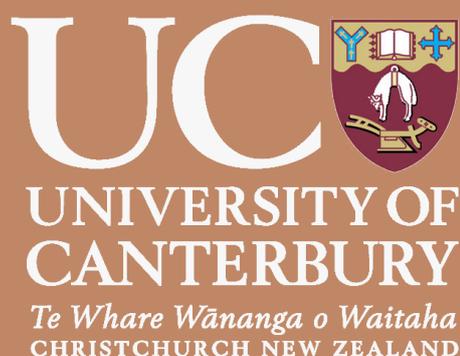


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JANINKA GREENWOOD

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 readably, 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 Mahammad 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!

Finding Te Parenga': Informing environmental identities through drama

MOLLY MULLEN - UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
SASHA MATTHEWMAN - UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
LEIGH SYKES - HOBSONVILLE POINT SECONDARY SCHOOL

Abstract

This paper takes the “future focus” in New Zealand’s curriculum as a starting point for examining the potential of drama to inform students’ emergent environmental identities. Drawing on research connecting eco-literacy and identity within the TLRI (Teaching Learning and Research Initiative) project *Tuhia ki te Ao – Write to the natural world*, the authors analyse the ecological teaching of a drama unit on Bruce Mason using a 3D model of eco-literacy learning for drama: the operational, the enviro-cultural and the eco-critical. The analysis highlights how teachers can shift existing drama practices to include an ecological dimension. In particular, this drama case study shows how actively engaging with playscript settings and students’ formative memories and experiences of place can facilitate personal and collective expressions and critical explorations of cultural and environmental identities.

Biography



MOLLY MULLEN is a lecturer in applied theatre at the University of Auckland’s Faculty of Education and Social Work. To this role she brings over ten years of experience producing theatre education, youth theatre, community arts and children’s theatre projects in the UK and New Zealand. She has ongoing research interests in funding, organisational practice and management in applied theatre. Other current research projects focus on applied performance and ecology, and drama and performance in early childhood education settings.



SASHA MATTHEWMAN is a senior lecturer at the University of Auckland and principal investigator on the TLRI project *Tuhia ki te Ao – Write to the Natural World*. She started her career as an English teacher and is the author of *Teaching Secondary English as if the Planet Matters* (2010).



LEIGH SYKES moved to New Zealand from the UK in 2009. She was Teacher in Charge of Drama at Rutherford College in West Auckland from 2009 to 2015, and became Learning Area Leader for Performing Arts at Hobsonville Point Secondary School in 2016. She trained at the University of Durham and recently completed a Master of Arts (with Distinction) in the Advanced Teaching of Shakespeare with the University of Warwick. Leigh’s research interests are focused on active teaching methods and developing the cultural value of Shakespeare for New Zealand students. She is keen to create and enhance the understanding of Shakespeare through performance.

INTRODUCTION

On the bus to Takapuna, in between excited talk and window gazing, the students read an extract from Bruce Mason's (1962) *The End of the Golden Weather*:

"I invite you to join me in a voyage into the past, to that territory of the heart we call childhood. Consider, if you will, Te Parenga. A beach, three quarters of a mile long, a hundred yards wide at low water. Rocks at either end: on the east, chunky and rounded, a squat promontory. The rocks on the west are shallow, spreading into a terraced reef, shelving far out to sea. Here there is no smoothness. The surface of these rock shelves is jagged, cutting and tearing at the bare foot, fretted away by the corrosive sea." (Mason, 1962, p. 11)

Looking at the photos on their worksheet, Aimee exclaims "ooo! We need to find some rocks!" Where are the rocks?" They study the picture and walk towards the beach. Shannon has been here before to swim at high tide, Aimee has never been. They spot rocky cliffs at the far end of the beach that look like the ones in the photo, it's a long way, but they set off, determined. Aimee is excited by the things she finds in the sand: shells and particularly the lumps of volcanic rock, 'crater rock' she calls it. She cradles the pieces in her hands and puts some in her bag. They keep walking towards the distant cliffs, agreeing that it is better to walk barefoot on sand than wear shoes.

At their best, secondary school drama classrooms are spaces in which young people can explore their identities and their place in the world (Gallagher, 2014). This article explores the potential for drama to create a forum for students to explore and articulate a sense of environmental identity, fostering "an active concern with the relationship between humans and the environment, and the impact and consequences of the activities of the former on the latter" (Kleiman, 2010, p. 157). The focus is a 12-week unit developed by Leigh Sykes, Learning Area Leader, Performing Arts, at Hobsonville Point Secondary School in West Auckland, for a mixed class of year nine and ten students. Over the course of the unit, the students put Bruce Mason "in his place"; examining the landscape represented in his plays *The End of the Golden Weather* and *The Pohutukawa Tree*, and then visiting the Takapuna landscape (the place where he grew up and that shaped his creative process). The opportunity to visit the place so vividly rendered in Bruce Mason's plays was a significant dimension of taking an ecological angle on the study of his work.

This unit was developed and analysed as part of a two year research project, Tuhia ki te Ao – Write to the natural world (funded by the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative). In the next section we briefly introduce the project and the key ideas, concepts and models that inform it. We then propose what we see as the opportunities and challenges of bringing an ecological focus to secondary drama in Aotearoa New Zealand. We then move into discussing the drama unit, highlighting the ways in which ecological learning was developed. Finally, reflecting on the strengths and limitations of the unit, we explain how it could be revised to strengthen the "eco-critical" dimension of this learning to inform students' environmental identities

Environmental Identities and Eco-literacy

Tuhia ki te Ao: Write to the natural world sets out to explore environmental identities and the process of how young people communicate and develop a relationship and kinship with the natural world within the secondary school context. Hobsonville Point Secondary School is one of two schools who are partnering with the University of Auck-

land's Faculty of Education and Social Work to find ways to integrate an ecological focus in three learning areas: English, Social Sciences, and The Arts, while taking seriously the bicultural framing of the NZ Curriculum. This research responds to the apparent gap between aspirations in the NZ curriculum for education that promotes ecological sustainability, and what actually happens in schools. Ecological sustainability is one of the values of the NZ curriculum; a value that should be integrated across school activities and curriculum content. But, at present, research indicates that its status in secondary schools remains marginal in relation to high stakes assessment areas (Eames, Cowie, & Bolstad, 2008). In this context Tuhia ki te Ao sets out to show that each secondary school learning area has something distinct to offer in terms of ecological learning.

One premise of Tuhia ki te Ao is that learning in secondary school classrooms plays a part in shaping students 'environmental identities': the knowledge, understanding, values and attitudes that people hold about their relationship to the natural world, their understanding of their physical place in the world and the relationship between their culture and nature. We work with the idea of identities as developing and changing over time, in relation to both the built and natural environment. We emphasise the importance of students developing a sense of environmental identity as part of their cultural heritage (Matthewman, 2017).

Literacy and identity formation are powerfully linked (Abrams & Rowsell; Gee, 2000; Ferdman, 1990) and this includes the way that environmental identity and ecological literacy have been brought together in the context of education (Thomashow, 1995, Matthewman, 2017). The concept of "Eco-literacy" is central to the way the research team are investigating teaching and learning across the three learning areas. We propose that literacy practices play a part in environmental as well as socio-cultural understandings, attitudes and actions. As people around the globe encounter results of human driven climate change and other environmental instabilities, it is crucial to reconsider the ways in which we speak for and represent the natural world (Buell, 2005).

Teaching and learning on this project is framed by a multimodal, three dimensional conception of literacy, adapted from Bill Green's (1988) 3D literacy model (see also Green & Beavis, 2012). Bill Green proposes three dimensions of literacy: operational, cultural and critical. Tuhia ki te Ao refocuses these dimensions to include the ecological as follows:

- Operational literacy includes the technical elements of writing, multimodal design or artistic creation. In drama this dimension might encompass learning and applying conventions, elements, stage craft techniques, design principles, or script/ character analysis tools, such as Stanislavski's fundamental questions.
- Enviro-cultural literacy involves recognizing, selecting and applying available cultural forms and practices for cultural and environmental effect. In drama these dimensions might include locating a playwright or performance form in a culture and place or learning about the cultural and environmental impact of a particular play. It would encompass the development of students' knowledge of important cultural and environmental texts and performance practices.
- The eco-critical dimension of literacy involves understanding how forms and representations might be critiqued, contested and transformed for different cultural and environmental purposes, interests and contexts. In drama, this might encompass critically analysing the cultural and environmental values expressed in a play or performance or making informed choices about the use of forms and techniques to achieve environmental and cultural effects/affects.

The three dimensions are not intended to be hierarchical or sequential, but should be integrated over the course of a task, lesson or unit of work.

During the first year of the project (2016), one emergent research focus was on the ways in which multimodal eco-literacy could help students to connect with local places and ecological concerns as part of informing their environmental identities. In Leigh's unit, we propose that the process of studying and staging Bruce Mason's plays became a way to connect students with particular places and environments in Auckland, past and present, and for students to experience and express a sense of their own personal connection to those place within a collective social context.

The concept of environmental identity has been studied in the fields of environmental education (Thomashow, 1995), sociology (e.g. Stets & Biga, 2003), psychology (e.g. Crompton & Kasser, 2009) and literary studies (e.g. Buell, 2005). In the project we have started with Clayton's (2003) definition of environmental identity as "A sense of connection to some part of the non-human natural environment, based on history, emotional attachment, and/or similarity, that affects the ways in which we perceive and act toward the world" (p.45). We have been guided by the empirical framework devised by Crompton and Kasser (2009) and extended by Jaksha (2013) which investigated environmental identity as composed of values and life goals, group membership and fears and threats. Drawing on our reading of seminal texts by Thomashow (1995), Clayton (2003) and Crompton and Kasser (2009) we have settled upon a four part model of environmental identity as comprising a sense of place and belonging; attitudes to animals and plants, involvement in group activities related to the environment and a sense of the natural world as interconnected (2003). We began with a focus in the project on "sense of place" as this is raised as fundamental to environmental identity formation across the literature. In relation to this particular project within the drama learning area the seminal work of environmental educator Mitchell Thomashow (1995) has emerged as especially relevant for understanding how the concept of environmental identity relates to place. Thomashow details a three part educative process for working on "ecological identity"¹. The three avenues that he explores are childhood memories of special places, the awareness of disturbed and damaged places, and developing a connection to wild places. He argues and illustrates how these "paths of exploration" create rich "educational possibilities for the collective expression of environmental identity" (p.18). In the educational context we suggest that the movement from the personal to the collective expression of identities is key.

Bringing an ecological focus to secondary drama: Challenges and Possibilities

Bringing an ecological focus to drama teaching is something teachers should already be thinking about (or doing) if they are taking the values of the New Zealand Curriculum seriously. In considering ecological sustainability in Higher Education performing arts, Kleiman argues that drama, theatre education and applied theatre lend themselves to the "integration and promotion of sustainability" (p. 164). Sustainability is usefully defined as the process of "exploring the long-term impacts of social, cultural, scientific, technological, economic, or political practices on society and the environment (Ministry of Education, 2007, p.39). The project Tuhia ki te Ao is focussed on developing relationships to nature which promote the concern to sustain the environment for the present and the future. However, the section of the New Zealand Curriculum on The Arts makes no specific mention of the environment, ecology or sustainability. In contrast the earlier, 2000 curriculum statement for The Arts was much more direct: "Arts education enables students to generate ideas about themselves, their experiences and their environment and to express and communicate them in a variety of artistic forms" [emphasis added] (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 10). This version gave learning examples for each arts discipline to explore the relationship between art-making and the natural world. We suggest that this guidance is a significant omission in the current curriculum which means that the value of ecological sustainability risks being sidelined within drama teaching in

¹ Thomashow uses the term "ecological identity" in order to stress the importance of developing a sense of the natural world as interconnected. We prefer the term environmental identity in relation to the greater familiarity and immediate accessibility of the term "environmental" for students and teachers.

New Zealand secondary schools. Hence the importance of sharing ecologically focussed work to bring the possibilities into the foreground of teachers' thinking and planning.

We suggest there are multiple ways in which teachers might approach an ecological focus, capitalising on their experiences and expertise and responding to their students and the local context. For example in Boxes 1 and 2 Molly and Leigh reflect on their own environmental identities in relation to their ecological focus in the project:

Molly: The approach I am inclined towards reflects my background is in youth and community theatre and theatre education. My work often focuses on social issues and I see myself as committed to the idea of drama as a critical social praxis. Also, I was raised vegetarian, wearing Greenpeace t-shirts and going on protest marches. When I learned about the hole in the ozone layer at primary school, my first feelings were fear and disempowerment. But, my parents got me books with titles like 'how ten year olds can save the planet', and I made my own t-shirts about banning CFCs, wrote poetry about the destruction of the countryside, and made bad 'agit-prop' plays with my cousins. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, my initial idea for bringing an ecological focus to drama is to get students activated, making theatre about an important (to them) environmental issue, using documentary or devised theatre.

Leigh: I was born and grew up in London, meaning that my upbringing was in a densely populated urban environment. Until I started Secondary School (after moving from London to Hertfordshire), I believed that sparrows were baby pigeons, as these were the only two types of birds I had ever seen. Despite this, I became passionately interested in animals at a young age, cultivating caterpillars in jars, bringing home strays and running a 'car boot sale' in the garden to raise funds for the World Wildlife Foundation. At 13, I chose to become vegetarian to support her animal advocacy, and has been ever since. But, my approach to this unit is grounded in my background as a British-born, British-educated Drama teacher with an ongoing commitment to learning about the theatre of Aotearoa New Zealand. The majority of the drama and literature I studied at school and University was from the UK, Western Europe and North-America. I had a great deal of exposure to theatre forms and practitioners from the United Kingdom-specific Mystery Plays, through Shakespeare, Chekov and Post War American Realism and into the 'In-Yer-Face' theatre of the 1990s. I had very little exposure to Australasian or Pacific theatre prior to arriving as an immigrant to New Zealand in 2009. On arrival, the first piece of theatre I saw was a bare bones production of *Niu Sila* in the school hall at the secondary school where I was teaching. I was aghast at the apparent political-incorrectness of the show, but my mainly Pasifika students loved it and explained that the play was very funny and accurate in its depiction of the characters and their relationships. That experience set me on a journey of discovering more about the theatre of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Box 1. Molly's and Leigh's environmental identities related to their focus on ecological drama

The advantage of the New Zealand curriculum is that teachers have the freedom to take up an ecological focus in a way that responds to their skills and experiences as well as to local cultures, students' identities, local environments or current issues. Academic literature on how theatre studies might respond to ecology and environmental change provides the basis for a range of possibilities for bringing an ecological focus in secondary drama in ways that are consistent with the framing of The Arts curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand. Some examples are listed in Box 2.:

- Making performance about an environmental issue.
- Learning about the environmental impact of theatre making and conduct an environmental impact study of a school play or local production. Students might then study sustainable theatre making and come up with the concept for a more sustainable production process (Kleiman, 2010).
- Process drama offers a range of possibilities for engaging students with ecological issues or themes. Teaching about environmental issues can provoke anxiety and fear which, in turn, can lead to fear and apathy (Hicks, 2014). Eva Osterlind (2012) argues that process drama is an ideal form for handling the difficult emotional dimension of teaching about environmental issues.
- Site specific performance and ambulatory or walking performance forms can engage students with the cultural and environmental significance and histories of particular places (Woods & Mullen, 2016; Matthewman, Mullen & Patuwai, 2015; Davis & Tarrant, 2014).
- There is a growing cannon of 'green' or environmental plays and productions that can be studied or staged (Chaudhuri, 1994; Arons & May, 2012).
- Originating in English Literature, ecocriticism provides an approach to text analysis that focuses on how nature is represented, seeking to reveal environmental values and knowledge and examining depictions of the relationship between humans and more than humans (Matthewman, 2011). An ecocritical analysis could be extended to live performance, considering how animals, plants, landscapes are presented or represented on stage and how a production expresses particular historical or cultural knowledge and values about the natural world (Arons & May, 2012).
- In a cross-curricular project with Science, students might look at examples of performances that present or interpret scientific research about the environment and come up with their own performance concept.

The topic of Leigh's unit was New Zealand Drama, with a focus mainly on plays in the Western, humanist tradition. This may not seem like the obvious choice when thinking about ecologically focused drama teaching. As a strongly humanist art form, much theatre is primarily an expression of human experience, society and cultural identity. When performed on stage, inside a designated venue, theatre literally cuts culture off from nature. Early Western naturalism in particular tends to express a hostile view of the natural world. It represents humanity's dominance over nature by literally placing "man" centre stage in a social drama while nature appears as a theme, a symbol, or a threatening force (Chaudhuri, 1994). But, Una Chaudhuri has suggested strategies for working with historical naturalistic drama. These include identifying and performing the ecological subtext; connecting the ecological themes in the play with actual ecological concerns (historical or current); and incorporating non-naturalistic strategies to raise critical questions about the relationship between the human and more than human world as depicted in the play. Leigh's approach to working with Bruce Mason's plays incorporated these strategies as well as connecting to Thomshow's (1995) work on developing ecological identity through place connections.

Finding Te Parenga: The unit and student work

In planning the unit, Leigh had to work within the models and principles of curriculum design at Hobsonville Point Secondary School. Learning at HPSS is designed to be connected across learning areas and to connect and illuminate overarching concepts, or themes, ranging from 'Citizenship' to 'Innovation and How Things Work'. The unit of work created for Tuhia ki te Ao was offered to Foundation students (years 9 and 10). It responded to the school-wide overarching theme of Citizenship. This worked well in relation to the aim of developing a collective expression of environmental identity through drama. The unit was taught as part of a SPIN (Special Interest module) lasting one twelve week term. Students were presented with the following description when choosing their cross-curricular Modules

and SPINs for term 2 2016:

We will explore the dramatic treasure of New Zealand theatre. We will look at plays that were written to give New Zealanders a voice and a place on the world stage and we will explore the ways in which the New Zealand landscape plays a significant role in these plays. We will explore approaches to interpreting scripts through the ideas of theatre practitioners such as Stanislavski, and the ways that we can take scripts from the page to the stage. We will visit some of the locations that appear in New Zealand plays (e.g. Takapuna beach where *The End of the Golden Weather* is performed every Christmas Day), before performing extracts from one (or more) of these plays to our peers.

All students are required to experience each Arts learning area at some point during their Foundation years (9 and 10). At Hobsonville Point Secondary School the process for taking students on trips is straightforward. Being able to arrange activities outside the classroom and school with the minimum of fuss was instrumental to the success of the unit.

The unit began with activities to gauge the students' existing level of knowledge and experience of theatre, followed by a presentation on New Zealand Drama. Using extracts from Bruce Mason's *The Pohutukawa Tree* in the first instance, students investigated character relationships before moving onto the more complex task of identifying and analysing relationships with the environment described in the play. Activities for engaging with the social and cultural themes of the plays ranged from reading and staging scenes, mind-mapping, applying tools for script-analysis based on Stanislavsky's fundamental questions, and using thematic freeze frames to investigate concepts such as family, class and cultural relationships.

Initially student's attention was drawn to the ecological subtext through script analysis tasks. They began by simply identifying the elements of the script that provided information about the setting and environment. They then moved on to reading and discussing key extracts, investigating the environmental context of the play and the characters' relationship to Te Parenga. The readings generated some very rich discussions. For example, students quickly engaged with debating the implications of the environmental changes that Claude Johnson describes in his speech at Sylvia Atkinson's wedding:

The very land we're standing on was thick in virgin bush. It all had to be cleared by hand, cut down, burnt off. And when the land was clear it all had to be grassed: only tussock here, so the seed had to be brought from England, twelve thousand miles by sail: makes you think, doesn't it? And you know, in two generations, it looks like rolling English countryside. This fine old house: it'll last as long as an English castle and it's full of memories; built out of the best Te Parenga totara. (Mason, 1963, p. 41)

Students learnt about the environmental context of the play, researching the native plants named in the script, like totara, and finding historical photographs and maps of Auckland to help them visualise the changing landscape described by Johnson and other characters. This connects with Thomshow's (1995) point that ecological knowledge and understanding needs to be linked to feelings and affiliations. Reading literature and enacting drama works specifically on that interface between the intellect and the emotion.

Many students were surprised when Leigh told them that Te Parenga is based on Takapuna in Auckland. This information opened up the opportunity for students to explore Bruce Mason's relationship with the place where he spent much of his childhood. This

place influenced Mason's plays, his imagination and his creative process. For example, in the collection *So/lo* Mason writes:

I could not have been much more than seven or eight when I first scooped a hole in the flax bush at the bottom of the garden and made a rough seat there. I would sit there by the hour, unseen, scribbling in tattered exercises. (Mason, 1981, p. 88)

And:

Rangitoto ... declining from a central cone to the water in two huge flanges, meeting the sea in a haze of blue and green ... still sits there in the lobby of my imagination. That huge panorama has formed a backdrop of my life. No anguish but it was not subtly redeemed by it; no joy not deepened by it. (Mason, 1981, p. 87)

Leigh wanted the students to experience and understand something of Bruce Mason's relationship to place. Students read extracts from Mason's *The End of the Golden Weather*. They looked at the language features used by Mason to depict the setting and discussed how the extracts expressed the character's and the author's feelings about this place. The next step was to take the students to the location described in *The End of the Golden Weather*. The plan at the time was to experience the location that had inspired the setting in the two plays and then to use the knowledge of that place to identify locations within the school grounds to perform extracts from one of the plays. In the event, while preparing activities for the trip, Leigh found that a very visible change had taken place in Takapuna since she had last visited, with the creation of a new children's playground in exactly the location where *The End of the Golden Weather* had been performed on Christmas Day for a number of years. She decided to take the unit in another direction, asking students to explore the changes in the landscape between the era of play and the present day and hoping to encourage them to form an opinion about those changes. This connects with Thomashow's (1995) exploration with students of disturbed environments as a component of environmental identity work. It also connects with the literary ecocritical idea of the environmental text and reading as promoting awareness that the environment is "in process" rather than fixed and permanent (Buell, 1995).

On the trip to Takapuna students undertook one of three activities. The first required students to closely read the text and identify the places that were described in the writing in the real landscape. The second activity required students to find places shown in period-appropriate photographs and take the same photos to see what changes had occurred in those locations. The final activity required students to assess the implications of the new playground for the environment and different groups in the community, and to research the reasons for placing the facility in its location. On their return, students completed presentation slides that combined the photographs they had collected with their responses to the location and their understanding of the way that it had changed. Students were then encouraged to consider the reasons for the changes they had identified. This included a discussion about the wider cultural changes in Auckland and New Zealand and how this was connected to changes in land use – one issue raised was the growing multiculturalism of Auckland as a global city. This discussion was enriched by listening to a recording of Bruce Mason performing an extract from *The End of the Golden Weather*. The voice of the author did not match the students' expectation of a 'New Zealand voice' and led them to reflect on the way the play presented a particular pakeha² perspective on the place in which it was set.

The final assessment task required students to select an extract from *The End of the Golden Weather* and perform it. Their rehearsal process and performance needed to

² A New Zealander of European descent.

draw on techniques and methods that they had learned over the course of the unit. They also had to find a way to incorporate material from the field trip to convey their experience of Takapuna beach or to communicate their opinions about the changes that had taken place there since the play was written. Students responded to this task in a number of ways. Some less experienced students struggled to incorporate material from the field trip in a meaningful way, finding themselves fully absorbed by the challenge of rehearsing and staging the extract. Others addressed this aspect of the task with some confidence, for example by articulating a response to the changes they had observed in the landscape by adding devised scenes or narration to their chosen extract. Other students drew on physical theatre techniques to 'become' the setting, drawing both on Mason's rich descriptions and their own remembered sensory experiences of the beach. For some students then, the opportunity to 'be' in the place so vividly rendered in *The End of the Golden Weather* seemed to have given them a sense of the world of the play that was connected to an actual place and environment.

