in a Hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Players decide if they will accept or exclude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRAME TWO</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Pre-text</td>
<td>Participants receive three letters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small groups of three.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention:</td>
<td>The groups read the letters and identify important information or factual details and then record these on the white board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artefact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRAME THREE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Context Setting</td>
<td>Location: Year Ten Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When: Beginning of the school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roles: Year Ten Co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention:</td>
<td>Group members sit in lines of four or five people and close their eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualisation and Thought Tracking</td>
<td>After visualization narration the groups assume the role of year ten students on assembly. Students when tapped on the shoulder voice their thoughts aloud about how they feel about Northfield State High School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRAME FOUR</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Enrolment</td>
<td>Location: The School Administration Conference Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When: Two years earlier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention:</td>
<td>Enrolment Interview: Rowan and care giver/ parent are interviewed prior to admittance to Northfield State High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot-seat</td>
<td>Information negotiated by the group in role as the interview develops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The remainder of the group assume blanket role as year ten co-ordinator Mrs Jackson, to conduct interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRAME FIVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Developing Narrative, Building Belief and Enrolment</td>
<td>Locations:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Rowan that morning at home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rowan arriving at school that morning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rowan in class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rowan at lunch hour at the moment he is caught with cannabis in the school grounds by a teacher. The teacher knows Rowan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention:</td>
<td>Time: The day Rowan is caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeze Frames, A Day in the Life of, Captioning</td>
<td>Working in small groups the participants discuss and then create a freeze frame depicting a moment in Rowan’s day. Each group presents their freeze and the audience is asked to give a caption to the image. The final freeze forms a linking device into the next frame. The role of teacher in the final freeze scene is used in the next role circle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRAME SIX</td>
<td>Location: The Deputy’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Context Building and Building Belief</td>
<td>When: Just after the incident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention:</td>
<td>Whole group in role as teacher are interviewed by the Deputy Principal about the moment Rowan is ‘caught’ with cannabis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Circle</td>
<td>Transition Cue: Alright then you’d better send him in now… let’s see what he has to say.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| FRAME SEVEN | Location: The Deputy’s Office |
| Phase: Context Building/Injection of Tension | Roles: Deputy Principal and Rowan |
| Dramatic Convention: | The Deputy interrogates Rowan and tries to encourage Rowan to disclose his source. |
| Pair Improvisation and Role Reversal | During this scene the Deputy and Rowan reverse roles several times. |
| | One pair shares the end of their scene with the Deputy giving Rowan his letter of exclusion. |

| FRAME EIGHT | Location: Rowan’s home |
| Phase: Context Building/Narrative Development | Time: 5.00 pm that day. Rowan has just been suspended. |
| Dramatic Convention: | The group moulds the start of the scene, builds the space in terms of furniture and decides the first line of dialogue for the moment Rowan first speaks to his parent/care giver. The group devises three key questions it would like the scene to explore. Pairs improvise the scene. |
| Improvised scene | Reflection |
| | The group are asked to analyse what happened in the improvisation. |
| Discussion out of role | What would Rowan do while suspended? |
| | How would expulsion affect him? |
| | Whose idea to appeal? His or the mother? |

| Short Break: 10 minutes |

<p>| FRAME NINE | Location: The school |
| Phase: Context Building | When: Lunch Time |
| Roles: Other students/ his peers. |
| Dramatic Convention: | What would Rowan’s peers and other students say if he is allowed to return to school? |
| Soundscape | The group sits or lies on the floor with eyes closed and creates the soundscape. Group members may use repetition, emphasis, word or phrases to create the mood or atmosphere. The soundscape may have a musical shape and weave various words and statements together. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRAME TEN</th>
<th>Phase: Context</th>
<th>Location: the Staffroom: When: Lunch hour, three weeks after the day Rowan is caught. The teachers are having a Birthday Party. Roles: Staff and the Year Ten Co-ordinator Mrs Jackson introduces more information: <em>Have you heard about Rowan Findlay? I can’t believe it...how can I stand up and talk about rules?. I am going to look like a fool. The district office has overturned the result. He is to be reinstated. Jack has already been onto the union - there may be a strike.</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploration/ Injection of Tension</td>
<td>Dramatic Convention: Whole Group Extended Improvisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRAME ELEVEN</td>
<td>Phase: Deepening of Tension</td>
<td>Location: Outside the school grounds Who: Members of the media and teachers. The group forms two lines and becomes the merciless press. Teachers, one at a time, have to push through while they are badgered for comment on the impending strike action and information about the student in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRAME TWELVE</td>
<td>Phase: Reflection</td>
<td>Location: Neutral Space Who: You are a teacher, student, parent or member of the community. Dramatic Convention: Writing in Role Individuals write an anonymous letter to the local newspaper expressing their views on the treatment of Rowan Findlay or issues surrounding this incident. You sign the letter as Parent, Teacher etc. These are exchanged. Individuals select and read out key sentences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| FRAME THIRTEEN | Phase: Reflection | What: How might these events impact on the school or Rowan? When: The Future Dramatic Convention: Prediction/ Participant Devised Short Scene, Performance Where: The small groups decide Working in small groups of four, create a short dramatic statement in response to today’s drama. Creative Constraints:  
- Takes place in a school context  
- Explores implications for Rowan or the School  
- 60 second scene |
Dear Executive Director,

My name is Rowan Findlay. I am 15. I am a year ten student but have recently been excluded from Northfield State High School.

I was excluded for having cannabis in the school grounds. This was the first time I have really been in trouble at school and I am not proud of what happened. I formally apologised to the school but it seems this was not enough. I feel that these rules are unfair.

I have been doing fairly well at school and I was hoping to go on to senior studies next year and maybe one day go to TAFE or University.

I feel that being excluded was too harsh a punishment. I made a mistake. I am sorry.

I have filled out the forms for appeal and I hope you will look into my case.

Yours sincerely

Rowan Findlay
Appendix A - Section Two:
Process Drama One: “Rowan’s Story” – Pre-Text Material

Rowan Findlay
14 Gailes Street
Northfield 9117

Dear Rowan,

Re: Your Suspension Pending Exclusion from Northfield State High School

I have recommended to the Executive Director (Schools) that you be permanently excluded from Northfield State High School in the Metro North District under Section 34 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 1989. The grounds for this suspension with a recommendation to exclude are:

a. The conduct of the student is prejudicial to the good order and management of the school.
b. The student’s misconduct is so serious that suspension of the student is inadequate to deal with the behaviour.

In making my decision I considered the following information:

• Your possession of an illegal substance in the school grounds
• Your admission that this illegal substance belongs to you
• Several witnesses confirm your possession of the illegal substance in the school grounds.

I made the decision for the following reasons:

• Your conduct breaches the school behaviour management plan
• The potential danger and exposure of other students of this illegal substance
• Your refusal to reveal any other details about the matter including any other students involved.

You are suspended and may not return to this school until the Executive Director (Schools) makes a decision relating to the exclusion. The Executive Director (Schools) will notify you of the decision within twenty school days. While you are suspended, your parents are responsible for you and you are prohibited from attending this school. You cannot go to classes or take part in school activities.

You may appeal (called a submission) against my recommendation to Executive Director Northfield State High School, Metro North District, 1554 Northfield Road, Northfield 9117, (07 9456789) stating the reasons for the appeal and providing any supporting facts. Information about what a submission is, and how to go about making one, is on the attached sheet. The submission must be made within 5 school days. You may contact the Executive Director (Schools) before that date and request a longer period in which to make the submission if required. Any information you provide in this submission will be used by the Executive Director (Schools) to review my decision, and may be passed on to other relevant officers at the district office or this school. If you decide to subsequently appeal at a higher level (eg: Director-General of Education or Appeals Court), your information may be passed on to other officers within Education Stateland. You should contact the Senior Guidance Officer on 3389 4067 to discuss anything you do not understand in this letter.

Yours sincerely

Susan Lewis
Principal
Northfield State High School
Appendix A - Section Two:
Process Drama One: “Rowan’s Story” – Pre-text Material

Ms Karen Simons
14 Gailes Street
Northfield, Stateland 9117

Dear Ms Simons

Please find attached a copy of the letter sent to Rowan Findlay concerning a notice of suspension with a recommendation to permanently exclude from Northfield State High School in the Metro North District.

Rowan Findlay may not return to this school until the Executive Director (Schools) makes a decision relating to the exclusion. The Executive Director (Schools) will notify you of the decision within twenty school days.

The attached information explains how you may make a submission against the decision.

Any information you provide in this submission will be used by the Executive Director (Schools) to review my decision, and may be passed on to other relevant officers at the district office or this school.

If there is anything you do not understand in this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Susan Lewis
Principal
Northfield State High School
Appendix A - Section Three:
Process Drama One: “Rowan’s Story” - Participant Writing in Role

Sample

Dear Editor

I am a local teacher and resident of Northfield, and I find myself torn with the issue that is rocking our small community. I believe every student deserves a quality education, but at what and whose cost?

What lesson are we teaching our students by providing a world with no consequences? But what lesson are we teaching the individual by providing a world with no education?

We need to ask ourselves; who is more important; the individual or the collective group? How can we truly decide when a group is made up of individuals? Just a few questions to consider before we begin to judge the actions of all parties involved.

Teacher and Local Community Member
Dear Editor

I am writing in reply to the article that featured in yesterday's (insert date here) newspaper concerning Northfield State High School's alleged “drug culture”. As a parent of three children who attend the school I am appalled at your blatant misrepresentation of the issue at hand. You refer to the teachers, admin and the education department “turning a blind eye” on excessive drug use and an established drug culture existing at the local school. How dare you present this information with absolutely no shred of credible evidence, how dare you undermine the dedicated and professional staff at the school, how dare you ignore the many high achieving wonderful students at the school. Your co-called journalism is what is dividing the community not the students and staff of Northfield who should all be commended for the patience and positivity that they have displayed through this whole ordeal. I will continue whole heartedly to support the school, the staff and the students on this matter.

Parent
## Appendix B: Process Drama Two: “The Secret Life of Us”

### Appendix B – Section One
Practitioner’s Process Drama Plan -“The Secret Life of Us”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Component</th>
<th>Dramatic Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRAME ONE</strong></td>
<td>Game: Truth or Lies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Climate Setting</td>
<td>Participants write down three short statements on a piece of card. These statements are personal statements about themselves. One of them is untrue…the group must try and guess which statement is untrue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRAME TWO</strong></td>
<td>Participants study the poster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Pre-text</td>
<td>The group is asked to identify important information or factual details evident in the poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention: Artefact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRAME THREE</strong></td>
<td>Location: School Community/ Abstractly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Context Setting</td>
<td><em>Imagine you are a member of the school community as parent, teacher, or student. You catch a glimpse of the poster displayed around the school. What is your response?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention: Soundscape/ Thought Tapping</td>
<td>Half of the participants are tapped on the shoulder and their thoughts are revealed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRAME FOUR</strong></td>
<td>The group builds the identity of the Teacher Participants - brainstorm in smaller groups and then as a whole group until consensus is reached.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Enrolment</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention: Role on the Wall</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dress</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hobbies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length of time at the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRAME FIVE</td>
<td>Location: School play ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Developing</td>
<td>When: February – Early in the school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative/ Building Belief/ Enrolment</td>
<td>Role: Year eleven Drama Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention: Small Group Improvisation</td>
<td>After your third class with your new drama teacher…what do you say to your friends in the play ground about the new teacher? Think about your attitude towards school...towards drama...your status in the class. Each group spontaneously improvises their scene while the remainder of the group listens in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRAME SIX</th>
<th>Location: The Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Context Building/ Building Belief.</td>
<td>The group creates the photograph that is to be used in the program for the performance “The Secret Life of Us”. They are asked to arrange themselves in relation to the empty chair which represents the drama teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention: Tableau</td>
<td>Transition Cue: Practitioner in role addresses class and distributes assessment task.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRAME SEVEN</th>
<th>Location: The Drama Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Introduction of Second Pre-text.</td>
<td>The ‘Drama Teacher’ answers questions from the group, in role as the year 11 class, about the assessment task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention: Whole Group Extended Improvisation</td>
<td>The ‘Drama Teacher’ answers questions from the group, in role as the year 11 class, about the assessment task.</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRAME SEVEN A</th>
<th>Location: Classroom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Deepening Enrolment/ Injection of Tension</td>
<td>Year 11 students write a monologue based on a personal secret.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention: Writing in Role</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRAME EIGHT</th>
<th>Location: Classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Context Building/ Poetic Action</td>
<td>Year 11 Students read out a selection of monologues. In between each one, participants chant…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention: Ritual and Monologue</td>
<td>What is said in this drama classroom stays in this classroom!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| FRAME NINE | Location: School Grounds  
Context Building  
Time: Soon after monologue reading class.  
Role: Year 11 Drama Students |
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Exploration of Context</td>
<td>With a friend from the drama class students in pairs are asked to explore the statement <em>what is said in the drama classroom stays in the drama classroom.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention: Small Group Improvisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| FRAME TEN | Location: School Grounds  
Phase: Reflection  
Reflection Out of Role…What happened? Does personal information stay in the classroom? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convention: Group Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| SHORT BREAK 10 MINUTES |

| FRAME ELEVEN | Location: In the Drama Classroom  
Injection of Tension  
When: In Between Classes  
Roles: Drama teacher and one student from the class |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic Convention: Modified Forum Theatre</td>
<td>One of the students stays back and talks to the teacher disclosing information about a friend with a personal problem (emerging from one of the monologues earlier). How does the teacher handle this? Could they have done anything differently?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – Section Two
Process Drama Two: “The Secret Life of Us” – Pre-Text Material

WHITE RIDGE STATE HIGH SCHOOL

YEAR 11 DRAMA CLASS
PRESENTS

“THE SECRET LIFE OF US”

AN ORIGINAL PERFORMANCE
WEDNESDAY 10 AUGUST
7.00PM
P BLOCK
ENTRY FREE

WHITE RIDGE STATE HIGH SCHOOL

YEAR 11 DRAMA

FORMING TASK
WHITE RIDGE STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Year 11 Drama

Forming Task

STUDENT NAME:______________________________________

TASK:

You are to write a monologue based on your own experience. The monologue must connect to your secret life in some way and explore some of the issues teenagers face. These monologues will be incorporated into our production, “The Secret Life of Us”.

Due Date: 1 August

Word length: 200 words
Stacey:

Sometimes I wonder what possesses people to enjoy their lives or more like pretend to. I am on my way home if you ever could call it that, like its not like anyone notices if I am there or not.
As I get closer I can hear the ruffling of feathers, my mum screaming at the new one she “loves.” Every week, someone new, maybe not every week but it feels like it. My mom always has someone knew and its usually some stupid bum that tries to take over my “home” if that’s what you’d call it. I suppose I am the one who takes care of my little brother, signs all of the school slips and does all he cooking, all the mum stuff. I suppose I would like to know what it’s like to be sixteen.
The Good Girl

I’m the good girl, always have been. The pride and joy of my parents. I never get in trouble, I’ve never got a detention. I get average grades but my comments are always ‘Tegan is a pleasant student to teach’. This one time in year 9. I got a parent teacher- interview requested by my graphics teacher, I wasn’t doing my homework. But both my teacher and parents decided that since I was such a good girl I just had to “try harder”. Not even a detention or a yelling. All because I’m a good girl. But nobody really knows me! Like last weekend I said I was staying at Jacqui’s, but really Jacqui and I went to a party! I got so pissed! I even got a little stoned! And it’s not the first time either. I do it all the time, but nobody will ever know, because I’m the good girl. I’d never do anything wrong. I just smile and say you can trust me and my parents just say “We know Tegan, your such a good girl”.
## Appendix C: Process Drama Three: “The Party”

**Appendix C – Section One**  
**Practitioner’s Process Drama Plan – “The Party”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Component</th>
<th>Dramatic Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRAME ONE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Climate Setting</td>
<td>Game: Knights, Mounts and Cavaliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FRAME TWO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Climate Setting</td>
<td>Discussion: Favourite Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The group think of their favourite teacher. Individuals share key words. Pair chat - followed by one participant story to the whole group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transition: <em>This drama is about a favourite teacher…a teacher with many of these qualities</em>…</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FRAME THREE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase: Pre-text</td>
<td>Location: The Tuckshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When: November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roles: Rosemary the Tuckshop Convener; remainder of the group in blanket role as ‘other’ new tuckshop volunteers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                      | Pre-text Plot Points:  
|                      | *Karen - Second year English and History teacher*  
|                      | *Six hours from Brisbane*  
|                      | *Boyfriend Stewart Cameron…local hardware*  
|                      | *Brother Michael in Karen’s year 12 class*  
|                      | *She is leaving…. Such a shame to lose good teachers.* |
|                      |                |
| FRAME FOUR           |                |
| Phase: Context Setting | Location: The Town |
|                      | When: A Saturday |
|                      | Roles: Karen and ???? |
|                      | Working in small groups, each receives a different time on Karen’s typical Saturday. The group members devise a tableau of this moment but then describe the event as a third person in a story circle convention. |
|                      |                |
| FRAME FIVE           |                |
| Phase: Context       | Location: Neutral/ Abstract |
| Building/ Poetic Action | When: End of the Year |
|                      | Roles: Year 12 English Students in Karen’s class |
| Dramatic Convention: | A symbolic chair representing Karen acts as focal point. The year 12 students individually come and stand beside ‘Karen’ and verbalise their farewell message in her card…What did they sign?  
| Modified Thought Tapping |                |
| FRAME SIX | Location: The Classroom |
| Phase: Injecting Tension, Second Pre-text | When: Class has just finished |
| Roles: Karen and one student from the class |
| Dramatic Convention: Pair Improvisation Thought Tap | Student from Karen’s class asks Karen if she will be attending Michael’s eighteenth birthday party. They give Karen the photocopy of the invitation |
| Karen’s classmates give their immediate thought response at the conclusion of the scene |

| FRAME SEVEN | Location: The Café beside the hardware store |
| Phase: Context Building/ Injection of Tension | When: A week before Michael’s 18th Birthday |
| Roles: Karen and Stewart |
| Practitioner selects a ‘Karen’ to improvise the scene and asks for a volunteer ‘Stewart’. Karen discusses with Stewart if she will or will not attend the party. |

| FRAME EIGHT | Location: The Principal’s Office |
| Phase: Context Building/ Narrative | When: The Monday after the party |
| Roles: Karen and the School Principal |
| Dramatic Convention: Pair Improvisation | The Principal needs information as the police are looking for information about an assault on a Year 11 student, who was at the party. Staffing for the following year needs to be resolved… Will Karen be staying on or requesting a transfer? |

| FINAL FRAME | Working in small groups, create a short dramatic statement that symbolically communicates any significant reflection that occurred in response to today’s drama. |
| Phase: Reflective Activity | Dramatic Convention: Dramatic Statement/ Symbolic |
INVITATION

Year 12

Michael’s 18th Birthday BBQ Bash

Where: The Cameron’s House
6.00pm Saturday 24th September
Participant Case Study One: Leigh

Date: 16 June 2005

I: Today is the 16th June 2005 and I’m interviewing Leigh. What’s your date of birth and age please?

R: Yep, XXX so I’m 23.

I: Did you come straight from school?

R: I did come straight from school. I did one semester and then took two years off and I failed miserably in my first semester because I didn’t want to be here, that’s why I took two years off and I went overseas and came back.

I: You worked overseas and you travelled?

R: Yep, I worked in London and travelled around and did a lot of partying. I was working as a teacher’s assistant over there so that inspired me to come back and try again.

I: What motivated you to become a teacher?

