



JANINKA GREENWOOD

Editorial

JANINKA GREENWOOD
TRACEY-LYNNE CODEY

Drama and other performative arts are well known to be means of exploring and processing life. The art forms and work within the forms may not always bring answers or necessarily translate readily into social action, but they provide ways of flexing our criticality and our creativity to reconsider the ready made apparent truths that surround us and to explore richer ways of being with each other and with the world we live in. Because of this, research into processes of thinking, experiencing and reshaping through drama and other arts is important. Yes, it is an academic activity, but it is also one that encourages us to professionally and ethically scrutinise our practice. This year there are eight articles that cover a rich palate of the applications of drama and prompt us to think further about what we hope for from our practice.



TRACEY-LYNNE CODY

Molly Mullen, Sasha Matthewman and Leigh Sykes explore the use of drama to allow participants to develop aware of their environmental identities. In a very readable, structurally exciting and practical article the authors encourage teachers to explore how they can address some of the important ecological issues that face us, and that the curriculum asks us to address, without having to make big changes in the content or style of their teaching. Their encouragement to take students outside school walls to personally experience places and environments is well-timed.

Patrick Shepherd offers a reflective account of how he and a number of students interpreted their experiences of the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes through music and how they were able to look back on and again re-form their experience through a performance in 2015 of the symphony, *Ex Tenebris Lux: From the darkness comes light*. He describes a process that was no magical deus-ex-machina intervention, but rather a prolonged engagement through music of the experiences of fears and hopes that were generated by the shock of the earthquakes themselves and the losses and tensions that continued for so many years.

A strong challenge is posed by Jane Isobel Luton who examines the work drama teachers do in providing co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. She interrogates the drive to work such long, perhaps unrecognised and almost certainly unfunded hours and explores the resilience of teachers and the effects of their commitments on their health. Her article is starkly honest in its personal reflection and in questioning about the extent the acceptance of the arts in education is dependent on the teachers accepting the “ugly side” of the demands of their profession.

Rachel Swindells also investigates tensions that face teachers. She examines the challenges music teachers need to navigate in balancing time and content in their lessons. In a context where students come to secondary school with considerably varying experiences, interests and skills music teachers need to consider a wide range of prior knowledge and motivation in preparing students for assessment. Swindells' article reports some the strategies used to meet such challenges.

Nick Brown examines the process of rehearsal. He reflects on his own evolving practice as teacher and artist, and considers both the ways school rehearsal has the potential to be an authoritarian process and the mandate to be an empowering teacher. Taking up the provocations of adventurous theatre practitioners, of Freire and of kaupapa Māori, he explores how the process of rehearsal can become a process of dialogue, engagement and active learning.

Collaborative learning is also discussed by Leigh Sykes. Sykes investigates ensemble-based learning about Shakespeare and the ways an active and collaborative approaches can prompt personalised learning to occur. She critically reflects on a classroom project that both challenged learners and allowed them to construct meaning and develop empathy and connectedness.

Tracey-Lynne Cody and Rachel Steele report a project involving drama teachers, supported by tertiary educators and the Teacher-Led Innovation Fund, exploring development of culturally-responsive contexts and practices in the drama classroom. The writers investigate how a professional learning group operated to build whanaungatanga, demonstrate manaakitanga, practice āko, and establish effective learning environments for students.

Janinka Greenwood and Mohammad Abul Hasnat play with data from Hasnat's doctoral investigation of rural parents' engagement in education in Bangladesh and use it to develop a dramatic script. They set out highlight the humanness of the kinds of experiences of frustration and hope that often get reduced to statistics in developmental reports. They invite consideration of whether some groups of parents in New Zealand might have similar experiences of distance.

Last year's editorial talked about the struggle to produce a yearly journal issue on a shoestring and the importance of doing so. This year there have been two of us as editors, and it's been great to be able to collaborate and support each other. We both hope to continue the collaboration into next year and we also hope that our teachers and researchers in New Zealand and our colleagues from other countries will continue to write for the journal. As New Zealanders we need to present a research platform that signals our active participation in the global enterprise of education in and through the performing arts. We hope to keep flying our banner high!