Ecological learning and 3D Literacy

The 3D literacy model explained earlier in this article is one framework for reflection on the ecological learning that was taking place during this unit. For example, in a drama context, 'operational literacy' might include the technical elements of multimodal creation. In this unit, operational literacy was developed from the first lesson as students constructed a definition of 'a play' and then looked at specific features of a script. Over the course of the unit they learnt about monologue, dialogue and ensemble formats by looking at different sections from and versions of Mason's plays. They learnt a range of elements and techniques including freeze frames, physical theatre, and methods for script and character analysis. In relation to the ecological focus of the unit, students encountered and defined terms like landscape, environment and setting. The tasks in which they identified different ways in which the scripts gave information about setting and environment, or where they researched the plants, environments and landscapes depicted in the plays, shifted the primary focus away from human characters and actions and provided a way to access the ecological themes in the plays. This was also a way to expand their circle of attention from the human to the natural world and to emphasise the connection and interdependence between the two.

The second dimension, 'enviro-cultural literacy' involves recognising, selecting and applying available cultural forms and practices for cultural and environmental effect. The enviro-cultural literacy in this unit involves the students understanding the cultural and environmental significance of a particular playwright, Bruce Mason. Over the course of the unit, Leigh drew attention to the way in which Mason's depictions of places, landscapes, animals and plants was one way in which he attempted to articulate a New Zealand 'voice' in theatre, challenging the very Euro-centric canon that had dominated New Zealand's stages for many decades. The students gained some understanding of the wider social and cultural context in which the plays were written, reflecting on why this assertion of voice was important to New Zealand playwrights at this time and the cultural complexities involved in doing so.

Mason wanted to represent issues affecting Aotearoa New Zealand and some of his plays, like *The Pohutukawa Tree* present issues of cultural change and land/environmental change as intricately connected. Students began to engage with this theme in Mason's two plays as they researched the changing landscape of Auckland and Takapuna and explored the relationships that different characters had to Te Parenga.

Students also learned about Bruce Mason, his childhood relationship with Takapuna and its influence on his plays and creative process. The trip to Takapuna beach extended students' earlier work analysing the language used in the scripts. The trip immersed students in an environment, enabling them to experience what it felt like, looked like, smelt like and sounded like - all of the senses evoked in Mason's rich

descriptions in *The End of the Golden Weather*. This experience informed the students' understanding of the environmental context of the plays and also the particular environment that shaped Mason as a writer. Importantly, students connected the plays to this actual place, not a generic New Zealand landscape. The experience of walking quite independently around the beach as they completed their set tasks was, for some students like Shannon in the opening narrative, a process through which they made a potentially formative experiential connection to a place in Auckland that they had never visited before. Without the trip this place and its significance in the plays and to Mason would have had little meaning to them, it would have remained an abstract setting, a backdrop for the actions, identities and relationships of the characters.

The 'eco-critical' dimension of literacy involves understanding how forms and representations might be critiqued, contested and transformed for different cultural and environmental purposes, interests and contexts. Throughout the unit, specific tasks directed the students' attention to recent and historic changes in the Auckland landscape. This related to the environmental subtext of the plays such as the changing use of land as deeply connected to personal, cultural and social change. As they discussed the changes to Te Parenga described by different characters in *The Pohutukawa Tree* and the contemporary changes to the landscape of Takapuna (specifically the playground and continued development) students were asked to consider the views of different groups who were invested in or affected by these changes such as parents with children, older residents, Maori representatives or local historians. Leigh then gave the students the aesthetic challenge of finding a way to incorporate material, elements or conventions into an extract from *The End of the Golden Weather* to convey their feelings or opinions about the environment or environmental changes in Takapuna. This task required students to transform the original play. For example, one group juxtaposed the hazy nostalgia of Mason's writing about Te Parenga with devised scenes that presented young people on a contemporary Takapuna beach.

Within this unit are examples of the strategies suggested by Chaudhuri for working with historic naturalistic plays. Students started to engage with the ecological subtext of the plays, the theme of deeply interrelated cultural, social and ecological change. In both of the Mason plays, the landscape, like the characters, seems caught within the forces of 'progress' and 'development'. They connected the historical changes depicted in the plays with current ecological concerns related to recent changes to the Takapuna landscape. In the final assessment, some groups effectively used non-naturalistic techniques to convey their feelings or opinions about these changes.

Reflections and revisions

The demands of generating eco-critical and enviro-cultural outcomes sometimes conflicted with the necessary task of building the operational drama skills of the mixed-ability class. This meant that some of the intended learning outcomes were not fully realised by all students. We reflect that the most successful elements of the unit were the students' responses to Mason's work and to the field trip location. In some cases students demonstrated perceptive thinking about why changes had taken place in the fictionalised and actual locations and the implications of those changes. A revised unit could make a more explicit connection to locations that have importance to the students and their experiences of environmental change. For example, those of them that live in the areas around the school would have direct experience of the rapid development in Hobsonville Point and the impact on different groups in the community. In 2017, Leigh has changed the final assessment, using *The End of the Golden Weather* as a model for creating monologues with students based on locations that have particular significance to them. These monologues allow students to explore their own childhood connections to special places using Mason's work as a model. Psychological studies have found that positive experiences in natural settings influences the expression of environmental values (Schultz & Tabanico, 2007).

Another option for revising the unit would be to explore the civic and political aspects of the plays more explicitly. Thomashow points out that an environmental identity moves from the personal relationship to nature (such as the personal exploration of childhood memories of place) to feelings of group identity which support ecological attitudes and behaviour leading to the realisation of greater political and civic responsibility. Mason was primarily concerned with social and political themes that were relevant to New Zealand, but the effects of changing ownership and use of land is a significant ecological subtext in both plays studied by Leigh's students. In *The Pohutukawa Tree*, Mason attempts to present different perspectives on and experiences of the changes to the Te Parenga landscapes. In terms of the relationship between nature and culture, in the play access to, ownership of and relationships to places are highly gendered, class-based, generational and connected to cultural background. Students could examine these different perspectives as well as the representations of the natural world in the play. Students could then work towards a performance that foregrounds the political ecological subtext. Many of the script analysis and research activities introduced by Leigh, as well as the trip, would support this work. Students might also map the setting of the play and annotate it with information about each place from the text based on their research. This could be supplemented by wider research about Māori land loss in the region and the changing nature of urban centres in New Zealand. In addition, the role-on-the wall convention could be used to develop an understanding of each character's environmental identity, collating information from the script about each character's values and attitudes towards places, animals and plants and about how they are affected by the environmental changes depicted in the play.

This would take the work into a more eco-critical orientation. . There were moments in the unit where students started to critique particular representations in the plays. For example, as Molly observed a lesson, she wrote:

It was fascinating to see what happened when the students got to hear Bruce Mason's voice on a recording of the play from 1959. His 'posh' English accent surprised students and provoked them into a discussion that touched on the politics of defining or claiming a 'New Zealand voice'. Hearing the performer's recorded voice generated questions of culture and representation in a way that reading the script aloud as a group had not. More work could have been done, however, to encourage the students' critical thinking about current issues of identity and representation back to the environmental identities of the author and the characters he creates.

The potential of the educational space is that identities can be expressed, explored and debated collectively as "a variety of personal experiences constitute a collective environmental vision" (Thomashow, 1995, p.18). In the New Zealand context it is important to avoid leaving stereotypical representations of Maori and Pakeha perspectives unchallenged. Stereotypical representations of environmental identities can create a problematic "in group" versus "out group" identity which can work against constructive behaviours (Crompton & Kasser, 2009). For instance the routinely expressed idea in the classrooms that we observed that Maori are "more ecological" can lead to the belief that the environment remains one group's responsibility (Maori) or conversely another group's fault (Pakeha). In particular, Bruce Mason' play offers the potential of examining the complex historical shaping of the land which can be set against present environmental initiatives and dilemmas. Auckland is a city of immigrants where an important role of education is to foster a sense of belonging for all students and to allow the expression of a collective and variegated environmental identity which draws on childhood attachments to home places as a stepping stone to forging new connections and bonds to the New Zealand ecology and culture.

Conclusions

Taking up an ecological focus in secondary drama is important, both as a way of integrating curriculum values and to enact culturally responsive pedagogies that recognise place, environment and sustainability as central to identity and literacy development in Aotearoa New Zealand. As outlined above, there are many possibilities for how this could be done without teachers having to make huge shifts in what or how they teach. By focusing on one example of an ecologically focused unit of work we have highlighted some particular activities and strategies that could be used when working with historical, naturalistic play texts. We have also highlighted the value of taking students out beyond the school to connect their drama-making with actual places and environments. Ultimately, we argue, the multimodal creative and critical processes of theatre making can provide a powerful way for students to inform, explore and articulate their developing environmental identities in a social context.

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From the darkness comes light: Music as an agent of catharsis, resilience and learning following the Christchurch earthquakes

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Abstract

Following the devastating earthquakes that rocked Christchurch on 4 September 2010 and 22 February 2011, I wanted to do something positive and respond in a way that would form part of the healing process and which, in the fullness of time, could also serve as part of the record of the extraordinary events that the people of Christchurch were experiencing. The result was my third symphony – *Ex Tenebris Lux: From the darkness comes light* – which was performed, one movement per year, by the symphony orchestra of the Christchurch Schools' Music Festival with myself as conductor. In 2015 the symphony was performed in its entirety and performers from all four years were invited back to take part in the final performance as well as to talk about how the project had helped them make sense of the situation. Many also were able to discuss how they had progressed musically during that time, another positive by-product of their involvement in the project.

It is widely documented that music is highly beneficial for a child's learning but it also has significant healing powers, so a significant reason for composing this piece was to use music as an agent of healing, to help the children involved in the music festival (and the audience) confront the repercussions of these terrifying times and to reflect positively on their own experience. Their comments, reactions and suggestions were an integral part of the creation of the symphony. This paper traces the project from start to finish and explores the issues raised by the children taking part, as well as illuminating my own reflections on creating a work with a purpose beyond entertainment.

Biography



PATRICK SHEPHERD works as a composer, conductor, performer, researcher and teacher. He is well-known for his work in the community and with young people and is currently Musical Director of the Christchurch Schools' Music Festival and a music critic for *The Press*. His works have been performed in the UK, USA, Germany, Russia, South Korea, China and Australia as well as regular performances and broadcasts in New Zealand. Patrick is an Honorary Antarctic Arts Fellow and much of his current creative work relates to trips there in 2003 and 2016/17. He also researches the medical condition synaesthesia (altered sensory perception).

All change starts with a distant rumble at the grassroots level.
Dr Tom Coburn (US Senator)

Overture to disaster

In the early hours of 4 September 2010, the residents of Christchurch and surrounding districts were woken by a 7.1 magnitude earthquake which caused widespread damage. Disturbing though this was, the city took comfort in the fact that no-one was killed and while aftershocks (more than 11,000 in the first two years) became part of daily life, disrupted routines were soon referred to as “the new normal” and the city thought the worst was behind it. However, at 12.51pm on 22 February 2011 all that was to change. A 6.3 magnitude earthquake hit the city and, although smaller in magnitude than the original earthquake, it caused a catastrophic loss of life with 185 people killed and many more injured. In addition, thousands of residents were displaced from their homes, many becoming “earthquake refugees”, seeking sanctuary in calmer and less volatile locations. Those residents left behind were faced with the task of rebuilding their lives which often meant lengthy and stressful negotiations with the Earthquake Commission (EQC), a New Zealand Crown entity primarily designed to provide insurance and support to residential property owners. Port-a-loos (chemical toilets) lined the streets of mainly the eastern suburbs, the New Zealand Defence Force guarded the CBD, schools and businesses were closed, sports fixtures were cancelled and there were few places for concerts to be held, even had traumatised residents felt comfortable in a crowded venue at this time. All this amidst a backdrop of thousands of aftershocks, the most psychologically crushing of which came shortly before Christmas 2011, leaving stunned residents wondering if it would ever end. It was a common sentiment that the earthquakes were really “out to get us” and the psychological impact this was having on the residents – and particularly their children – was becoming all too apparent.

Genesis of an idea

After the earthquake in February 2011, I wanted to do something positive and respond in a way that would form part of the healing process and which, in the fullness of time, could also serve as part of the record of the extraordinary events that the people of Christchurch were experiencing. As a composer, I have written many works in response to a wide variety of stimuli, but never in relation to an event such as this where I was a participant, albeit rather unwilling. The Christchurch earthquakes presented me with an opportunity to respond directly to an event that was unfolding in front of me. It became increasingly clear that the severity and fluidity of the situation, along with the growing social implications, would not only affect Christchurch for many years to come but also the entire region and, economically, the country as a whole. With this realisation came another, that the primary driver for the work should be the benefit of others, using the power of music to heal and build resilience in a community that was shattered by natural disaster. Music has long been acknowledged to have strong social, cognitive and social benefits, including, “physical relaxation and release of physical tension; emotional release and reduction of feelings of stress; a sense of happiness, positive mood, joy, elation... [as well as] a sense of greater personal, emotional and physical well-being,” (Hallam, 2010, p.21). I was used to writing music designed to stimulate, engage and entertain an audience but this was an entirely new lens through which to approach my compositional process. *Ex Tenebris Lux: From the darkness comes light* (Symphony no.3) came about as a direct result of the Christchurch earthquakes and, like the earthquakes themselves and the subsequent aftershocks and social disruption, it was a project that from its inception was to last several years.

Next steps – truly understanding what “magnitude” means

Many a true word is spoken in jest, so the aphorism goes, and as I watched the developing media reports, I remember saying something like, "What am I going to do, write a symphony or something?". Gallows humour for sure but in the face of a deepening sense of helplessness I did use music to help process what was going on around me by composing the song *Elegy for a Fallen City*. Composed in a matter of days, *Elegy* is a short song for solo voice and piano (later scored for choir and piano) and it tells of how, at precisely 12.51 on 22 February 2011, a magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck the city, with the resultant loss of life, widespread damage and symbolic ruin of fallen statues and iconic buildings. It was always going to be a piece occupying a short window of “popularity” as the people of Christchurch did not want to remain in the moment of the tragedy and the desire to move on and out of the abyss was – and still is – strong. *Elegy* was fairly widely sung by schools and community groups, even reaching as far afield as a fundraising concert in Sydney, and it served its purpose – it helped document the event in a cathartic way. Interestingly, Wellington music teacher Gary Wilby used *Elegy* as a way of working through the anxiety of students in his class following an earthquake that struck Wellington in November 2016:

What we needed was meaningful time and what I needed was an activity with meaning. Then while driving to school I remembered Patrick Shepherd's response to the Christchurch earthquake in the form of his composition – 'Elegy for a Fallen City'. That's it, I would teach it to my music classes the first day back. We would learn to sing this piece, his song. Here was a music response to the earlier devastation in another city but one still in Aotearoa, a place which had even sent some of its young to our school following their dislocation a few years previously.

The students are no longer sitting 'isolated' at their desk. They are huddled more closely together around their teacher and a piano. Learning the words, the story, re-constructing images (walls, spires, birds, clocks, sirens, statues), recalling people, learning the tune, relating experiences of the previous few days, becoming familiar with the accompaniment – singing the song 'Elegy for a Fallen City'. Some were also encouraged in the next few days to improvise and or write their own composition.

(Gary Wilby, personal correspondence, 2017)

Wilby touches on an important point that Schweitzer (2017) raised around social isolation in today's youth culture reliant on YouTube, iTunes, iPhones and MP3 players, stating, “these resources mean that individuals listen to recorded music in isolation more frequently than they attend live performances or make music together in the community; this represents a loss.” (p.60). Wilby and his students instinctively knew they had to come together; Wilby understood his duty of care that day and that music was one of the best conduits for that, echoing Schweitzer's view that, “Music, when incorporated into the art of pastoral care, can assist individuals to have a renewed sense of hope in the midst of struggle and trauma.” (2017, p.50).

Composing *Elegy* helped me to focus and rationalise my thoughts but it was only on a very personal level – the situation demanded more and I felt a sense of community engagement was missing. I have always regarded the relationship one builds with the intended performer as being one of the most fulfilling aspects of being a composer, working together to achieve a common goal but the composing of *Elegy* was definitely not that; this was the composer several steps removed, commenting from afar at precisely

the time when connectivity was needed the most. I was beginning to understand the true meaning of the word “magnitude”, that in this case it not only referred to the severity of the earthquake but also, in its broadest sense (after the Latin “magnus”, meaning great), the enormity of the implications for Christchurch on every conceivable level. With that realisation came the formation of the project that was to occupy much of my time over the next four years.

Methodology – in times of crisis, you work with what you’ve got

As a creative artist, I am always intrigued as to how ideas initially present themselves before they develop, transform and finally reach fruition. Conversely, there can often be roadblocks where the project stalls or aborts. In my experience, it is a rare thing indeed for a project to reveal itself in its entirety at the start and remain virtually unaltered by its close. It is far more common for a work to evolve, developing a life of its own, often veering off in a direction that was not part of the original concept. Rather like a parent, an artist is responsible for bringing their “child” into the world but their “creations” soon begin to exert their own sense of purpose, character and independence. To non-artists, this may seem an utterly fanciful comparison but, in my experience, it is very much a palpable actuality. For Mozart and artists of his stature it may have been common for their artistic creations to present fully formed – and remain so through to completion – but that is far removed from my own arts practice. Not so with *Ex Tenebris Lux*: From the darkness comes light. It presented to me fully-formed as both a creative work and a research project simultaneously and the “who” and “what” was clear from the outset, moving “with the flow of new ideas and strong feelings” (Sacks, 1995, p.241-2).

I knew that using the power of music was the ideal vehicle to chart the recovery process, something borne out by Walsh, who states,

Suffering can be transcended in creative and symbolic expression through the arts. Music ... can release sorrow and be uplifting, restoring spirits to carry on. Finding ways to express the experience of trauma and survival through writing and artwork can facilitate resilience. (2007, p.210)

I had just the right group of performers in mind for whom this would be of maximum benefit. An isolated “one-off” composition like *Elegy* was not going to capture the complexity of the situation nor engage at the deeper level that was warranted so, while *Elegy* had helped me cope, whatever was to come had to have, at its core, the purpose of helping others. Involving an orchestra would mean reaching a much larger group of people, a body that Walsh describes as a, “multifamily community support group [with] ideal contexts for exchanging information, sharing painful memories and feelings, providing mutual support, and encouraging hope and efforts for recovery.” (Walsh, p.211)

My experience of being affected by the earthquakes paled into insignificance in comparison with the challenges faced by many others so in order that this response be as authentic as possible, the project needed to be informed by the people directly affected by the earthquakes and it had to specifically target their well-being and recovery through meaning and understanding. Walsh highlights this as a key factor, stating, “coming to terms with traumatic loss involves making meaning of the trauma experience, putting it in perspective, and weaving the experience of loss and recovery

into the fabric of individual and collective identity and life passage.” (Walsh, p.209).

It also became clear that the timeframe would stretch over a matter of years, not days or weeks. Ideally it would culminate in a public performance so that everyone could come together, united by a common goal in acknowledging that a page had been turned and the participants and their families had moved on, even though day-to-day it may not have felt like it. It seemed not only logical but also supremely important to come together in a public place to recognise that we had not only survived, but also thrived.

The solution was to use a phenomenological approach to tell the story of Christchurch and its people, reflecting on the lived experience of those affected and the unique circumstances in which they found themselves. As van Manen asks, “Aren’t the most captivating stories exactly those which help us to understand better what is most common, most taken-for-granted, and what concerns us most ordinarily and directly?” (1990, p.19), producing “action sensitive knowledge” (Ibid, p.21). I was also able to bypass the plethora of scientific, seismological data (there was a plentiful supply of this relating to the Christchurch earthquakes alone) and focus on the distinctly human stories. By allowing people to tell their story, while also being part of a parallel one (the retelling of their lived experiences through music), my intention was to provide an opportunity for catharsis and healing.

As a music educator, it seemed obvious that the people I would want to work with most would be children and the medium would be music. I have been the conductor of the symphony orchestra for the Christchurch Schools’ Music Festival since 2005, and the festival’s musical director since 2013. The aim of the festival is to promote music-making in primary schools across the Canterbury region and engender a love of music in young people. Each year, the festival involves thousands of children in a remarkable event over three nights, achieving an unparalleled standard in singing and instrumental music performance for this age group. As well as teaching the children performance skills and the discipline of regular practice, rehearsals, self-reflection and improvement that go hand-in-hand with that, there is a strong educative focus exposing the children to different genres and types of music. The social skills involved in these activities have also been shown to be vitally important a factor that has become even more important in the aftermath of the earthquakes. Johnston (1920, as cited in Southcott, 1990) suggests that a child, “must be taught to express himself freely as an individual, but quite as essential is it that he shall learn to express himself as part of a group.” (p.125). Johnston’s opinion is quaintly expressed and, with additional reference to the feminine gender, very relevant regarding the need for community cohesion following the dislocation, isolation and uncertainty brought about by the Christchurch earthquakes.

Utilising my particular skill-set, I decided to write a symphony and, in my capacity as the orchestra’s conductor, rehearse and perform it. While doing so, it was important to involve the performers in discussions around its development and their own personal journey. Walsh and McGoldrick suggest that healing and resilience can be facilitated by, “shared acknowledgement of reality of [the] traumatic event, [and] losses,” along with “the shared experience of loss and survivorship”. They also mention how active

participation in memorial rituals and tributes help foster recovery from major traumatic events (2004, as cited in Walsh, 2007, p.209).

If this project was going to succeed, it needed to be a catharsis for them as well as acting as some kind of benchmark by which they could measure how they had moved on, emotionally and musically. I wanted to help build resilience in the children, something Associate Professor Billy O'Steen identifies as a necessary character-trait for success in children's everyday life circumstances (Smart, 2015). As a music educator I'm conscious that, for the learner, the incremental steps of musical progress are often miniscule and recognising personal development is not that easy for the individual concerned. The symphony would provide some of those indicators of progression, if nothing else but for the realisation that one could not play something three years ago but now could. The emotional and psychological healing, however, is far closer to the heart of this project than the acquisition of technical facility.

Exposition and development – crisis over, the work begins

Before I even picked out a melody at the piano there was one compositional decision that I had to make as it would affect the entire organisation of the project – was this going to be a piece *by* the children or *for* the children? If it was going to be *by* the children, then I would be using their actual musical ideas to shape the piece, “framing” their music in a larger structure; if it was to be *for* the children, their written and spoken ideas could shape the piece and I would write the music that reflected that. The pitfalls of the former are typified by Coleman (1931) in her treatise on writing a children's symphony:

One of the disadvantages of this method of making symphonies from children's themes is that in many cases a very good tune has to be discarded because it cannot be made to fit into the general plan for the symphony. Several of the best melodies submitted by the children for example, two lovely little gavottes by Margery G. – could not be used in this particular work, though they were of greater musical value than many that were used. (p.55)

I did not want to be in the position of rejecting children's musical ideas given the healing and inclusive nature of the project. Nor did I think that the process would be conducive to a cohesive end result, Coleman again offering a thinly disguised caution when she described her method of selecting musical themes that her children had handed in to her when she embarked on the new symphony:

Some of the children's melodies... were given in staff notation. Sometimes a little scrap of soiled and rumped paper that had been carried all day among marbles, chalk and other odds and ends... There were about seventy-five or more handed in before Christmas.

(Coleman, p.47-48)

The title came straight away – *Ex Tenebris Lux: From the darkness comes light*. It is the title of a bronze statue by Ernest George Gillick in the foyer of the Christchurch City Art Gallery that I had long admired and it summed up perfectly what I wanted to do; taking people from a dark place and moving them to a place of hope. I decided to write a movement a year, giving me the option of three or four movements depending on how things went, and when the work was finished all the players who played in it would return to perform it in one “super-orchestra” as part of the festival or in a separate concert.

In 2012 the orchestra performed *The Fallen Cathedrals*, which was about how the city had lost both its cathedrals and included a quotation from Debussy's piano piece *La Cathedrale Engloutie (The Submerged Cathedral)* (Fig.1).