R: My whole family are teachers so it wasn’t really much of an option. Laugh. Both my grandfathers were Principal s, my mother’s qualified as a teacher and all my aunts and uncles are teachers, most of them anyway.

I: Is your mum still teaching?

R: She’s not teaching, she only taught for a year then she had a nervous breakdown and left.

I: Really?

R: Laugh. But she’s got her qualifications - she’s tutored instead.

I: Okay.

R: It was pretty much Education was always on the brain as something to do and because of dramatic inclinations I was able to speak in front of people so it wasn’t an issue.

I: So was Drama a strong subject area for you when you were at school?

R: Yes. From about grade 10 I knew that this was the course I wanted to do at Uni. But the other option was just to pursue straight theatre studies, so…

I: Why didn’t you do that?

R: There were a couple of things… one was the family thing and the fact that my parents probably would have killed me if I had tried…

I: Why not acting?

R: It’s something that I’d like to try at some other time but I wanted to, I knew that I’d like my teachers qualifications even if I don’t end up teaching for ever and ever. And I knew that I wanted to do it now rather than in another 20 years. If that’s what I decided to do in 20 years, I’d rather get my qualifications now then do it again later.

I: So this is your first degree?

R: Yep.

I: Tell me about your University course so far.

R: Well instead of doing five subjects… because I took two years off and I came back the course had changed a lot and so the subjects that I had passed weren’t relevant to the course anymore anyway so I had to redo some of those and I had to redo the subjects that I failed. So I had to pick up extra subjects anyway and the choice was to either do six subjects in the same semesters or do an extra semester at the end, so I took the extra semester at the end and then dropped a couple of subjects along the way as well so I had a full load at the end and was only doing four subjects a semester rather than five which is what everyone else was doing. Laugh.

I: Do you think that the units that you’ve done in Education and in your curriculum areas have prepared you for teaching?

R: Some of them. I think the Drama ones have been good, most of them. They have been good I just wish there were more of them laugh. But they have all been good, just trying to think of some that weren’t so good.

I: Which units in the Education faculty do you think have particularly prepared you for teaching?

R: I found them all a bit wishy-washy.

I: What do you mean by wishy-washy?

R: I found them a bit general. But that could also be my upbringing so it’s hard to tell, I don’t know if everyone feels that way but I found them very general and very… theoretical rather than practical. And I understand the importance of theory but that doesn’t help you much when you’re starting out. I think theory becomes more important after you’ve done the hard bit at the start and then you want to improve. So I think you want the practical.
I: What sort of pedagogical approaches have you experienced in Education units?
R: Well, the exam that I’ve got on Tuesday is basically regurgitate the textbook and there’s been a lot of that in the Education faculty. I really liked the EDB 450 I think it was, it was a behaviour management subject, which has now apparently been cancelled. But they have as the first 50% of the course a micro teaching episode and that was what our tutes were whereas people doing microteaching and then we all worked together to critique other people’s teaching which was really good. It would have been better if we’d also been able to have tute time to discuss the content as well but that was really good. The exams still required regurgitation though.

I: Do you think that some of the Drama units prepared you?
R: Yes. I felt that the ones we did early on Process Drama and the Forum Theatre ones, it would have, it would have been really good if we’d have them after a bit of time at prac first so that we could see how it was relating, but now it’s still helpful because I can think back and go, oh right, we did that, gotcha. But I think that’s actually the biggest problem with the course is that you don’t get into the prac and the Education bit until third year, end of third year and by that time you’ve had two and a half years of study that you don’t know what it’s relating to on a practical level. Whereas if you threw us in in the first year, we could suddenly be able to relate everything that we learnt after that back to our practical experience which would be good.

I: Have you experienced critical pedagogy here at University?
R: Pause. Not a lot. We’ve got a subject at the moment which is Social Justice Education subject which I really like because it’s forcing, it’s making us look at issues that we’re not used to looking at that. My mum’s a sociologist as well so I see that side a lot but a lot of people go ooh, I never thought of that in terms of a classroom or a school and I think that’s good. All the Drama elements come together as a critical component and the Forming Knowledge subject was excellent, some people bitched about it but I thought it was great. Laugh.

I: Because it made you think about what paradigms were driving you?
R: Yeah, and just become aware of other people and how other people saw the world and why there were predominant paradigms and I thought it was very interesting and I think that everyone should have to do it. Laugh. But in the Education school there’s this CLB 306, which is good.

I: What are the main forms of pedagogy in that unit?
R: We do, it’s a 50/50% one. We’ve got an exam next week, that’s in the essays and we did a presentation which was good, we gave a seminar and then the rest of the class got involved in discussing it.

I: What was your seminar about?
R: Our seminar was about behaviour management and the reasons behind behaviour management techniques, not what they were but how they were actually just you know, used to control people and discipline areas which was good.

I: So do you feel prepared to teach?
R: Yes, mostly. I definitely feel prepared to teach Drama, although a year ago I was petrified. But film and media no, I haven’t had any experience in it whatsoever. I don’t feel I’ve had enough subjects in the area to know the content well enough and I haven’t had a prac yet where I’ve taught it so not at all for that one but Drama, yes. But I also have help with that one because I work at the XXX so I get to practice it three times a week. Laugh.

I: Absolutely. I now know how to relate to kids, I now feel comfortable walking in on the first day and establishing myself rather than sitting around and waiting until I felt comfortable which I think is a big problem.

I: How confident do you feel about your relationships with students in a school setting?
R: I feel reasonably comfortable, I still do have trouble figuring out where this line is that you draw between friendship and friendly and withdrawn because I know on my last prac the girls there were just beautiful and were crying to see me leave the school and I did get on really well with them and they came and they gave me this huge basket full of chocolate on my last day and I gave each of them a hug and then went, oh god, what if I wasn’t meant to do that? So that wasn’t so good but I couldn’t not give them a hug so… and then I also felt the girls who I hadn’t clicked with as much that… because I just hadn’t had the opportunity or they were less inclined to come to me, there I felt bad that they weren’t getting the hugs, you know? It’s hard.

I: How do you think they relate to that when they see you or any other teacher hugging other students but not them? How do you think they might interpret that?
R: Well I think it could go both ways. They could either think that other students suck up and they must be really glad that they’re not doing it or they could feel bad that they’re not also getting the same attention
which is what I didn’t want them to feel but it was just because I had only been there for four weeks and
didn’t get a chance to know them all. But I did feel bad.

I: So this idea of the line or the boundary what do you mean when you talk about that?

R: I think it’s hard. My first high school prac I was freaking out because there wasn’t that much age difference
between me and the grade 12s and I was going out with a younger guy at the time and he had only just
graduated from high school himself and I’m thinking, this is weird! And I was going, how do you make
sure that you’re the one in charge and that you’re not there like, talking to them on a social scene because
they’re going you know, I went to this party on the weekend and I’m like hey, me too! Oh, wait, I did go to
a party but I don’t need to tell you about it. But the first prac was actually easier to establish a line between
friendship and professional because the kids were very different from me, from a completely different way
of life so I didn’t relate to them on a friendship level I was just… a teacher to them and they didn’t want to
get to know me on a personal level, most of them. But the problem with that one was that most of them
worked a local shopping centre. So I would run into them at the shops and walking down in my daggiest
and go, ooh, hello, you didn’t see me just walk out of the bottle shop with a bottle of rum. Laugh, I was just
like this is really bad, there’s no escape. Whereas with XXX that wasn’t a problem.

I: Because you don’t live out that way?

R: Yeah.

I: So what about the students at XXX, how do you relate to them?

R: They all saw me with respect and I think that was a big thing, they never thought of me as their buddy,
although one girl did try and say, come over to my house after school and I was like oh no, because actually
that’s illegal. And she said sorry. But there wasn’t ever that issue, I was always their teacher, I was just a
cool teacher.

I: A cool teacher?

R: Yeah.

I: Do you think young people want cool teachers?

R: I don’t think it hurts, I don’t think it hurts but I don’t think you should just have the cool teachers. I don’t
think of myself as particularly cool …

I: But sometimes students assign you that role?

R: Yeah.

I: What does a cool teacher mean to you?

R: Laugh. I don’t know. I think it was… some of the girls at XXX were in my XXX class which is how I got
the place at XXX so they knew me as this cool, wacky XXX teacher who sat down on the floor with them
and was on first name terms and so that was, that influenced the other girls a lot as well I think because
they then went, oh she must be pretty cool because these girls think she’s pretty cool.

I: So it’s by association?

R: Yeah, definitely by association. If you can get in with one, you’re in with a lot of them. Laugh.

I: Isn’t that strange?

R: Yeah, it’s really strange but it’s so true because I was never a cool kid. I was never a cool kid and so being
seen as being cool by the cool kids at school I was freaking out. It was weird! But I think being a cool
teacher can backfire on you.

I: Can it?

R: Yeah, absolutely. I think you can be seen as being easy to manipulate or easy to get around. I heard one
stage, one of the girls said something like oh, I’d go and get my mobile phone and I was like no you
wouldn’t, and she was like well I won’t because the supervising teacher is over there but if it was just you I
would. And I was like, ah, no you wouldn’t and she just sort of smiled at me and I was like oh, okay, so
you think that you can get away with that with me but just because there’s other teachers in the room is the
only reason you’re not doing this behaviour even though it is wrong, which is interesting.

I: How did that make you feel?

R: Yeah, it took me down a few pegs because I thought I had been going really well and they were really well
behaved and they were responding well to directions that I gave them and so on and then for her to say that
I went oh, maybe they’re not actually responding to me but by the presence of this other person in the room
and I don’t think that’s always the case but it did remind me that it was a false setting, it wasn’t real
because there was someone else there who has already established their power.

I: How confident do you feel about your relationships with other staff?

R: Ah I think it must be hard to come in and be on an equal footing because I just don’t think you are and they
know it and you know it and it would be really hard to justify why your opinion mattered when you’re
fresh out of Uni and you haven’t had that experience. I don’t have a problem getting on with people.

Although my first practice there was an awful bitch and stuff and it made my life hell but mostly it’s not a
problem, I got on really well with most of the teachers that I’ve been in the staff room with. I designed a
I: So is that something you think that all beginning teachers are going to face? That sense of finding their voice and their confidence with colleagues?

R: I reckon. I mean, I think there are some people that are more confident and there are definitely people in schools who are more assertive than I am but there are a lot who are a lot less assertive than me and… especially if they’re the only Drama teacher fighting for Drama to have a place in the school it’s going to be really important. Depending on who else they’re working with, it just depends doesn’t it, if the people are supportive of first year teachers then it’s alright but if they’re like uh!

I: I want to ask you too about relationships with parents as a beginning teacher. Are there any areas that you feel really confident in dealing with parents?

R: No. Because they don’t have a manual on that. Laugh. And you don’t get to experience the parent side of it. They have parent-teacher interviews when I was on prac but you don’t go to those.

I: So you think that’s an area that you may be unprepared for?

R: Yeah, definitely. Even with my XXX work, I’ve been talking to teachers, to parents rather and I also am lucky with this though that I did work at a school previously and have already had the chance to liaise with parents and watch other teachers do it but even when I first started XXX and parents would come up to me, how’s she going? I’m like, ah good… should I mention that I yelled at her three times in one class? You know like… I don’t know what you say to them.

I: Can you give me an example?

R: You don’t want to say, you’re kid’s a holy terror and I never want to see them again, because you know… they don’t want to hear that and there’s got to be something good about them and they need more constructive criticism than that, but you also need to say it in a somehow positive way, it’s easy, if the child’s an angel, pleasure to have in the class, fantastic, always hands in work on time, works beautiful, nicely presented, never have to talk to him about anything, beautiful, nothing to worry about. But it’s when you have problems that it’s the thing. I did actually end up asking my supervising teacher this time around, I said what do you say in parent-teacher interviews? And she said you start off with something really generic… yes she can be lively and wait for them to jump in and say, oh, she’s a holy terror. So you go off and do your thing and I’ll do mine and I went oh okay, thank you, have a lovely day.

I: And do you feel you’re going to be supported as a beginning teacher?

R: Yeah, I think that all the admin staff I’ve met have been lovely and they seem to just want to support all the teachers in what they do so…

I: Tell me about one of your most positive experiences on your recent prac?

R: Well the most standout memories was actually on my last prac because I actually had holy terrors a grade 9 unit for them, this last prac that they’re now working on, even though I’m not there and I worked collaboratively with that and that was successful so I feel confident in that I just also realised that I personally don’t think I have the assertiveness skills to stand up and say, no my opinion matters and I do know what I’m talking about. I think I go, oh you have another 15 years on me, you win, your way is right. But that’s just a learning curve.

I: Do you think that’s the clientele?

R: Yes.

I: Okay. So clientele makes a difference?

R: Absolutely.
I: At any stage during your last prac or in your experiences in a school context, have you ever witnessed an example of tough ethical decision?

R: Hang on… nothing’s standing out, I think the worst one was deciding whether someone got a pocket or not for an activity.

I: *Laugh.* Whether or not they got an award?

R: Yeah, because they were obsessed with pockets in private school, pockets are a nightmare. And they’re like, do I get a pocket for that? Well you’ve only been doing it for three months so you might have to wait, but I did it to get a pocket! Well you should be doing it for the love of the activity rather than…

I: So that idea of expecting a reward?

R: Yeah.

I: Okay.

R: Let me think… I saw someone breaking what I consider ethical boundaries and legal boundaries by giving kids cigarettes.

I: Really?

R: Yeah. One of the teacher aides.

I: They gave them a cigarette?

R: Yeah, she would regularly take the kids out to have a smoke with her.

I: For company?

R: Yeah, and she’d give them cigarettes. She was, I was talking to her early on in the prac about one of the students who had come from a very poor background that he was a regular smoker and I was like, oh I don’t even know how he affords cigarettes and she was like, well sometimes I do give him some because he is short on money. Gosh!

I: Did the admin know about it?

R: She worked almost exclusively for my supervising teacher who relied on her for everything and wouldn’t hear a bad word about her and this supervising teacher was a very powerful influence within the school so no one wanted to upset her. And a few of the other teachers at the school knew about this but didn’t want to say anything for fear of upsetting the other teacher.

I: Why? If they upset the other teacher, what would she do?

R: I don’t even know.

I: What would the ramification be?

R: The other Drama teacher at the school didn’t want to do it because she was a beginning teacher and she was relying on this teacher for a reference because she was on a contract so she couldn’t upset her for fear of… ruining her own career. And this teacher had been at school longer than all the admin and so on and she really had, she really held a lot of power within the school, I don’t know what she could have done but she did seem to really have a lot of power that most of the other teachers were a bit scared of her.

I: How did they show that they were scared of her?

R: She just always got her way. It wasn’t even that she tried for it that much but she didn’t have to crawl to the higher ups as much as everyone else did. You know what I mean? Like when they were filling out forms for what activities they’d take care of for the next year, she didn’t have to do as much as others.

I: So… I’m really interested about these power relationships in the school…

R: Well I don’t know because I didn’t see it but I saw a bit more in the second prac, but that might have come down to jealousy or something because you know, the Drama PE divide, but the PE teacher was apparently one of the worst teachers in the world. *Laugh.* But she still managed to have her sway over everything and got to have sports events all the time and take kids out for sport every you know, during lessons all the time and the Drama teachers and the Music teachers were going what the? You know, how can she do this? But she was married to the lord mayor, the mayor of the town.

I: If you think about overall the units and content that you have covered in your Uni course and what has actually prepared you in terms of code of conduct or ethical frameworks, do you feel prepared in that area?

R: Not specifically, it’s been touched on in tutorials mostly. I had an excellent tutor last year for EDB 451 which was a prac subject and we never talked about what we were meant to be talking about in the tutes she was just like this is what’s going to happen in school, this is the situation you’re going to face. Don’t ever say this, but say this even if you don’t agree with it because otherwise you’ll fall flat on your face and that was what every tute was about which was good, but I don’t think that was a subject thing that was just her and she was great.

I: So you got real tales from a school context?

R: Yes.

I: She was sharing her experience with you?

R: Yes, it was good.

I: So did you get to interact with her or did she story tell?
R: Mostly we’d start off with an innocent question that would lead through stories but at no time did we feel it
was off track or…
I: It was all relevant?
R: It was all things we needed to know, I thought.
I: So what emerged out of that for you in terms of code of conduct or ethical framework?
R: Actually the best code of conduct one I got was from you, when you said don’t ever bitch about a Drama
teacher because the Drama teaching community is so small.
I: Where else in this course that you’ve walked away with some knowledge about ethical conduct?
R: I think it’s always in moments like that. There’s been no subject or course, it’s always been from the tutors
who have had recent classroom experiences saying this is what will happen and again when you did your
grade 9 roleplay of lying on the floor going I’m bored and we went, that’s not meant to happen! And you’re
going yeah, but it will. And we went, oh, right.
I: Laugh. But you were equipped then? It didn’t throw you?
R: That’s right.
I: So you haven’t done anything on child protection?
R: We had one lecture in behaviour management that was on legalities but I didn’t think it was about very
practical legalities. We had some tute notes and things on child protection act and so on but I think you
know, we were talking about that line before, I still think that’s just not covered. People are like, well
you’re going to have to figure it out for yourself and that’s all very well and good but what are the legal
requirements of that?
I: So where is the line, and where will I be protected by the department?
R: Yes, that sort of thing. We did have, EDB 450 was good because it was our first prac subject and they did
say things like do not wear singlet tops that have just the thin strap, do not wear something that’s too low-
cut, do not wear, you know all those sorts of things which for some people are common sense but for some
people really aren’t and you do need to say, this is what you should wear. And then that, then the tutors and
lecturers are also being role models of correct attire and behaviour.
I: Have you ever felt uncomfortable in a school environment?
R: From my own behaviour?
I: Yes.
R: I’m trying to remember where this came from though. I can remember feeling it pause. I think I probably, I
just get a bit distracted sometimes when they’re telling me stories. And not ever during the class but before
class when they’re coming in or when they’re going out and they’ll go, even something as simple as, oh my
boyfriend is such an ass and I’m like, oh yeah boy’s suck that sort of thing and I go, I didn’t mean to say
that. I didn’t mean to go there, you know, that’s too bad, come into class now.
I: You acknowledge that you hear them but how much do you partake in the conversation?
R: Yeah. Because at the same time I don’t want to be aloof, I do want to share my life.
I: How much of your life do you share? Is that what you’re saying?
R: Yeah, how much do you go into? It’s a bit different but I’ve got these XXX classes, I’ll quite happily tell
my seniors, I had a really good date the other day, it went really well and they’re like oh good on you Leigh
and that’s all. Or when I’m teaching gibberish to them I’m like, well actually I do my best gibberish on a
Saturday night after a couple of drinks and they go yeah, yeah, funny. But I wouldn’t…
I: You wouldn’t say that?
R: I wouldn’t say that at school.
I: So what is the line?
R: Absolutely.
I: Thank you very much.
R: No problem.

End of Interview
Participant Case Study: Leigh
Online Reflection
Subject: Drama Two - “The Secret Life of Us”
Date: 14 September 2005

This drama raised questions which I had already considered – and no-one seems to have an answer for! It’s fantastic for teachers to have an impact on their students, and for students to feel comfortable talking to their teachers. However, what is the line between friend and professional? This is a major issue, I believe, and probably not the major one of the drama, but one which concerns me.

This didn’t really raise an ethical dilemma for me but it was certainly curious. I think the reason it didn’t raise ethical issues for me was simply because I couldn’t imagine myself being in a similar situation. I’d never set a task of that sort for one thing. More importantly however, I think my teaching style is always very professional so that, while students feel comfortable with me, they know that first and foremost I am their teacher, not their friend.