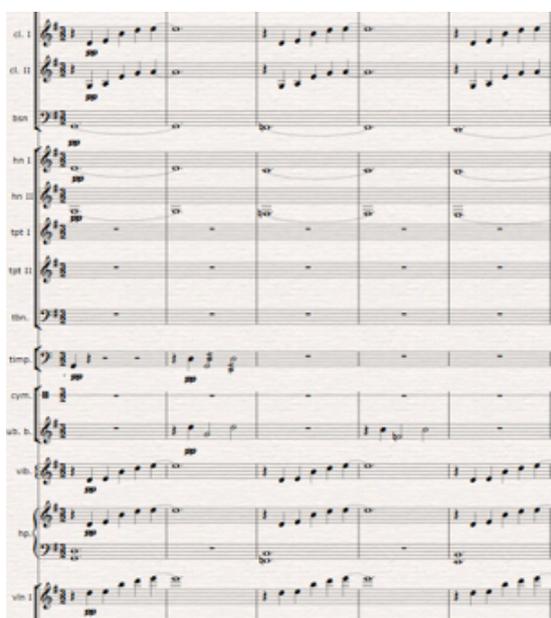


Fig.1 *The Fallen Cathedrals* quoting directly from Debussy's *La Cathedrale Engloutie*

The images of the two cathedrals were amongst the most powerful following the earthquake and the decisions (or, rather more accurately, indecisions) around their respective remediation are still proving problematic six years on. I deliberately avoided anything that sought to recreate noises or effects from the actual events as I felt these would have been too disturbing and quite genuinely frightening for the children, so my planned movement based on the seismographic image was left until last (entitled *Magnitude 7.1*, it became the first movement in the completed symphony but was the last in performance order, premiering when the whole symphony was completed). Supporting the educative aims of the festival, I also introduced some contemporary techniques (Fig. 2) which shows the brass striking the mouthpiece end of their instruments with the cupped palm of their hand, thus producing a “plopping” percussive effect. The children genuinely enjoyed doing this and found it fun, something that was also a key part of the normalisation and recovery process.



Fig.2 contemporary effects in *The Fallen Cathedrals*

Two streams working in parallel

With the performers now actively engaging with the material during rehearsals for *The Fallen Cathedrals* and thinking about their experiences in a different and somewhat sanitized context, I introduced the research component. Having gained ethical approval from the University of Canterbury's Human Ethics Committee, I proceeded to ask the performers to write short responses to the following questions:

- How does *The Fallen Cathedrals* make you feel? What does it make you think of?
- What part(s) of *The Fallen Cathedrals* do you like best? Why?
- What part(s) of *The Fallen Cathedrals* do you think is/are the most effective? Why?
- The symphony is not finished yet. What do you think should be included in the other movements?

It became immediately apparent that when doing a similar thing later on I would get far better responses if I interviewed them or recorded their thoughts in a less formal way, which I duly did. The performers were also asked to make suggestions for the other movements so I could plan ahead and, hopefully, write music that related more directly to their experiences.

The themes emerging from these initial questions were as follows:

- disbelief
- feeling overwhelmed
- sadness (for themselves, their families the city, and for those that died)
- sadness but then feeling happy and/or optimistic
- tiredness
- the importance of the cathedral(s)
- people and the city rising up after the earthquake
- rebuilding the city
- the thrill and excitement
- being scared or tense
- feeling calm, thoughtful, emotional or mournful
- hope for the future

Their thoughts around how the symphony should progress were as follows (verbatim quotations are italicised and the actual outcomes are next to each one in square

The organisation has since become an internationally recognised model for community crisis response.

The conclusion of the symphony, *Magnitude 7.1*, was the riskiest as it included the whole orchestra stamping to give the impression of an earthquake in a shock ending, having lulled the audience into a false sense of security with 12 calm tubular bell chimes signifying noon on the day of the 22 February earthquake (Fig.4). As I explained earlier, I left this until last and it was not performed until 2015, four years after the 22 February earthquake. I felt vindicated when one performer commented:

Patrick told our groups that he didn't do the earthquake first as he thought some of the children would get quite scared as it is very real, like a real earthquake. If that were to have happened there would have been a lot of people scared and worried that it was a real earthquake. Because we're not so scared now shows that we have grown stronger and braver.

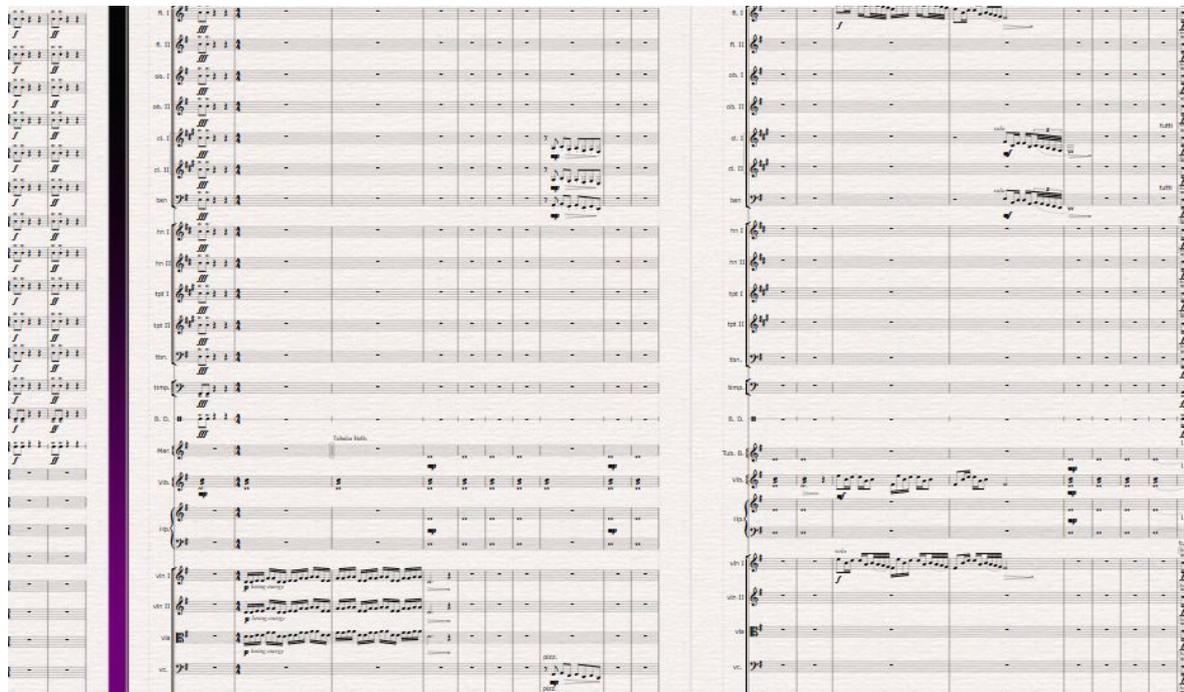


Fig.4 the conclusion to *Magnitude 7.1*

The performers predictably enjoyed doing this as it created a sense of fun around something that had hitherto been very frightening for them, exorcising their demons or facing their fears. One performer summed it up brilliantly by saying, “*It is better to be the earthquake than to be in the earthquake.*” They also had to keep the effect secret for maximum impact of scaring their parents in the audience and, indeed, I received no complaints at that time. However, I did receive one complaint much later on, expressed in a casual chat one day following a conference presentation I gave on this project. Apparently, some audience members at the concerts had been upset by the use of projected images that accompanied the performance, especially those of the Student Volunteer Army clearing liquefaction in suburban streets. It brought home to me how raw the whole experience still was for some people and how confronting some of these images continued to be well after the fact. I had assumed (wrongly) that they had been absorbed into our psyche and we were now “over it” – some were but some, quite

clearly, were not.

Once the dust has settled comes the aftermath

August 2015 saw rehearsals commence for the performance of the symphony in its entirety later that year. Following on from my previous attempt to solicit suggestions and idea from the performers, I enlisted the help of a research assistant to take them off in groups during rehearsal to share their thoughts in group discussions. These were recorded and later transcribed. They were also given felt pens and asked to express their thoughts on large sheets of A3 paper; these responses were not directed in any way. I was pleased that many of the things I had intended to come out of the project had and, predictably, some had not but the key aims of providing a platform for catharsis, resilience and personal growth were there. The symphony had given the performers something to which they could look forward to the following year and something they could measure their own personal development against. In some respects, it allowed them to have fun with something that had hitherto terrified them, and given them an opportunity to voice their fears in a non-threatening environment. In many ways it abstracted something that was very real for them and, in that format, they could process it more easily, as demonstrated in the following responses:

- *It's like reading an autobiography because it's like someone's life except it's the life of Christchurch,*
- *It's like a celebration and also a reminder. It's reminding us of the hard times we've been through and it's a celebration because we're getting past those. It rises up something in me, it makes me feel very courageous but also sad because of the people who have lost loved ones or homes or stuff.*

Since the completion of the symphony, several of the performers asked me if I was going to write an extra movement, a typical comment justifying this suggestion being, *“the fifth movement could be about what is happening now and how we have recovered as a city and as a family of Christchurch”*. I had no plans to do so at that time as I felt that the symphony was about a well-defined series of ideas responses occurring within a set timeframe. Any additional movements would have meant another year built into the rehearsal/performance schedule with the inherent risk that when the time came to do the full symphony it may have lacked relevance or, at the very least, immediacy. As it turns out, the slow recovery of the city meant that I need to have worried on that score but I did also have a time limit within the concert programme of around 12 minutes and I was at that point with four movements. The comment did, however, show a heartening trend of positivity and how the children were intent on looking forward in a very optimistic way. I realised that the project had been a success as the children were beginning to look forward to a new Christchurch and participating in the symphony had made them aware of the journey they had been on, that out of darkness does, in fact, come light. Walsh (2007) talks of hope being essential for recovery, stating, “Hope fuels engines and investment to build lives, revise dreams, renew attachments, and create positive legacies to pass on to future generations.” (p.210). Walsh also goes on to say that resilience “involves ‘mastering the possible’, coming to accept what has been lost and cannot be changed, while directing efforts to what can be done and seizing opportunities for something good to come out of the tragedy” (Walsh, p.210).

One of my favourite responses was, *“It lets people react to the music rather than telling people how to feel.”* This surprised me given how prescriptive the titles were and how,

essentially, the performers had told me how they felt and what they wanted, but what I found telling in this statement was how the symphony had served to allow people to react in ways that meant something *to them*.

Regarding the identification of educative, musical advancement, *“It is cool to see how far I have come as a musician,”* was gratifying and, *“Last year in the Student Volunteer Army I found some parts hard but this year I can play them more easily,”* was just what I wanted. One of the trombonists summed this aspect up beautifully by saying:

I remember when I was in Year 8 in The Fallen Cathedrals there is a trombone solo, I couldn't play it but the other trombonists could. I can remember sitting there thinking 'I want to play the solo' because it is so beautiful as the solo makes it happier and continues on to the lighter part of the movement. And now I can play the solo it makes me feel like I have grown as a musician throughout the four years.

I sensed a tinge of irony in the statement, *“I've got better at counting,”* as I suspect this may well have come from the tubular bells player who wished for *“less rests”* during my initial inquiry. Some responses demonstrated total understanding of the intended musical journey:

I really like the title because it is pretty much how we have coped with the earthquakes, going from the darkness and despair of quakes and not knowing what to do to growing from the experience and growing as a community and making good out of it. Now when you go round [sic], there's paintings everywhere and it's like they've made good from it.

and,

It's about going from the darkness and despair from seeing our town being destroyed but the light is how we coped with it, how we transformed the town and how they have made it good out of the ruins and how we have come out of it even stronger as a community.

and finally,

Even in the darkest and toughest of times there is still hope; that definitely applies to Christchurch.

Conclusion

While I truly wish that the earthquakes had not occurred in the first place, creating this symphony with the input of the children, helped me to provide a powerful accompanying narrative – both musical and textual – to the situation around us. I felt that I attained a clear sense of purpose in my work, not just *ars gratia artis* but rather a palpable imperative to use music as a tool for learning, catharsis and resilience. As a researcher, it allowed me to get closer to the lived experience of people in ways that I could not ordinarily have done, hearing their stories and listening to how they viewed their world which physically, emotionally and psychologically, lay in ruins. In terms of education, it has been a truly humbling experience to be part of children's lives growing up and acknowledging how something you have done has helped them make sense not only of a natural disaster but also their own development as a musician and as a person. I can find no better validation of the project than in the following words of one of the children: *“It makes you want to persist in everything you do even though it may be hard.”*

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“The ugly side of drama teaching”: Drama teacher resilience in the face of school productions

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Abstract

In this article I explore what Justin Cash refers to as “the ugly side of drama teaching” (Cash, 2015) specifically the long hours required to produce drama productions in schools and the subsequent effect this has on the health of drama teachers. Guided by documents drawn up by the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association Te Wehengarua (PPTA) I question what drives drama teachers to commit themselves to provide co-curricular and extra-curricular productions in schools, above and beyond normal teaching hours. This commitment is, according to the PPTA, “unrecognised” and not funded which begs the question why do teachers feel obliged to volunteer their skills. What do they believe the school production and other extra-curricular drama events offer the students? How do drama teachers sustain themselves delivering the long hours required to produce these performances? Weaving the PPTA documents, health and safety regulations and academic research this discussion challenges attitudes towards the provision of extra-curricular drama as an expected yet mainly unpaid requirement of the job. Since the writing of this article there has been a change of government which may offer further hope for the arts and in particular those drama teachers drawn to providing extra-curricular productions.

Biography



DR JANE ISOBEL LUTON is the Head of the Faculty of Drama and Dance at Macleans College, New Zealand, where she directs and produces several productions a year. She completed her PhD in Education with a creative practice component in drama using an embodied dramatic method. She has co-authored four drama books in New Zealand and continues to write articles and chapters which are published in peer-reviewed journals and books. She has frequently presented at conferences using dramatic performance as her medium. Jane's recent teacher inquiry has focused on school productions and how they help build resilience in students through the creation of community.

Introduction

This article explores what Justin Cash refers to as “the ugly side of drama teaching” (Cash, 2015) and in particular the long hours required to produce drama productions in schools and the subsequent effect on drama teachers. As long ago as 1967, it was acknowledged that “the staging of a school play involves an immense amount of time, effort and thought” and is often for students the “major event” in not only the school year but in “their entire school careers” (Chilver, 1967, p.11). Today I question what drives drama teachers, including myself, in our often extensive commitment to provide co-curricular and extra-curricular drama productions in schools. I draw on a range of academic research from within New Zealand as well as internationally. The discussion is informed by the guidelines for extra-curricular activities provided for teachers by the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers' Association Te Wehengarua (PPTA), the professional association and union of New Zealand secondary teachers. I write from my viewpoint as a secondary school drama teacher who, like many others, has given up personal time, unpaid, to ensure high quality drama productions are presented on behalf of a school. I faced a dichotomy between my belief in the importance of drama productions in schools and my decreasing level of resilience. While I want to direct plays that challenge students and develop a wide range of skills, I often resent the long hours spent at school directing co-curricular and extra-curricular drama.

According to a recent PPTA workload survey:

Pressure on teachers to undertake extracurricular activities continues to increase as schools see this as a competitive necessity. There is no resourcing provided to schools for extracurricular activity (either in terms of staffing time or specific funding). The additional hours teachers put into extracurricular is largely unrecognised and contributes to the overall workload pressures, absorbing many hours annually in the evenings and weekends for most teachers. (PPTA, 2016a, p.97)

Understanding terminology

Firstly it is important to understand the terminology involved in what designates a co-curricular or extra-curricular activity within the school system and specifically the secondary school system in New Zealand. The PPTA defines co-curricular activities as those “that arise from curriculum requirements that involve extension beyond the classroom” (PPTA, 2010, p.2). While Extra-curricular is defined as “optional activities that involve teacher participation outside of normal school hours” (PPTA, 2010, p.2). Therefore productions that relate to drama assessments or that support curriculum studies would fit the first category. The school musical or senior and junior productions best match the latter. The PPTA acknowledges that:

Extra-curricular activities have always been regarded as part of the culture of secondary schools. Many teachers relish the opportunity to act as sports coaches, drama producers, international tour guides and musical directors and all teachers accept the benefits of being able to engage with students in less formal settings than the classroom. (PPTA, 2016)

As a way to support this culture the PPTA created a set of guidelines designed to “encourage schools to establish supportive practice around extra-curricular activities” (PPTA, 2016). This is important because as the PPTA explain:

The establishment of a competitive regime amongst secondary schools over the last decades has resulted in schools endeavouring to expand the range and extent of extra-curricular activities for marketing purposes as well as for other reasons. The result has been pressure on teachers to increase their

extracurricular participation at the same time as curriculum, administrative and assessment demands and staffing cuts have so increased the teaching workload that teachers find themselves with neither the time nor the energy for other activities. (PPTA,2016)

With over twenty five years of teaching experience in the United Kingdom and New Zealand I have felt the increasing demands made upon myself as a drama teacher to present more and more productions. This year I will have assisted with the production of the school musical, directed a senior production, a junior production and overseen the presentation of several assessment evenings including two nights for the examination presentation of a full length play. This involves long hours and in 2016 I calculated that I had given three hundred and ten hours of extra-curricular time to productions and another fifty hours to assessment productions and scholarship teaching outside of my required teaching and preparation hours. As I write this I know I am not alone or unique. One participant in research by Tracey Lynn Cody “describes his production term as being “insane”, finding he is at school three or four nights a week, for seven weeks in a row” (Cody, 2012, p.172).

But talk to any drama teacher and there will always be stories of the long hours worked and the difficulties encountered doing productions. Cody’s research confirms this with one participant discussing “the burden of productions” (Cody, 2012, p.172) feeling “that being a head Of Department in Performing Arts means a far greater workload, involving many more hours than other subject areas seem to require”. He was left feeling his job was “unsustainable” (2012, p.172). While in Brooks’s research one participant senses that:

There are not many staff in a drama department, and the school production is enormous. After all, people do those jobs for a living. Yet we’re often doing those things as well as teaching our full-time teaching load. I think that’s what burns people out. They love doing those things, but they’re very demanding; very, very demanding of people’s time and energy. (Brooks, 2010, p.236)

While researching my Master’s Thesis I spoke with experienced director and Head of Drama Anton Bentley about his production of *Vinegar Tom* by Caryl Churchill. Bentley reflected on the long hours that are required to put on a school production which often resulted in setting aside his own work to meet the needs of his students:

I feel that in teaching there is a lot of good will exploited. My co-curricular was equivalent to a 0.5 job unpaid last year. In effect I gave \$35,000 worth of my time to the school. We can’t say we are doing it for the good of the kids. There is a huge inequality in terms of expectations. Teachers can’t run departments, do productions, resource 5 year levels and write all the lesson plans for a management unit of \$4000. (A. Bentley, personal communication, August 25, 2009). (Luton, 2010, p.67-68)

This use of the word “exploitation” is a powerful indictment of the system that can expect teachers to not only prepare lessons, teach and mark but to then work extra unpaid hours. As Bentley warns, ‘doing productions’ should not be justified by a sense that it is “for the good of the kids”. After all, the PPTA identify these activities as for the benefit of marketing the school. Certainly if state schools paid teachers for the hours spent on extra-curricular activities like productions, it would be unsustainable due to rigid budget constraints. According to the PPTA guidelines “the state does not fund schools for extra-curricular activity and these activities are not defined as part of the paid work” (PPTA, 2010, p.3). This, I believe is a key statement, for if extra-curricular work is not a part of the paid job then why do we feel obliged to volunteer our services on top of the many demands teaching makes. Remarkably teachers feel they are obliged to do what amounts to voluntary work while employers believe it is acceptable

to ask that they do so. However, as part of co-curricular activities “the teacher in charge of Drama may produce a play every year as part of senior performance for assessment requirements” (PPTA, 2010). Despite the many apocryphal stories of teachers feeling debilitated by the workload many drama teachers relish the chance to act as directors or provide opportunities for their students. It is a paradox that while exhausted directing co and extra-curricular productions it can also energise and contribute to the enjoyment of our work.

The PPTA’s policy is that “teachers should not agree to the inclusion of extra-curricular activities in their job descriptions because they then cease to be voluntary” (PPTA, 2010, p.3). It is also important to note that according to the Secondary Teachers’ Collective Agreement: “If an activity is done outside school hours and is unpaid then the employer cannot legitimately require teachers to do it. (PPTA, 2010, p.4). It is interesting that while the Union suggests that it is unethical for a school to require staff to carry out extra-curricular activities, drama teachers still feel obliged to do them-volunteering their time and skills. According to the document *Rest and Meal Breaks Guidelines* from the *Guidelines to the Employment Relations Act 2000*:

Teaching can have a heavy and demanding workload. That’s why it’s important for your own health and safety – as well as your students’ learning – that you have the opportunity to take regular breaks. (PPTA 2015, p.1)

All the more for drama teachers who, when engaged in directing a production may hold rehearsals after a full day teaching and often at weekends and during school holidays. Not only are teachers actively directing (which also means teaching acting skills) they are responsible for ensuring other aspects of a production are organised. Zoe Brooks describes this as “an exercise in logistics to ensure that all the facets of a successful production [are] in place” (Brooks, 2010, p.234). This can mean that a drama teacher can work from early morning through to late evenings and during production season they may be working as many as twelve to fifteen hour days. In the current climate there is a serious discourse around health and safety in schools informed by the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. Increased attention is now paid to what can and cannot be done by students. Risk Assessment management Forms (RAMS) are now an integral part of any school trip or activity. Recent safety issues concerning productions in New Zealand has contributed to the stress of drama teachers. Yet little thought appears to be given to the health of staff engaging in long hours, sometimes six to seven days a week, over an extended period of time. A teacher’s employment contract only requires a teacher to be called back to school for professional development or other duties for a maximum of five days in a year (Ministry of Education, 2017). Yet drama teachers are giving up many more days than this during a year to produce school plays. Staff are often given no leeway within the school day in recompense and may still be expected to cover for absent colleagues, take on duties during and after school or participate in school sporting activities like athletics days. In 2010, Brooks’ research suggested that incentives for teachers were few and far between and “the direction of the school production was considered integral to their employment” (Brooks, 2010, p.235). The PPTA suggest that as part of best practice schools should be “releasing teachers who undertake extra-curricular activities from doing duty” (PPTA, 2010, p. 5) and that they should be recompensed for their meals and expenses. Staff finally acknowledging exhaustion may have no other choice than to take sick leave. The PPTA guidelines note that the “the long-term solution for extra-curricular demand is additional staffing and resourcing” and suggest one of the ways to do this is:

Providing time for teachers who take extra-curricular activities in their own time. For example a non-contact period prior to or after lunch for a teacher who takes choir, orchestra or sports practices at lunchtime (PPTA, 2010, p5)

There seems to be no acknowledgement that time should be provided for staff who

engage in rehearsals and production preparation before or after school. There appears to be a lack of understanding by school management, and the Union, of the long hours it takes to produce a high quality production—a lunchtime rehearsal would not in common parlance ‘cut the mustard’. Rehearsals are a lengthy process which requires a more sustained approach, preferably away from the ringing of bells and the noise of the day.

The PPTA suggest that schools which promote a work-life balance for their staff are more likely to recruit and keep staff than those who place undue pressure on them (PPTA, 2010). In these days of teacher shortages it is interesting that schools still expect that extra-curricular activities are carried out. For Heads of Departments or Faculties management units do little to recompense for the long hours required to accomplish school productions. Certainly they would not repay the Bentley’s calculations of \$35,000. The age old cry that teachers work short days (NUT, 2017) and get long holidays fails to recognise that in those holidays the drama teacher will often be found directing and rehearsing student productions. With few other careers requiring unpaid commitment one wonders why drama teachers commit their own time to producing plays. Is it because they have a need to help their students? Or is it to do with promoting their subject in the face of its constant marginalisation? Prue Wales’s research has suggested many drama teachers see themselves as missionaries out to save the world (Wales, 2009) and perhaps we are our own worst enemies. Instead of limiting extra-curricular activities we often present more than one production during a year. This may range from the school musical through to junior and senior productions as well as assessment presentations required to fulfil the needs of the curriculum. Cash asks an important question:

the school production, while often a wonderful and rewarding experience for our students, is unnecessarily stressful for the Drama teacher who directs or coordinates it. On top of a full teaching load and rehearsals for any number of other activities at the same time, why are we expected to direct a full-scale show as well? (Cash, 2008)

Perhaps we see these opportunities for students to perform as a vitally important expression of drama’s identity in a school, as well as providing important authentic learning opportunities. Nevertheless it could be argued that all teachers seek to do this. So what is it that leads drama teachers in particular, to spend long, often unpaid hours, outside school time to interact with students? McCammon et al suggest that:

Theatre is not only entertainment but also a rich context for learning and a motivator for better school attendance and academic performance. Its participants learn about art itself and its role in society. (McCammon et al, 2012, p 17)

These researchers outline some of the pitfalls of school productions as well as identifying a wide range of long term benefits for students including among others: self-confidence, friendships, presentation skills, self-worth, interpersonal skills and emotional growth. All of which they say “will help future adults in their vocational and everyday life endeavors” (McCammon et al, 2012). These positive outcomes are significant concepts which underpin many of the reasons why drama teachers direct co-curricular and extra-curricular productions. From entertainment to education, school performances are a dynamic space in which teachers and students can participate on a shared project for a public audience. It is perhaps the first way in which drama entered schools.

The background to school productions

In England school productions have existed since 1110AD (Luton, 2014, p. 7). While in New Zealand they have been an important part of the school system and “the principal manifestation of Drama” (Greenwood, 2009) since European settlement and were “the face of drama in secondary schools” (Brooks, p.72). Schools in Wellington and Auckland have produced school plays since 1893 and:

In 1899, at King’s College Auckland, a performance of Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare was described as “a cultural highlight of the early years” (King’s College, 2009). (Luton, 2014, p. 6-7)

According to John O’Toole many schools view theatre as “peripheral and ornamental” (O’Toole, 1992, p.191) and perhaps the fact that school productions are an extra-curricular activity confirms this. Kempe and Ashwell acknowledge the importance of the school play as “the means by which a school celebrates itself and demonstrates its own culture” (Kempe & Ashwell, 2000, p.7) and certainly the PPTA suggest it is a good advertising tool. Schools often embrace school productions for the value it adds to both the school as a community and the students involved. King’s College in Auckland acknowledge the correlation “between participation in co-curricular activities and high academic achievement” (Kings College, 2017). However for this to occur the production must be of a reasonable standard. Chilver suggested fifty years ago that “many school plays are incompetently produced or badly managed, and are therefore of no educational value to anyone” (Chilver, 1967, p.11). Perhaps this has been why so little research has been carried out into the benefits of the school production:

First, it has not always been valued as a serious part of school-based drama education. Second, it is often considered theatrically second-rate, lacking professional-level skills in direction, design and performance. (Mackey, 2012, p.35)

However drama productions in schools have improved as theatre has become more accessible to people and teachers come to the profession with dramatic and theatrical training. The production of the school play, comes nowadays with the expectation that it will be professionally produced (O’Toole, 1992). But as O’Toole suggests drama teachers can be put under immense pressure as often their own, “self-esteem” (O’Toole, 1992, p192) and their desire to “raise the status of drama within the school” (1992, p192) is at stake.

As the PPTA point out, teachers take part in a wide variety of activities outside of normal school hours. Drama teachers are not alone in this involvement. Yet the intensity and complexity of productions within a school setting can mean that drama teachers spend huge numbers of hours with students, teaching and directing as well as unseen hours organising the technical requirements in order to achieve a memorable production. Annually, in Auckland, there is an award ceremony ‘Showdown’, the Auckland secondary school production competition. But while this event celebrates school productions it can also contribute to the pressure to succeed, although the organisers state:

the best part is you don’t have to do anything other than create the same awesome show that you would anyway!(Showdown, 2017)

Drama productions are often closely connected with a desire to demonstrate artistic skills and to prove oneself as a teacher and drama and theatre professional. For many drama teachers the first school production is undertaken early in their career. My first production took place in my second term of teaching when I directed a play about the First World War presented in a local theatre. It is a rare occurrence for a head of drama to refuse to direct the school production. If they do then they may take on production

responsibilities, overseeing others who have taken on the project and acting as a liaison between the school and provider.

Challenges and benefits of school productions

When drama is intended for an audience then most teachers want that work to be complete. This means it is presented to a high standard demonstrating an overall production concept and an attention to the aesthetics of the art form including lighting, setting, costume, and. This can bring with it several challenges as Shifra Schonmann points out:

It is extremely difficult to acquire various accessories, props, proper lighting, and audio equipment due to the lack of a reasonable budget. Technical and logistical constraints are an added problem. (Schonmann, 2016, p.56)

The exception, I have found, is the school musical which of all performances is often the best resourced and supported. The demand for musicals as the main school productions is also challenging requiring extensive resources in terms of finances and personnel. Cash suggests that we:

remind ourselves most of these shows were written to be directed, choreographed, acted, sung and danced by professionals on Broadway and the West End ... not students in Year 10 ... for a reason. (Cash, 2008)

Back in the 1970s Head teacher Charles Gardiner, in Leeds, England was also the director of drama and for him “there was only one standard as far as I was concerned, and that was what I understood as the standard of performance of the professional theatre” (Hodgson & Banham, 1973, p.158). There can be huge repercussions for teachers attempting to maintain this level of work output as Cash suggests:

Drama teachers preparing school productions don't just have lesson planning problems, but sleepless nights, endless hours (sometimes in the dark) up at school building sets, constructing costumes, rehearsing with students, printing programmes, rigging stage lights ... the list goes on. We become unnecessarily stressed and anxious, so much so we sometimes find it THE most difficult time of the year in all aspects of our life, be it personal or professional. (Cash, 2008)

This is indeed an ugly side of drama teaching. Schonmann suggests that “out of frustration the teacher eventually declares never to take part in a play in the future, even though s/he recognizes its worth” (Schonmann, 2016, p.56). I return again to ask why, as drama teachers, we put ourselves through this level of stress to direct a school production.

The limited research that has been done on school productions has suggested that they offer valuable experiences in the life of students who participate (Kempe & Nicholson, 2001; Burton, 2005; Mackey, 2012) confirming the many skills that that can be gained (McCammon, Saldaña, Hines & Omasta 2012). Sally Mackey's research led her to contact and question past students involved in one of her productions. She was pleased that:

All the responses were pleasurable to read. I had hoped for the positive and, as a former teacher, my first response was a profound reassurance that these ex-pupils felt the project had offered them something worthwhile, remembering it as an important event in their lives. (Mackey, 2012, p.42)

She found that students carry special memories of the process many years after a

school production:

Several believed that they had gained increased confidence and self-esteem, a sense of community, a nurturing of pride in achievement, discipline and attention to detail and, of course, performance skills which some went on to use in their later careers.(Mackey, 2012, p.42)

Michele A'Court, New Zealand comedian and actress, has fond memories of drama at school but in an interview reflects critically that there is lack of understanding of its importance:

People think of it as an add-on or a frilly bit because it's so much like play, and we don't value play as much as we should. I don't think people quite understand or can easily quantify how important play is, and creativity is, to everything else we do. (Chin, 2014)

While interviewing drama students working on a production of *Vinegar Tom* with Anton Bentley I noted that:

The students had a strong working knowledge of how a play is rehearsed and what steps an actor has to go through to develop a role for performance. Although only 17 or 18 years old, and without formal tertiary drama training, these students demonstrated a mature grasp of theatrical processes and, in particular the student actors understood the nature of the job. (Luton, 2010, p.63)

With research supporting the value of the production we can find it hard to refuse its place in the extra-curricular life of the school. According to Andy Kempe's research "experienced drama teachers tended to regard themselves as artists whose art was teaching drama" (Kempe, 2012, p.533). Cody's research confirms that the drama teachers she interviewed all had experience as "dramatic artists" (Cody, 2012, p.190). For many of us the school production provides the opportunity to work as an artist with an accessible group of actors, in an accessible space for an available audience. Working with a team of colleagues can expand personal friendships in the school and, while exhausting, a successful production can bring with it a sense of personal satisfaction.

Key practitioners on drama in schools

So how does a drama teacher cope with the intensity of productions and what discourses do they use to remain resilient? In their research into the lifelong impact of participation in drama at school McCammon et al suggest the drama teacher should be:

physically and mentally healthy because her job consists of time-consuming hard work. She has cultivated ethics of patience and perseverance because she has committed herself to immersion in the art forms with dedicated and selfless understanding. Most importantly, she loves her job and is passionate about the art form, yet she also knows how to balance her job with her personal life. (McCammon et al, 2012, p 13)

The ability to balance work and personal life in this time consuming job can be difficult. Especially during production season which may last for several weeks during term, weekends and holidays. Being passionate about productions means we can become consumed by them. Ultimately this can lead to exhaustion and a loss of resilience or ability to bounce back from difficulties. During my research with key international drama practitioners into what sustains them (Luton, 2015) Andy Kempe recounted his first forays into drama productions as a young teacher. His career had found him spending many long hours delivering productions which were not always supported:

I kind of thought I'm at sea I don't know how to deal with this. But what kept me going definitely ... what kept me going was the pupils. (Andy Kempe, personal communication, 2013)

Spurred on by this he spent the next few years involved in numerous productions:

it was a bit like working in rep actually because we would always have a show on and then there'd be another one in rehearsal. (Kempe, 2013, personal communication).

Over the course of ten years he was involved with over seventy productions- "knackering but very, very exciting" (Kempe, 2013, personal communication). In this colloquial statement Kempe captures the dichotomy for the drama teacher between exhaustion and excitement which lies at the heart of drama production.

John O'Toole believes that playmaking is an integral aspect of a drama teacher's *raison d'être*. He has fond memories of his own school productions as a student and it was this that encouraged him into the field of drama. During our research session he recounted his involvement in Shakespeare productions which, helped by "inspiring teachers", encouraged his love of theatre and drama:

I got the opportunity to play Portia when I think I was 12 at the time, a very nifty figure and we had very good cossies, I remember a fur coat of beautiful velvet grey and yellow coat costume. Kissing Bassanio was a problem but I think that was the apotheosis of my acting career. (O'Toole, 2013, personal communication)

Ron Price, author and drama educator for over thirty years had the opportunity to take part in professional productions outside school while still a pupil. During our research session he recalled being asked to take part in a production at The Everyman Theatre in Liverpool.

I went from nothing (gesture) to suddenly working in a professional play working with professionals and not working on, excuse the theatre expression, whoops you've dropped your trousers type of drama, it was, I was working on a piece of classical Greek theatre and... It was just... the Shell broke (*Ron opens his hands like a shell*) I came out of it and I was... Suddenly found a completely different me... it just allowed me to blossom. (Price, 2013, personal communication)

Ron's own experiences, albeit in a professional production, supports research that suggests that confidence and a sense of belonging can be developed as a result of involvement in productions (McCammon, Saldaña, Hines & Omasta 2012). One of the participants in McCammon et al's research describes a similar moment:

I had always been shy and unsure of myself; being in theatre gave me the opportunity to come out of my shell and interact with others who had the same interests. (McCammon et al 2012, p.2).

The metaphor of the shell breaking open seems an apt description for what many drama teachers hope their productions will achieve. With such a powerful purpose it is hard for drama teachers to deny students an opportunity to take part in a school production. Price's involvement ultimately led to his creation of a summer school in England for gifted and talented students which has successfully run for over 30 years. It is attended by students from national and international locations. The long term effects of productions are only now beginning to be recognised in research although apocryphal stories abound from decades of drama productions in schools.

O'Toole, Price and Kempe, have all found the personal experience of drama productions have informed and inspired their subsequent work. Kempe's research with trainee teachers suggests that "on average, 81% of respondents claimed that their teachers had been particularly influential in developing their interest in and involvement with drama" (Kempe, 2011, p. 7). One participant commenting that "I had a fantastic drama teacher at secondary school who put on amazing school productions which I loved being involved in and as a result loved her lessons" (2011, p.8). Just one example of the way in which school productions can help develop positive relationships within the school community and inspire and assist future careers.

Conclusions

When students have been part of a production process, required to learn lines, develop a role and perform over several evenings to a public audience, they are learning valuable skills. The production is also a vehicle for a drama teacher to demonstrate their own artistry. This, nevertheless, come at a cost. The PPTA suggests that as stress levels rise among teachers and no recompense is made for long hours spent in extra-curricular activities then this "may result in actions under the Health and Safety in Employment Act (2000)" (PPTA, 2010, p.7).

While the PPTA advise their teachers to have regular consultations regarding their co-curricular and extra-curricular activities it does not solve the dichotomy for drama teachers. We want to direct productions as part of our authentic professional development and give our students opportunities which curricular drama may not give.

Sometimes, as Mackey found, the positive effects of a production are not experienced immediately. McCammon et al note that "it may not be until years later that the teacher discovers he or she literally saved a student's life through an ethic of care and the expressive power of the art form" (McCammon et al, 2012, p.15). While the production may be considered worthwhile, remembered for years after the event, its demands on us, the teacher, can lead to a loss of resilience. In some cases a loss of passion and ultimately 'burnout' occur. It is a vicious cycle which could be improved if the education department finally acknowledge that teachers should be paid or recompensed fully for the hours they contribute to their community. Particularly as New Zealand's new education minister Nikki Kaye calls for children to be "well rounded" and to "succeed in the arts" (Collins, 2017).

So what can drama teachers do? McCammon et al suggest that:

the speech and theatre teacher should exhibit Lifelong Endurance throughout one's career. A self-monitoring reflexivity on one's personal engagement with the profession and art form is necessary to ensure a passion for teaching and a resilience to challenging issues that guide each day, lest dysfunction erode a program and career—not to mention student life. (McCammon, et al, 2012, p.12)

For me this article is a part of my self-monitoring reflexivity. Yet I am still left with a concern. While we as drama teachers continue to sacrifice our own time to ensure productions take place in schools, the longer school management will continue to expect us to do so. One drama teacher realising that she couldn't do everything suggested that we stand up and say "I can't do all this" (Brooks, 2010, p.233). It takes a brave teacher to step outside the expectations and find other solutions which may include the buying in of a professional team to direct the production. While this can relieve some of the stresses it can also leave drama teachers feeling empty-denied our opportunity to be creative outside the classroom.

It is my belief that as drama teachers we will probably continue to work long hours

unpaid because the alternative is a cheerless one. Without teacher's voluntary services many extra –curricular projects would come to an end. Schools could no longer offer school productions unless they paid an appropriate remuneration to those involved. There is also the possibility that by giving of our time so freely without recompense we are contributing to the devaluing of the very art form we aim to promote. The old adage that the worker is worthy of their hire may be useful to remember. While the PPTA list several possible improvements to the situation (PPTA, 2016b, p.97) perhaps "less extracurricular pressure, commitment, expectation" might be a helpful start. In the future it may be that the new health and safety laws in New Zealand may be the only hope as it becomes more apparent that teachers' health is being harmed working long hours in a stressful activity. At a recent international summit on the teaching profession New Zealand made a commitment that teacher "wellbeing must be a priority, both for their personal and professional efficacy and for the quality of their students' learning experiences" (PPTA, 2017, p. 9). Perhaps by acknowledging the difficulties and dichotomies we face and prioritising health, safety and happiness we might encourage solutions to be found to the 'ugly side of drama teaching'.

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A proposed model of rehearsal for bicultural Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract

Many secondary school drama teacher-practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand struggle to find the most suitable and efficacious form of rehearsal methodology to execute, when working with young adults on an in-class or extra-curricular drama/theatre product. There are currently profound tensions that occur in the rehearsal room: between a drive by the teacher for the student-actor to experience agency versus a more formal approach of the teacher working in the role of director; between a rewarding process for students versus a quality final dramatic-theatrical product for an audience. This can lead to a compromised result, one that is neither aesthetically satisfying nor educationally sound. This research article posits a new possibility for educational-theatrical rehearsal, born from work in a Decile 9 Auckland school, in a large drama department, committed to notions of student agency, social justice and with an awareness of obligations towards Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Te Ao Māori and Biculturalism in 21st Century Aotearoa New Zealand. The paradigm reflects Freire's statement "The dialogical theory of action does not involve a Subject, who dominates by virtue of conquest, and a dominated object. Instead, there are Subjects who meet to name the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1970). A model of the new paradigm has been developed to frame and articulate the new possibilities that come from this research.

Biography



NICK BROWN is the Head of Drama & Theatre Arts at Westlake Boys' High School in Auckland. He has previously held visiting lecturer positions at the University of London and the University of Canterbury, and has also worked for Cognition Education and Team Solutions. Nick's area of research interest is the intersection of performance and cultural/inter-cultural identity.

Prologue

Tūrangawaewae (noun) domicile; standing; place where one has the right to stand - place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship and *whakapapa* (<https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>).

"I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged" (Brook, 1968).

The young female senior school student walked upon the stage, hesitantly. Out of sorts; quietly sad; uncertain of what should happen next. Rehearsals had not been going well, so teacher intervention was needed. "What brings you comfort?" he asked. "Being on stage," she replied. "Good," he responded, "but can you be more specific?" "More specific," she asked, "in what way?" "Well... which stage?" he asked; "This one," she replied. "Okay, that's good to know. Is it the entire stage that brings you comfort, or can you be more specific again?" "Oh, that's easy..." she said brightening, "it's just here. This spot is where I feel most comfortable, happiest," and she walked and gestured to a spot on the stage, down stage right, close to the audience. At that spot was a distinct indent in the stage, where a heavy stage weight had been dropped. "Just here," she repeated. As she spoke she began to relive the experience; it was written upon her face: "It was here in Year 8... I was standing right here in Year 8 when I got my first laugh... I can still remember the feeling, the emotion... It was wonderful." "So this spot has a profound meaning to you personally, psychologically, emotionally? It helps, in however a small way, to define you as a performer?" "As a person, actually. The experience, its meaning is that important to me," she responded quickly, overlapping with his last word. "Tūrangawaewae," he spoke, out of nowhere. "I'm sorry?" she replied. "Tūrangawaewae," he repeated, catching himself. "It is a notion in te ao Māori, and it describes a place that brings meaning to you, which helps to define you as a person. It could be where you were born, your home, the location of your iwi, but for you, a non-Māori, it would be quite acceptable to describe this spot, stage right, where the damaged stage sits (and where you got that first laugh). This could be tūrangawaewae, because this is where you found and explored a developing self of yourself as a performer, and as you have said as a young adult."

The student smiled, the ennui and uncertainty of the start of the rehearsal diminishing. It was a brief and modest interchange between myself and a student, but a seminal one for both. For me, it was a realisation that te ao Māori (the Māori world) and tikanga (Māori customary practice) could have a profound and penetrating value for young, intelligent – but culturally malnourished – Pākehā New Zealand students¹. I also saw how such notions could also be used in such a way to create greater student agency, within the dramatic-aesthetic-educational experience. For the female student it was a realisation that a spiritual notion from an alien culture could bring comfort and clarity during a challenging period.

Six years on I realise that it was this interchange that set me on the path towards my new focus as a teacher-practitioner, which in turn would lead me to undertake a PhD, as my practice had started to become research, and my modest research, practice:

Moreover, the reflective researcher cannot maintain distance from, much less superiority to, the experience of practice. Whether he is engaged in frame analysis, repertoire building, action science, or the study of reflection-in-action, he must somehow gain an inside view of the experience of practice. (Schön, 1983).

¹ This experience (with the female student) occurred at a co-educational school, also in Auckland. The research that this interchange provoked was then undertaken at a single sex boys' school

Setting the Scene: Positionality & Context

My current position as a teacher in Aotearoa New Zealand is predicated upon a number of factors. Firstly, I was born in London, not New Zealand. Secondly, I did not initially train as a teacher, but as a theatre director and then as an actor. My undergraduate degree saw me developing as a young director by focusing on the direction of plays by Harold Pinter, and then writing a summation of my experience in a thesis, which looked at the notion of masculinity and threat in his plays. After university I attended drama school and focused purely on the role of the actor and the actor's craft, and then worked in theatre in London and regional theatre in the UK. I then undertook a Master's degree and returned to directing theatre, with my work taking me to London, Rome, Bermuda and New York. As I directed, I also found myself being asked to teach in drama schools and universities, but with no formal teaching foundation I decided to train as a teacher.

This research article is one section of one project (focused on *The Pohutukawa Tree*, by Bruce Mason) within my PhD², and the work was undertaken with Year 11 students. The context of the school in which the research took place is a Decile 9 school on the North Shore of Auckland, Aotearoa's largest city, and the world's largest Pasifika city. One in five residents of Auckland nominate themselves as having Pacific Island or Māori heritage; this will rise to one in three by 2050 (<http://www.stats.govt.nz/>). The school itself has a broad demography, with 50% of students having been born outside of Aotearoa New Zealand, although these students now (mostly) call Auckland home. The students themselves are all male, as the school is a boys' school. However, the school does have a sister school close by with whom regular collaboration occurs, in many cultural and artistic endeavours.

As a teacher-practitioner and researcher, my position is one of *spectator/manipulator* and aligns with that described by Schön (1983):

...there is an objectively knowable world, independent of the practitioner's values and views... His stance toward inquiry is that of spectator/manipulator... Through his transaction with the situation, he shapes it and makes himself a part of it. Hence, the sense he makes of the situation must include his own contribution to it. Yet he recognizes that the situation, having a life of its own distinct from his intentions, may foil his projects and reveal new meanings.

From this paradoxical source derive the several features of a stance toward inquiry which are as necessary to reflection-in-action as the norms of on-the-spot experiment and the uses of virtual worlds. (p. 163).

I do not hover at the fringes observing dispassionately-objectively, but rather I led the process, and experienced much of the joy and frustration that my students felt, as we explored complex ideas and ambitions in theatrical form together, collaboratively.

² My PhD explores "How does a drama teacher-practitioner utilise New Zealand play texts, such as *The Pohutukawa Tree* by Bruce Mason and also colonial/coloniser texts, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, by Shakespeare, to explore NZ cultural identity and intercultural identity?" In essence, I am looking at how a drama teacher-practitioner use the process of devising and reconstructing performance texts in order to meet New Zealand Curriculum goals, allow for development and exploration of students' New Zealand cultural identity and intercultural identity, as well as allow a teacher the space for personal aesthetic development?"

Bogart, Freire, Schechner and Greenwood & Wilson: foundations for an alternate rehearsal methodology

Numerous writers influenced my research, however, reading alone was not the focus of my study; I would have to live it also, for “The locus of study is not the object of the study. Anthropologists don’t study villages (tribes, towns, neighborhoods...); they study *in* villages.” (Geertz, 1973).

The books that have influenced my thinking, and the creation of a new paradigm – Figure 2 – include four in particular, which speak to the particulars of this project: *A Director Prepares*, by Anne Bogart, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, by Paulo Freire, *Between Theater & Anthropology*, by Richard Schechner, and *Te Mauri Pakeaka*, by Janinka Greenwood and Arnold Manaaki Wilson.

a. Bogart

Bogart (2001) discusses the numerous words that different theatrical cultures use to describe the rehearsal process(es). Such knowledge impacts the manner in which the theatre-makers and cast engage with the process of bringing what is written on the page to life, and how we as creatives (actors, directors, designers; the creative players) engage with the aesthetic.