In terms of being presented with a problem by a student I think my first port of call would be the school counsellor just to check details and stuff. I would still maintain confidentiality though. I’d just want to be certain of the correct procedure, not only in order to help the students most effectively but also in order to ensure my legal safety! As much as I want to help students, I can’t lose my job over it or I’d not be able to help anyone else! Also, I’d want to confirm as soon as possible whether or not there was reason for concern, and not just storytelling.

There is a blurred line in teaching between friend and teacher. I think this is especially the case in drama where you share stories of your lives to create relevant drama. However, it’s imperative – if only for legal reasons – that students are well aware there IS a line. I’d just like to find out for sure what that line is!
Throughout our uni course, and especially during and after prac, my friends and I have been engaged in discussions of ethics related to education. Some of the subjects we’ve discussed have been covered by these process dramas.

Some subjects we’ve had at uni have touched on legalities involved with the topics covered, especially prac subjects. Mostly this has been with particular tutors relating their experiences and ideas. This has been great because it’s the only time the problem of relations with students has come up. One subject had one lecture on legalities involved with working with children. This is a major weakness of the education course, as teaching is SO much about ethics and the line between professionalism and caring. In our counselling subject we did learn the ‘answer’ to the topic 2 question which was to say something along the lines ‘I would like to help you but I don’t know how. Do you mind me talking to someone else who can help us?’ However there has never at uni been a case where the ‘rules’ have been simply stated. It is therefore still confusing as to what the proper code of behaviour is for young teachers.

These process dramas emphasised that teaching is about self and ethics. I think it’s essential that all beginning teachers have a better understanding of that. Teaching is not just a job but a lifestyle. I’m still paranoid about running into kids I’ve taught when I’m not in ‘teacher-mode’. The third drama was particularly relevant for this as living in a small town is all about everyone knowing everything! I therefore think it’s imperative that teachers are transparent. Trying to keep parts of yourself private isn’t going to work in this kind of situation and being ‘caught out’ with a secret is going to be worse than being open about it to start with.

I think the major weakness of process dramas for making people aware of ethics etc in teaching is that there is no concrete resolution at the end of them. So while they’re fantastic at making us aware of the issues, and making us think about what we’d do, it would be good to have some sort of firm answer to the question to resolve the problem neatly!! Or as neatly as possible anyway!

After these process dramas, I became more convinced that it is essential to just be yourself as a teacher. In any of the situations covered, but particularly the last one, you can only be true to yourself. If you’re being fake with your personal life or teaching life then a) you’re going to be exhausted and b) you aren’t doing the best you can. If you are just yourself then you always have a point of reference and you are worried about what is best for you rather than struggling to remember the psychology, legalities and career potential of a given situation.

I can’t say that these process dramas would encourage me to change my behaviour, but I would certainly be more inclined to look at possible problem situations from different perspectives before taking action. I think these dramas have a definite place in teacher training, if only to make future teachers aware of what some of the ‘dangers’ may be or what could possibly lie ahead. Teaching is hard and all these types of situations make it harder, it would therefore be helpful for all teachers to know about these before they get caught in one!
Participant Case Study Two: Phillip

Date: 29 June 2005

I: Hello Phillip. Can I start with your date of birth?
R: XXX
I: So you’re 21?
R: I am.
I: Did you come to Uni straight from school?
R: Yes.
I: Why did you want to be a teacher?
R: It was a few, well ever since basically year 10, I’ve just felt that the teachers that I had, the work that they were doing made me feel that I could do this and that I wanted to give back. When I was going through school there were a lot of teachers who the teachers didn’t really have that much time for and I thought that no, they should be, in all their classes have time, be catered time for so I just thought no, I’m going… I want to be a teacher, I’ve always wanted to be and apparently it’s in the blood.
I: Is it?
R: Yeah, apparently.
I: There’s a generation of teachers?
R: Yeah.
I: So your parents are teachers?
R: Not that I know, no.
I: But your relatives are?
R: Yeah, ones I don’t know.
I: What is an inspiring teacher to you? If you had to list the top 5 qualities, what are they?
R: Someone who caters for students in a classroom, involves students in the classroom. I should say further, a teacher is someone who constantly looks at the students not only in the classroom but outside of the classroom and then probably number three, being a teacher who knows what they’re doing, appears to be confident and appears not, you know, someone who appears to be confident in, not only their content but in their manner. And probably number four would be their professionalism that they are not slacking off in front of the class, although they sometimes develop a great rapport with the students, I constantly do that myself but I can always maintain a professional standard so professionalism. I don’t know what another one would be… probably just a teacher who is friendly. A teacher who is approachable.
I: Do you think your University course has prepared you to be a teacher?
R: It could have done it to a further extent; it could have done it better. When I look at it, I would have done things differently and I would have done things better.
I: So which units have prepared you?
R: Most of the Drama classes have prepared me, the psychology units have prepared me, but not as much… so those units really have prepared me, not being too specific, not being quite… the Drama units in general have all developed me for the aesthetic field further, knowing the content… and then the psychological subjects have furthered my development and understanding for the appreciation of the students and their varying outcomes, their varying approaches, their intellect and stuff like that. Do I have to go the other way and say those that haven’t? I haven’t been impressed with the second teaching area, like the English for example. I’m more confident in my Drama than I am in my English. I know my Drama more but in the classroom, my English is much better than my Drama which is real… real unusual but that comes down to a lot of different variables. But for English for example, even though it’s a second teaching area, we haven’t had the opportunity to have, like Drama for example, there was whole blocks, whole semesters where all we did were Drama subjects, we haven’t had whole semesters where we’ve done just English subjects or a mix of both within our semesters so…
I: So it’s the amount of time that you’ve done?
R: It’s the time that you get.
I: Or is it pedagogy? Is it how you’re taught?
R: No, no it’s the time that you get. And then also coming down to the subjects like, everyone out there, all my friends, all of them will say that we haven’t had a subject that teaches you the basics of English like what a plural noun is, what a collaborative noun, you know all the ins and outs of the English language, there hasn’t been something like that, that’s where a comma should go and an apostrophe, all that type of work, that’s kind of been on a fundamental basis that you know that before you come to University, we shouldn’t have to revise or recap that for you but I think that it should, there should be something similar like that.
I: Quite a change?
R: The student planning centre, otherwise known as an RTC. But we’re the SPC baked beans and spaghetti,
I: What’s the SPC?
R: Coming and going, in and out, don’t know their names sometimes with them. She came into the classroom,
I: Really.
R: I had one student who was a complete pain. She came from a very tough area, this was her first week into
I: You have described several positive experiences? Any not so positive?
R: XXX High School.
I: What school are we at?
R: Yes laugh.
I: Can you tell me about one of your most positive experiences on prac?
R: A positive experience that had been turned from a negative into a positive made it really enlightening. On
prac, for the four weeks, the first two weeks was our fashion extravaganza so that’s the major thing for the
school. Being in a low socio-economic area we call our fashion houses K-mart and Millers and stuff like
that so… for them, it’s a big thing. It’s a huge thing. It’s…
I: You have described several positive experiences? Any not so positive?
R: I had one student who was a complete pain. She came from a very tough area, this was her first week into
the school, I didn’t know that, I assumed she’d been in another class because I have kids coming and going
all the time.
R: Really.
I: The student planning centre, otherwise known as an RTC. But we’re the SPC baked beans and spaghetti,
kids make fun of it all the time. Anyway, she left the classroom and never came back for the rest of the
week. The next week came. I pushed her, not physically pushed her, I pushed her to develop her skills,
building her confidence in the class, at the end of the 70 minute lesson, she performed in front of the class.
I: Quite a change?
R: Just by pushing her, having a supportive group around her, to get her up on her feet.

I: On her own?

R: No, it was in a small group so that she wasn’t isolated, she was in a group of girls who were in her year, I have, they’re composite classes, all the classes that I have.

I: A positive outcome for her?

R: So she didn’t know anyone except for these girls that she’d met in other classes and saw at lunchtime. I didn’t know her background or anything like that. I did a bit of investigating in the week that she was away, that she was out of my classroom I mean but she was still very volatile when she came back, just not nudging her but just that little, this is a Drama classroom, you’ve got to get over the fact that you don’t know these people. Great way to do it, you’re not, step out of yourself as being you XXX, step into the character of a clown, you’re something completely silly. They’re not going to know that you are XXX, you’re doing something out of the ordinary. Here’s some juggling balls, have a go at juggling. To hide

I: What are the areas that you feeling you need to work on?

R: I think it’s more of a personal.

I: So that’s a personal…

R: I don’t think… in part the University degree might have but I think it’s more my approach and my personal belief and value in catering for students, trying to motivate them in as many ways that they can, but more to the point that they have confidence and have self-worth. That they can do something and they can develop

I: Do you think your University course has prepared you to deal with moments like that?

R: I removed her. Did the admin support that?

I: A positive outcome for her?

R: So she didn’t know anyone except for these girls that she’d met in other classes and saw at lunchtime. I didn’t know her background or anything like that. I did a bit of investigating in the week that she was away, that she was out of my classroom I mean but she was still very volatile when she came back, just not nudging her but just that little, this is a Drama classroom, you’ve got to get over the fact that you don’t know these people. Great way to do it, you’re not, step out of yourself as being you XXX, step into the character of a clown, you’re something completely silly. They’re not going to know that you are XXX, you’re doing something out of the ordinary. Here’s some juggling balls, have a go at juggling. To hide

I: Did the admin support that?

R: Yeah, I removed her.

I: Did the admin support that?

R: Yeah, she was quite frustrated, quite annoyed that she wasn’t, this isn’t what she does, she doesn’t do this type of work, this isn’t me, this isn’t what I want to do… I want to be with my cousin who’s in another class so they both had come from XXX over to XXX.

I: What’s driving you and your decision-making in those moments?

R: I don’t think… in part the University degree might have but I think it’s more my approach and my personal belief and value in catering for students, trying to motivate them in as many ways that they can, but more to the point that they have confidence and have self-worth. That they can do something and they can develop

I: So what happened when she threw the chair at you? Did she get removed from your classes for a week?

R: Yeah, I removed her.

I: Did the admin support that?

R: Yeah, she was quite frustrated, quite annoyed that she wasn’t, this isn’t what she does, she doesn’t do this type of work, this isn’t me, this isn’t what I want to do… I want to be with my cousin who’s in another class so they both had come from XXX over to XXX.

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I: What’s driving you and your decision-making in those moments?

R: Yeah. So basically I don’t think it has enough. One thing that I’m let down on and all my reports let me down on is my behaviour management. Last prac they failed me for behaviour management in the classroom, this prac it was noted on my prac report and my prac teacher rang me on Monday and said that I want to meet, you know meet… she’s really happy go lucky, I’m the best thing that’s ever walked in the classroom, she’s never had a prac teacher before but still, I seriously, your behaviour management, I want to discuss that, I want to work with that. So I think in that fact, Uni has let me down. We did do one subject classroom management, it was a waste of time, honestly, it was a waste of time. We went to the lecture, and the lecturer was… it’s, because in Education it’s a combination of primary and secondary so you’re not getting, you’re getting your primary, the primary lecturer talking about primary students and the secondary lecturer in the one lecture basically. That you don’t understand and you can’t put it into action in any way.

I: What are the areas that you feeling you need to work on?

R: [Students] Refusing to do any work in the classroom, therefore you know, students having, not bringing any pens, any books, any bags, anything to school. What am I meant to do with them if they don’t have anything? I’m becoming a resource, a stationary cupboard and giving out paper, giving out pens. I’ve got exercise books for kids because they don’t bring books. I bring them with me, every class, because I know they’re going to need something to do.

I: Is it those moments of conflict that are the difficult moments for you?

R: I think that is, I think my supervising teacher will also say that it’s got to do with me and I agree with her though that I’m too soft sometimes on these students. That I can see they’re coming from quite a tough background. Some of these kids don’t want to be there at all. They don’t want to be there.

I: So is the teacher trying to get you to take a tougher stance?

R: Yes. She said to me, well if you don’t think they’re doing anything, send them out. And I said, well what’s that going to achieve? That’s just going to remove them from the classroom where they won’t get any work done, they won’t get any experience in it… a behaviour management strategy of the school is bucket duty. If you don’t cooperate in class, if you don’t, it’s whatever the teacher thinks, you have bucket duty at morning tea, you come to my staffroom, you get a glove and an ice-cream bucket and you’ve got to pick up
rubbish from around the school. I personally don’t see that as much of a punishment as such, I don’t think that that’s… it’s not rewarding the students in any way but it’s more of the students know they’re going to get bucket duty, but at morning tea and lunchtime, they don’t get up to go to the bin and put their rubbish in the bin because they know someone’s going to be on, they know people on bucket duty, there’s at least 10 students in each of the five areas around the school on bucket duty so at least 50 students every morning tea or lunchtime you can count the students on bucket duty so I don’t see that as an appropriate… Yeah, so no I don’t think behaviour management side of things has prepared me enough in this…

I: But other strategies?

R: Yeah, for strategies, you know?

I: You want other strategies by the sound of it, that are more in line with your personal values. Is that what you’re saying?

R: Perhaps, but more in the fact of what can I do with, like… messages, fine, they taught me that, I’m not happy, I’m disappointed with this class, therefore hopefully, and hopefully getting the students to think self-regulation theory of oh well we’ll get back onto task and we’ll try and do what he wants us to do.

I: This notion of ethical decisions. In lots of ways, what you’ve just been talking about, is about ethical decisions and about professionalism because it’s about, how do I deal with these various problems and what sort of strategies do I apply. Have you, in your last prac or in your experience have you witnessed any examples of tough ethical decisions being made?

R: I don’t, not that’s coming to my… I think everything that I’ve wanted to say or I think answers those pre-questions that you’ve asked, I think I’ve covered it. I don’t think there’s any further problems that are occurring in the classroom that I’ve encountered that I’ve seen or I’ve heard of or anything like that, no.

I: Let’s talk about relationships within the school environment, it sounds to me like you feel quite comfortable with student relationships in general, so I’m probably interested in any incidents concerning staff?

R: Staff, yeah okay. My staffroom is combined, is everyone’s staffroom. It’s the art department, it’s Visual Art, Performing Arts, Business, Maths and SOSE are all together so there are about 30 odd people in this staffroom. And there’s 4 of them around the school but this is the best staffroom. I’ve not come across anything like this before, it’s just… everyone’s fantastic. You know when you’re having an off day and other staff know when you are, they’ll leave a note on your desk and say that you’ll be a great teacher. It’s moments when –

I: So that’s happened to you?

R: Yeah. It’s moments when other staff are having nervous breakdowns that they don’t want to answer the door because the students are there to talk to them. The good students are there. It’s moments when staff are finding it quite difficult to deal with 14 year old girls who want to do Dance and they have to be involved in Dance but there’s not enough time in the day to let them be involved, that it becomes their fault and… but yes, no staff have had nervous breakdowns in my classroom so seeing that and being engaged in that has been an experience where other staff have just banded together and help this other staff member overcome the problem that they’re having with the whole class. Not just a student, but with the whole class that they were having, was just unbelievable to see.

I: So they banded together and they problem solved?

R: Yes, and everyone helped without having to get Admin involved. Everyone dealt with it, all the staff tried to deal with it in the best way that they could in our staffroom.

I: Why didn’t they want to get Admin involved?

R: Admin [consistently] complain that they have too much on their plate already, you deal with what you can. If you have any problems further, that you haven’t dealt with that you cannot deal with yourself, you send them to their year level Deputy. Who’s the Deputy Principal so one of their deputies so other than that, it’s basically up to you to deal with your own students, the Deputy in particular, the Principal, its very devolutionary practice school. The Principal is the CEO so he doesn’t have much to do with the students or the staff at all, he’s there for money. There’s only one Deputy Principal in my eyes who is the site coordinator though. The kids hate her because she is nasty and she’s mean and she is the one that expels most of the students and suspends them and she’s a business woman, a pure business woman. She’s fantastic, she’s what the school needs. Laugh She is, she’s just down the line, hard, straight, this is what has to happen, this is what’s going to happen, I don’t care if you don’t like it.

I: She’s an enforcer?

R: Yeah, she’s great. On my prac previous, last year, the relationships with the staff were very hostile last year I was excluded from everything, I wasn’t involved in anything in the staffroom, it was quite difficult. That staffroom was absolutely ridiculous. All the staff were together in the one staffroom so there was one central staffroom, that’s the only staffroom. All the staff have their desks and corrals together in one section
and then the dining room is attached to that where everyone meets. So you couldn’t go, you couldn’t go
anywhere else because that was the staff place. I was excluded from my teaching staff completely and there
was no support from that staffroom for other staff at all. Whereas this time, it’s just been amazing, it’s just
been fantastic.

I: Why do you think it’s so different? School culture? Or personalities?

R: No, it’s a lot, it’s a mixture of the staff that are in the staffroom and the environment that… the students at
that school were much more approachable, the students at that school I thought weren’t a problem. The
students I have at the moment I don’t think are a problem either but comparing them both to the school I’m
at now is much worse than the one I was at, is the worse than the one I was at last year.

I: So is there camaraderie happening where you are now because it’s tough out there so we band together in
here?

R: Probably I think that could be a mentality.

I: When the teaching’s a bit easier we don’t have to work so much as a team?

R: Yeah, no, probably. I think so. I like it. Where we are at the moment, everyone helps each other no matter
what. You know, one of the teachers was having the teacher now having a nervous breakdown, oh sorry,
another teacher having a breakdown on a separate day with her year 8 maths class. My supervising teacher
sits beside her in the staffroom and she said well I’ve got a spare, you stay here, I’ll take your maths class.
So her and I (sic) toddled off to supervise this grade 8 maths class, which this teacher was having a problem
with. The teacher having the problem sorted herself out and came to the classroom because every lesson is
a double so 35 minute lessons so you have the 70 minute lessons and she came for the second part of the
lesson. And we stayed with her for the whole lesson and the next day we both, myself and her got a box of
chocolates each on our desk because we helped her through a tough time and that’s what the staffroom was
about. I’ve felt included as a staff member and enjoyed and thanked that appreciation.

I: This idea of teachers having a breakdown, what do you mean? they’re having a breakdown?

R: Okay having a breakdown emotionally getting over the top, getting worked up that the students hate me
that it’s all my fault, that I’ve failed the students in giving them enough knowledge in their assessment, I’ve
failed them because I haven’t given them enough time.

I: They have to get out of the classroom at that moment?

R: Yep.

I: And do they breakdown in front of the class before they go?

R: Not usually.

I: They try not to have a breakdown in front of the class?

R: Yeah, they wait til after. I think, that it’s that professional attitude that I’m not going to let it get to me in
front of these students.

I: But sometimes you just have to leave?

R: Well it happened to me, you know, I broke down in front of the kids because of, I won’t go into that, that’s
a-whole-other story but it was just, yeah. I was felt that much a member of staff that I copped the blame.
Because of all the bitchy-ness that was going on in the staffroom with, it’s a horrible word to use but that’s
what it is, that my supervising teacher on the fashion show, she heard that other staff were talking about
her, how they took stuff and stuff like that and it came back that well I’m the new member, it must have
been me that told her. The teacher aide who doesn’t have anything to do with the students, who was only
there to type up work and make phone calls and do all that type of work abused me in front of a couple of
other staff and it’s my fault for everything… I had to get out of there and said I can’t deal with this, I’m
out, I was let out of class by my supervising teacher to make phone calls for the excursion that we were
having, this was in the second week of my prac there, abused me in front of other, in front of three other
staff who are quite senior, professional senior, have been there for a while, I went back to the classroom, I
held myself, I was okay, let’s forget about that now, I’ve got these kids sitting here, I’ve got to get back
onto them and I’ve got the next class coming so I’ve really got to finish this class and get the next one
going. I walked in the class room and they had just finished the movie and they were quite boisterous, quite
over the top and I just said to my supervising teacher, I just can’t deal with this… threw my books on the
table and said I’m going to Karen who’s the Deputy Principal and just burst out in front of her and told her
what happened and it was just, where she was so comforting to what I needed that I needed someone to tell
me that I’m going to be fine, there was no need for anything like that, I didn’t get involved, the teacher aide
didn’t want to hear my side of the opinion, that she got chastised and she was harassed about it and
consequently was pulled into line but I was felt that much member of staff that she treated me as a member
of staff, not as a visitor to the school.

I: Did you stay in that school for your prac or did you go to another school?

R: Yes, I stayed there.
I: So that was your last prac, last year?
R: No, that’s the one just gone, the 4 week just gone.
I: Are you going back to the same school?
R: Yeah, I’m back there for 6 weeks.
I: And is it alright now?
R: Things, as soon as the fashion extravaganza finished, because there was, my supervising teacher, the Dance
teacher and the other Drama teacher were the ones running the fashion extravaganza.
I: So extracurricular events?
R: Took a lot out of us. Every other staff member didn’t have an extracurricular event to coach, to tutor, to
work with and that’s where it really appealed to me. Where I had come from the background in both my
pracs and my schooling, that every staff member must take a co-curricular activity, you coach them, you
tutor them, you mentor them in whatever way so when I walked into this Drama, this is what I’m doing,
I’m doing co-curricular, I’m into fashion extravaganza, we’re going to model this section, we’re going to
work it you know, to get stuff done, and when I sat back, no other staff member was doing any co-
curricular at all so that further heightened that co-curricular had an importance. We’ve gotten off-topic
here.
I: It’s interesting.
R: It’s very interesting but still it’s… yeah. I was made that much a member of staff that I was treated as a
member of staff and felt quite… minute, very small for my work. Surprisingly laugh. But still, it was an
experience. It was an experience, I’ve had so many experiences on this prac that it’s been amazing, it’s
great.
I: What percentage of your course do you think has prepared you to deal with these professional situations or
given you a personal framework to deal with a range of different ethical challenges?
R: If I say… probably 10% might be a bit too lenient. Somewhere between 5 and 10% I think. The rest of it
has had to come off my own back and what I think professionally, what I think should happen and how it
should happen. Unless I seek advice, which I have done from the Deputy and from those other teachers in
the staffroom when I needed it.
I: Thank you Phillip

End Interview.
Participant Case Study: Phillip
Online Reflection
Subject: Drama One - Rowan’s Story
Date: 23 August 2005

Did the Drama raise ethical dilemma for you? If so what were you thinking about?
Throughout the whole drama I did not feel that I was fully engaged. Throughout the whole drama I was thinking about my prac experience and what had been re-laid to me about the same event the year previous.

At my prac school in 2004 a similar event about a student whole was found with drugs at school was expelled, he and his parents appealed the decision and he was allowed back into the school. The media were involved and parents kicked up a real stink.

The drama raised ethical questions for me, but not dilemmas. Questions such as, ‘Would I talk to the media?’ ‘What would I say to my students and other parents?’ ‘How would act when teaching this student?’

Will you take anything away from today's drama and apply this to your teaching practice or own professional practice? If so what?

What I took away from today’s drama is the fact that school life goes on. No matter what events whether you are involved in them or not, the school will always continue to function without you.

Events within the school whether reported in the media or the local community, have an effect on so many more people that those directly involved. For instance, the school could be brought into disrepute because of the decisions made by others, the attitudes of the teachers is all too often unheard.

I aim to be a ‘voiced’ teacher and try to be level headed as an ambassador for my school.

Did the drama raise anything new for you about education, schools or professional relationships? If yes please describe.

I now have an appreciation for the work of admin who have to deal with legal, publicity and student matters each and every day!

I will not let the value of my teaching of many be diminished because of the attitudes and actions of a few.
Participant Case Study: Phillip
Online Reflection
Subject: Drama Two - The Secret Life of Us
Date: 6 September 2005

Did “The Secret Life of Us Drama” raise ethical dilemmas for you? If yes describe these? If no, describe why not.

Yes. This drama has made me question my pedagogy and whether I consider the Drama zone as a safe zone. Indeed it is and I will always try in my teaching to foster that mentality. The drama raised for me what I feel as being a safe issue to deal with. I do not think that the ‘Secret Life of Us’ idea is safe! The drama also made me conscious of the security and safety in my classroom. That the students within its walls must trust each other whether physically, intellectually, emotionally and psychologically. The whole ‘Passing the Buck’ and ‘It’s not my job’ was bantered with throughout the drama. I believe that yes as a teacher when such sensitive information like the information contained in the drama is leaked, that it is that teacher’s responsibility and duty of care to the child to act on that information. The most responsible manner in my eyes is to speak with the guidance counsellor. I am a role model. I am a mentor. I am a guide for my students to aspire to be like. I am not a counsellor. I am not a therapist. I would indeed do my utmost to help that student receive the support and guidance that they need but do not believe that I have to give that student the counselling that may be necessary.

If you were presented as a teacher in a school with the same dilemma of a student disclosing information about a friend possible experiencing harm what would you do?

As a teacher I believe that it would be a very close colleague or friend who has approached me and trusts me with this information. Therefore I believe that they are seeking help and that it is my moral obligation to provide that support and help for them. I would let them know that it is all going to be alright and that I am going to be their rock, the person that they need to fall onto. This dilemma is going to be dealt with my both of us not just my friend. I am willing to be there for them as a true and honest friend would and we may need to seek professional advice and take possible courses of action.

What do you believe is the role of the teacher in terms of their relationship with students and their personal lives?

I believe that the teacher is a person whose role and responsibility as an adult with duty of care of their students to be a role model, a guide and a mentor for their students. The relationship between teacher and student is pivotal in the functioning of the classroom and its work.

Students don’t leave their sense of self and personal lives at the school gate. They are who they are. The teacher should be aware of their student’s social situation and at times check in with the students, but not in an obtrusive manner.

Last week a colleague of mine, who is also a mother of a year 12 Drama student who as a class staged their student devised Brechtian Performance called XXX. The drama was written and directed by the students. It dealt with Aboriginality and presented all view points, highlighting numerous Brechtian techniques. This mother was outraged that her son should not have to deal with such issues. In addition her son does attend an all boy private college. She was outraged that their final class performance was of this nature.

It made me think, would I deal with this issue? Of course I would. I would like me students to be well informed and educated members of their active society. It made me think, what was the teacher’s motivation for such an issue? Food for thought.

A unit that I am studying as an elective choice is SPB010 Education Law and the Beginning Teacher. This is a great unit and giving me great information about my legal role. One statement that the lecturer said every teacher should memorise is “The known or ought to be known, presence of children on school grounds, is sufficient to establish duty of care for their well being.” Indeed when a teacher like in “The Secret Life of Us Drama” is exposed to delicate information, it is the teacher’s duty of care for their students well being to act.
Participant Case Study: Phillip
Online Reflection
Subject: Overall Reflection
Date: 21 September 2005

Looking back over your experiences of the last two or three workshops what did these dramas teach you about professional standards or ethical dilemmas for teachers?

Over the past three dramas I have come to realise that as teachers we need to be diplomatic and level headed in dealing with issues such as sensitivity of content, relationships with students and working with the media. The dramas have made me more aware of my responsibilities and given me the opportunity to hear other people’s responses and attitudes to such issues. These experiences have I believe made me a better teacher and participant in a school community.

Where have you previously touched upon ethical issues or issues of professional standards in other parts of your degree? How was this information or learning conveyed to you? Did this learning influence your practice, your relationships with staff or students your professional conduct?

This semester, my last semester of study I have undertaken an elective SPB010: Education, Law and the Beginning Teacher. This subject has absolutely opened my eyes and my intellect into the operations and organization of a school and their staff and students. It has focussed so far on the duty of care that a teacher expresses and will soon move into workplace, health and safety, the Child Protection Act and welfare for students. We have dealt with these issues and cases as a cohort in the lectures where the lecturer has called upon students to recall information about case studies in the public environment. This can be a bit intimidating but ultimately it is to test knowledge. I am not studying this subject to remember case studies but merely because I am interested in the matter and am interested in developing my intellect about Educational Law. During our tutorial time, which is very casual we discuss cases further than the lecture and more about how the situation could have been overcome – a hypothetical’s type style.

SPB010 has absolutely influenced my practice because I am going to be more hands on when rostered to playground duty, taking students on excursions and camps and when scheduled for Physical Education supervision/s. My relationships with staff and students may be altered because of my newfound knowledge, but I am yet to test this. My professional conduct will mean that I will not be more active and aware of the running of my classroom and the events that occur both within the four walls of my room but within the realm of my school community.

Did these process drama experiences give you a deeper understanding of professional standards and ethical dilemmas?

Yes. They have made me more aware of my responsibilities as a teacher and that I need to have a high standard of professionalism for myself to not only set an example to other staff but also to set an example to my students in my classroom. I believe that I do have a high professional standard before undertaking this study for Sharon Hogan. However this study has made me more aware of my standards and expectations.

Would these process drama experiences influence or change your future practice in anyway, your relationships with staff or students you professional conduct?

As I have already mentioned, the dramas have made me more aware of my expectations and the high standards that I not only set for my students but also for myself. I believe that by setting a high standard I am acting as a leader for other staff and may possibly influence them. The dramas have been organised as such that I have often not been engaged in a role but more as myself. Therefore often I have been involved personally, not fictionally.
Participant Case Study Three: Zoe

Date: 24 June 2005

I: Thanks for coming in today Zoe. I’ll just start with some details to begin with. Your date of birth?
R: XXX.
I: So how old are you?
R: I’m 25. Laugh.
I: So what sort of things did you do before you came into this teaching course?
R: Well I did my bachelor of Behavioural Science with a double major in clinical psychology. Yes, so I did that. And while I was doing that I did volunteer work in um… a shelter run by our church for young homeless women and then I established my own um… halfway house for young women who were at risk or homeless for a yeah, with myself and my younger sister we had a spare bedroom and um… the girls didn’t have to pay any rent, they just had to um… not do drugs or have any boys over um… and they could live in a safe space until they could find appropriate accommodation rather than their drug dealer or whatever. Yes, and um… I’ve been a youth leader in our church for 10 years now and in that I’ve just met a very diverse range of young people from lovely little middle class churchy homes with Christian ethics and really, really you know, lovely experiences to children who have been um… abused by every adult they know. Yeah, so… that’s my perspective and where I’ve come from.
I: So I’m fascinated why you came into a teaching degree with Drama
R: Oh yes, absolutely.
I: Why did you make that leap?
R: Well when I finished my psych degree, I had a year off to make a decision on whether I was going to continue and do all of my post grad and if I was going to do my post grad I was going to excel in eating disorders and babies and transition through a curious learning between mothers and their babies. Um… but um, I mean I got an offer from one of my lecturers who said he would supervise me for that project if I wanted to and and I had a year off to decide, do I want to do another for years of post grad and truly I didn’t, as much as I found psych incredibly fascinating and it’s wonderful to investigate the human mind, I really truly felt that psych was divorced from the actual experience of being human and, but it was so much more focused on biology and statistics and scientific reasoning that it really did um… displace the person from the actual mind so that’s why I thought, no I really need to take a year of soul searching to decide where I’m going to go and what I’m going to do and when I left school originally, I couldn’t decide whether I wanted to be a drama teacher or a psychologist but because I was too afraid to audition because I was a bit chicken then, I ah… thought no, I’ll just be a psychologist and then when I came to that year I thought no, I’m going to be a Drama teacher. And I don’t know exactly why I made that decision it was… underneath what I really want.
I: So what is it about being a Drama teacher that sort of hooked you in? What is it about Drama teaching that you see as worthwhile?
R: Well I think that… Drama provides an opportunity for young people to learn skills that they would not always be readily equipped with in their own families. I think that’s what it was for me as a student myself, because coming from quite a lower working class background, like I taught my father how to read when I was a little girl and so I always felt like I was a little bit behind the 8 ball, like everybody knew other things that I didn’t know. But I really did feel that in Drama, I guess in some ways I learned to reign my way through. And although that was feigning initially, eventually it became a part of my confidence.
I: There’s a lot that’s been written about that, the notion of the potential to imagine yourself doing something and being able to project into other roles that eventually you might be able to take them in your own…
R: Yes I agree with that. I know that… I mean that’s totally biased, this is my perspective but I mean, there are psych theories that actually suggest that if you implement behavioural strategies that you think are appropriate, your emotions will fall in line with that. So sometimes if you don’t feel confident and you act it, you’ll eventually feel it as well.
I: So now that you’ve been out on prac, twice now, or three times now, do you think you made the right decision?
R: Oh yes. I think I was very well prepared to work with young people because of the stuff I did with our church. So I wasn’t afraid and I wasn’t. I mean unless kids were smoking crack in front of me, laugh, or sniffing a paint bottle, I wasn’t really surprised by anything they were doing. And so when I went into high schools in my local area, I felt very prepared for the culture, laugh, shock but I, yeah. I just wasn’t afraid. I know that a lot of other people were.
I: Do you like teaching?
R: I do, it’s very sad at times. Like I found um… I found this particular prac that I’ve just been on just a little bit more confronting than in past and…
I: Why is that?
R: I just had so many children like… within like maybe the third day, coming up and talking to me and telling me about their um… like their dad that’s in jail or how they’ve been, they’ve moved five times already this year, foster families, because they’ve been taken off their mother because she’s a crack addict or whatever, for whatever reason, and just like too many of those kids and that’s fine, I listen to them and made sure that they understood that I cared but that they did need to go and see someone if they wanted to continue, like if they felt they needed to talk to someone else about it. But the problem wasn’t that, the problem was that it was normal. The problem was that they were like, oh miss this is normal. Like, oh you don’t have to worry about me, this is… laugh, don’t worry, everybody’s mum does that. And they truly believe that, they weren’t just acting because I can tell who’s acting and who’s not usually. But that was, that was quite confronting because I just went oh… I can’t say mum or dad in class because 10 kids will put their hands up and tell me they’ve never met their father or their mum has 20 boyfriends and 5 of them are violent and… I mean obviously I’m exaggerating that but… literally half the class could put their hand up and say those things. And…
I: So this particular challenging environment is making different demands on you?
R: Oh it does.
I: Than previous places?
R: Yeah, I feel like… although like my, the prac before this one, prac before this one was in the same demographic, the same area, the same kinds of issues but it’s like 15 minutes down the road, it’s just a whole-other kettle of fish and I don’t know, it’s just exacerbated incredibly I was just… yeah. As much as I have always thought these things in my mind that this is the place where I live and yes, this is the way things are in this town, they really are for a lot of young people that really is their circumstances whereas I kind of thought that I was over exaggerating it in my mind, but not really.
I: So it’s alarming to you how common negative experiences are for young people that you teach?
R: Yes, and more alarming that they think as a communal group, those who think its normal.
I: Some of the things that you’re facing, do you think your University course has prepared you for that?
R: I think my Psych course prepared me for that.
I: Isn’t that interesting.
R: I don’t think this course has, sorry.
I: No, that’s really interesting. Have there been any units in your course here that have?
R: No. In all honesty, if I had graduated, in all honesty, if I had have gone back to just graduating when I was 16 and then come straight to do this course, I think A), I would have quit, although that’s not like me but I think that the pressure of the first two years is incredible, I handed in something like 70 assignments on Drama and although that made you feel very well prepared in Drama, that was great, that’s nice, it was very full on. And there are inherent links between Drama and Psych, but you must look for them to understand them. But in terms of dealing with behaviour management and dealing with the issues of children, I don’t think there’s any preparation.
I: Is this something that the University should be preparing you for?
R: Oh I think they absolutely should. In all honesty I think the Education subjects are a bit of fluff and they are very sociologically based and I believe in people understanding social justice principles and I think it is very important to understand there is aspects of sociology but really you could do that in one subject. You don’t have to do it one subject five times over. You would be much better off giving teachers… oh… well I guess, some kind of counselling training. Like I’m doing a counselling subject next term because I just want to check it out. Laugh.
I: I don’t think you really need to do it.
R: Yeah, I’m just like oh I’ll do it, I want to see what its like and the perspective that they come from. Because in terms of what I believe, like I’ve met counsellors who I’ve just, in all honesty I’ve thought well I would never go to you because you’re manipulative and you don’t understand what ethics is all about. Because when you are trained in that field, you shouldn’t be a 6 months TAFE course and as a teacher, you’re not meant to be a counsellor but I think you almost are. It’s like it’s you’re doubling as it.
I: You’re often the first port of call, aren’t you… so you’re there in that moment when students self-disclose.
R: And you must know what to do because if you do the wrong thing, like you brush the student off because you feel you need to be professional and that line, then that student may never tell another person and they may suffer for that, quite deeply.
I: You’re saying your university course hasn’t really prepared you for those important encounters, those important moments?

R: Not at all. And it’s almost like those moments, they’re important but they almost don’t stand out anymore. It, depending on what school you’re in. Like at my school, we had to do bag checks and pencil case checks for drugs and alcohol and you find them. *Laugh*, but… we had to do arm checks. All of the students in our classes, we had to do arm checks. They had to roll their sleeves up to check for self-harming, self-mutilation marks, for slicing.

I: So what did they do?

R: Well, we spoke with the year 8 coordinator because I said to my supervising teacher, look, there are 4 girls in this class that are self-harming and one of them, their mood has significantly dropped in the last 2 weeks and I think there’s some. I think this girl is very serious and these girls are following her and so there’s a bit of copy-cating going on but I think this girl is in trouble and she, she needs some kind of intervention because she seemed quite depressive. And she’d gone from such a happy-go-lucky girl all of a sudden just a very dramatic drop and oh… You know, your mind just clicks and you think, what if something happened?

I: If your mind clicks, do you think other teacher’s minds click?

R: I don’t know, maybe younger ones.

I: But because you’ve done a degree in Psychology, because you know what signs to look for, because you’ve been trained in clinical Psychology too, are you picking up on things that other people might not even notice?

R: Maybe, I guess that’s possibly true. Because well, my teacher said oh, okay, I’ll have a look out for that and then she after, like in a few days she said yes Melissa, I agree with you and I said what should we do? Because I thought we have to do something because these girls had scratches like… they call it chicken scratching and they have like scratches about this long up their arm and they’ve scratched it and it’s a wound, it’s not just a little slice, it’s a chunk out of their arm and so um… we spoke with the year 8 coordinator and he was like yeah, okay, and then he was like alright, well we need to address this so we’ll get, we’ll do a… a check on all the arms of the students, and any students with um… prominent markings on their arms like that, must go to the school nurse.

I: Was it done in private? Was it done in the form group?

R: Um –

I: Was it like, okay, everybody show their arms. I’m just trying to work out how this was managed, you know?

R: We, I don’t know what we did, we just said everybody line up and roll your sleeves up and said it in a cheery manner and we went through and went oh that’s a nice, you’ve got a few freckles there and made out like it was a bit of a… we feigned it as a bit of a joke. But um, and the students that we did notice with arm markings, we sent them to the school nurse.

I: Did they go? Did they turn up to the school nurse?

R: I wasn’t there the following week but I’m pretty sure they do. They’re very strict about school like if you don’t turn up to something that you’re meant to go to, you just get asked and detentions for the rest of the year.

I: And what will the school nurse do?