Let us start with the word in the English language (and in theatrical culture), used to indicate the practice of animating a performance text: rehearsal. This word seemingly privileges the auditory aspects of the process: to re-hear the performance event, and by implication review it, make necessary amendments, and move on to the next unit of rehearsal. When the word rehearsal is set into the context of taking place in what the Greeks called the auditorium, this bias towards the auditory/hearing sense is further underlined. However, is this privileging of the auditory element true in other theatrical cultures? Well no: in French theatre-making the word used (instead of rehearsal) is *répétition*, or in English the rather prosaic, *practise*. In Japanese the word *keiko* is used, which means to perfect through practise. In German, however, one finds the word that – to my mind and educational-theatrical philosophy – best reflects the rehearsal culture (Bogart, 2001) I was striving to create in this project (as well as in my general teaching practice): *probe*. *Probe*, as a verb, means to investigate or to explore, and with a postmodern, deconstructivist approach to textual analysis and execution (Schechner, 1985) at the heart of my process ambitions, *probe* appears to be a perfect word for what we should undertake in rehearsals with our students (Bogart, 2001, p. 45). Such philosophical positioning in terms of investigation and exploration impacts the way(s) that the student-actor and teacher-director alike can explore an aesthetic.

b. Freire

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) sets out a manifesto for a revolutionary realignment of the teacher-student relationship, in order to democratise the process of education. Much of what Freire stated has now found its way both explicitly (in curricula and education ministry mandates) and implicitly (in the execution of their perceived role by teachers). However, implementation is far from universal. Freire recognised that “revolutionary leadership must accordingly practice co-intentional education. Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge”(p. 53). The shared re-creation of position, and knowledge (cultural, social and self-knowledge) are some of the aims of my PhD project, and therefore need a robust and new paradigm (in terms of rehearsal) to make this possible. Freire also recognised what I (in part) have felt is evident in certain deficit model rehearsal methodologies, in that students should no longer be

“docile listeners” but rather “co-investigators in dialogue with their teacher” (p. 62). He explained that “Problem-posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming – as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality...” (p. 65). The power of Freire’s ideas, and its potential to influence an alternative model of rehearsal, is because it is able to “resolve the contradiction between teacher and student” and therefore allow both to “address their act of cognition to the object by which they are mediated” (p. 74).

c. Schechner

If in the experimentation and later creation of this new rehearsal paradigm (and methodology) Freire is a foundation stone, then the post that supports the canopy of ambition would be Richard Schechner, the American director and academic. Schechner’s role as theatre-maker also overlaps with the role of cultural anthropologist. He recognises that “Either permanently... or temporarily... performers – and sometimes spectators too – are changed by the activity of performing” (Schechner, 1985, p. 4). My reading of this relates not only to the act of final rehearsed performance to an audience, but to the playing in role in workshops prior to any performance. For Schechner it is in the theatrical workshop, and not rehearsal, where the meaningful work on a text occurs and where the actors and creatives are challenged: “Workshop is a deconstruction process, where the ready-mades of culture (accepted ways of using the body, accepted texts, accepted feelings) are broken down and prepared to be “inscribed upon...” (p. 99). In fact Schechner goes further and states that a drama-theatrical “Workshop is analogous to the liminal-transitional space of rituals.” which is a far more virtuous, creative, meditative state to exist in than rehearsals, which “...are the opposite of workshops. In rehearsals longer and longer strips of restored behavior are arranged to make a new unified whole: the performance.” (p. 99).

For Schechner, giving license to departures from a concrete performance playtext through such workshops is also not a concern, which in turn gives license to my in-class process ambitions with Year 11 students. Schechner explains the transitory nature of performance:

Hard as it may be for some scholars to swallow, performance originals disappear as fast as they are made. No notation, no reconstruction, no film or videotape recording can keep them. What they lose first and most importantly is their immediacy, their existence in a specific space and context... the occasion is different, the world view is different, the audience is different, and the performers are different (p. 50).

Schechner’s power as a researcher, dramaturg and theatre-maker is in his recognition (and promotion of the notion) that older, more established, concretised³ texts, need to be re-evaluated and broken open with postmodern approaches that allow for new interpretations to come to light. These new interpretations are enabled not through the traditional process of a rehearsal but in a workshop where “a deconstruction of the text and narrative of the play” can be undertaken, whilst at the same time there is a “parallel deconstruction of the lives of the performers” (p. 287). Schechner felt keenly the frustration that most “productions are not allowed enough time” to “grasp the process I am talking about – to separate the deconstruction phase from the reconstruction.

³ “If during a rehearsal of one of Brecht’s plays, according to his authorized mise-en-scene, it is suspected that some gesture is not being performed as Brecht intended it, the gesture is checked back against the Modelbuch (and other documentary evidence). What the Modelbuch says goes. It is the authority.” (Schechner, 1985, p. 43).

People too soon are doing the work of rehearsal” (p. 287).

Schechner (p. 289) demonstrates what the relationship between workshop and rehearsal might look like graphically, to an actor or director in the figure cited below. He states that “This process can also be represented as a movement from a public space to private space and back into public space.”

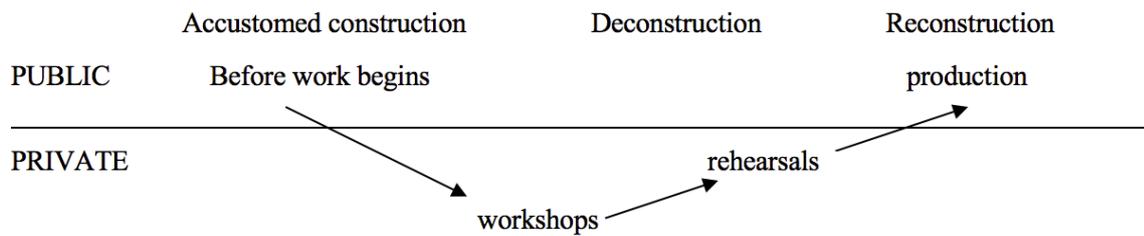


Figure 1: Schechner’s workshop and rehearsal model

The model shows that the deepest, most personal and private state of the process for Schechner and his actors, is during the workshops. These workshops then morph into rehearsals and then into production. This diagram gives an image of a theatre creative “diving” into the process, reaching the deepest point of the dive (the most personal and sacred space for the actors and teacher-director) in workshops, and then starting to resurface towards production (or performance). This is crucial for Schechner, and is a process I came to subscribe to. Schechner argues that “workshops find, reveal, and express material; rehearsals give this stuff performative shape”, which is possible because “workshops are liminoid, creating an “as if” scalpel used to cut into the actual lives of those making the performance (p. 103).

d. Greenwood and Wilson

At the heart of the Kaupapa for Māori education are notions also suggested, previously, by Freire (1970) in section b:

The *raison d’être* of liberation education, on the other hand, lies in its drive towards reconciliation. Education must begin with the solution of the teachers-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. (p. 53).

I recognise in my practice and research crucial elements of kaupapa Māori, as found in Greenwood’s and Wilson’s research and practice (2006), such as *ako*⁴ and *tuakana-teina*⁵. For Greenwood “biculturalism is a necessity as well as a choice” (Greenwood,

4 The concept of *ako* describes a teaching and learning relationship, where the educator is also learning from the student and where educators’ practices are informed by the latest research and are both deliberate and reflective. *Ako* is grounded in the principle of reciprocity and also recognises that the learner and *whānau* cannot be separated, (Ka Hikitia, 2008, p.20)

5 *Kuia* and *kaumatua* have taught me that the *tuakana-teina* relationship works best when seen as an integral part of traditional Māori society. In this, an older or more expert *tuakana* (brother, sister or cousin) might guide a younger or less expert *teina* (originally a younger sibling or cousin of the same gender). This would be in a learning environment that recognises the value of *ako*. However, the *tuakana-teina* roles may be reversed at

2002, p. 11), for both teacher (kaiako) and student alike (akonga) must recognise the inherent differences and similarities of their positions as teacher/learner and learner/teacher, and actively engage in a philosophical shifting (Freire, 1970; Greenwood, 2002 & 2006).

Greenwood's groundbreaking work with Arnold Manaaki Wilson, in her Te Mauri Pakeaka project, reflects these concepts, values and aspirations (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006). In her book of the same name, Greenwood articulates the art making that was undertaken in the project, and the community building of learners that occurred both in order to make the art, and as a consequence of the art-making in the following terms:

The immediate objective in each workshop was to create an art work. The intention was to move ... towards the experience of living together and of making... It also allowed participants to re-examine roles they usually took... The long term aim was to create a third face for New Zealand: that of a dynamic biculturalism... For many of the thousands who participated in Pakeaka, the experience constituted a first journey into a previously unknown space. It offered them a chance to physically cross the threshold into a Māori world... (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006, p. 5/6).

Whilst also recognising the influence of research by Bogart, Freire, Schechner et al (and the aesthetic and pedagogical ambition of my PhD project to introduce Year 11 students to new ways of seeing and engaging with the world), it was crucial to introduce my culturally under-nourished students to notions from te ao Māori. In essence, it is a way of seeing (Berger, 1972) that privileges the bicultural nature of our nation, and alerts the participants (students; audience) to alternative perspectives on the relationship between Māori and Pākehā⁶, and by extension, towards all peoples of varying cultural backgrounds. Although not to the manner born, I am, however, a director and teacher growing in confidence when discussing issues relating to biculturalism, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, tangata whenua and te ao Māori.

In my research I found that the two precepts within te ao Māori and kaupapa⁷ Māori that were most valuable to my research were *ako* and *tuakana-teina*⁸. *Ako*, is the word in te reo Māori that describes the exchange between teacher and student. This exchange is not predicated upon a hierarchy of status between the teacher (high status; the knower) and the student (low status; the potential receiver). *Ako* recognises that – under the right conditions – the teacher can also be the student, and that the student can also be a teacher, in a democratic sharing of knowledge, experience and position. It reflects what Greenwood saw in Te Mauri Pakeaka: “What happens in the third space is unscripted. It evolves out of dialogues, confrontations, accommodations, risk-taking and unplanned discoveries... it engages with the development of something new” (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006, p. 12). Such a “something new” could be seen as either the art work or a relationship, or perhaps both, simultaneously.

Democratic notions of education found in te ao Māori (*ako*; *tuakana-teina*), that were

any time

⁶ I have been cautioned, however, by *kuia* and *kaumatua* that not all *tangata whenua* necessarily speak with one voice. My teachers have taught me that no *iwi* presumes to speak for Māori in broader national terms, but rather the unique identity of Māori, *tangata whenua* and/or *mana whenua* is upheld in specific regional locales (Silich, 2010)

⁷ (**noun**) topic, policy, matter for discussion, plan, purpose, scheme, proposal, agenda, subject, programme, theme, issue, initiative

⁸ <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/>

being practiced by iwi and in kaupapa Māori, were also being propounded by Freire forty years ago within the academy. What unities both Freire’s and Greenwood’s work is their proposal that we break away from educational models and classroom practice predicated on “educational system(s) of the 1970s”, which were by nature “monocultural”, dominated by “a single cultural value system” (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006, p. 35). This is not just in terms of the challenging, developing notion of biculturalism in Aotearoa, but also the culture of the perceived hegemony of teacher over the student. As Greenwood has seen in her projects, and as I hoped for in mine, “Teachers knelt on the floor with their students, arguing, without claim to authority...” (p. 41).

Condensing Thought and Practice: a Diagram depicting the divergence between a Euro-American *traditional-linear* rehearsal model versus an *alternative* paradigm

My preferred manner of explaining this new way of engaging in the rehearsal process is by describing the paradigm (Figure 2 and Figure 3 below) I created in light of the rehearsal practice I undertook in a Year 11 class, which was (in part) co-constructed with the students. When these figures are seen side by side comparisons between the two methodologies can be explored. The desire to create a new rehearsal methodology, whilst recognising its antecedents, reflects Schechner’s research (1985) when he stated that:

Many other directors... felt this same double tug... (in that they) ... neither interpret old texts nor compose wholly new ones but practice a kind of theatrical bricolage, deconstructing/reconstructing texts and mises-en-scènes from a variety of sources... But mainstream Euro-American theater still works from literary texts. (p. 230).

Over time my teaching, reflection and research began to aggregate into a new way of seeing, and a new potentiality in, the rehearsal process, provoked by the “double tug”. This was not to be a rehearsal method that was driven by the need to create a final performance product. But one, rather, that was driven by embracing various processes that mitigate in favour of a rewarding aesthetic and learning experience, for students and teacher alike.

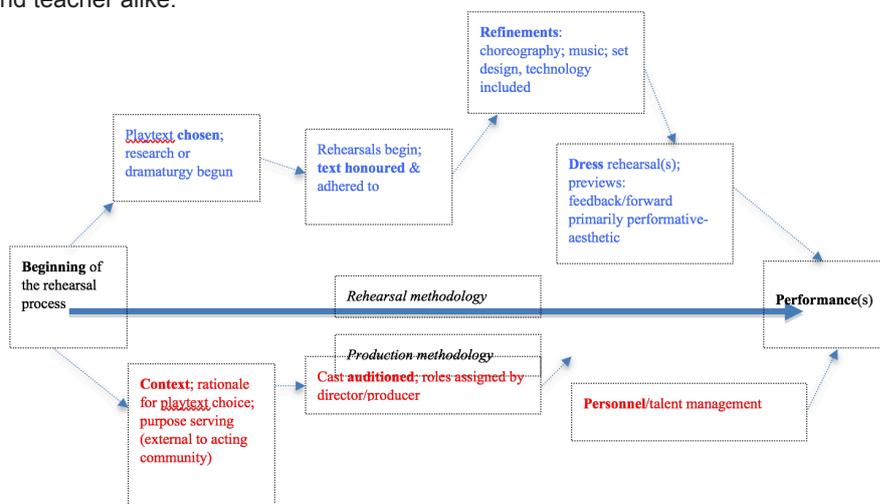


Figure 2: Euro-American traditional-linear rehearsal paradigm

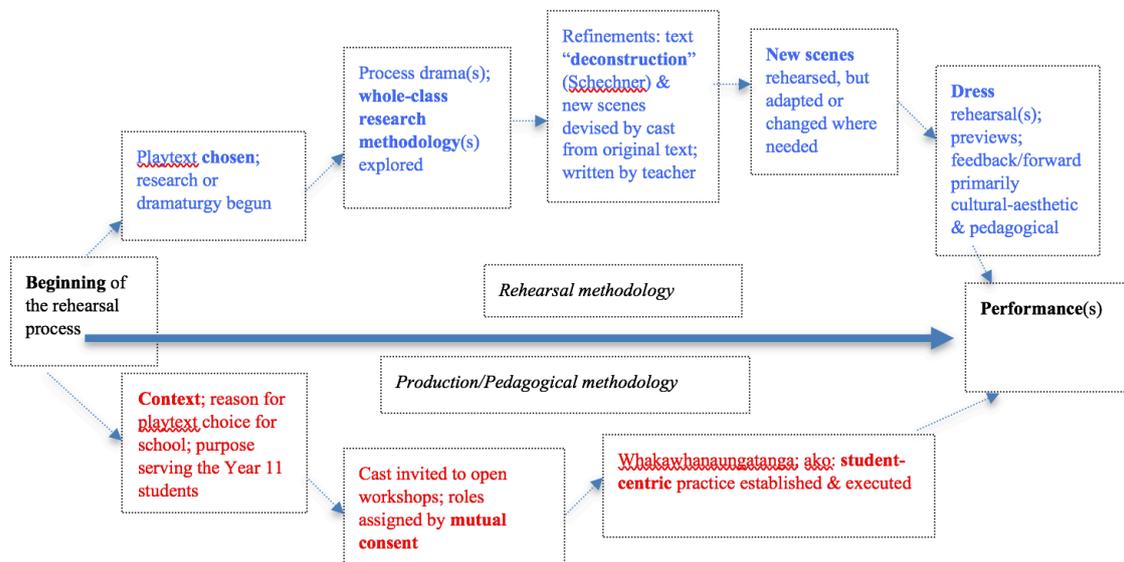


Figure 3: *The Pohutukawa Tree* alternative rehearsal paradigm

Figure 2, the Euro-American *traditional-linear* rehearsal model, is the model that most directors would apply to the time-precious rehearsal period, which traditionally last between three and five weeks⁹, in professional theatre, or three to six months in a school context¹⁰. This model I have developed through my own training and practice as a professional theatre director in Europe and the US, and my experience of discussing rehearsal methodologies with other theatre directors, and whilst chair of the Directors' Guild of Great Britain's theatre group.

a. Choice & Context

In the first instance, the start of the process(es) begins when a producer or director feel the impetus to consider a new or old text for performance. This in itself can have many antecedents or energies that precipitate the decision to stage (or restage) a text. For example, a touring production of George Orwell's "1984"¹¹ has captured the zeitgeist and imagination of audiences worldwide, as it taps into the hysteria around Russian hacking of the US elections in 2016. In my project, and in the use of Bruce Mason's 1960 play *The Pohutukawa Tree*, my desire was to use the play as a tool to enable investigation of the Year 11 student's national and cultural identity (a further unpacking of these ideas will be a focus of my full PhD). I am grateful to the estate of Bruce Mason whose permission enabled me to explore and experiment with the text of *The Pohutukawa Tree*¹² as I did.

9 Bertolt Brecht was a radical exception, with his heavily state-sponsored theatre (the Berliner Ensemble) having rehearsal periods of up to six months

10 Schools often rehearse afterschool two to three times a week, with possibly a weekend rehearsal day, plus (if fortunate) a production camp over a long weekend

11 <https://www.atc.co.nz/auckland-theatre-company/2017-18/1984/>

12 *The Pohutukawa Tree* was first presented as a play in 1957 and latterly published as a playtext in 1960

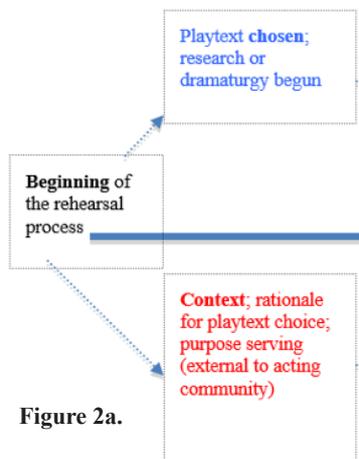


Figure 2a.

From the diagram outlining the new paradigm (Part i), the reader can see that there are two pathways: the Rehearsal Methodology and the Production Methodology. These two pathways are differentiated by the fact that the Production Methodology (PM) is the foundation that allows the Rehearsal Methodology (RM) to occur. The two – PM and RM – are separate functions of bringing the text to life – from page to stage – however, they overlap in many areas. For reasons of clarity I have kept the two quite separate.

In Part i, the Euro-American *traditional-linear* rehearsal paradigm, I have nominated a hierarchical-typical process. The producer and/or the director, with the aim of serving an external objective, choose the playtext (Figure 2a.). This could be, for example, to create a piece of dramatic art that reflects the zeitgeist. The producer and the director, who are looking for talent that fits their vision of what the final product will look like, then audition a cast. There is an inherent problem with this notion: that the product is almost predetermined¹³; flexibility, participant voice and spontaneity are all but denied, which, in educational terms, is a bankrupt kaupapa (philosophy). As Freire wrote, the teacher's:

efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. His efforts must be imbued with profound trust in people and their creative power. To achieve this they must be partners of the students in their relations with them. (Freire, 1970, p. 56).

By contrast in Part ii, I have designed a non-hierarchical based in part upon Bogart, Freire, Schechner, Greenwood and Tikanga/Te Ao Māori. In this paradigm, the playtext is chosen as a response to the internal forces of the institution and its student (and teacher) population; to serve the student-actor need and further the narratives and discourses of the institution. Whereas in Figure 2 the cast is chosen through a typical audition process (which is inherently hierarchical), in Figure 3 the student actors are invited to audition workshops, where the process is transparent and co-constructed, framed around notions of student agency, as can be seen in Ako and Tuakana-Teina. In the final analysis, roles in what will become the performance product are assigned by mutual consent (teacher-director in negotiation with student-actor). It must be recognised that paradoxically the choice by the teacher-director in Figure 3 could be seen to reflect some of the limited values and processes of the producer/director in Figure 2, as both imagine a product they wish to explore (Figure 2: Product; Figure 3: Process). However,

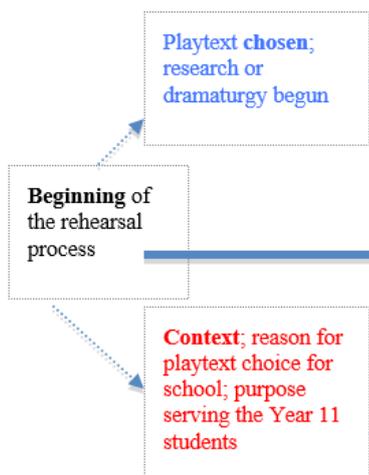


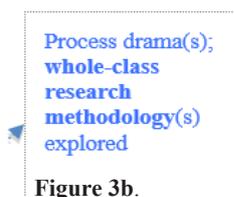
Figure 3a.

13 In *The Shifting Point* (1988), Peter Brook discusses how it is only once the play is performed that he finally realises the actors he *should* have cast, the set design he *should* have executed, the music that he *should* have had accompany the performance, but by this point it is too late

Figure 3 offers far greater flexibility for student-actors and their participant voice, as I will explain further.

b. Research

Within a contemporary professional rehearsal methodology, many directors employ the services of a dramaturg. The dramaturg's role, and the purpose of dramaturgy, is one of objective research and analysis, on behalf of the production. Often reporting to the director, and sometimes fulfilling the role of assistant director, the dramaturg traditionally undertakes research into the period that the playtext was set in, the politics and economic situation of the time (Eagleton, 1989). Beyond this, the director might charge the dramaturg to investigate other productions of the same playtext, and/or apply various lenses of analysis to both playtext and previous productions of the playtext (that is presuming that it is not an original text). For example, constructivism, post-structuralism, modernism, post-modernism, post-colonialism, feminism and post-feminism viewpoints might also be researched by the dramaturg in order to better prepare the director, and sometimes the cast. In the latter example, the dramaturg might speak with or lecture the cast on her or his discoveries. However, as you can see in this example, the presence of hierarchy and typicality is pronounced. In the *alternative* paradigm, Figure 3, I am proposing that, as we did for *The Pohutukawa Tree* project, that the dramaturgy is a shared process of the whole class and students (Figure 3b.).



The power of such a teacher choice is in the democratisation of the process: “The dialogical theory of action does not involve a Subject, who dominates by virtue of conquest, and a dominated object. Instead, there are Subjects who meet to name the world in order to transform it”, (Freire, 1970, p. 148). Each student is charged with an area of interest and/or importance, born from the discussion within the drama class

and workshop. They then researched that area during and after class, and then report back to the class¹⁴, where questions and realisations are shared amongst the students. Non-teacher-directed discussion can then occur and unbidden insights and unexpected outcomes are welcomed. At the heart of this process are both *ako* and *tuakana-teina*, as articulated previously. The students are endowed with *expertise* by the teacher-director and his peers, and all listen and respond to the student-researchers with respect for the student's knowledge(s) generated through this process. During this process (but not exclusive to this period), the teacher is able to model and encourage students to also model *whakawhanaungatanga*. In te ao Māori and in *tikanga*¹⁵ Māori, *whakawhanaungatanga* is the demonstration of care and respect in relation to the student and their history and story, regardless of where that student originates. In a project such as *The Pohutukawa Tree*, which examines cultural and national locatedness this is a key notion of *tikanga* to include in the class workshop processes.

¹⁴ Students were being assessed against AS1.5 for this particular task; AS1.6 was the Achievement Standard being used as the assessment tool for the other aspects of this Year 11 project

¹⁵ Māori practice and/or custom

c. Refinements

The notion of 'refinements' is key to both Figure 2 and Figure 3. In Figure 2 these refinements are quite typical (Figure 2b.), in theatrical terms, focusing on the inclusion of complex and/or expensive and/or time-consuming elements that complete a rehearsal process as it approaches the performance season: music to underscore stage action; set design that frames the action; and technology that creates stage effect and impact. However, what Figure 3

Refinements:
choreography; music; set
design, technology
included

Figure 2b.

is suggesting as refinements is quite different (Figure 3c.), and focused less on how the final production product will be viewed by an audience (external perspective), but rather on what can be created from within the creative company (actors, directors, researchers et al) as they head towards the mid-point of the process (internal perspective). In Figure 2, these refinements include elements that we as theatre consumers might recognise, as they are outer manifestations of a polished production. Figure 3 is not proposing a process that dismisses the inclusion of such ideas, however, at the same point in the process as Figure 2, as creatives are more interested in a departure from normal workshop-rehearsal protocol. What eventuates is not possible for all texts, especially those that are still liable for performing rights¹⁶. As Richard Schechner (1985) wrote:

Refinements: text
"deconstruction"
(Schechner) &
new scenes
devised by cast
from original text;
written by teacher

Figure 3c.