R: This is what I don’t know. If I was a school nurse I don’t think I would know what to do. I mean, in nursing you do like one unit in psych and it’s not really counselling, it’s just understanding the biology of the brain I think. That’s what my friend told me, she does nursing.

I: Any other ethical dilemmas that you saw that you either experienced that you’re grappling with, like moments of discomfort where you’re going hmm… what do I do here? Or ethical dilemmas that you noticed even going on in the school around you like other issues or other teachers grappling with things, I’m sort of looking for incidences or examples of the sort of things that beginning teachers may be confronting or observing?

R: Well I found that with other teachers, I found it a bit disheartening but I just kind of brushed it off I guess, some of the… some of the older teachers, the way they spoke about the students, it was very much in a manner of… they’re little shits, basically.

I: In the staffroom?

R: Yeah. And, sorry to swear but that’s kind of the… I don’t know how to describe it any other way. Yeah, there was all, it was really very much an us and them mentality and I know, I must admit the children, some of their behavioural strategies are absolutely mind boggling like, you’ll just go crazy if you analysed it. I mean these children deal with huge things but you as a teacher have to deal with those huge things in your classroom because the children are so distracted, they’re often violent, trying to bully each other and that is
stressful. And when you’ve got 30 kids and a lot of them feel the same that is difficult. So I understand why they would be tired, burnt out by it.

I: So their morale is low.

R: Yes.

I: Okay.

R: And very um… just very, I don’t know it’s like… time has gone past that they’re… maybe they should have quit 5 years ago.

I: Do you think they’re trying to get out of there?

R: Yes, no they are, and they’re literally, they’re very vocal about that, “I can’t wait to get out of here”. “I can’t wait til I go on holidays.” I mean, holidays is understandable but it’s a different kind of I can’t wait to go on holidays, it’s like I can’t wait to be out of this rat hole and things like that.

I: Hmmm

R: And it’s very self-perpetuating I guess but it’s very much like, they’re almost “like little animals” and I’m like, yep I understand why they think that way because the students do often behave… like that. And they behave in terribly antisocial way, and they do, they try to bully each other, they try and bully you um.. but at the same time, you’ve got to kind of look at life through their shoes as well. So I found that really hard because I know that I’m a beginning teacher and I’m not going to step on anybody’s toes in terms of you know, I’m not going to stand there on my high horse and say oh you shouldn’t be thinking about students like that, they’re valuable creatures blah, blah… although I believe that.

I: So it’s hard sometimes as a beginning teacher to sort of stand your own ground to a certain extent, like when you’re surrounded in that environment and you’ve got that happening around you …

R: I think it could be very difficult but I think um…

I: Would you like to work in a school like that?

R: Yeah.

I: Why?

R: Laugh. I’m very strange, I know. Um… yes I would.

I: Okay.

R: Because I know that aside from whatever experiences are around me, I am a firm person in what I believe and no matter what that is, I can be very pig headed too but um… as much as, I’m not going to step on anybody’s toes about you know, their feelings. I mean they own their own feelings, they have their own, I guess, right to their opinion and their feelings about their work place, I haven’t been there for 20 years, some of them have um… but at the same time, they know I don’t feel that way.

I: Yeah.

R: I feel very explicit about the fact that I don’t feel that way and they always laugh at me because they’re like oh Zoe, how do you come in here so happy and I’m like… I don’t know, I’m just happy to be here.

I: Tell me about a positive experience in the school environment? Any rays of hope, either this prac or your last prac, tell me about a moment where you went, yep, I like what I’m doing, this is good.

R: Well I’ve had many. As much as, it’s been a bit of a… bittersweet experience in many ways but on my, on my prac, it was my last prac, I had this amazing experience with the grade 12s which was actually um… XXX’s class, because she was… her grandmother passed away so she asked me to take it and I went, oh my gosh I have one night to do Process Drama, I’m going to die. So I went on the net and got the terrorism Process Drama, knowing me I thought why did I have to pick that one? Knowing that this would be my first class with these year 12s and I wouldn’t know how they’d respond to me but I just sort of manipulated it a little bit so it was a bit more um… reflective of that school environment. And um… I just walked in and I told them who I was and they were just… they were actually, I found them quite a nice bunch of kids but, and I just… I picked out the leaders within about, I gave myself a 5 minute warm up so that I could quickly pick out who the leaders were, and then I gave them all an invite to the Arias and I marked x the people who were going to be the terrorists and I told them they had to go in the back room, had instructions in the back and balaclavas and blah, blah, blah. Um, and they knew their cue, all the instructions were written out and um…

I: They loved it?

R: They did, they went nuts-o. A couple of the teachers came down, I told them I was doing one on terrorism and asked them if that was okay but they thought that the school was on lock down because –

I: Laugh.

R: And it was funny because I was standing there going, oh gosh, this is so real! I’m, this is huge! I realised, from paper to reality it was huge, huge difference. But these students just ran with it. And apparently they were quite lazy most of the rest of the time and didn’t really like doing much work but they did today and um… oh they were just amazing! They brought out this stuff and they did this Process Drama on terrorism
and we investigated the perspective of the Muslim woman who was the terrorist, her perspective and her understanding of the world and understanding of terrorism, considering that in her story, all of her family had been killed by American soldiers. And it was [set in] America so we sort of distanced it a little.

I: So one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter?
R: Yes. And so it was really good because in that school it was very much a small mindedness about things like terrorism. Like yes, we should bomb all of Afghanistan, you hear comments like that but they were very, very introspective and they really…

I: So you witnessed shifts in understanding?
R: Well absolutely. Some of them were crying and we had a really long de-brief afterwards, we actually ended up taking up the whole of lunchtime with a de-brief um… laugh. And it was really good because I saw some of those kids who didn’t know, from the first few minutes of just interacting with them, knew who the cool kids were. Knew who had their little facades up, because everybody does. But they had really come to a point where they were reflecting on life from the perspective of a Muslim woman who I’d just taken them as hostages, but they were very reflective. I was shocked at the amount of reflection that they, the level that they were able to achieve.

I: Is that the form? Is that the pedagogy? Is that the Process Drama?
R: I think so. I don’t think that they could have gotten that, I don’t think they would have been able to access that level without that experience.

I: So if you had have come in with a newspaper article about a Muslim woman who was a terrorist –
R: Yeah, no. Well even the kids told me afterwards, they told me and I heard about it weeks afterwards, like XXX told me, oh gee those year 12s they’re still going on about that thing you did with them, that Process Drama and they were just, it was like they were shocked out of their own worlds, that’s what I thought.

I: That was really good.
R: Yes. And so it was really good because in that school it was very much a small mindedness about things um… a student was telling me about their father that was in jail for um… raping the mother.

I: Okay. So… I’m just looking through our questions there. Okay, so has the course prepared you for the ethical dilemmas that you’re going to face as a teacher?

R: Well no. I found that even in the behaviour management subject which is where I expected ethics to be covered, because I expected ethics would be covered, they had this tiny little slide about it and that was it. There’s no examples there’s no…

I: Case studies?
R: No just, nothing. It’s basically, don’t sleep with your students which is common sense which as much as, you know, I always question common sense, we’re not questioning that one, that’s pretty understandable.

I: You don’t have relationships with your students in that kind of way. But it doesn’t address things like how do you stop students from becoming your friend because they love you so much… maths teachers don’t get hugs.

R: Drama is a very different form, it’s a very fluid form. And even just in your interactions, you tend to play the games with the students, you are as much a part of their cohort as you are outside of it.

I: Why is that do you think?
R: Drama is a very different form, it’s a very fluid form. And even just in your interactions, you tend to play the games with the students, you are as much a part of their cohort as you are outside of it.

I: Yes.
R: You see the things that they share and you experience the things that they share. And they share things in your class they’re not going to share in other people’s classes.

I: So what are the ethical dilemmas there for you? And what are the professional issues for you as a Drama educator?
R: Well there’s a point at which you go, is this substantive conversation or is this violating the student? Right?

I: Um… I had one instance, this is why I learnt to really define it, which was good. I had one instance where um… a student was telling me about their father that was in jail for um… raping the mother.

R: Just outside of the class. But I wanted to stop him from continuing because it was such a huge disclosure and I didn’t want him then to feel vulnerable around me and shut off from anything that we were doing in class because he felt like I knew too much about him. So um… and then the student burst into tears um… not because I said don’t talk, I didn’t say it like that, I just… well he burst into tears and I said to him, I said would you like to go and speak with the guidance counsellor and he just looked at me and he said what is the point of me speaking to her? It doesn’t change anything. It doesn’t change anything and I’m never going to see my dad again and look at what he’s done to my mum. Yes, and I stood there and I thought, this is when we were moving the TV, this is what I mean, it’s when we’re moving the TV, it’s not during a deep and meaningful conversation where something might come up, it’s moving a TV.

I: So it’s those moments in a way that you can’t control, in a way, it’s those fleeting moments that you go… oh.
R: Oh my gosh, what, I wasn’t prepared for this right now.
I: Yeah.
R: And so he didn’t want to go to the guidance counsellor but he was upset, he wanted to cry and I’m not
gothing to tell him not to cry so I just said to him I said look, I think that you just need to sit down and have a
little moment on your own and I find that if I’m sad about something although what you’re doing is huge
and very complex um… sometimes writing a letter to a person and explaining all of those feelings and then
burning it is very therapeutic and that’s actually a therapy tool, I’ve used it myself but I kind of just made it
more friendly. Because I thought, I mean what do I do? Do I leave this student up in arms thinking about
this awful, horrid situation.
I: With no strategies?
R: With nothing, no strategy, no help, no hugs, nothing. And… not many friends and I just… it was, that was
very much a big dilemma because I thought, oh Lord, have I done the right thing?
I: What goes through your mind as the student’s approaching you to give you a hug?
R: Um, well, initially I sort of got swarmed. The girls were just like oh we love you miss and gave me a big
hug and I’m like, whoo…
I: Did you hug them back?
R: I just sort of stood there a little bit and patted them on the back because I didn’t want to be too huggy but at
the same time I didn’t want to just reject them flat out. But then they started to try and hug me in the
playground and that’s when I said, oh girls, I said… oh I said, I know that you’re lovely I said, but the
school has a no hands policy so there’s no hugs. So unfortunately I have to hug you in spirit. And I just sort
of said it in a funny voice and they went, oh that’s alright miss, we love you anyway. And they got it then.
I: But you have all these tools now. Where does this wisdom come from? You just problem solved that like that.
R: Really?
I: Yeah, you just problem solved it like that in the play ground in that very moment. You’re a really quick
thinker and you just problem solved it.
R: I’m a slow thinker laugh.
I: No but you do, so where is your wisdom coming from? If it’s not coming from this course, has it come
from your prior learning?
R: I think it does come a lot from Psych, I’m very aware of… and I mean, working with young girls that are
very vulnerable, like working with young girls that have been displaced by their families and having them
in my home, that’s probably where I learned the most about anything.
I: About boundaries?
R: Yes. And just about the fact that they will become attached to you. And so attached to you because they
don’t have anyone else. And although, as much as you in your mind you think, that would be so nice if they
could have someone who loves them in their life, I know that I’m not going to be there in every moment of
their life, I’m going to be their teacher so I need to be able to allow them to not be attached to me in an
emotional way because that’s unfair to them as much as they might like that and might need an attachment
figure, I can’t be that person because I won’t be there. Does that sound too hard?
I: No.
R: So I just, I know that I have the capacity to draw someone into me if I had… decide to orchestrate that
which is not something that I can do and it’s not me, I’m not that sort of person but… because I’ve seen
other people in Psych do it and I hate that, I think that’s really manipulative. Um… but I recognise that
ability and I try and stop students from disclosing too much and then feeling vulnerable and out in the cold
because that’s virtually where they are.
I: Yes.
R: Um, but yeah. So with the hug, and on the last day, I didn’t worry about hugs because they all just crowded
me so I couldn’t resist off them so they were like, big group hug and that was lovely, I just didn’t worry.
I: Yeah, but it’s interesting isn’t it? The hug in Drama because that’s what you were sort of talking about and
I think that is a beautiful metaphor for the closeness that develops and talking about that. I think I’ve
exhausted you, are you alright?
R: Laugh have I exhausted you?
I: No. … I think you’ve given me some beautiful stuff about relationships and teachers and… yep. I think we
might leave it at that.
R: Cool.
I: Thank you. Thank you Zoe.

End Interview.
Did the drama raise ethical dilemmas for you? If so what were you thinking about?

While we were doing the drama, I was trying to think of what I would actually do in this circumstance and the truth is I don’t really know. The ethical dilemmas that I personally faced were the boundaries between what is right and wrong. That being, if you have stated in your school policy that there is no tolerance for drug use or possession at the school, then to undermine your own policy is to potentially suggest that it has been constructed as a token document? And if you allow a student back into the school when they have brought and used an illegal substance on the school grounds, are you really protecting the rights of all of your students to learn in a ‘safe’ space, I know that drug use does happen in schools and I am not blind to that, but to openly recant your own policy on drugs in the school grounds what does this mean for all students and parents within the community. I think that weather you agree with the policy or not, to override that decision might create an awful amount of division within your school community as well as the extended community. Then on the other hand there is the question: should we be facilitating growth and development for all students, including those with drug use issues? Well I think the answer is yes, no and maybe (see I’m a total fence-sitter on this issue it’s very hard). Yes, students with these issues need support and help, and this very well may be offered by the school, No: should this really be the place of the school, is our role as teacher becoming more our role as logos parentis and psychologist? Can we allow these issues to intercede our learning environment and would this actually be a compromise of professional boundaries?

Will you take anything a way from today's drama and apply this to your future teaching practice or own professional practice? If so what?

Well definitely some serious thought processes! I must admit I watched very closely for new conventions that I would like to use and alter etc in my own drama classes, these were letter box, the media AKA conscience alley modified, I found many of these activities confronting and thought-provoking and thus would like to pass that on to my students. And one thing that was really underlined for me, completing this drama, was the need to understand and be able to network with many different support strategies/communities/ agencies outside of school. At one of my schools, we were very well informed on the anti-drug strategy and the local resources available for students dealing with drug issues, this was very important for me, because If I am at a school with no drug rules (which I assume most are) then I must be aware of places where I may be able to refer students or parents in order to create a greater sense of access to support facilities even if I am not able to intervene personally *(which I think is a more professional way of dealing with a situation, potentially less human? Not sure)

Did the drama raise anything new for you about education, schools or professional relationships? If yes please describe?

Sort of, the direct issue of drug use amongst school students feels very familiar, just from being the social milieu of my community, but the actual reality of what may or may not happen in schools regarding this issue was quite new to me.
Participant Case Study: Zoe
Online Reflection
Subject: Drama Two - “The Secret Life of Us”
Date: 5 September 2005

Did "The Secret Life of Us Drama” raise ethical dilemmas for you? If yes describe these? If no describe why not.

I found this process drama very confronting as it reflected some of my experiences on prac, I got a little too involved and found myself talking over others and blabbing emotionally, cos deep down, when I was faced with students who had those experiences it was so hard because in my heart I didn’t feel like we were helping them at all, I mean we went to the school counsellor, we organized a youth worker from ‘reconnect’ to come out and do some family mediation and try to work with the student, and the process was left there for me because I left and this made it very unresolved (so I felt as though my issues of having no closure came out in the process drama), and also I don’t have faith in the ‘appropriate’ bodies, I have many friends who work in family services and the issues they face are huge but they are very disempowered by the resources they are given by the government, so although I know some of the ‘legal’ processes that I must abide by as a teacher, as a person, I don’t have faith in those processes.

If you were presented as a teacher in a school with the same dilemma of a student disclosing information about a friend possibly experiencing harm what would you do?

I had a young girl, just burst into tears and explain everything to me at the end of our English lesson and I told her, how I cared about her and as a result we have to look into this further, how would you feel about speaking with the guidance counsellor, she told me she had tried to speak with the gc for months, but the gc is totally booked out, I went up to speak with one of the deputies (the young girl was ok with it all) about getting her an appointment, then it was made, then connections were made with a youth worker from reconnect – but then I had to leave, I left the number of a girls’ shelter that my church runs with my supervising teacher and said that this might be an option for her, as it’s a pretty safe shelter in the Ipswich area.

What do you believe is the role of the teacher in terms of their relationship with students and their personal lives?

I think that you have to be professional but you also have to be a person, the reason students talk to you is because they trust you and whether you like it or not you may be the only positive role model this student has, you may be the only one that notices the bruising or the cuts or …. as much as officially I don’t really think it is the ‘job’ of the teacher to be involved in students personal issues (you do have to build relationship with your students in order to maintain a functional classroom), but I think that society has changed and we might have to be flexible with that, I don’t think that there is a black or white answer to that question.
Participant Case Study: Zoe

Online Reflection

Subject: Overall Reflections
Date: 22 September 2005

Looking back over your experiences of the last two or three workshops what did these dramas teach you about professional standards or ethical dilemmas for teachers?

My main learnings were:

- Although you have to maintain your sense of self and ‘not care what others think’ you need to be wary of your reputation in terms of being a role model within a community and that even your personal opinions concerning various situations or policies may have wider ramifications due to that role.
- Seeking the advice of other teachers and professionals can be an excellent stepping stone to solving or mediating an issue that may be difficult for a person to handle alone.
- You need to know ‘codes of conduct’ and things like the ‘child protection act’ in order to know what legal requirements you as a teacher have to meet/abide by etc.
- Situations involving students are often incredibly complex and rarely involve a simple black or white solution, or even a solution at all.

Where have you previously touched upon ethical issues or issues of professional standards in other parts of your degree? How was this information or learning conveyed to you? Did this learning influence your practice, your relationships with staff or students your professional conduct?

- In our behavioural management subject, we had an awesome tutor who was previously a lawyer and is now teaching educational law, in our tutes we would often go off course and he would tell us all different case studies that involved various situations concerning student behaviour and teacher’s duty of care etc. He was a wonderful source of information.
- In my psych degree, there was a real focus on ‘ethical behaviour’ as a psychologist/counsellor and many of these laws and understandings also apply to teaching, so that has been very helpful in informing some of my decisions in the class room.

Did these process drama experiences give you a deeper understanding of professional standards and ethical dilemmas?

- The process dramas looked at some situations I had thought about briefly, usually because there had been similar situations portrayed in the media. But after completing the process dramas I felt that there was so much more beneath the surface, and this applies to all of the process dramas, it also made me question not just where I stand on particular issues but how I will stand on those issues in a professional setting and the responsibilities associated with that setting.

Would these process drama experiences influence or change your future practice in any way, your relationships with staff or students your professional conduct?

- The situations showed me that there is so much more that meets the eye: more emotions, more legalities, more people, more relationships, more policies, more politics, and more DETAILS involved than you originally expect, so I think the main thing it taught me is to examine each situation from as many perspectives as possible, and this is a skill that we all have but it takes a lot of active thought and analysis to tap into that skill and that I think is the key experience that I will use in my future practice.
Participant Case Study Four: Megan

Date: 27 June 2005

I: Thank you Megan for being in this project. Did you come here straight from school?

R: Yeah, straight from school. I am 20.

I: Okay, why did you want to do this course? Why did you want to be a teacher?