... more recently, many non-Westerners have participated in experimental performance. This has led to the development of intercultural companies and a marvelously complicated exchange of technique and concepts that can no longer be easily located as belonging to this culture or that one. This dialogue relating modern, traditional, and postmodern elements even takes place within single nations... where deep learning takes place, eventuating in artistic works that may not at all look like what they have come from (p. 24).

Schechner's words prefigure this part of the new process I am proposing in Figure 3, which is a clear departure from the typical form of rehearsal, as seen in Figure 2. The process(es) engaged in by teacher-director and student-actor during the refinement of the play in Figure 3, allow

for the students to consider *alternatives*. What is meant by alternatives is a re-examination of the play at its core (Figure 3d.), unpicking the tensions, the context, the characters, and the time and place of the play (the socio-historical context; Eagleton, 1989). Such re-examination, however, is undertaken in order to shed light on the students' lives as they currently live them; to enable them to unpick what it is to live in Aotearoa New

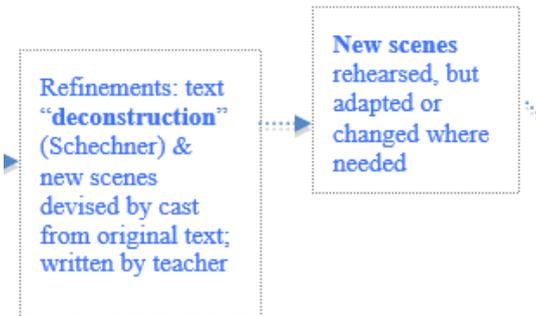


Figure 3d.

Zealand in the 21st Century. The refinements that are undertaken in Figure 3 are therefore focused on "deconstruction" of the original Bruce Mason text of *The Pohutukawa Tree*, and by doing so discovering relevance in the lives of the students in 2017. This aligns with Schechner's statement: "What happens at workshops like this is not only a deconstruction of the text and narrative

¹⁶ The estate of Bruce Mason kindly gave permission for this experimentation, and this research, to occur. If a teacher-practitioner were keen to explore other texts it would be advisable to make contact with the rights holders of the text to discuss the feasibility of doing the same. Playmarket NZ, and their agents, would be a good place to begin research and also a conversation: <http://www.playmarket.org.nz/agent>

of the play being done...but also a parallel deconstruction of the lives of the performers..." (Schechner, 1985, p. 287).

Through exercises, improvisation, provocations, discussion and rehearsal of ideas – suggested by, and predicated upon, the original Bruce Mason playtext – students come to better understand how they are situated as a young New Zealander.

The fundamental result of such unpicking were suggestions for new scenes, inspired by and/or departing from *The Pohutukawa Tree*. Student-actors were enabled and given agency so that they could propose new scenes taking place in the past, the present or future that reflect the concerns of the original play, whilst also allowing them to explore their concerns as 21st Century New Zealanders. Once these suggestions were made, the teacher-director takes on a third role as writer, shaping these new student-centred ideas into a text that can be rehearsed. Rehearsal then takes place, as in a typical theatrical process, which in turn leads to dress rehearsals and performances of the work in front of an audience¹⁷. The final performance is crucial, as without an audience to engage in a meaning-making process, and to engage in a discourse with the actors, all the dramatic-theatrical work will have been for nought. As Geertz (1973) stated "Culture is public because meaning is" (p. 12), and "Cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses" (p. 20). The performance is thus designed to offer the student-actors an opportunity to examine the veracity of the decisions under performance feedback conditions, and allows the audience to question their own positionality in light of the student-actors' choices.

17 As a unit of in-class assessed NCEA study, students were marked against AS1.6 Perform an acting role

Conclusion

In my experience as an arts-educator and theatre maker, the most damaging creative choice can be to purely focus on the *product*, an arbitrary notion of what a client-audience needs or wants, settled upon long before the creatives become involved in the process of theatre-making. I have worked in institutions where this has been an unstated aim, due to the particular forces at work in that time and place. Even the father of 20th Century experimentation, and research in drama and theatre, Konstantin Stanislavski, could not avoid this fate. After his death in 1938, the Soviet authorities preserved his works for political reasons, only allowing productions to be reproduced based upon his original rehearsal models and books (Benedetti, 1998 & 2000; Mitter, 1992). These products toured the world for thirty years, until aesthetic fashions had changed, and such an approach – and what had become known colloquially as museum piece theatre – had become unpopular.

However, to work solely on *process* without a healthy respect for the moment of organised communion between artist and audience is also potentially damaging to the performance art work. In an educational context it is finding the balance between these two competing forces, marrying them in such a way as to make them allies and collaborators, seeking out the synergies that allow for efficacious work. Work that is both educationally rich and aesthetically satisfying, for teacher and student, and audience. I have tried to posit here that, through a refining/refined process, I have found a way of marrying my broad knowledge as a theatre practitioner with the distinct knowledges that I possess as a teacher, and this is eminently replicable in other contexts.

Furthermore, as a teacher-practitioner, a discussion on the issues discussed in these pages is crucial. In Aotearoa New Zealand student teachers on graduate diploma programmes in universities are finding that there are fewer and fewer hours that they share with their academic tutors, exploring the aesthetic as well as class and rehearsal paradigms; one on one class time is being squeezed by budget constraints¹⁸, and in many cases is being replaced with online eLearning options. Thus learning the nuance of how to structure an educational-aesthetic programme that mitigates in favour of student agency is under pressure.

Finally, many schools are now asking that drama teachers provide an extra-curricular musical or play once a year, as a promotional exercise for the school, allowing the school's leadership to champion culture. Beginning teachers, and especially those new to drama, coming from a variety of other curriculum backgrounds, and/or the theatre industry, must realise that a realignment of expectation, process, practice and execution needs to be engineered for the good of all participants.

18 Greenwood, 2016, private correspondence

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Strategies New Zealand teachers use to counter the tension between time and content in the Junior Music Classroom

RACHEL SWINDELLS

Abstract

New Zealand Secondary School music teachers face a challenging task in preparing their students for the rigours of assessment, especially given the wide range of ability and experience students bring to the classroom when they start high school. This article examines what difficulties music teachers face, and what strategies teachers are currently using to address these challenges.

Historical context to the New Zealand teaching environment is given, followed by the results of a survey of current music teachers. The survey's results and the comments made by the participants are then discussed, and the author makes a number of recommendations based on these: namely, that back planning, a holistic approach, integration, co-curricular activities, and effective itinerant teaching are vital to student success in classroom music.

Biography



DR RACHEL SWINDELLS holds a MusB (Hons) in organ performance and PhD in Musicology from Otago University, where she studied and then worked until 2012. After teaching privately for some time, she embarked on a Graduate Diploma in Secondary Teaching through Massey University in 2017. Rachel is interested in classroom teaching and research in education, particularly the use of evidence-based strategies in the classroom.

There exists a significant body of literature that tells us how students benefit from learning music. We are already familiar with the broad findings: music education has been linked to ability in mathematics, improved executive functioning, and cognitive abilities (Eide, 2015), as well as accelerated auditory processing (Habibi, Cahn, Damasio, & Damasio, 2016). Music researcher Susan Hallam has found, through examining large numbers of studies, that there is a 'strong case for the benefits of active engagement with music throughout the lifespan' and that benefits from music include improvements in 'language development, literacy, numeracy, measures of intelligence, general attainment, creativity, fine motor co-ordination, concentration, and other areas' (Hallam, 2010, p. 269). (What the implications for music's benefits might be is outside the scope of this article; nevertheless, it is important to note these benefit value from the outset.) Benefits notwithstanding, music has its own, inherent value – it would be a cold, colourless sound world without music, and as music educators it is important to remember this value, as opposed to defending music for how it benefits other domains.

And yet – it will surprise few to learn that New Zealand Music Education specialist Linda Webb sums up findings from the 2006 UNESCO International Arts Education Conference in this way: '[Researchers] highlighted a mismatch between music education policy expectations, teacher education resourcing and practice, and the increasing dominance of literacy and numeracy, in lieu of creativity, as key international themes' (Webb, 2016, p. 2). Webb's research also points to the Cambridge Primary Review, which highlights worrying trends in the UK for music with the narrowing of the curriculum. Similar narrowing has also taken place in New Zealand, which I will discuss shortly.

Following on from this, it would be easy to paint a picture of doom and gloom when considering how much time music is given in most New Zealand Secondary School timetables, and indeed, this can anecdotally be extrapolated out to include all arts subjects (or perhaps even all non-STEM subjects) in a New Zealand context¹. Recently, much has been made of the coming addition of digital technologies into the technology learning area ("Nikki Kaye reveals digital shakeup for school curriculum," 2017) and I hypothesize there will be a continued need for Arts teachers around New Zealand to battle for classroom time and resources. This paper examines how New Zealand Secondary School Music teachers handle this difficulty, and suggests some approaches to help ease their load.

Changes in New Zealand Education

Drawing attention to the previous paragraph, I have used the term 'battle' in reference to time and resources; I concede that this may be a loaded term, but it may well be the most appropriate one, given current school circumstances. In my view, there have been three major changes since the 1990s in New Zealand that have had a negative influence on classroom music time at all year levels:

1. The curriculum changes which took place from the mid-1990s to early 2000s relegated music into the Arts learning area, grouping it with drama, art, and dance (Ministry of Education, 2000). This is not to suggest that drama, art or dance are of lesser value than music, but rather to recognise that music, previously having its own syllabus, was now considered as part of a group. Though the recognition of Arts as a learning area can be viewed as a positive move, Judith Donaldson notes that the consequence was less time for music in Years 9 and 10 (see Donaldson, 2012). I contend that there were positive elements with some of these curriculum changes – such as the emphasis on diversity in music and the opening

¹ STEM here refers to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

of the music curriculum to embrace Māori music forms. However, time is the ultimate resource, and there was consequently less of it.

2. In 2009, the New Zealand National Party-led Government contentiously brought in literacy and numeracy testing at Primary School level, which are generally referred to as National Standards. Though few of us would disagree that literacy and numeracy skills are fundamental for students, there are many arguments against testing, predominantly: (a) testing alone does not lift achievement; (b) teachers already know which students need more support, and need more money to support them, rather than this money being spent on National Standards, and; (c) because results of the tests are published, teachers come under pressure to have their students perform well, and consequently, more classroom time is devoted to them. The knock-on effect to music – and indeed, all other subjects – is that less time is spent on it in the Primary classroom; music becomes a nice-to-have, rather than an essential component of the curriculum (Gerritsen, 2017).
3. Finally, New Zealand Primary teachers now only receive nominal training in music – about 6 hours over three years (Armstrong). Unsurprisingly, few Primary teachers report feeling confident teaching music (see Donaldson, 2012, and also Webb, 2016). Though it is important to acknowledge that many primary schools and individual teachers run excellent music programmes, what music happens in primary schools varies enormously from school to school. (This observation is borne out from the survey results, which will be discussed shortly.)

As part of a professional inquiry into music teaching, I recently sought to investigate the tension between time and content in the junior (Years 9 and 10) music classroom². I decided to focus on the tension between time and content in the junior school, but more specifically, I wanted to find out how teachers working in New Zealand today actually handled the problem. To put this another way, I was looking for practical solutions to the scenario New Zealand teachers face – how to prepare music students for NCEA Level 1 and beyond when music is afforded so little classroom time in Years 9 and 10. The response I received from the survey and the subsequent interest in it from New Zealand music teachers have made me realise that this is an area of great interest to many people, here and beyond, and convinced me that making the results more widely known is worthwhile. I raised awareness about the survey via an email through Musicnet, a forum which many secondary school music teachers in New Zealand belong to. The survey received 51 responses.

How much time do music teachers actually have with students, and what are the timetabling issues?

The first four survey questions were time-specific, asking how many hours per week Years 9 and 10 students have in music, and for how many weeks music courses run. I used this information to calculate how much time teachers have with students over the two years comprising Years 9 and 10. There was, as expected, a wide variation, summarised below:

² In a New Zealand context, Years 9 and 10 refer to the first two years at High School, where students are typically aged between 13 – 15. NCEA Level 1 refers to the first external examinations which take place at High School, taking place in Year 11. Itinerant teachers, as referred to in this article, are those who teach instrumental and vocal students, either individually or in groups, during school time. This role is sometimes taken on by the classroom music teacher, or by a non-classroom teacher with a LAT (Limited Authority to Teach) who comes into the school weekly.

	Approx. Hours: Year 9	Approx. Hours: Year 10	Total Hours Years 9 – 10
Mean:	48.8	92.2	139.6
Median:	50	95	140
Mode:	60	120	180
Highest vs Lowest:	120/0	160/27	240/38

Most Year 9 classes ran for either a term or two terms, and most Year 10 classes ran for either two terms or a year (for full survey results referred to in this article, see Swindells, 2017).

How classes are delivered, particularly in Year 9, differs a great deal. Some schools have music as an option, whilst for others it is a core subject; it seems that in Year 9, it is now common to run ‘taster’ courses (in which students try all option subjects but only for short periods of time; frequently as little as 6 – 7 weeks). One respondent’s school did not offer Year 9 music at all; another did not run music as a class but rather as a band and orchestra programme. Interestingly, that particular respondent strongly agreed their students were ready for NCEA Level 1 after Years 9 and 10 music.

Of more concern, though, is continuity. Although a large number of respondents ran music courses for a half-year, or even a full year in some cases, many ran only for a term or even less. Leaving aside the school with no music at all, six respondents’ courses ran for fewer than ten weeks (often the ‘taster’ courses referred to above). Although those with fewer weeks were usually given more hours per week, this raises the important question of how to establish continuity in learning. Students taking music toward the start of Year 9 may well have forgotten a great deal by the start of Year 10, yet those at the end of Year 9 may also be at a disadvantage, as the requirement to be in itinerant music lessons if they wish to take Year 11 Music may well have passed them by (that is, if they are not in private lessons).

The survey did not ask questions about itinerant music specifically, though many teachers mentioned itinerant music in their comments. As New Zealand music teachers are well aware, NCEA Level 1 Achievement Standards in Performance stipulate that students need to be at a level that ‘should reflect the equivalent technical and musical demands of at least a third year of study through itinerant lessons’ (“NCEA on TKI: Level 1 Music Assessment Resources,” Achievement Standard 1.1). If a keen student only begins itinerant music lessons in term four of their Year 9 schooling, and is then assessed on Achievement Standard 1.1 in term two of their Year 11 year – which would not be unusual – then that student would only have received seven terms (at best) of tuition.

Survey respondents were also invited to answer what the specific difficulties in timetabling were:

What are the main difficulties with timetabling sufficient class time for music in Years 9 and 10? Please indicate all answers that you agree with.

Reason for timetabling difficulty	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Timetabling pressure from other option subjects	29	59.18%
Timetabling pressure from non-option subjects	26	53.06%
Timetabling pressure from needing to provide Religious Education classes	6	12.24%
Music is not taken seriously as a subject	13	26.53%
Other time pressures in the school	10	20.41%
There are no difficulties in timetabling sufficient class time for Years 9 and 10	8	16.33%

Respondents were invited to comment on this question. Tying to the responses above, one person noted: 'Our school offers all options at year 9 - taster courses. [This] may be good for other subjects but not Music as L[evel] 1 is '3 years' of music classes.' Most teachers expressed resignation about the amount of time they were given: 'We get the same as all other option subjects at this point in time so while it is never enough, we won't be getting more.'

However, what is most significant here is that only 16.33% of respondents indicated that there were no difficulties in timetabling sufficient class time for Years 9 and 10. This indicates that over 80% of teachers who responded agreed that there were timetabling difficulties – a worryingly large majority.

Prior knowledge and preparedness for NCEA Level 1

The survey then asked about the level Year 9 students were at when they arrived in the music classroom. After all, students will have been at school for eight years; it would be reasonable for an English teacher to expect them to be able to read and write, and for a Maths teacher to expect them to add, subtract, and multiply. Yet, in music, little or no prior knowledge at Year 9 is often the norm, as indicated in the results summarised below.

How many students studying music in Year 9 have significant prior knowledge that assists them in the music classroom?

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
All or nearly all students	1	1.96%
More than half of students	2	3.92%
About half the students	8	15.69
Less than half the students	24	47.06%
None or almost none of the students	16	31.37%

Survey respondents were invited to comment on this question, which many did. A great deal of those surveyed noted that prior knowledge was more likely to be from private lessons outside of school than from primary or intermediate, and although those at schools which included Years 7 – 8 were usually at an advantage, only one respondent mentioned that they had a relationship with an intermediate school with a good music programme. One teacher noted: 'Often students' experience of Music in primary school is just singing in the end-of-year production.' Another said: 'We are lucky if they come in with curriculum level two.' Many respondents also noted that whilst some students had practical music skills, their theoretical knowledge lagged behind – and in some cases, this even included those taking lessons: 'Some students have private instrument lessons but their teacher isn't teaching them any reading skills or even names of the chords.'

Following on from this question, I asked:

Do you agree with the statement: "Students who complete Years 9 and 10 Music successfully at our school are well prepared for all elements of NCEA Level 1 Music"?

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Strongly agree	9	17.65%
Somewhat agree	21	41.18%
Neutral	6	17.76%
Somewhat disagree	11	21.57%
Strongly disagree	4	7.84%

More than half of survey respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, which on the surface seems positive, but there is still a significant minority who felt that their students were unprepared for Year 11 Music after completing Years 9 and 10. I feel confident that this respondent summed up the views of many music teachers: 'NCEA Level 1 requirements mean that most students who only take option music at years 9 and 10 would struggle to reach Achieved level [Pass] for most standards. Our Level 1 students are those who have worked hard on their own time to reach the required level.' This is despite the fact that the curriculum is (supposedly) designed so that students can do just that – begin instrumental or vocal tuition in Year 9 and be able to reach a suitable standard of performance for level 1 by Year 11. I contend that the scenario currently being faced by many teachers is that the class time is insufficient to achieve this goal for many students, and indeed, this respondent agrees: 'a successful itinerant scheme is very important for NCEA success. Students have to be skilful on an instrument to pass the solo and group performance standards. Generally this cannot be taught in classroom music. Often the most successful have parents that have paid for private lessons.'

Strategies used to prepare students for NCEA Level 1

The final and most significant questions in the survey examined strategies used by teachers to prepare students for NCEA Level 1, and how extra and co-curricular music activities feed into this:

What strategies do you use in Years 9 and 10 music to help get students to the required level for NCEA Level 1? Please give as much detail as you wish.

As this was the focus of my research, I have summarised the findings into the following points:

1. Many teachers – about 35% of respondents – noted that they **treat Year 10 like a mini-Year 11**, like this respondent: 'I treat Year 10 Music like a mini-NCEA course and scaffold them through all the skills they will need to be successful at Level 1.' To my thinking, this is a practical and effective idea, although given the scarcity of time it would be very important to do this in a holistic way (linking to my second point). In a similar vein, another respondent noted that they provide: 'similar conditions for assessment [to level 1] and back planning the marking so that it is in alignment.' This means that students in Year 10 begin to appreciate the conditions for assessment at Year 11.
2. **Take a holistic approach.** This is generally a sound teaching strategy for all subjects, but when teachers are constrained by time it becomes even more crucial. One respondent said: 'I try to offer a holistic approach to learning music. i.e. [students] are playing music and reading it and composing and performing and researching. Or I have units that touch on two or more aspects listed above.' Another noted that their classroom activities include: 'Listening analysis of a huge variety of genres, Itinerant lessons, Co-operative learning, Performance opportunities, Tech and gear maintenance, Theory 101.'
3. **Focus on theory and music software skills.** One respondent described how: 'every lesson we do 10-15 minutes of theory before getting in groups and playing,' and indeed, theory was an issue identified by many respondents. One summed up the views of many: 'It is hard work getting the theory diet right without turning them off and keeping it fun. It is a fine balance.' Nevertheless, for students to be successful at Year 11 – particularly in the external standards – having well-rounded theory knowledge is essential. Several respondents also mentioned that they start using music software early, and if resources are available, this could be an excellent idea. The wealth of websites and apps that reinforce theory concepts, along with the fun and interactive ways that music can be made on programmes such as GarageBand should be embraced by teachers (and this links into digital technologies as well). For those with devices but no means to purchase music writing software such as Sibelius, MuseScore and Noteflight are free and absolutely capable of doing anything all but the most advanced students at Years 9 and 10 could want. However, whilst working with students using these programmes, it is important to integrate this learning holistically.
4. **Encourage students to learn an instrument, either privately or through an itinerant programme.** This is a significant issue, also identified by many respondents. One noted: 'Instrumental learning is the big problem as students are not learning instruments at primary school and there is less take up at secondary school.' Another said that: 'Instrumental learning is the biggest problem. There needs to be a rethink around how and where instrumental learning happens

at primary school level. The Sistema programme³ needs to be expanded nationwide.' Few music teachers would disagree that instrumental lesson uptake is more beneficial when it takes place early, at Primary or Intermediate school. Yet, presently, there are potential difficulties in keeping itinerant schemes running even at a high school level (see Dastgheib, 2016), without venturing beyond this into the Intermediate and Primary sectors. I suspect that many secondary music teachers may want to get involved in schools in their community, but are lacking in time and energy. Yet, investment in this area may see the biggest payoff later on, if programmes and connections can be implemented.

5. **Keep in good contact with parents.** We know this is good advice in education generally, but it is good to bear in mind. One teacher notes: 'we [...] keep in contact with parents to let them know how their child is going and the potential they are showing. [This] helps to get them practicing.'
6. **'Advanced' music offered as an additional subject, or individual programmes at Year 11:** Naturally this is resource-dependent, but potentially beneficial to teachers if the option is available. At one school, a teacher describes how: "advanced" music is offered at both years 9 and 10. Students can take both beginners and then advanced music.'

Finally, the survey asked about extra-curricular and co-curricular music activities specifically, as these can be such a fundamental part of music-making at school for many, and for the most part, take place outside the classroom. I asked:

Does your school have any extra-curricular music activities which assist students with classroom music at all Year levels? If yes, please briefly detail.

Unsurprisingly, there was a big variety in responses, from 'none' or 'hardly any' to hugely varied offerings. Although several teachers noted that 'all' extra and co-curricular music assisted students in the classroom, one teacher wrote that: 'Co-curricular groups only help students with prior knowledge'. I suspect that whilst students with prior knowledge will probably fit into co-curricular groups more easily, those with less prior knowledge also stand to benefit.

However, a number of other suggestions worth considering came out of this question. The first of these was to take advantage of school performance opportunities early in the year to assess student performances. 'The Year 10 semester begins in the second half of the year so the students are encouraged to sit solo and group performance during the first half at opportunities such as House Music cup, chamber music, rock quest etc. [which leaves] the second half of the year freer to cover [everything else].' As mentioned above, getting Year 10 students ready for the rigours of NCEA standards can be a good idea, and having this take place early in the year – when possible – leaves more time for other classroom study. However, it must be noted that this requires students to be at a level where they are able to do the performance early in the year, and may also be time-intensive for teachers in organisational terms.

A second suggestion is utilising or creating outreach programmes. One respondent describes how this works at their school: 'We have an outreach band programme running. This is based out of CSM [Christchurch School of Music]. It is highly effective with reading, performing, and understanding theory. If students opt into this programme (which starts at Year 5) they are well and truly prepared for NCEA Level 1 Music. One boy who had been going a year sat Grade 3 trumpet. It just gets the students reading and playing straight away.' Schemes or outreach programmes like

³ The Sistema programme provides free instrumental tuition to children from a low-socio economic background. For more information, see <http://www.mch.govt.nz/what-we-do/our-projects/current/sistema-aotearoa>.

this could also be used for specific elements of the curriculum; for example, another respondent noted that they 'also had a mentor from the NZMC [New Zealand Music Commission] for 10 hours this year who focused on Composition/Songwriting.' This would be particularly useful if a classroom teacher felt less confident in that area

Finally, one respondent described having a 'senior volunteer mentorship programme' which offered extra instrumental tuition to junior students. It worked like a buddy system, with senior students tutoring junior ones on their instrument of choice. For schools who have more students wanting itinerant lessons than they can offer – or for students wanting a little extra – this could be an excellent way of both providing lessons and giving seniors the opportunity to get some teaching experience. As well as this, it helps foster the types of relationships we want seniors and juniors to have; a positive partnership embodying the principle of tuakana–teina and recognizing the value of ako.

Conclusions and recommendations

I have summarised the survey findings as follows:

1. Teachers working with students in Years 9 and 10 should be prepared that the majority of students will have little to no prior knowledge, depending on the school makeup and its feeder schools;
2. Students can be assisted to reach NCEA Level 1 through a carefully planned programme, including:
 1. Having Year 10 mirror Year 11 by back planning;
 2. A holistic approach;
 3. A focus on integrated and applied theory and music software use;
 4. Plentiful and varied co-curricular activities, which feed into assessment opportunities when possible;
 5. A supportive and effective itinerant programme
3. To assist future outcomes, secondary school teachers should, where possible, create links with Primary and Intermediate feeder schools to potentially set up instrumental music schemes, and/or access outside mentoring and assistance programmes available to them.

At this point, I must acknowledge that classrooms in all countries are fraught with difficulties that theoretical best practice does not take into account. The demands on teachers' time are unlikely to cease in the near future, and I have already seen the importance of balancing planning, teaching, and organisation with personal needs and self-care, not to mention other school demands. What I have attempted to do in this article is outline, through the survey respondents' ideas, how teachers might use their time most effectively to achieve the best outcomes.

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‘A Muse of Fire’: An investigation of the extent to which personalised learning about Shakespeare can be promoted through active, ensemble-based teaching methods that provoke empathy.

LEIGH SYKES - HOBSONVILLE POINT SECONDARY SCHOOL

Abstract

This paper investigates active, ensemble-based teaching methods and the ways in which these can prompt the personalisation of learning to occur, before examining the extent to which application of these teaching methods has an impact on Year 9 and 10 students. The paper will argue that collaborative, co-construction of meaning creates the connectedness and empathy necessary to personalise learning, by examining cases where students provide evidence in their own words. The paper will also suggest that the examination and construction of both theoretical and practical inputs must be carefully managed in identifying the extent to which personalisation of learning takes place when prompted by the application of active teaching methods.

Biography



LEIGH SYKES moved to New Zealand from the UK in 2009. She was Teacher in Charge of Drama at Rutherford College in West Auckland from 2009 to 2015, and became Learning Area Leader for Performing Arts at Hobsonville Point Secondary School in 2016. She trained at the University of Durham and recently completed a Master of Arts (with Distinction) in the Advanced Teaching of Shakespeare with the University of Warwick. Leigh's research interests are focused on active teaching methods and developing the cultural value of Shakespeare for New Zealand students. She is keen to create and enhance the understanding of Shakespeare through performance.

Introduction

Hobsonville Point Secondary School (HPSS) serves the growing community of Hobsonville Point in the North-West of Auckland, and has now completed its third year of operation. The School's mission is to 'Innovate through personalised learning, Engage through powerful partnerships and Inspire through deep challenge and inquiry'. Teaching and learning is designed to support this mission and the creation and support of personalised learning is seen as crucial to its delivery.

I have chosen to teach a 400-year old English playwright's work to Year 9 and 10 students in a three-year old New Zealand school, because Shakespeare is my personal 'Muse of Fire.' Shakespeare's works, and especially the language within them, are the bright and powerful beacons that inspired me to become a Drama teacher, and these works represent my personal cultural capital. I also believe that that all students are entitled to be exposed to Shakespeare and his works, making the teaching of Shakespeare a culturally responsive activity for me. Macfarlane (2004) believes that one of the central requisites of a culturally responsive classroom which helps to engage and promote achievement for Māori and Pasifika students is the 'passion and enthusiasm' (p. 97) of the teacher. I therefore seek to share my passion for Shakespeare with all students, and in doing so, to provide an opportunity for personalised learning to occur. In an environment where students are meeting a new body of knowledge, they are able to learn with and from me and each other – a process which then promotes Ako:

The concept of ako describes a teaching and learning relationship, where the educator is also learning from the student and where educators' practices are informed by the latest research and are both deliberate and reflective. Ako is grounded in the principle of reciprocity. (MoE, 2013, p. 23)

Leadbeater (2005) defines personalised learning as a "highly interactive process of learning [which] comes through interaction in which the learner discovers for themselves" (p. 8), while Bolstad and Gilbert et al (2012) suggest that personalised learning takes places when "learning activities and the curriculum/knowledge content they engage with are shaped in ways that reflect the input and interests of students, as well as what teachers know to be important knowledge". (p. 19)

The active, ensemble-based teaching methods that form the basis for this research seem entirely consistent with the concepts of both Ako and personalised learning, since these methods support a collaborative, inquiry-based experience that enables students to learn with and from each other. When investigating a Shakespeare play, all learners feel equally concerned about dealing with the language, and Winston (2015) notes that

at all levels of education, the very strangeness of his [Shakespeare's] language can act potentially as a great leveller, as all children will be challenged by it, be they first or additional language users. (p. 33)

Teaching a Shakespeare play therefore seems to be an effective way of challenging students to create their own learning from and about material that is unfamiliar.

Project Aims and Literature Review

Through this project I aim to test my own belief in the efficacy of active, ensemble-based methods in the teaching of Shakespeare against a growing belief that personalised learning is necessary to prepare learners for the increasingly complex world that awaits them after school. Although much has been written about active teaching methods, little research has been carried out on the extent to which this specific method for teaching Shakespeare can stimulate personalised learning and so this project seeks to begin that conversation.

My definition of active teaching methods is based on the similar viewpoints on pedagogy taken by those such as Gibson (1998), Stredder (2009) and Neelands (2009). Gibson (1998) argues that the popularity of Shakespeare's plays stems from "their infinite capacity for adaptation" in both performance and educational contexts, and he is clear in his belief that "Shakespeare was a man of the theatre who intended his words to be spoken and acted out on stage". (p. xii) This belief in the theatricality of Shakespeare's work leads Gibson to conclude that approaching the plays as scripts, using active methods that "release students' imagination and involve them in speaking and acting" (p. xii) allows those students to make their own personal responses and connections with Shakespeare that are "both critical and appreciative". (p. xiii)

Stredder (2009) recognises that active methods offer a collaborative approach, creating experiences for students that are "creative, stimulating, participatory, offering ownership" (p. 14), and that collaboration is a powerful tool in ensuring inclusivity and success for participants, since "Active Shakespeare means that all participants are active. Shakespeare is shared". (p. 10-11) Neelands (2009) suggests that active methods create a social or collaborative response to Shakespeare where "The principles of the ensemble...require ... a mutual respect amongst the players, a shared commitment to truth...a shared absorption in the artistic process of dialogic and social meaning making". (p. 183) The power of social collaboration is one of the aspects that aligns these methods very closely to the Māori concept of *Ako*, as mentioned previously.

While the literature relating to active, ensemble-based methods has a long tradition, discussions about personalisation became much more prevalent in the approach to the 21st Century. Early on in my research it became apparent that the literature discussing active, ensemble-based methods and literature discussing personalisation share very similar terminology. In many cases, without context, it could be assumed that the same topic is being discussed. When Stredder (2009) describes students as "personally involved, enmeshed even, in a learning matrix in which they must actively manipulate resources and make individual decisions" (p. 15) and Leadbeater (2005) suggests that "Learning should be a deeply personal experience" (p. 8), the connections between the two topics seem clear.

However, such compatibility of terminology is not always the case when personalised learning is being discussed. Littky and Allen's (1999) view of personalisation focuses strongly on knowing the student and family well enough to make decisions that make learning relevant and exciting for the student. They start from the view that the student's interests and abilities must be at the centre of the curriculum and that these interests should be used to help students to identify learning and experiences that "spark the natural learning process, starting with the student's interests then building in new information that is meaningful to each individual learner". (p. 5-6) The natural conclusion of putting the student at the heart of the learning experience is "organizing a school around the student, not the subject matter". (p. 6).

Leadbeater compares learners and their parents to investors in education and describes learning as a series of transactions. He sees personalisation as being a "larger productive system that creates learning" (p. 5) and notes that personalised learning "is not just about giving learners more choice" (p. 8), but that it in fact "puts the emphasis on learning through interaction and co-creation" (p. 23).

This individual aspect of personalised learning is the one that most closely intersects with the concepts of active, ensemble-based methods, and this aspect is further explored by Bolstad and Gilbert *et al.* (2012) in their report to the NZ Ministry of Education. They develop Leadbeater's (2005) concepts of personalisation within education when they identify "deep and shallow expressions of personalisation" (p. 19) where

In deep expressions of practice, students' learning activities and the curriculum/knowledge content they engage with are shaped in ways that reflect the input and interests of students, as well as what teachers know

to be important knowledge (p. 19),

while “*In shallow expressions of practice, the curriculum content is still determined by the teacher, and students’ input is limited to more shallow choices about which activity(ies) they will undertake*”. (p. 19) They suggest that inspiring these deep expressions of practice will require schools to encourage “*multiplicity, diversity and difference*” (p. 25) by arranging the school experiences around “*exploring the connections—or spaces—between people, things and ideas, and what can happen there”.* (p. 26) As well as exploring the importance of making connections in learning, Bolstad and Gilbert *et al.* recognise that “*Experiences are critical to learning. Just as learners need knowledge to think with, they also need experiences to think with*”. (p. 15) They suggest that the experiences students have through their learning should develop and enhance the connections that they make with their world, thus building their ability to learn and function within that world.

However, if we wish to claim that active methods could improve assessment outcomes for students, we must address the fact that formal assessment is generally applied to an individual. This raises the question of whether the benefit of a collaborative experience can be identified for an individual, or whether individual achievement that is the result of a collaborative process can be identified and measured. Since *personalised learning* (my emphasis) implies individual learning, this creates a dichotomy between the generally collaborative nature of active methods and the individual nature of personalisation.

This apparent tension between the social and collaborative aspects of active methods and the benefit to the individual finds some resolution when Campbell and Robinson *et al.* (2007) describe personalisation as “*a collective activity, not an individualised one*” (p. 151), noting that “*the collective frame leads to the individual developing her/his learning*” (p. 151), while Leadbeater (2006) describes personalisation as “*participation and co-creation of value*” (p. 106) and Hartley (2008) suggests that “*Individual personalisation - somewhat paradoxically - requires for its accomplishment new collectives, new collaborations*”. (p. 371) These descriptions all suggest that a collaborative, group approach is necessary for personalisation to occur. Leadbeater (2005) also suggests that “*Learning should be a deeply personal experience*” (p. 8) and that personalised learning “*means engaging learners in a highly interactive process of learning... Learning comes through interaction in which the learner discovers for themselves, reflects on what they have learned and how*” (p. 8), while Littky and Allen note that “*students are encouraged to look to their personal experiences of the world to discover what knowledge really matters*”. (p. 6)

Taking these varying definitions, and the tensions between them into account, prompted me to be very clear about my own view of personalisation and to create my own definition for this project as ***‘learning that creates personal connections for students, and where collaborative experience is a critical aspect of creating these connections’***. This reflects a constructivist approach to learning, whereby students create their own knowledge within a structure created for them by the teacher. This being the case, I agree with Campbell and Robinson *et al.* (2009) that individual learning can be created through the collaborative process, and so the tension between the social and the individual can be resolved.

Research Methodology

This project is set very firmly within the sphere of drama education, however, in more precise terms, this project is about investigating whether an identifiable effect can be created by a particular cause. It could therefore be suggested that the intended action of this project is to bring about change. However, the true aim of this project is not so much about implementing a specific pedagogy to bring about different (and therefore implicitly ‘better’) learning outcomes for this specific group of students, but rather to investigate the extent to which this specific pedagogy has the ability to stimulate a different way of learning. The main area of interest for this research is therefore to understand the experience, ideas, beliefs and values in my research group. It is about investigating

people and their responses to certain situations and stimuli, and it is the type, or quality, of the experiences that interests me.

Opie (2004) recognises this as an anti-positivistic approach, which “*seeks to obtain softer facts, and insights into how an individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which they find themselves*” (p. 8), and goes on to suggest that the most appropriate way of approaching such research is via qualitative techniques, where “*interviews and participant-observation would predominate.*” (p. 9). Fleming et al. (2004) suggest that qualitative methods are a natural fit for research that touches on artistic pursuits, since ‘*The arts are more at home with narratives than numbers. Such approaches are more equipped to explore process and to deal with the ambiguities and complexities found in the arts.*’ (p. 178). It therefore seems that a qualitative approach to the research is the most appropriate way to address my research question.

Having established that qualitative research best fits my research question, it is necessary to investigate the many different ways of designing the research methodology within the qualitative framework, in order to generate the most appropriate data for my research question.

I am particularly attracted to the concept of knowledge that is generated and stored in the body (literally embodied), and so this informs my research position. In carrying out research, O’Toole (2006) suggests that we should “*take note of David Dreschler’s comment: ‘What we decide to research and the way we conduct our research is a political statement about who and what is important to us’.*” (p. 16) What is important to me in this research is testing a pedagogy I find persuasive (active, ensemble-based methods) against the perceived requirements of future-focused learning, and so it is important that my methodology has the ability to capture aspects of human behaviour and understanding.

One qualitative method that seems to provide a framework for viewing data on “*shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs, and language*” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 68) is ethnography. O’Toole (2006) describes ethnography as building an understanding of “*how a group of people construct and experience their world*” (p. 40) and suggests that the ethnographic field worker is “*an engaged co-participant who builds relationships with people within a social and political context*”. (p. 40) This description resonates very strongly with my position with the students I am investigating for this project. Working in an active, ensemble-based way requires collaboration between teacher and student so that knowledge and meaning are co-constructed. I therefore believe that there is an ethnographic aspect to this project.

O’Toole belief that “*case study honours the agency of the participants and positions them as experts rather than merely a source of data for analysis*” (p. 46) speaks to the importance of the experience and participation of the research subjects. Since I am most interested in their views, attitudes and experiences, this persuades me that case study can shed light on the type of inquiry I am engaged in.

Although I have determined that this study is qualitative in nature, the data generated by the teaching activities have some quantitative characteristics that should be acknowledged. Some interrogation of statistical trends within these data gives a fuller picture within which to place the outcomes of the research, as well as allowing me to identify themes and generate suppositions. Therefore this study can best be described as mixed-methods, due to the use of a combination of different methodologies in the gathering and investigation of a range of data.

Research Design

Having established that a qualitative inquiry was the best fit for addressing the questions I was investigating, I designed learning sequences and data collection tools that would enable me to gather and analyse data that could illuminate those questions.

In order to gather opinions and attitudes, I conducted a survey prior to the beginning of teaching, so that I could identify aspects the students were looking forward to, their concerns about the module and their general views about Shakespeare. Results of the initial survey showed that 84% of respondents identified the language of the plays as one of their concerns about studying Shakespeare, giving reasons ranging from *“the vocabulary is very different and hard to get used to”* to *“the dialogue is quite complicated”*. (Sykes, 2016a, p. 1) However, when asked what they were most interested in learning more about during the module, 15% of respondents also identified language. Interestingly, when asked what they thought would be a helpful lesson about Shakespeare, 38% of respondents identified an aspect of performing, acting or *“Hands on activities”*. (Sykes, 2016a, p. 2)

This data prompted me to plan teaching sequences that focused first on language activities, in order to address these concerns. I delivered the teaching sequences using two different types of data collection: observation via video recording and documentation. The recorded teaching sessions were reviewed and specific instances of learning were identified and coded. This coding related to my research question by identifying instances of responses that required some active engagement from the students, for example collaboration in generating meaning or empathy with characters or situations in the text, as well as identifying instances of personal connection. Documentation was in the form of individual student blog posts that responded to specific questions posed at the end of a teaching session.

The sequences focused mainly on Romeo and Juliet, as participants had the opportunity to see a production of the play at the Pop-Up Globe in Auckland, but I also chose to deliver one session based on King Lear as a contrast. Following the teaching sequences, a further interview was carried out with a subset of those who had responded to the initial survey and who had also published blog posts in response to some or all of the teaching sequences. This interview was recorded. The questions in this interview were designed to access the respondents' views about the level of personal connection they had experienced during the teaching sequences.

Since the aim of my research question is to investigate the extent to which active, ensemble-based teaching methods promote an effect, it was important to ensure that I collected data from a range of active and less active participants in the teaching sequences. Therefore, in order to generate data that might reflect different viewpoints or contradict data collected from the students who had responded to most activities, I also conducted interviews with students who had not responded to the survey, or published blog posts. The questions in this interview were designed to establish the views and attitudes of these students towards the teaching sequences, as well as on their more general engagement in other modules.

Finally, I kept a personal research journal recording activities and outcomes as they occurred. This allowed me to reflect on any learning points immediately and to ensure that I captured any pertinent points or learning outside of the teaching activities included in this research project.

Ethical Considerations

All participants self-selected the module, based on a description that emphasised Shakespeare's skills in investigating humanity alongside an invitation to investigate how Shakespeare is relevant to students' lives in 2016. The students were then approached individually and given information about the nature of the research, the research methods to be used and the eventual outcome of the research process. They were informed that their personal data would be treated as confidential with the only identifying factor being a number, their school year level and gender. They were also informed that all of their contributions would be anonymised in the final research report.

Since I am both Teacher and Researcher for these students, it was very important that

they understood that their participation in the research was not in any way linked to any assessment that was part of the teaching sequence. This was included as part of the initial discussion about the project.

Teaching Activities

As already discussed, teaching sequences were created to fit within a framework of inquiry-led teaching, where students were offered activities that introduced them to aspects of Shakespeare’s work in general and to the plays Romeo and Juliet and King Lear in particular.

All active sessions began with warm up activities designed to encourage collaboration and a sense of ensemble. They included movement activities such as ‘Stop, Go, Jump, Clap’, where students must move through the space and respond as quickly as possible to the four instructions given, and ‘Person to Person’, where students move through the space until stopped by the teacher. They then work with the person closest to them to physically connect as instructed by the teacher, e.g. hand to hand, foot to foot, until the phrase ‘person to person’ signals them to move away to find a new partner. These warm up activities aimed to create an environment where students felt able to participate and contribute, and grow comfortable with their peers and the physicality and energy of the sessions.

The first two active sessions used activities that explored Shakespeare’s language. Focusing on the Queen Mab speech from Act 1, Scene 4 of Romeo and Juliet, the first session included activities such as using movement (e.g. galloping) to explore and sound out the rhythm of iambic pentameter, creating new lines of iambic pentameter and speaking iambic pentameter lines chorally and individually. Students then worked in groups to create freeze frames of specific sections of the speech (see Figure 1)

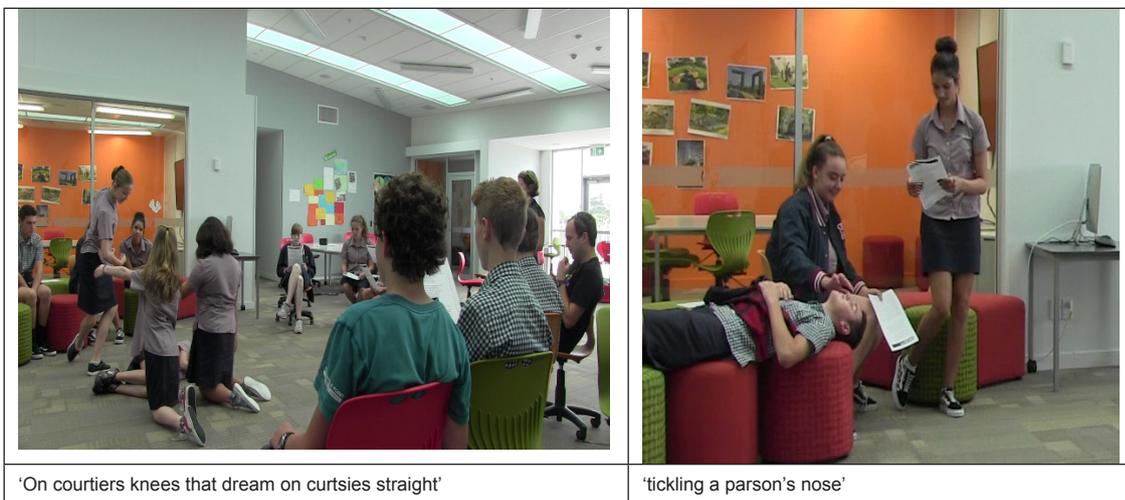


Figure 1: Freeze frames of sections of the Queen Mab speech:

Finally, all groups performed their section of the speech chorally as they demonstrated their freeze frames. In this way, the whole speech was performed vocally and visually. Following the session, students were asked to create a blog post answering questions on their own and others’ freeze frames, their understanding of the character of Mercutio and their discoveries about Shakespeare’s work writing

The second session focused on Juliet’s O Serpent Heart speech from Act 3, scene 2. In this session students explored language through movement by reading the speech from punctuation point to punctuation point as a group, then reading individually while moving and changing direction at each punctuation point. They explored antithesis through creating images of antithetical statements in the speech e.g. ‘beautiful tyrant’;

'fiend angelical'; 'dove-feathered raven' and then explored Juliet's situation by working in groups to have two students deliver the positive and negative aspects of the speech to a Juliet placed in the middle. Following the session, students were asked to create a blog post answering questions about the language of the speech and their understanding of Juliet's character and situation at this point in the play.

The next two sessions focused on making performative choices about aspects of the play, using the Capulets' party in Act 1 Scene 5 and the conflict between Juliet and her parents in Act 3 Scene 5. In the session relating to Juliet's conflict, students were asked to identify issues that they might disagree with their parents about, before working in small groups to identify examples of Capulet threatening or showing concern for Juliet. The groups then delivered these phrases to their Juliet, before undertaking an exercise where they used movement within a space to respond to what Juliet's parents say to her, for example moving closer to Lady Capulet when she tried to comfort Juliet. They also had the opportunity to provide Spoken Thoughts for any of the characters, before discussing the factors that contributed to their movement choices and Spoken Thoughts in the scene.

The session focused on Act 1, scene 5 allowed students to take on different characters attending the party at the Capulets' house, with one small group acting as directors. The groups enacted the scene as their different characters, refining the action after each attempt (see Figure 2).



Student demonstrating how servants would carry trays



Servants carrying out tasks



Romeo enters the party



Capulets and guests arrive at the party

Figure 2: Staging Act 1, scene 5

The final session focused on Act 1, scene 1 of *King Lear*. Students were first taken through a textual analysis of the scene before receiving information about specific characters. They were asked to place the characters on a range of continua, such as 'who is most loyal to Lear' and give their reasons for their placement. They then created freeze frames of characters such as *three siblings; master and servant; the politicians;* and then for themes such as *'madness; loyalty; deceiving an important person'* (see Figure 3). Students then worked together to refine one of the images, based on their perceptions of the characters in it. Finally they discussed what they had discovered about this play.



Figure 3: Constructing a continuum of characters in Act 1, scene 1 of *King Lear*

Following these active sessions, students chose the topics and formats of their individual inquiries about Shakespeare and his work, based on their own interests and curiosity.

Outcomes: Language focus (Queen Mab and O Serpent Heart)

These activities aimed to address the results of the initial survey, where respondents identified language as one aspect of studying Shakespeare that they felt could be difficult. These first sessions therefore allowed students to explore Shakespeare's poetic language using physical embodiment to promote understanding of the form and structure of the language.