R: I’ve always really sort of liked the idea of teaching, I did Cadets going through high school and I was the senior Cadet there so I took a lot of classes teaching stuff and leadership roles. I just sort of kind of, it’s only sort of occurred to me that this was the reason my, well during this year, because I had um… I had a really good friend in my English class who was dyslexic and a lot of the time he fell through the cracks and it was me who allowed him to pass English like, I did all my work with him and all that kind of stuff and we just… things like that where I just enjoyed having that contact with other people and helping them do stuff. And it was really, basically in year 12 I decided yes, I want to be a teacher now what do I want to teach? I sort of thought well what am I going to enjoy because you know, if this is going to be my career I need to have something I’m really going to enjoy and Drama was my first one because I mean, it is really good and it wasn’t until I got to University that I saw Drama as um… a way to like, a process to learn through, not as just something to learn. So I mean that, that whole perception has changed but I still love Drama just as much and I want to teach Drama even more so now but really I just… I wanted to teach first and then I chose Drama as…

I: So what’s your second teaching area?

R: English. Which originally was History, another subject that I enjoy but I want to teach overseas and I thought if I studied History here, I’m going to learn about Australian History and if I want to teach over in Canada I’d need to teach Canadian History so I thought, well English is pretty in any Western country it’s going to be very similar so I chose English as a better um, sort of option to go overseas.

I: What subjects or units in your, if you think about your whole University course have prepared you, do you think, for teaching?

R: Um… I think a lot of the Drama ones, especially Drama curriculum studies have. Can’t really pinpoint subjects that have but I can definitely pinpoint subjects that haven’t.

I: Go for it.

R: And that’s all of my English subjects. Like we get, this is a big thing that I have, I’ve been complaining about it all year, we get um… four English electives and two curriculum studies and that’s like, meant to prepare us to teach English and I feel it really didn’t.

I: English you don’t think has prepared you so you’ve done four electives, you’ve done two curriculum subjects…

R: Yep, I really think that if that’s all we get to do, because I mean we’ve done a Drama degree and that’s prepared us for Drama, um… that if we get to choose four electives, they shouldn’t be electives, they should be chosen ones that are really going to help us. Because like, my grammar is awful and um, you know, doing things like that with students where you know, my spelling on the blackboard is wrong and they can pick that up, you know, that’s really… not um, like, it hasn’t happened to me yet but I just know it’s going to happen.

I: So you would have liked things like ‘Grammar for Teachers’?

R: Well yeah, they’ve talked about in curriculum studies or English that there’s a certain subject you know that’s similar to that but you know, that we all should have done and we’re like, oh wait a second no, I was away that year so it wasn’t an elective on offer. And I just sort of thought, well that shouldn’t be your elective. If you really think that was going to help us get through curriculum studies and all of that, that should have been a mandatory subject. And before, who… I mean who’s just had it for four subjects that I chose for English are going to prepare me enough to teach and then English curriculum studies, they don’t… I really, like that’s just like doing any other subject, there’s no real focus on like you know, reading through the syllabus and there’s not a lot of workshopping and coming up with like, you know, curriculum documents and coming up with our own work programs, like they say okay, go off and do it and then they all give the scores and we’re like okay, what do we need to do? And they’re like, well you needed to do these subjects to pass. They use a lot of key words like in terms and stuff that we really um… well my group of friends, we really only learnt those terms when we went into curriculum one and they were using them like we’ve known them for the past four years and I just really think, I don’t feel prepared to teach English. Um… I’m really feeling like I’m winging English at the moment and it’s just, yeah.

I: Can you think about, in terms of the type of pedagogy that you get, and even in your Education subjects, have any of your Education subjects been helpful?
I: Let's talk about relationships in the school context, particularly, relationships with students, do you feel confident about that?

R: Yeah.

I: Yep.

R: Yeah.

I: And then it’s not really clear?

R: Okay.

I: Okay, let’s talk about prac now. Um, can you tell me about one of your most positive experiences on any of your prac’s that you’ve been on?

R: Um, I had, my first English lesson that I taught on this prac, this was the first time I’d taught English um… my first one was pretty awful like I’d done all this stuff and it went okay and everything and then the teacher came up to me and she’s like okay, well I kind of thought you would do it this way and I’m like okay… and then the next lesson so my very second lesson you know I had the students engaged, I had them, I had things on the board and we’re discussing things out loud and I’m putting things on the board and then like, we’re talking about stuff and I was able to like, use my own knowledge so my own experiences of watching Romeo and Juliet and say things like that and I knew this stuff that I could tell them and they were listening and they were engaging and they were responding and it was just like, it was a really good discussion, class discussion and I walked out of that and my teacher came up and she was like, that was much better. And I had an interview, like a sort of meeting straight afterwards in the office and I walked all the way to the office with a big smile on my face and I got there and one of the um… the head of the English department was there, I’d met her before and I said, I had the best English lesson, I’m so happy but um… and that was really good for English wise and with Drama, I’ve had a lot of, with my year 8s I didn’t really teach a lot of my year 12s but my year 8s which was performance so I was actually teaching them dance and movement and I was really concentrating on the movement because that’s what I know, I had a lot of good moments with the kids like when I got to really know them and I could, and I’m like, so you guys are rehearsing stuff and I see what they’re doing and they’re like do you like it? Do you like it? Do you like it? And I’m like yeah, that was really good and I was able to give them good feedback and they really responded well and everything. My first lesson with my year 8s was dreadful like, the way that my class was set up, my teacher Peter, he has them all come in and they sit on these steps and they’ve got their bags there um… and like, they listen to him and they do all that and then I did that, I kept with that same, I didn’t want to change it up too much but it just didn’t work for me. So the next day I had them lined up at the front straight away, told them what I wanted, I wanted a circle on the floor and all bags at the back and then we start. And they did that and from every single day, all I had to say, I opened the door, right, what do I want? And they’re like, bags on the back, circle on the floor when we got into their dance and movement and they did it every day and they got in there, sat on the floor, that’s when we marked the role, we talked about what we were doing and it really worked for me and the kids really responded to it, I didn’t have any problems in that first 10 minutes of getting in the classroom. You know –

I: They were comfortable with you.

R: Yeah, and I was able to get them in a place where I could tell them what I wanted to do and all that kind of stuff and have a chat, whatever, and it worked. And I just, and after about the first week where that happened I thought, this is cool, I can do this. I just needed to find my own way.

I: That feeling of, feeling that I can do it.

R: Yeah.

I: Let’s talk about relationships in the school context, particularly, relationships with students, do you feel confident about that?

R: Yep.

I: Yep.
R: I do think that, you know, and I make no... I don’t try and hide the fact that I’m only 4 years older than them. And they know, my year 12s especially, they know that. Um, and with their QCS I can talk about that and I can say, guys, don’t stress seriously. And I can tell them my experience with QCS and I can do that and they know I’m only young and you know, I’m teaching them, I was teaching them eulogies and key note speeches and I’m like you guys are going to have 18 speeches next year, I have my 21st this year and I was telling them about all the key note speeches I saw at all these 21st’s and they really responded to that because I was relating it to them and I can easily relate to them and my year 12 Drama class I mean, they really liked that, they really respond well to that, they know that yes I’m young but I’ve chosen to do Drama, I like Drama, I studied Drama, I know more than them and although we’re the same age...

I: So think it’s an advantage?

R: Yeah, I think behaviour management might, I haven’t had, I’ve had one, I mean one really troubled kid, that was giving me trouble so maybe being so young with behaviour management, they might not, they might think to walk over me but at the moment, with the kids I’ve got, they don’t. They really respect me because I don’t treat them like little kids, I treat them the age they are and that they’re my peers as well.

I: Okay. I wonder whether you have ever felt uncomfortable with a student?

R: Well I um, yeah, she was in year 8 and ah, yeah, that was probably like the only experience I’ve had where I didn’t feel like I was in control um... but, and what I soon came to learn was that um... my prac teacher who has that student all the time only knows of one other teacher who can keep them in control and I, it got to the stage where I sent like, there was a big kafuffle, I sent the student out, went out and spoke to her and that was just getting nowhere Justin then went out and spoke to her and that got nowhere either um so... it wasn’t, I kind of thought you know, it wasn’t just me but I also felt that, well I didn’t know what to do next. But... yeah. So that was probably the only time and um... I suppose, I really felt that maybe I was asking her to do stuff rather than telling her to do stuff, like to stop doing stuff and I think that really, she abused that a lot because I give them a lot of leverage, I give them a lot of leeway.

I: choice?

R: Yeah.

I: And she didn’t respond to choice.

R: Yeah so I thought... whoa. And it was at that and then I kind of realised well no, there’s certain things I have to change and that, but that’s pretty much the only incident, yeah.

I: Do you ever feel like, if you saw the students outside of school or you saw them in a situation, how would they relate to you if you saw them outside of school? Is that an issue? Or it’s not really?

R: I have seen students outside of school like at the shopping centre and stuff and they’ll be like oh look, it’s my teacher and I’m just, yep, hi and I keep walking. I don’t really, like if they come up and chat to me that’s fine but um... I don’t really want them to think that just because like, they can um, I mean, having a chat in a shopping centre, that’s fine but if they can really socialise with me and I tend to think that they might think that they can get away with more things, I realise that. Especially the area that I’m in where it’s like, you tend to run into a lot of people. And I have a problem with that, I work with a lot of year 12s and I’m actually lucky enough that none of them are in my classes so none of the kids that I actually know who, when I walk around in the school yard they’ll say, hi Megan and I give them a look and they’re like, oh, miss. Because I’ve spoken to them at work and I’m like guys, you can’t call me Megan. And I don’t have them in my class so I mean, I feel really lucky for that because they are my friends um...
I: Yeah.

R: I: Yeah. I know, I had another pre-service teacher here the other day and he said, I’m not allowed to do it at my school. It’s just a sensitive issue, you’ve got to work out the culture of where you’re at. And for instance, the particular school he was telling me about just last year, a boy jumped off the roof at school and committed suicide in front of other kids right there. So at that school they, they’re sort of saying no, we won’t because there’s two schools of thought.

R: Yeah.
I: Some psychologists say if you talk about it, you promote it as an option, whereas some other psychologists say, yes let's get it out. So some schools will err on the conservative and they will go, no we're not going to go there. So it really depends where you are. And that’s the main thing, isn’t it? That you’re thinking, this could be a sensitive issue, this is a hot issue, who’s going to, you know, is this going to be okay in this school or not.

R: Yep.

I: So yeah. I’m sort of… yeah. I wouldn’t do it myself, having had a student in my class commit suicide, I wouldn’t do it. But that’s just me because I’ve been in that climate and culture where I’ve seen what’s happen. And I’ve come into a room and found some of my year 11 form class on the floor in the foetal position because one of their friends has committed suicide. Perhaps it could be distanced in some way and I would look at depression, or I think I’d look at communication, but I don’t think I’d go into suicide… but that’s only because of the things that I’ve see. It good you checked with your supervising teacher… the buck stops with her really.

R:Yeah. And I thought it was interesting that she didn’t even say, there was no, it was just a… yep, no that’s fine. There wasn’t even a discussion of um… whether that would be okay, and I know that it’s sort of, it’s sort of against EQ policy as such but –

I: I just got told recently it’s against EQ policy to do eating disorders.

R:Oh really?

I: Yeah, I’ve got to check on that. Because there’s a few things that, you know, I suppose we will teach, we will always teach you to err on the side of caution professionally, because we want you to be safe as teachers out there, we’re probably going to err more on the conservative side to a certain extent. It would be irresponsible of us not to flag to you that this could be potentially dangerous.

R:Yeah.

I: Yeah? It is our ethical responsibility.

R:Yeah.

I: See I’m wondering… your supervising teacher might have said that, did you go to the counsellor, the guidance counsellor, did you ask the Deputy?

R:No.

I: Different teachers have different tolerance levels and thresholds of risk, and sometimes I think we need to be aware of the school’s threshold with, that policy level in school is, I wonder sometimes if we would always would be supported.

R:I remember because I, that school that it happened, I did my… I was at high school there. And I remember in year 12 we had an opportunity to write our own work and we, in an extra curriculum arts program and like, we had a whole, we had a theme there on… I wrote a monologue and a duologue, a monologue… on suicide and we performed them in front of our audience and our admin was there as well and that was a… like when I first heard that you know, suicide has really sort of been a no-go area, you know at Uni I’m like, I did it in year 12. I wrote it myself. Laugh and that was really odd.

I: Had you had recent suicides at your school?

R:No. We’ve had… we’ve had deaths but none being suicide. Um…

I: Drama often goes into interesting territory… and because it’s such a powerful medium… I think it’s that thing about your responsibility in working with a powerful medium. Mind you, look at Romeo and Juliet in English, but I think because you get away with it when you do Shakespeare because there’s this notion of distancing it and it’s in the past.

R:And there was, and I found that when I was teaching there was that issue of distancing, like these students did not see how they could relate to that.

I:Yeah.

R:And I had, I had it all scaffolded that they saw it through a directors point of view, but I really sort of tried to bring those issues like, yes they were really distanced but I tried to bring them into their lives and get them to see how that fits into a modern day context and cultures and stuff like that. But um…

I: It makes it interesting though, like it’s… a real issue. If schools are going to say suicide is a no-go policy, does that mean they’re going to take out Looking for Alibrandi? Does that mean they’re going to take out Romeo and Juliet? I mean, and these are… the censorship in schools is an interesting areas. Swearing in scripts. You know, this is stuff where… I’ve had colleagues who have been not supported by the admin. And I suppose so my warnings to you as beginning teachers are based on things that I’ve seen when teachers have not been supported. You know, so it’s that thing of your, your threshold of risk. And also what would the school, what’s the schools threshold of risk? And yeah… sometimes you need to know the climate you’re working in. So it sounds like where you were, it hadn’t been raised as an issue, it was fine. Whereas I know when I was… we had something like four suicides over five years.
R: Yeah, see I don’t think XXX has had any suicides.
I: So that’s a good debate for us to have and it’s something that, it’s a good thing to bring up because it’s
about ethics, about content isn’t it? Anything else you want to raise? Any dilemmas that you’ve seen
schools grappling with?
R: I don’t really think I’ve actually witnessed any that I could really sort of comment on.
I: Okay, so the last question, how much do you think of your course has actually prepared you to deal with, if
you were facing the dilemma in the classroom or as a teacher or dilemma in the playground, how much
percentage wise of your course do you think has prepared you for um… yep, for that, for dealing with that
eventuality?
R: Not much.
I: Have looked at the Child Protection Act?
R: No.
I: Okay.
R: Um… not much at all. I really don’t think so. Like, maybe 5%. Laugh. Because it’s, and I mean…it’s only,
we haven’t dealt with it directly maybe only through discussion, we had a big discussion in curriculum 2
um… with Richard telling us his story of doing um… oh well, he’s opinion on Black Rock and all that kind
of stuff and we were all talking about it and then we all um, we all talked about it, like my little group we
got to Beadles and we all had discussions and we were all on the same wavelength on what is right and
what is wrong and like, you know, how far can you push students and we were, and I was really… I was
really sort of happy to see that all of us six, we’ve gone through Uni all together and we’ve all got the same
sort of train of thought about that. Um…
I: So what was the train of thought? How far can you push students? What was the consensus?
R: Well we… we sort of went against um… we wouldn’t go as far as Richard, I think in some… but, though
he’d just done an activity with his, with his tutorial where one of the students, you know, reduced to tears
and… but I wasn’t in the tutorial but what I’ve got told, like what um… you know, am I allowed to say
names?
I: Yeah, because I’ll change all the names.
R: Oh good.
I: It’s confidential.
R: Um… because Barbara was reduced to tears and Phillip and Diane sort of, they weren’t participating in it,
they were sort of sitting out but they sort of observed and sort of said to Skye and I that um… it appeared
that you know, Richard was really pushing her um, you know, and pushing her beyond that emotional thing
like, they thought there was something else there that was making her upset and he was really pushing that
and getting her to bring out the drama whereas we sort of thought no, we thought I wouldn’t do that. I mean
it’s not taking advantage of someone’s emotional state for dramatic purposes, I think we all thought was
kind of wrong. Yes, it really benefited the Drama and everyone was really impacted by it and everyone was
just like, wow! But at what cost? So the whole class benefited but that one student like, that just didn’t
seem right and I mean, I wasn’t there and she just, what I got told from them I said no yeah, I definitely
agree, I think that was wrong. Um, I wouldn’t push my students that far. He was talking about Medea,
um… like, Richard telling us experiences and what, and workshops he did with his students or we just…
and we were discussing those and it’s basically where I didn’t really know many of them, this is just from
what Diane and Phillip, because they were in his tutor group like, was telling us you know and we all tend to
agree that they, that was pushed too far, those students were pushed too far into that text emotionally and
physically that there wasn’t enough distancing and the fictional context sort of came down and around fell
and like, we just… and we thought that went too far. And it’s really only through those sort of discussions
that I really feel that I’ve even discussed ethics like… how far is too far?
I: It’s good to think about.
R: Yeah.
I: Because we do border on that territory of the personal and how much you ask students to self-disclose and
how much do you disclose of yourself.
R: And I think, and things like what happened in, when we did Process Drama and you know, people were
given the opportunity to leave and one of those Process Drama’s Skye like, left and I know why she did and
you know, because Skye is like my best mate since, you know and… I really feel that you know, it was
good that she was given that opportunity and you know, if you don’t give students that opportunity to do
that’s just… and I said that and even in the suicide Process Drama, it was actually like, it was a mood
process Drama, youth suicide is the context and I said, you know, I gave them, okay guys, we might be
dealing with some heavy – … one student, Adam his uncle had died and um… I was doing a reflection thing
where they got to write like, in role, saying goodbye to the student like it was, we’d just watched the scene
from Alabrandi where she ripped up his thing and I’m like, we say goodbye, I want you to say goodbye and
I want you to say what this person meant to you and this sort of thing because this person has passed away.
Um… and he chose not to because he didn’t, because he felt that he was saying goodbye to his uncle and
he didn’t want to do that and I said that’s fine, you know, if you want you can go outside and XXX my prac
teacher went outside and had a chat with him and all that kind of stuff and the next day he brought her
chocolates to say thank you and it wasn’t that his mum brought chocolates, he went and brought the
chocolates to say thank you to her.

I: We have moments where we have these epiphanies don’t we? Cathartic moments. Do you think that’s your
role as a Drama teacher? To set up cathartic moments?

R: Um… only if we’re prepared to help them through that. Like… he you know, he was dealing with the death
of his uncle and um… I don’t think that I’m prepared, I, you know… can help him enough to continue
through that healing process that he comes out the other side you know, feeling better for himself and
really, yeah.

I: So if that had have been you there on your own without your supervising teacher being able to look after
him at that moment, what do you think you would have done as a beginning teacher?

R: Um… I would have gone out and just sort of said, and spoken to him and asked him if there was anything
he wanted to talk to me about. Um… and I can, I mean, and I knew why he was upset and I wouldn’t push
it but I would, I would think that I would allow him to talk to me and then you know, if that sort of, if I
really needed to speak to him more about it, like if he didn’t feel okay by the end of just you know, him
being able to talk and me responding but allowing him to speak, I would have gone to the guidance
counsellor and I would have even said hey look, you know, well not necessarily the guidance counsellor
but the chaplain, I know what the chaplain at that school is like, really you know, she’s really great and
she’s, she was um… a young lady and apparently all the students really connect with her much better than
the guidance counsellor because the guidance counsellor was more careers orientated whereas the chaplain
was really um… great and I sort of, and knowing this, if I was at that school in that situation I would have
definitely said hey look, why don’t we go and speak to me, I wouldn’t say the chaplain but I’d say her name or
I, I’d even offer him but I would go speak to her for him and you know, and you know say… come see me
at lunch or come see me tomorrow and we’ll have a good chat you know? I definitely would not want to, I
mean if that’s something that I brought on through my Drama, I definitely wouldn’t just leave it, wouldn’t
want to leave it. Wouldn’t want him to deal with that by himself. And as far as I know, I think, like I mean,
I don’t know what XXX and Adam were talking about, she just said we had a chat and all that kind of stuff
um… but I mean if that was me, I definitely would have allowed him to talk and just given him that
opportunity um… and then if need be if I don’t feel really that I could deal with that then I would have
gone to the chaplain or the guidance counsellor or someone who you know, knew the process of healing or
whatever a little bit better. Someone who could really help me out.

I: Okay. So yeah, sometimes Drama we open up these moments don’t we. Okay, thank you. I think we’ve
answered all these questions.

R: Okay laugh.

I: We’ve had a good chat.

End Interview.
Did the drama raise ethical dilemmas for you? If so what were you thinking about?

Something that this drama really got me thinking about was the idea of who do I work for, and therefore whose ideas and procedures am I enforcing? Do I support these personally?

I found myself being really conflicted with the whole idea, well this is the school I work for and therefore I need to support my school in its decision-making process because I am an employee and the school makes decisions for the good of the school, right? But what if I disagree with the schools decision? Not saying that in this drama I didn’t support the schools decision, I’m just pointing out that up until now I hadn’t even thought about it…perhaps this reflects the our teacher preparation course (I found myself today making the comment that I think its funny that Education Qld and QSA seem to have very little to do with teacher preparation courses and that perhaps more links and connections should be made and earlier than 3rd and 4th year…).

I also found the need to justify a decision that wasn’t mine, and one that I wasn’t a part of a really hard thing to grasp. Not only justify to the media, but to the students as well. To justify why the schools policies haven’t been upheld when I myself don’t understand…

Will you take anything a way from today’s drama and apply this to your future teaching practice or own professional practice? If so what?

The big thing for me from this drama was the idea of school-based decision-making, and what happens when a school makes a controversial stand. In regards to my future teaching practice, I had always assumed I would join the union, my brother is a big supporter of the union (even though his trade doesn’t have a union) so I’ve always been aware of the benefits of the union (as well as the negative, Mum doesn’t like them! 😏), but yeah I’ve always kind of assumed that as a teacher it would be an association I would be a part of…. and this drama kind of reinforced that for me, because when even the Education Department doesn’t stand up and support school-based decisions which are made ‘apparently’ for the good of the school community, students and teachers alike, who will stand up for them? However I think Diane made an excellent point during the unpacking of the drama where she asked ‘what happens when you don’t agree with your union?’… Lots of questions I know, but these are all things all aspects of the teacher’s world that I feel we are walking into very much blind folded.

Did the drama raise anything new for you about education, schools or professional relationships? If yes please describe?

Most definitely! Once again my question of who supports whom? Okay so the education department regulates schools decisions, but who regulates the Ed Department. I realise it’s not the union, but if schools are not even supported by its own institution, who will?

I’m such a fence-sitter in all of this really…I really couldn’t make up my own mind of whether I thought the student should be let back into the school or not…but in the drama I took on the role where I supported my union, because I believe they look out for the teacher’s best interest. I’m still not 100% sure if this is my own stance, but it has definitely given me something to think about.
Did "The Secret Life of Us Drama" raise ethical dilemmas for you? If yes describe these? If no describe why not.

Yes. Many ethical dilemmas were brought up for me.

Firstly, the matter of being told material by a student in a circumstance that they believe to be confidential and having to move the information done the line. Although I don’t actually feel this was a big dilemma for me, I don’t believe this student would have said anything if they didn’t want other people getting involved as long as it was for the right reasons. And I also believe as a teacher I would also feel the same way that although it may seem like a betrayal at first to the student, other people getting involved in the situation for the right reasons, to help, is the only way a positive solution can really come about.

Something that did occur in the drama that really got me quite concerned over this matter was the fact that I didn’t know what to do in this situation. During the drama I went with my first instincts, which was to approach the school counsellor, but the fact that I didn’t actually know that this was the correct step to take in this type of situation was really kind of scary for me, I mean what other correct procedures don’t I know??

If you were presented as a teacher in a school with the same dilemma of a student disclosing information about a friend possibly experiencing harm what would you do?

Well my first instincts would be to go to someone who knows more about these ‘types’ of situations than I, such as counsellor, who could guide me in the next step to take. I obviously wouldn’t hand the buck down the line, I would recognise that this student chose to disclose information to me for a reason, either they believed I was approachable or would be able to really help their friend, and for that reason I would want to be involved with the following process, as a support to both the friend and the victim.

This is not a situation that I think I could tackle on my own. I would seek help from my peers and colleagues in order to get to the bottom of the situation and if need be help the student.

What do you believe is the role of the teacher in terms of their relationship with students and their personal lives?

I believe in a professional relationship with students. I can be friendly, but ultimately I am the teacher, they are the student and there is a line between that relationship.

I do find this sometimes hard though, because I have a hell of a lot of empathy! This is what a drama degree does to a person! I can’t watch a single movie without crying in sadness or in happiness! It’s crazy! So for that reason, I know for sure that if a student came to me for help I would be there for them, I would get involved in this students life in order to help them. However, I wouldn’t do this alone, I would do it with the school councilor/Chaplin/Deputy etc.

It is weird though, I found that when I was on prac, I came across a lot of students that I knew from work and so forth, and for me seeing them as a student was fine but for them they still saw me as ‘Megan’, their pal from work. This was a big reason why I chose not to work whilst I was on prac, because I wanted to distance that friend relationship and establish a more teacher-student relationship, which I was able to do rather well. But having that relationship where I’m Miss Jones not Megan was really important for me, made going back to work rather hard, but at school it paid off because I was able to implement behaviour management and work standards etc., students understood that I was their teacher and such they needed to respect that this is a classroom I am here to do work not muck around with my mate Megan from work. Does that make sense???
Looking back over your experiences of the last two or three workshops what did these dramas teach you about professional standards or ethical dilemmas for teachers?

That I am rather unprepared to deal with them. That up until now I hadn’t even thought about the ethical dilemmas teachers face! That I have been completely close minded to all of the dimensions of the teacher profession.

I really think that I thought I was a professional and my standards and actions where professional in every way, but these dramas where able to get me really thinking that wow in this situation there is a particular professional way to act and although the way I think is professional, it may not be seen like that by others.

I originally volunteered to be a part of this study because I thought that it would help me become a better teacher (you said something when you very first mentioned it in drama curr’ 2 lecture, to make me think this) and it has, it really has. By being able to not only think ‘oh what’s ethical in our profession, how should we react?’ etc. I was able to see these actual dilemmas develop, it really made me think even more about my role as a teacher!

Where have you previously touched upon ethical issues or issues of professional standards in other parts of your degree? How was this information or learning conveyed to you? Did this learning influence your practice, your relationships with staff or students your professional conduct?

I don’t believe I have ever really looked at ethical issues or professional standards before. Within my little group at uni, and whilst sitting at Beetles, we have discussed what we would and would not do with our classes. I remember this conversation vividly. I walked away feeling really good because all of our views were very much the same and as a result I tended to believe that the decisions I would make in the future would be professional.

Drama units I believe have got us thinking about ethical issues, by looking at what texts would one do and would not etc. but specifically looking at ethical issues and professional standards, I don’t believe any subject/unit or any of my experiences at both uni and on pracs have prepared me to make the most informed and professional choices.

Did these process drama experiences give you a deeper understanding of professional standards and ethical dilemmas?

My god yes!!!!! Really this is all I need to say!
But I will say a little more…I don’t believe one can learn simply by talking about it, and especially by simply hearing about it. I believe in the experience and the power of the experience in our learning! After all we learn from our mistakes don’t we. We can tell a child not to touch a heater because it’s hot, but it’s not until the child actually touches it and learns it is hot through experience that they will never do it again. I realise that I am preaching to the choir here, but this is why I think that these specific process dramas have given me a deeper understanding of professional standards. By just only experiencing 3 ethical issues, I am more open to idea that I need to be thinking about the ethical issues involved in all of my decisions.

Would these process drama experiences influence or change your future practice in any way, your relationships with staff or students your professional conduct?

Yes. These process dramas really opened my eyes to the ethical issues the teaching profession has. Before these I hadn’t even thought about them. Seriously, I was completely unprepared to tackle ethical issues, although I believe I would have handled them rather well and in a professional manner, these process dramas have really given me the opportunity to say stop, now what would I do? Why would I do that? What else could I do? Is this the right thing? For me and for the student? I’ve never specifically asked myself these questions, but now that I am aware of it all I believe I will ask myself these questions in the future which will ultimately influence my future practice.
Participant Case Study Five: Maree

Date: 20 June 2005

I:
Maree has agreed to come into this interview, which is very kind of her. Maree can you tell me your date of birth.
R:
The XXX.
I:
So how old does that make you?
R:
21, 22 in XXX.
I:
So what did you do before you came to uni?
R:
I went straight from high school into uni and I went to XXX, so I’m just... but I’m a year older than everyone because I was born in Melbourne so I did two years in Melbourne, I had a prep year.
I:
Oh okay, so most people graduating might be 21 if they came straight from school in Queensland but you’re a year older for that reason.
R:
Yes.
I:
Okay, very good. Um, what motivated you to want to do teaching?
R:
Um, I’ve always had positive experience, I’ve always had positive experiences at school. I found school a very supportive environment. I think I learnt a lot more beneficial and positive things from teachers um... outside of like... more so than what we learnt in the classroom just from teachers individually helped me grow as a person, more so than I did maybe in the family environment and I liked the positive effect they had on me, the school environment had on me and I wanted to be able to achieve that. I like working with people and I like the results that you can see happening, not needing, not necessarily needing someone to say thank you for doing that, but just to see them achieve and know that you had some sort of assistance in that. I do XXX Camps and we take ‘at risk’ and disadvantaged children away and it’s one way that we can give kids a really good time just chill out from the normal life but that’s only during the holidays. So a teacher has more sort of –
I: Ongoing.
R: Ongoing, yeah, more presence to assist that development that we sort of start on camps.
I:
So you’ve always had this motivation in a way to help others?
R:
Yes laugh.
I:
Have you always been like that do you think?
R:
I think so.
I:
Yeah?
R:
I think when I was at school I didn’t have that little bunch of close girls that I sat with, I sort of moved around a lot. Very sociable and liked and lots of people came to me I think to talk about stuff and just to talk, because I like talking. Laugh. And I think... I felt better about myself too, I don’t know whether that’s selfish or not but... so yeah.
I:
Do you have religious beliefs?
R:
I do.
I:
Yeah.
R:
I’m Catholic, I was bought up in a Catholic family, XXX is a Catholic school and they were really supportive in... they really helped develop those beliefs in a wonderful way and the founder of XXX is XXX and she said women in time will come to do much and I believe that strongly, and she said do good and do good well and have strong faith, I have a strong faith and I understand that other people have their own faith but my faith is important to me so, and that’s helped me.
I:
And do you still go to church now?
R:
I do. Which is good too, the youth group there is run really well and I like helping the younger kids with activities and running those things as well.
I:
Tell me about your university course. Which, if you think about, because here you are, you’re three and a half years into your course, are there any particular units or things that you studied here at Uni that you feel have prepared you, that given you more than perhaps others? Like I’m sure it all has collectively has given you something but any units that stand out to you as ones that have helped prepare you as a teacher in your experience?
R:
Well the first one that comes into mind is the first Drama curriculum subject, for two reasons, that was sort of the beginning area of this is what happens when you’re at school, like that was sort of when we were going onto the first prac and we were actually applying knowledge to what we were doing. And also because I’d go into other lectures around that time, so English or Education and they’d say a whole heap of
stuff and you think oh I don’t really understand that, and you go into Drama and they’d say similar things
in a different way, I don’t know whether it’s because of the way people who work in Drama communicate
or whether it’s just the way they apply knowledge to theory… theory to prac or whatever it is, um, helped
me understand a lot of the other subject’s a lot better, drama gave me a really good understanding and good
basis for understanding. So with that, other Drama subject’s that I’ve done in the past have given me tools
in the classroom like… Forum Theatre and Social Action and ways of they… you know, ways of using
Drama to not only develop self-confidence but to experience the world and develop knowledge of things
outside of the square we live in. And that, Drama is just really, really positive which I think… the same
thing that happens in school which is why I wanted to do Drama teaching.

I: Hmm… it’s interesting isn’t it?

R: Yes laugh.

I: What about some of your education subjects? Which ones have been most helpful?

R: It’s funny because I can’t remember a lot of them.

I: Isn’t that amazing?

R: Laugh but I guess educational psychology, a lot of the social psychology theories.

I: What’s the main form of pedagogy?

R: Um… I think this is where there’s a problem with education subjects. We have a subject where the lecturer
has stood up in front of us and said, these are the things you’ll need to know when you go out in prac for
example. You need to make friends with the gardeners and the cleaners and the tuckshop ladies because
they will help you and I’m sitting there going, well that’s common sense and we know that, why are you
lecturing us about that? And I… there’s a lot of lecture and… in the lectures particularly, there isn’t as
much open dialogue as there is in the Drama lectures.

I: Is that size do you think? How many students are sitting there?

R: Yeah, true, I think…. Yes, size is a big… especially in education when you’re in W block seats 400
students or whatever compared to when you’re in L block which is not even full when we’re all in it. Um…
so yeah, and I guess with the size of the lecture didn’t give us opportunity for that.

I: Yeah.

R: And then you’re taking it into the tutorial and I think a lot of the lecturers um… and the tutors know, they
know. And they like to help, like share their knowledge with us but I don’t think they grounded it very well
and there’s a lot of, I feel that there was a lot of sharing of knowledge from the lecturers but that didn’t
really help us because it wasn’t really applying the knowledge. Does that make sense?

I: Yeah, so you’re getting a lot of information –

R: Information.

I: That you’re not necessarily able to process that or absorb that or apply it?

R: No, and that’s where Drama with the open dialogue and the using Drama processes to demonstrate and
example and all that kind of thing, the knowledge that we’ve been taught and I guess I just don’t really do
well in lectures where you’re copying down notes and they’re talking to you, especially when the slides say
exactly what they’re saying, they don’t do the… just put notes and expand so well. And that’s not all of
them, like some of them are good and it has a lot to do with the information laugh.

R: Do you feel prepared to teach?

I: I do now. After I finished that last block of prac I um… like, I think there was a gap between um… end of
third year when we did our four week blocks to end of first semester/fourth year and we did our next block
that made me go, I don’t really know how to teach like that great when everyone’s talking about you know,
this is how you write assessment and this is how you write unit’s and this is how you write lesson plans. I
think I lost touch a bit with and when I went into the school and XXX said to me, you know you can do this
series of lessons for the grade 12’s and this series of lessons for the grade 11’s I kind of went ooh! But
when I started doing it, I was like oh no, I do know how to do this, I do remember. And just reapplying that
theory worked a lot better than sitting in classroom getting all this information. So I do feel a lot more
confident now.

I: Because you got the chance to do it.

R: Yes, to apply it. And I also think that… I feel confident because I know that I’ve still got another block of
prac and I’ve still got the year to finish it, to learn and I feel confident because there are people who I know
I can go and talk to like, I don’t know everything yet so there are people who can help me with the stuff
that I don’t know.

I: And that’s okay to seek help ?

R: Yes. Laugh. I think that’s what I was scared about going into prac, I don’t know everything! XXX is like,
well that’s what I’m here for. Oh good! Laugh. Someone’s here to help me. Now I feel a lot more
confident. I think, getting up in front of students and teaching them stuff wasn’t the problem.
R: Nah, ah… no. I got… it was Miss Timmins
I: Do they call you ‘miss’?
R: Yes, you learn to know which lecturers will read straight off the overheads and the power points and
I: Yeah, you read it on the OLT site.
R: Um… I think there are, especially in some education stuff, which feels like they’re repeating from like first
I: We’re looking, I’m looking particularly at teacher professionalism and I’m looking at, for beginning
teachers, what are some of the issues that come up as a beginning teacher. So I’d like you to reflect on your
prac or even, the future, what, if you have any concerns. With your relationships with students, how
certain do you feel at the moment?
I: Um… I felt, I, on my last prac I felt really good. When the girls came into the classroom like, okay. When I
first went into prac they were doing rehearsals which was wonderful because I didn’t have to teach
anything and I jumped straight into introducing myself and just saying I’m going to watch you a bit and
then if you want any feedback I can give that to you or I’m just going to watch and that was really good for
developing a rapport with the girls and so when I started teaching, I already had that connection which was
lovely because it made it a lot easier to connect with them. Um, I guess my biggest worry is I’m just
learning. I know that sometimes my talk will get flustered or I talk too quickly and I get muddled and I
know that I have to provide opportunities for them to… show their understanding or opportunities for them
to ask questions in case they don’t understand.
I: What about you personally with them?
R: With them like…?
I: How do you feel like working with them and…?
R: Good! Laugh.
I: How do they relate to you?
R: Laugh really well. It was um…
I: Do they call you ‘miss’?
R: Nah, ah… no. I got… it was Miss Timmins laugh. Which I sort of… with the senior girls, I don’t feel so
comfortable with but at XXX, Miss Timmins was necessary, sort of thing. But um… I could play warm up
games with them whereas some of the younger grades feel odd with the teacher involved but with the year
11s and 12s we could jump in and play games and we were doing a name game where we passed around
something and you said I’m Miss XXX and this is… Olivia’s secret wish, and so you’d pass it onto another
Why doesn’t XXX like talking about the weekend?

Oh, because it gets off task. Laugh.

Whereas you don’t mind doing a bit of self-disclosure?

Yeah, I think that. Well I guess it wasn’t so much me talking about my weekend as them telling me about their weekend. And whatever they felt.

Why do you feel it’s important to talk about that? Why did you do that?

I think because I was new, I wanted to make sure that… I find it hard… with such a small class, if I got up in front of them and they didn’t know who I was, I felt that they would be like, who are you, why are you teaching us, what reason do you have to teach us? You know, that sort of thing. And if I told them who I was and why I was there and then sort of like… help them like… share who I was so they knew who I was and I knew who they were and we could sort of connect on the same sort of, a similar level then I’d get more response and more involvement from them.

Okay.

Who want’s to share with someone they don’t really know?

Yeah, exactly.

And I think it blocks the learning.

What about when you see them outside of the classroom?

Ah, they come up and have a chat and… laugh. I’m a bit of a klutz and um… they, the stupid XXX College ground has these dumb grounds where you trip if you’re wearing kitten heels, it’s awful. Laugh. I did it a few times and I’d trip and I’d look over at the girls and one of my senior girls, year 11 and 12’s would be like I saw that Miss XXX and I’d be like, don’t tell everyone! So they were like, they were nice, they all said hello and I’m not sure whether that’s just the clientele um… but that was nice

Would you say that’s different than other prac’s you’ve done?

Laugh no. Well, the one before that I was at um… XXX at XXX and there I think oh I’ve shared too much of myself because in the first few weeks they started calling me Maree because we were talking about what we had on our senior jersey and I said Maree and the year 12’s started calling me Maree which I didn’t really have a problem with and then they started pushing it and the year 12 coordinator told them to call me Miss Timmins and they thought that was a joke, that like… Miss Timmins, because they had to and so I was with XXX and they kept calling [him the wrong name] and they went, we have to put a ‘d’ in his name, so we have to put a ‘d’ in her name and they said Miss Tiddins and I said that sounds like a ‘t’ and they went, no, that’s Miss Tiddins and they’re like, oh yeah, that’s Miss Timid. And they called me that and I didn’t have a problem with that because you know, it was something kind of agreed on, it was a bit of a joke but it was also, you know, nice it wasn’t disrespectful because I understood where it came from.

Do you think different teachers have different boundaries?

I think so, yeah. I know my brother, when he was in year 12, he called his teacher Lucy and I’m sure that’s whatever the teacher feels comfortable with and I know that especially admin have issues breaking those boundaries but Drama is kind of a situation where it happens.

Yep.

So…

How do you feel about your relationships with other staff members? As a beginning teacher and anything you’ve noticed happening to you as a pre-service teacher?

Oh, when I first go on prac I always feel like I’m invading so trying to get comfortable with where I fit is a bit of a problem but once I start to develop it’s good, you know, especially the teachers that when we, at XXX we did a physical theatre production – So when we were doing the physical theatre production it gave me an opportunity to work with a multitude of the teachers which is wonderful because I got to see not only the Drama teachers and the English teachers but teachers outside of that. I had made friends with a pre-service teacher who was in the business department so I’d go up there and chat with her and she introduced me to the other teachers and I could go up there for another chat too and that was really nice. And then the other aspects of the staff there, there was a lady XXX who organised morning tea every day so she was someone else to talk to and it was just lovely and… everyone was really, I don’t know whether it was just a pre-service thing but they were keen to help and teachers would just come up and chat and say how are things going and that was really, like I didn’t have a problem. I felt more comfortable talking to teachers...
I: So you liked working with other staff? You never had a… do anything there?
R: No. We were sitting there one time and one of the teachers said, teachers whinge a lot, you just have to ignore that, they whinge about everything, okay it’s not personal, they just whinge. Laugh. But I didn’t really, like I thought oh yeah, I’ll think about that but it wasn’t a problem, didn’t have issues, I don’t know. I just… I keep thinking like, and especially on my other prac’s, I keep thinking maybe it was just the staff that was there but I didn’t have a problem.
I: At your other prac either?
R: No, like… at XXX they were wonderful and…
I: So what were we talking about?
R: Teachers, staff.
I: Staff, and they whinge a lot?
R: Yeah, but I didn’t have a problem with that and I was trying to think if I did have a problem with any of the teachers and… I think… I hate these topic you know… self… I think I do have the right attitude and I’m willing to talk to other teachers and if teachers I don’t… talk to, I don’t know don’t… if teachers I don’t know start talking to me, I’m not going to go oh yes, whatever, I’ll take the opportunity… a lot of those teachers who I get the opportunity to talk to, have been teachers for a while. There was one gentleman who was, his name was XXX and he was previously the Chaplain at XXX and then he left but they told him he couldn’t, sort of, and put him back and now he’s just teaching RE. And I got talking to him and found out that he did his masters with Miss XXX who was the Principal at XXX and he knew a lot about um… although he wasn’t Catholic he was Uniting Church, he knew a lot about faith and I’m doing a foundation study so I can teach RE and you know, you know just something else, another source, another person I could go to. And you know, when we were doing the production we talked to XXX who was a Home Ec teacher and that was someone else that could help us out and people who you can learn from and can help you and…
I: Sounds like a really nice school.
R: Laugh.
I: What about parents? Do you see any of your teachers about how do they manage their relationship with parents?
R: Um… I think… okay, well when I was at XXX the only sort of aspect I had which really involved parents was I heard teachers, like teachers said to me oh I have to ring up parents to talk about poor marks and so I’d be sitting there and the telephone who’s in the same room and so she’d be saying look I just have to discuss with you, can we meet a time and that was just a way of… touching base with parents about how students are doing in class so that was, that was all I heard about parents. At this school they have a arts support group, a parents art support group so the parents get involved and the parents do dinners and supper and raise money and I think the school really invites parents to be really involved so there was a real attitude that parents should be involved I guess in that case students would make more of a… teachers would make more of a connection with the parents because there was more opportunity to and XXX being the head of department, she was the coordinator of that sort of thing so there was always phone calls to her mobile and to her office phone and she told me apparently to her home phone, from parents talking about student’s marks or what they can do to help you know, dinners for the productions and stuff like that. it was good to see that because you see the way that…
I: Is it ever too much do you think?
R: I think… I think…
I: (?) complain but you were –
R: I don’t think I’d give… parents to have my phone number. Mobile yes, because I can turn that off and especially seniors who have issues, actually XXX ( School) is really good with e-mail, they had the intranet so e-mail, the parents could e-mail, staff could e-mail, students could e-mail everyone so that was a really good way of communicating, that was easily accessible and I think fair, because then you can you know, reply.
I: Access it when you can.
R: Yeah. Um… but laugh. I think lots of phone calls would be a bit overwhelming for me. Laugh.
I: What was your most positive experience on your last prac? If there was a moment where you went… yes, I like doing this, or was there a really positive moment for you?
R: There was. Um… my brother did Process Drama and he brought home a picture which he’d used, which had been used in a Process Drama at Uni about the Pulitzer prize and the Sudanese girl and he’d told me about the Process Drama he’d done with them and how they had to make a choice at the end and… um, I really liked the choice that they had to make and the story behind the photo so I took the photo, I didn’t
want to do the same Process Drama because I didn’t want to focus on the suicide and I got this book which I really loved called the *Balloon Tree* and sort of made a story drama where they investigated things that were treasure to them and –

I: What grade?

R: Year 12.

I: Oh okay.

R: Um, things that they treasured, how it’s hard to make a choice with things you treasure and helping other people, um… and –

I: And they really engaged in it?

R: They really, oh they did! *Laugh.* It was, it started off we just read some stories and then we talked about, the girl in the story, her father goes away and the uncle comes to look after her and he’s mean and she doesn’t want him to come look after her and her father says if you have a problem just let off some balloons and I’ll see them but as soon as the king leaves the uncle pops all the balloons and locks her in the castle and we sort of… did some… dramatic activities about how she would have felt in that situation. And then she escaped through her secret passageway and had to look for a balloon to plant under the tree so she could warn her father. And she went searching through the village and you know, everywhere, she couldn’t find a balloon anywhere and the girls did a movement piece about that and once they did that, I got an excerpt from the UN or World Vision website about the situation of this placement in Sudan and the searching and that sort of thing and I said to the girls, have a think about that and see how that changes your movement piece and there was a lot more um… weight to their piece and I think that sort of hit them more about the situation it’d be when they were searching for help and they couldn’t find anyone.

I: So did you get positive feedback from the teacher?

R: I did, like once we got to the very end, we’d sort of looked at the ideas of choice and the situation and things that we treasure and I did the same thing at the end there, I got the… similar to maybe what the *Fox Drama* was, got them to write a message of hope to the boy who had to make the choice between keeping his balloon or giving it to the girl. Um, and they had to write a message of hope to her saying you know, to him, saying you made the right choice or you might have lost your balloon but you saved a nation, that sort of thing. And then at the end I said… I showed them a PowerPoint slide you know, once upon a time there was a girl who met a… who was hopeless or something like that, and there was a boy who had a choice to make and then on the PowerPoint I showed keep the photo and save the girl or take the photo and show the world. And the girl had to make the situation and the girls at the end of that had to make that choice and the girls, like there was one girl who put it straight back in the box and said, you have every opportunity to show the world this situation, help this girl. And there were other girls that went, you know, as much food as you give them, they still might die and it just went up, it started from a little thing and just developed because they’re doing documentary Drama’s for extended study and they were talking about you know, choice and you can’t make judgement about other people’s choices, quality of life –

I: Nice.

R: And they said stuff like, you know, we were walking down the hallway and we’re talking about formal dresses and things like that and we live in this sheltered world but look what’s happening outside this and…

I: Great, so you really inspired them.

R: Oh, yeah, one girl oh… she… one cried. She started, she even linked it to having to make the choice between her father being on life support and living in pain or turning it off and saying goodbye and like… it just opened their eyes to the sort of… little bit. I don’t know. It was really, *laugh,* it was really good.

I: Could I ask you to think about the teachers you have worked with. What sort of decisions do you see the teachers weighing up and stuff, and what are they talking about, what sort of things are on their mind, what are they making decisions about?

R: I guess marks that they give the girls, but I don’t think they were ethical decisions involved in that.

I: No, just weighing up what they’re… evidence they’ve got and making decisions.

R: *Pause.* Nothing I was personally involved in. there was, I guess, we have briefings every Monday morning for 20 minutes and I sort of, I guess I came in half way through a situation but there was one girl who apparently had been stealing things and it was something to do with her culture and what she understood to be… relevant and material things being like, stuff that you must have and I think that they suspended her but also provided her with counselling and then she came back to school and there was this thing that you need to be aware that she’s coming back to school, you don’t need to be lenient but you need to be aware you know, there are different… and, but that wasn’t really shared with the whole staff, that was more of like, you need to talk to the individual teachers involved with this girl. Um, so I don’t… I could see what
the situation was, I could see that she’d done something wrong, she’d been suspended, they provided her
with help to work through that problem and then she’d been brought back to school not to be lenient but to
be understanding of the situation and I… I don’t remember hearing, oh okay, there was one, at XXX there
was a situation where boys were taking photos on their mobile phones of another teacher in another room
who was unaware of the situation and they got suspended for that because of… privacy laws and rights to
knowledge. Um…

I: Why were they taking photos of this particular teacher?

R: No reason, like it was just that they were bored and it’s the back of the classroom and there’s a door and it
was something to do as far as I understood. The teacher who it happened to went… I know they weren’t
doing harm but they shouldn’t be doing it. They could have been using those photos for anything. Um…

I: Have you gone home and felt uncomfortable about something that’s happened?

R: Only on my, only on my second prac and that was only because I thought that I was too close to the
students. Like we started talking about birthdays and you know, them coming to my birthday and you
know, that relationship there got, and that was because they kept pushing it. I didn’t really have a problem
with it because I was only really there for four weeks but I knew as a teacher it would have been a problem.

I: Okay.

R: But… but I can’t think of like –

I: Yeah, that’s good. I think you sound like you’ve been in some schools that there’s been a good culture.

I: And I think the only situation where I could explain that jarring was in Ed and Rice camps that I do, we do
Child Protection training because a lot of these kids come from… backgrounds that are – Risk… and you
know, there’ll be a, there might be a situation on camp where children will disclose their situation and
there’s a process that you have to go to and it’s a ‘have-to’ process and I might have like… a child might
tell me in confidence something that happens to them in their family and I might want to think, oh I can
help this child or there might be something that I can do but there isn’t anything that I could do and the
process there is, thank you for telling me, um… I won’t share this around but I do have to tell someone just
to make sure that you’re safe. And they might get upset about that –

I: Has that happened to you in the school context?

R: No.

I: But it could.

R: I guess it could.

I: Yeah.

R: And I think the same situation would apply. Um, slightly different.

I: Have you done much Child Protection training or anything like that?

R: We have to do Child Protection training to do Ed and Rice camps.

I: Ah. But have you done it in a school system? Have you done it through the university?

R: No. Laugh. I didn’t even think about that. Um… and that’s important. That’s – and I think that’s where
education and counselling that subject that I’m doing at the moment because teachers aren’t counsellors,
they’re not. But how you respond to that situation, well that’s true. Laugh.

I: If you think about the overall course content and the units that you’ve done in your whole degree, how
much do you think has actually prepared you for ethical conduct?

R: pause. I think a little bit of education subject covered legality stuff but only the tiniest bit, like one week
where they talked about legal issues in education which apparently used to go over two weeks but they
shortened it so we only did one week and that was in one semester. Um…

I: What percent would you give it?

R: Oh, okay so I’d say like less than 5% for education and curriculum but when it comes to Drama, um… let’s
say 25% because we talk about you know, issues related to topics that you might cover.

I: Thanks Maree.

R: Laugh.

End Interview.
Participant Case Study:
Online Reflection
Subject: Drama One – “Rowan’s Story”
Date: 31 August 2005

Do you ignore the rules and give the boy a second chance, or stick with policy? Yes the drama raised dilemmas. Throughout this drama I was thinking about which was the correct choice when it came to this boy. It was his first time offence; he apologized; if the school doesn’t accept him back what will happen to him, where should responsibility for this boy’s education lie? On the flip side however, there were strict policies, there were stakeholders in the community to consider, and then the union became involved. I’ve never had any connection to a situation of this nature so I didn’t know the cause and effect of implementing various actions and I think that it made if difficult for me to comprehend the real issues.

I think one important thing that was present in this drama for me was the effect that your choices can have on the wider school community, at the admin level right through to the teacher- student level. The stakeholders in the school community play an important part in the way schools are governed. You can’t just think of your classroom as one small macrocosm, and do what you see fit, because the students talk to the friends and families, their results are shown against the rest of the cohort and everything that you do with your students has some connection to elements outside the classroom. For this reason you have to follow policy and consider what you tell to your students and know that every action has a further reaction. This isn’t new information for me but it is an important fact to be continually reminded of and in many ways this drama did this.

Something new that was raised for me was the element of the teacher’s union. I’d never thought about it before and still don’t fully understand its role but it is something that I know now I have to start forming ideas about.
Participant Case Study:
Online Reflection
Subject: Drama Two: “The Secret Life of Us”
Date: 6 September 2005

Yes it did raise issues about the sharing of information, and the form of relationship a teacher should have with their students as well as where responsibility lies when it comes to situations like the one presented in the process drama. Subjects like drama where the space is made safe to share information and trust is necessary, often opens up opportunities where these issues can easily arise, and it is the teacher’s responsibility to know the boundaries and to help the students understand both school policy and ethical issues. It is then also the teacher’s responsibility to gain an understanding on what the school policies are and what legal elements are involved.

Second-hand information can often be unreliable, but it doesn’t always mean that it is untrue. The students we were dealing with in this drama were in grade 11, which may allow us to assume a degree of maturity would be involved but of course every situation is situation specific. In this situation there is the element of possible self harm and I, regardless of the age group or second hand information would direct the matter to the school counsellor or alike and work in collaboration with this person as self harm is a serious matter. I have completed a number of child protection workshops and it has taught me that you should never take chances, small year eight bitch fights and arguments are one matter but when there is a possibility of child harm it should never be taken lightly. Often much of the information being disclosed is already apparent to the necessary parties, but if it isn’t, I know that I’m not trained as a counsellor or social worker and someone who is will know the appropriate course of action for them or you to take.
Participant Case Study:
Online Reflection
Subject: Overall Reflection
Date: 6 October 2005

The main thing I took away from these dramas is that I will always be learning as a teacher and more specifically I will always be learning about professional standards and ways of dealing with situations. You can’t always just sit down and say ‘so this is the issue and in the past it has been dealt with in this way so it will work again’, because every issue is situation specific. Each school may have a different process and each student has different needs. Most importantly I learnt that as a teacher you are never alone, there is always someone who’ll be able to give you the help you may need and furthermore dealing with any ethical dilemma on your own is most likely opening you up to greater problems.

These dramas have also reaffirmed some things I already knew, details like not saying anything to your students that you wouldn’t want them to repeat outside the classroom and that you can’t underestimate the value of getting to know your students so as you can be more aware of their behavioural patterns.

I have previously touched on ethical issues and professional standards first and foremost in my drama studies. There are many activities we do in the drama classroom that requires a safe and open environment, and if this can be created then many learning experiences may follow, however this open, supposedly safe environment can also create issues. Therefore in my drama studies some of the ethical issues and professional standards have been elucidated to me through tutor modelling and explaining as well as in class discussions and as part of lectures. Along the way lectures and tutors have mentioned things that we as teachers need to be aware of if we are going to try different things in our classrooms. Much of this discussion as arisen out of discussions about appropriate material for the drama classroom and what effect choice of material can have on the students, their parents and members of the school community.

The only other area I can be sure that ethical issues or issues of professional standards was touched on was in my educational counselling and educational psychology subjects, however from what I remember of these subject much of the information was based on disclosure of information from and about a student and the legalities of discussing certain information with students especially if another adult is not present.

This information that I gained from my drama subject did affect some of the choices I made in the drama classroom throughout my prac experience as well as topics of discussion I may have shared with the students. However I didn’t feel that much of the other information was relevant as I wasn’t in situations of discussing or dealing with personal student issues/information. In the coming years when I am a teacher I think that much of the topics covered will however be more necessary and I will know its full impact when I am in a situation when information related to ethical issues or issues of professional standards is necessary, then I will be better equipped to tell you how well prepared I was.

Finally I do feel better prepared after completing these process dramas, as the issues that we may not have to deal with till after we’ve been teaching for a while became more real. It is hard to know what you’d do in certain situations until you’ve been in the actual situation and these dramas placed us right there and made us consider the flow effect of our choices. I don’t think they will change me as a teacher in my relationships with other staff members as I already felt that it is from them that I will be learning, however I think that it has made me more warier of my conduct around the students. After being involved in XXX Camps where child protection is of high priority there is much I have learnt that has prepared me to be a teacher, but I do understand where the differences are and feel that there should be more weight placed on ethical issues and issues of professional standards in the university situation, especially as they were presented to us in the Dramas as it made it real and really made me think.
Appendix E: Consent Letter

Participant Information Sheet
“Professional Ethics and Process Drama”
Sharon Hogan
s.hogan@qut.edu.au
Phone: 3864 3217

Description
The purpose of this study is to investigate these two key questions:
• Can process drama assist in developing ethical educators for a post-modern world of schooling?
• How effective is Process Drama in developing deep understanding of key aspects of professional ethics?

Process drama is a complex form of extended improvisation where meaning and experience is negotiated by the participants. Dramas involve participants’ actively managing role and symbol to create a fictional world that explores human experience. The chief investigator requests your assistance as a pre-service teacher in determining if Process Drama can assist in developing your understanding of issues surrounding teacher professionalism.

You will be invited to contribute to the following forms of data collection:
• attending and actively role-playing in four drama workshops each two hours in length in August - September of 2005.
• writing in role during the drama
• video documentation of your participation in the drama
• focus group discussion immediately following the drama.
• online written responses to key questions one week after each drama

The process drama workshops and discussions will be video taped for future analysis.

Expected benefits
It is expected that this project will benefit you, increasing your understanding of issues relating to teacher professionalism relevant to your future work as an educator in a school context. The findings from this study could also impact on the development of pedagogy in teacher education in a tertiary context and develop a deeper understanding of the learning possible through process drama.
**Risks**

This study requires you to role play in a range of fictitious contexts that explore problems, potential conflict situations or ethical dilemmas possible in a school setting between teachers, students and parents. While every effort will be taken to protect you from personal emotional anxiety, you can withdraw from the drama at any time. Each drama will be de-briefed in a detailed post-drama discussion. All dramatic scenarios will include fictional role protection and employ a range of dramatic conventions drawing upon symbolic metaphor, analogy and reflection.

**Confidentiality**

All interview material will include the use of pseudonyms in the documentation and final thesis. Film footage will not be publicly broadcast or shown other than for the purposes of analysis involved in the study.

**Voluntary participation**

Your participation in this project is voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from participation at any time during the project without comment or penalty. Your decision to participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT.

**Questions / further information**

Please contact the researchers if you require further information about the project, or to have any questions answered.

**Concerns / complaints**

Please contact the Research Ethics Officer on 3864 2340 or ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project.
Participant Information Sheet

“Pedagogy in Higher Education”

Sharon Hogan
s.hogan@qut.edu.au
Phone: 3864 3217

Statement of consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- have read and understood the information sheet about this project;
- have had any questions answered to your satisfaction;
- understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team;
- understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- understand that you can contact the research team if you have any questions about the project, or the Research Ethics Officer on 3864 2340 or ethicscontact@qut.edu.au if you have concerns about the ethical conduct of the project;
- agree to participate in the project.

Name
__________________________________________________________

Signature
__________________________________________________________

Date
____________________ / _____ / _____
Appendix F: Participants

Participants, Attendance and Response

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