The outcomes of the first session (Queen Mab) included clear examples of language deconstruction, as students used their new understanding of Shakespeare's language to create their own line of iambic pentameter. The second session (O Serpent Heart) generated examples of students describing a physical sensation they had experienced as part of the work in the session. There were also examples of empathy, which demonstrated students' ability to place themselves in a character's shoes due to an understanding of the way that language is used. For example, following the Punctuation Shift exercise, Student I showed clear empathy as she suggested that at the conclusion

of the speech being considered, Juliet would feel *"Not just tired, but you don't want to carry on"* (Sykes, 2016d, p. 2), while Student L1 noted that Juliet is *"Feeling stuck, stuck in a certain situation"* (Sykes, 2016d, p. 2). The quality of individual responses in these sessions is apparent when students show personal connections to the Echoing exercise, where positive and negative aspects of the speech are identified and spoken to 'Juliet', with Student L describing the experience as *"like what happens when you're trying to decide between good and bad. It's like having those two on your shoulders"* (Sykes, 2016d, p. 3), and student L1 recognising that *"It's your conscience"*. (Sykes, 2016d, p. 3) This student also makes a very important connection to another section of the play, purely through the way that language is used when she notes that *"I kind of find a similarity between the line that says 'a damned saint, an honourable villain' to the fight scene, when Romeo and Mercutio are talking about 'o brawling love, o loving hate'"*. (Sykes, 2016d, p. 2)

Only six of 20 students published individual blogs in response to questions based on these sessions, which could suggest that a majority of students did not engage sufficiently with the learning in the session. However, the collaborative work used to create meaning and the high level of empathetic responses to exercises such as Punctuation Shift seem to have informed the blogs that were published. For example, Student I demonstrated her ability to interpret the text when describing her view of Mercutio (based on the Queen Mab speech) as *"very descriptive, and contradictory of himself ... he uses opposite words a lot in his speeches. He has an imagination, and can make up characters to portray his feelings or explain something"*. This student also shows a clear understanding of the use and effect of language and its ability to create individual connections, when she suggests that

Shakespeare uses adjectives and similes/metaphors in his writing to make the audience connect with the actor and feel their emotions, which is why when people go to see good plays/movies they end up crying or changing their mood depending on ... the entertainment they are watching. His writing also references how we all feel and think at different times, and that makes us relate and sympathise with the character.

Student M notes that *"the text ... made me feel quite confused as the text was consistently going back and forth with opposites for example: "A damned saint an honorable villain", "O serpent heart hid by flowering face"*, which I believe suggests a response that is empathetic (*"made me feel quite confused"*) as well as analytical based on a physical experience. He goes on to note that:

Juliet is highly confused and second guessing every choice that she has made for example wondering if marrying Romeo was a good idea in the long run let alone if he is villain or her hero. The language in the text suggests Juliet is highly confused with her relationship and desperate for the truth.

The quality of this analysis suggests to me that the student connected with the experience of exploring the verse using the Punctuation Shift exercise. Student L1's ability to empathise is also noticeable in her written responses, such as her work following the Serpent Heart session:

the speeches made me feel saddened by the realizations of Juliet as she mourns for the loss of Tybalt and the banishment of her husband, Romeo. I noticed that the way that the speech is said and the rhythm about it shows us that Juliet is confused, and Shakespeare truly embodies this when the rhythm of the words comes into effect, as some lines don't add up. At this point in the play, Juliet is confused and conflicted as to the true identity of Romeo. The language helps you understand how Juliet is feeling.

Her use of the word 'embodies' in this response is fascinating and suggests to me an instinctive understanding that the physical sensation she experienced has had a direct impact on her thinking about the character and the situation she is in, which has informed her written, individual response. I believe that the quality of individual work from a range of different students show connections with the language and the plays that are personal, and thus are demonstrations of personalised learning taking place.

Outcomes: Performative choices focus (Staging Act 3 Scene 5 and Act 1 Scene 5)

By this stage in the module, students were working on inquiries into an aspect of Shakespeare's life or works. They had identified questions that they wanted to answer and were researching information to assist with answering these questions. They had all been given a number of options for sharing the outcome of their inquiries, which included a presentation or the performance of a scene. This phase of the teaching sequence was therefore designed to support students in investigating performance aspects of Shakespeare's work by exposing them to ways in which meaning is created through making performative decisions about characters or aspects of staging the plays.

The two sessions generated a high number of quality individual responses, for example, in the Act 3 Scene 5 session, Student L1 connects personally to the topic of arguing with parents, noting that the outcome of arguments *"can be emotionally scarring, depending on what you're fighting about"* (Sykes, 2016e, p. 1) and then displays empathy when she recognises that Juliet's feeling at the end of the scene is one of *"Abandonment, because that's basically what happens"*. (Sykes, 2016e, p. 2) Other students also display empathy with Juliet, when they respond *"I'm worried about what's happening"* (Sykes, 2016b, p. 2), *"I'm scared"* (Sykes, 2016b, p. 2) and *"I'm confused"* (Sykes, 2016b, p. 2), and with Lady Capulet, with comments such as *"I don't understand why she doesn't want to marry him"* (Sykes, 2016b, p. 2) and *"I'm about to lose my temper with her"*. (Sykes, 2016b, p. 2) In making decisions about characters or staging, students showed clear understanding of the way that these performative decisions make meaning, exemplified by Student I working with students playing teenagers at the ball and directing them with *"You're going to spy them from across the room, and you're gonna whisper"* (Sykes, 2016f, p. 3), as well as explaining why particular staging decisions were made, by observing that *"If you had them just in an empty room, it wouldn't be as 'Oh my god, they've found each other'"*. (Sykes, 2016f, p. 4).

Student S is just as clear in his suggestions for how the scene should begin when he tells the students in the guests and workers group *"I think there were a bit too many people crowding around the table...instead of just crowding around the table, move around talking to each other and then wait for them to come around and hand out drinks"*. (Sykes, 2016f, p. 2) He also shows clear evidence of taking the audience into account in his staging choices when he tells a student playing a guard to *"Stand there and face the audience"*. (Sykes, 2016f, p. 2) Student L1 demonstrates clear understanding of the effect of performative choices when she suggests that Romeo and Juliet meet in the middle of a public event in order to *"show the fact that they've come together when everyone else is sort of like in a group, so they're separated and they've come together"* (Sykes, 2016F, p. 3) while Student M also gives clear directions to other students playing the guests: *"I'd like you to enter over there [pointing to stage left] and wander around the room. Both of you will arrive at the same time"*. (Sykes, 2016f, p. 1) This student also makes performative choices for a student who has described his character as lazy: *"Act like you're falling asleep and then wake up when something happens"*. (Sykes, 2016f, p. 2). The clarity of these responses demonstrates students who have clearly connected to the events and characters.

Although students were not required to answer questions relating to these sessions, Student I chose to publish an individual response. She shows a deep level of understanding of how staging creates and informs our understanding of character,

responding to the question of why Shakespeare chose to have Romeo and Juliet meet for the first time at a public event with “*Because this shows how Romeo and Juliet saw each other across a room of laughing, moving people. They had eyes only for each other*”. The student goes on to suggest how the scene should be staged:

Romeo and Juliet should be placed across the room from each other, each unaware of the other. Interactions can happen between party guests to show how many other conversations Romeo and Juliet could have taken part in, to emphasise the fact that they had eyes only for each other. Romeo and Juliet may float a little closer together before spying each other, tiptoeing to look over the crowd and get another glance at the other, to show that their attention was immediately caught from just one glimpse of their lover to-be.

Her final response demonstrates her clear understanding of Shakespeare as a playwright when she observes that the scene is written in this way

So that Romeo and Juliet's first interactions are simple and they are unawares (sic) of the tragedy that would ensue due to their love. This makes the audience feel sorrowful, and wish that it could have stayed like that. That fact that their meeting was caused by Romeo and co.'s mischief makes the audience sigh, for the tragedy could have so easily been avoided. But perhaps Shakespeare wrote the scene in an innocent way to lull the audience into a fake sense of security, before throwing them into a confused tragedy.

The quality of these responses suggests the student has made a strong connection to the way in which meaning is made through staging, as well as displaying, I believe, a deep level of empathy with the characters. This demonstrates that these sessions have been successful in allowing students to connect to the play and create personal responses from that connection.

Outcomes: applying active teaching methods to a new play (King Lear) and the presentation of inquiries

The final phase of the teaching sequence exposed students to a new play, enabling them to test their ability to analyse and connect with an unfamiliar Shakespeare play. There were clear examples of making meaning about character or through staging, such as Student L1 interacting with a tableau created by other students and deciding “*I’m gonna move [Student I] back a little bit just because she needs to be a bit further away from her father, so that you can see that he doesn’t really want to listen to her*”. (Sykes, 2016g, p. 2) Student C2 then suggests “*I would move Lear back and kind of make him look over his shoulder at Cordelia*” (Sykes, 2016g, p. 2) and Student E2 decides “*I would have you guys [‘Goneril’ and ‘Regan’] with your arms crossed and be really snooty, like ha!*” (Sykes, 2016g, p. 2)

There is an impressive example of connecting the worlds of different plays when Student L1 notes “*I’m sort of thinking, and this is referencing what Juliet’s Mum says to her, but I’m sort of thinking Lear’s probably got the same attitude as Juliet’s Mum, saying ‘Do as thou wilt for I have done with thee’*”. (Sykes, 2016g, p. 3) There are also clear examples of empathy showing students putting themselves in the characters’ positions, for example Student I noting that “*Cordelia’s kind of like questioning. She doesn’t understand why he’s not just accepting this*” (Sykes, 2016g, p. 3), while Student E2 suggests that “*Goneril and Regan would be thinking she’s, Cordelia’s, screwed up, we get more of the kingdom and I’m really happy*”. (Sykes, 2016g, p. 2) Student L1 then describes Cordelia as “*kind of re-evaluating her life after being kicked out*” (Sykes, 2016g, p. 3).

The empathy shown by Student L1 in this session contrasts strongly with her work on analysing the scene as a text in the session immediately before. In this analysis

she identifies factual and narrative aspects of the scene, making only one reference to Cordelia's feelings, as shown in figure 4 below. I suggest that this is a clear indication of the way that students are stimulated to move from understanding text to empathising, by embodying the character's experiences. I propose that the collaborative co-construction of meaning in the active session allows students to physically experience a character's situation, thereby prompting empathy, and that this aspect of the active methods approach is the one that makes the greatest contribution to personalising learning.

from ACT 1 scene 1.
King Lear's palace.

Enter KING LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants

KING LEAR
Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.
Give me the map there. Know that we have divided
in three our kingdom; and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answer'd. Tell me, my daughters,—
Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,—

Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

GONERIL
Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;
Dearer than eye-sight, space, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;
As much as child e'er loved, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

CORDELIA
What shall Cordelia do?
Love, and be silent.

LEAR
Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
We make thee lady; to thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

REGAN
Sir, I am made
Of the self-same metal that my sister is,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love;
only she comes too short; that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys,
Which the most precious square of sense possesses;
And find I am alone felicitate
in your dear highness' love.

CORDELIA
Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so; since I am sure, my love's
More richer than my tongue.

→ Why divide
between 3?
Why not give
to one daughter

→ What about
younger siblings?

→ Don't
Disobey me

→ Cordelia feels
differently about
getting land
of her father

→ Lear thinks
Cordelia doesn't
care, and loves
him less.

Figure 4: Student L1's text analysis.

Once again, a majority of students chose not to publish blogs following this session, and this lack of engagement with written work is an aspect of the project that requires further investigation. The three students who did choose to publish blogs showed impressive individual connections. Student M displays a very clear sense of connection to the characters and an ability to make performative choices:

I felt like I can connect to the Fool. This is because he is an honest person and he can manipulate King Lear through the use of irony, sarcasm and humour, by doing this the Fool is releasing the truth out of Lear and is allowing himself to moderate the behaviour of Lear. King Lear is currently feeling betrayed, ashamed and disappointed that his daughter Cordelia is rejecting his offer, which tells how much she loves him and in return she will get a bigger third of his kingdom than her sisters do. King Lear is also feeling shocked that his favourite daughter is saying the things that she is saying...the dialogue helps support my reasoning on why he feels this way. If I were to play this scene I would be showing facial expressions that represent, Betrayal, shamefulness disappointment, and my body movement would somehow show disgust.

I find the student's statement that "*the Fool is releasing the truth out of Lear and is allowing himself to moderate the behaviour of Lear*" particularly insightful, and I suggest that the student would not have reached this conclusion without the clear sense of empathy he displays when stating "*I felt like I can connect to the Fool*". It would be fascinating to explore the ways in which the student recognises himself in the Fool, but even without this, the evidence displays a connection that typifies empathy inspired by active engagement in the tasks.

Following the active methods sessions, students completed their inquiries and shared the outcomes of them. The formats chosen for this sharing suggest that students built on the active methods sessions, since 13 of the 20 students chose to perform as a character or use performative methods. Student I originally worked with a partner to create "*An interview with me ... pretending to be Shakespeare and answering questions (both answers and question will be scripted)*". The student performed a live interview as Shakespeare where she responded to questions such as "*Did you bend your ideas to what was popular at the time?*" with responses developed from knowledge of the plays: "*This above all: to thine own self be true, it must follow, as night does day, thou canst not then be false to any man*" and responding "*The theme that be mine to love most reflects on the horror of love, and the violence that ensues in the face of love. These violent delights have violent ends, / And in their triumph die, like fire and powder*" when asked "*What themes were your favourite to pop in here and there?*"

Student S and Student L1 both chose to represent their inquiries by creating performances. Student S created a film with a group of four other students, in which he plays the role of Shakespeare, who has been kidnapped and brought forward in time to help the other students with their homework (very reminiscent of Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure). As Shakespeare, the student attempts to create some Shakespearean language, exclaiming "*Where art I? Who are thee before me?*" when he awakes following his kidnapping; responding to items such as an iPhone with the exclamation "*What is this witchcraft?*" and describing a t-shirt as "*more of a tragedy than Romeo and Juliet*". Student L1 created an enacted scene with two other students, with the Weird Sisters from Macbeth as the main characters. In a blog post once the inquiry was underway, this student notes that:

the group that I am in decided that we were going to look in to the so called curse and myths surrounding the Scottish Play. We decided on this because it was the subject ... that most interested us, as we wanted to know more about why everyone says that the play is cursed ... So far we have actually found that most people are blaming the curse on the fact that Shakespeare used so called actual Black Magic spells in the three sister's incantations.

From here, the group created a scene that imagined the sisters discussing the effects of their 'curse' and trying to decide what they should do about it:

The Macbeth Curse

Carmen's taking a nap. **Persephone's** drawing. **Scarlett** storms in with newspaper in hand.

Persephone: Where hast thou been sister?

Scarlett (angrily): What hath thou done! *holds up newspaper* You have taken this too far!

Persephone: But sister, we have done nothing

Scarlett: You have done nothing you say *whacks **Carmen** with newspaper* Look what is said. What hath thou done?'

I believe both of these examples show personalisation of learning by performing as a character, based on students working collaboratively and displaying empathy. I propose that students would not have felt compelled to display their learning performatively without the stimulus of the active methods session.

In the end of module interview Student E1 suggests that personalisation is learning "in a way that you understand it, in a way that you almost enjoy it more" (Sykes, 2016h, p. 6) while Student E2 defines personalisation as being able to "Take something that many people have done before and make it special to you, so take something and just kind of make it your own. Put your own personal brand on something that's been done many times before". (Sykes, 2016h, p. 6) These students have both shown evidence of enjoying their learning, as well as providing responses that suggest they have made personal connections and choices about their learning. I would also suggest that Student L1's responses and the work she has produced also demonstrate the creation of new understanding and knowledge, since working collaboratively to research information on the 'Macbeth curse', then crafting the research evidence into a new piece of drama shows an ability to make connections and construct meaning that is a clear example of my own definition of personalisation.

However, the most impressive example of work that meets my definition of personalisation came from Student I. Having already shown the ability to interrogate the plays for examples of Shakespeare's possible beliefs in her interview as Shakespeare, she also chose to create an entire series of blogposts written from Shakespeare's point of view, including explanations of why she had written each post and the information she had used in order to create it. This demonstrates a powerful level of empathy and creativity, exemplified by the following post where the student considers Shakespeare's possible response to the death of his son Hamnet:

*A Sonnet I have here writ, in grief of my son I lost:
What god hath chose to take I question not,
But I ask why one so young must be took.
By angel's skill this sweet child hath been wrought,
And it is only now that I close look,
To notice what I had not seen before,
The beauty of the child who is now gone.
Sweet and pure as roses and much more,
Once lovely cheeks are now so pale and wan,
Upon the face of one that we so love.
I see such good as past times did not show,
Ne'er this thought can I truly be free of,
The thought the child I love can never know,
That I have always loved him and still do,
E'en though that precious child, he never knew.
I wrote this sonnet as a variation from my normal post, as well as to see how well I could write a sonnet/how hard it is.*

Why is this post necessary?

To give an idea of what Shakespeare might have gone through.

What does it convey?

What Shakespeare may have gone through when his son died.

Does it contain fiction? If so, Why?

Yes, it does. The majority of the text is fiction, the only fact in there is the backbone to the whole sonnet, the fact that Shakespeare's son Hamnet died at the age of 11. The fiction is needed to give the reader an idea of the situation and describe in rich detail how the character starring in the selected text felt.

This post is an extremely strong example of Student E2's definition of personalisation as taking "something that many people have done before and make it special to you, ...take something and just kind of make it your own. Put your own personal brand on something that's been done many times before" (Sykes, 2016h, p. 6), and along with the work created by Student L1, it epitomises for me my own definition of personalisation as 'learning that creates personal connections for students, where collaborative experience is a critical aspect of creating these connections'. Although the existence of two separate events (active teaching sessions and the personalisation of learning for this student) does not prove a causal link, I propose that this student's decision to create a blog as Shakespeare suggests that experiencing Shakespeare's language and making meaning through staging scenes has influenced her to choose empathy as the best way to demonstrate the deep connections she appears to have made to Shakespeare and the work he created.

I believe these outcomes present examples of learning that fit with Bolstad *et al.*'s (2012) view of personalisation as being about "knowledge-building" ... in ways that draw on the strengths and knowledge of [teachers and students] in order to best support learning" (p. 42), and in my conclusion, I will seek to identify how far the evidence I have generated and analysed suggests that students have built knowledge based on the connections they made due to the active teaching methods, as well as considering further questions that the project has raised.

Outcomes: Analysis of Generated Data

Although I have identified qualitative methodologies as most appropriate for this research, the data generated by the teaching activities contains some quantitative elements. Thus, interrogating these data gives a fuller picture within which to place the outcomes of the research. First I attempted to establish the extent to which students had participated in the active methods session (Figure 5)

20 students in cohort	Year 9 Students		Year 10 Students		Totals:
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
5 or less (no.)	1	2	3	2	8
5 or less (%)	5%	10%	15%	10%	40%
6 – 15 (no.)	1	4	1	2	8
6 – 15 (%)	5%	20%	5%	10%	40%
16+ (no.)	1	2	0	1	4
16+ (%)	5%	10%	0%	5%	20%

Figure 5: Students who contributed during active sessions (by name in coded evidence): NB ALL students contributed at least once. Categories are based on 5 recorded and transcribed sessions, therefore 5 responses is considered an average of one response per session.

Detailed interrogation of this data shows that 100% of students in the group of 20 made at least one individually identified response during the active methods sessions.

Of the 8 students with the lowest number of individual responses, only 3 failed to publish any individual blogs, which suggests that the remaining 5 students with low response levels did produce evidence of interaction with the learning in the module, despite a lack of documented responses during recorded sessions. Interestingly, 1 of these students was in a group of only 6 students who published at 3 or more of the 4 blogs required during the module. Of the 12 students with 6 or more documented responses, only 2 failed to publish any individual blogs, and 5 of the remaining 10 published 3 or more of the 4 blogs required during the module. This could suggest that in general, students who gave more individual responses during the teaching sessions were more likely to produce evidence of their learning than those who made fewer responses.

Teaching sequences were designed to fit within a framework of inquiry-led teaching, where students chose the topics and formats of their individual inquiries about Shakespeare and his work. Students had the choice of working individually or in groups, with the outcome that 19 of the 20 students chose to work in groups of between 2 and 5 students. The student who chose to work individually on one inquiry also worked with one other student on a different inquiry. In investigating the data generated by the teaching sessions, I sought to identify indicators that students were personalising their learning, according to my definition stated above. This meant that I was most interested in examples of personal connection, making meaning and empathy in relation to the characters and situations in the plays studied. It should be noted at this point that although the teaching sequences were deliberately designed to provoke and promote particular types of response, in analysing the data generated by these teaching activities, I tried to establish whether the type of response that is prompted by the activity was then carried on into other pieces of work.

I identified 251 specific instances of verbal and visual student responses that I categorised as either Collaborative (the result of a group of students working together) or Individual in the data (figure 6 below) that was generated from five specific active methods teaching sessions.

The examples of collaborative responses that are categorised as Observed are mainly visual in nature, and could not be accurately attributed to one individual student. For the specific responses identified, I then further categorised these into different types, based either on the learning intention of the lesson; for example *'To help students enjoy Shakespeare's language and understand how poetic technique creates meaning'*; or on my own interpretation of the responses students could make. Interrogating this data provided the outcomes detailed in figure 6 below, where 205 of the 251 responses were categorised as Individual, while 46 were categorised as Collaborative (a response that was made by an identified individual, but generated directly as a result of a group working together).

251 identified responses	Year 9		Year 10		Student not recorded or Observed (Group)	Totals:
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Individual comment or question	6	14	2	14	0	36
Individual making a connection	6	13	3	7	0	29
Individual display of empathy	0	9	0	11	7	27
Collaborative making meaning – character decisions	0	0	0	0	7	7
Individual making meaning – character decisions	3	15	2	15	2	37
Collaborative making meaning – staging decisions	12	10	6	0	11	39
Individual making meaning – staging decisions	0	6	0	7	6	19
Individual experience	3	4	1	2	1	11
Individual imagination	1	1	0	1	0	3
Individual language deconstruction	1	11	0	4	0	16
Individual language knowledge	2	3	0	5	0	10
Individual textual analysis	4	3	2	8	0	17
Total responses:	38	89	16	74	34	251

Figure 6: Identified examples of different types of Collaborative and Personal responses from five of the six active methods teaching sequences, by type. (Sykes, 2016)

With 205 (82%) of all responses categorised as Individual, this might suggest that students are making individualised connections, which I believe are an integral aspect of demonstrating that personalisation of learning is occurring. 29 (12%) of these Individual responses exemplified a specific connection being made in relation to personal circumstances: *“It was like what happens when you’re trying to decide between good and bad. It’s like having those two on your shoulders”* (Sykes, 2016e, p. 3)

It is also notable that 27 (11%) of these responses display empathy, for example *“Lear’s thinking how can my favourite child not love me as much as my other daughters”*. (Sykes, 2016g, p. 2) I therefore suggest that students displaying empathy are demonstrating the creation of individualised connections to the plays and especially the characters within them.

Conclusion

This project aimed to investigate whether active, ensemble-based teaching methods might stimulate personalisation of learning in a particular group of students, with differing views of personalisation reflected in the responses given to the question ‘what does personalisation mean to you’ by my research subjects during the end of module interview. Student S describes personalisation as *‘Getting to choose the way you want to work, and how you do it’*, which reflects ‘shallow’ personalisation, while student E2 describes it as the ability to *‘Take something that many people have done before and make it special to you, so take something and just kind of make it your own.’*, which reflects ‘deep’ personalisation. 2 of the 8 students interviewed defined personalisation in terms of having a choice while 6 of the 8 defined it in terms of customization or individualization. As a teacher in a future-focused school, where the aim is to *‘innovate through personalised learning’* in order to prepare students for their futures, I find this a very pleasing response,

The data generated by the project suggest that the students with the greatest number of interactions in the teaching sessions displayed the highest indicators of personalisation. 3 of the 4 students with the highest number of responses (ranging from 19 to 54 responses) produced many items of work that displayed clear examples of personal connection and 3 of the 4 students chose to perform as a character or used performance aspects in the outcome of their first inquiry. I believe that this finding shows evidence of these students interacting within the sessions and making meaning for themselves through performative choices that was then used to create meaning in a performative way in the outcome of the inquiries. This chain of events is supportive of Campbell et al.’s (2007) view of personalisation as a *“collective frame”* that *“leads to the individual developing her/his learning”* (p. 151), since these students also engaged in collaboration during the active methods sessions, and experienced events that allowed them to become part of the world of the play. This in turn allowed them use that experience to further develop the personal connections they had gained in order to produce new, personal knowledge.

It was also noticeable that for these students with higher levels of responses, the number of responses steadily increased over the number of sessions. Student M, for example, made 4 responses in the first recorded session, rising to 12 in the fourth session, while Student N made no responses in the first two sessions, then made two responses in the third session rising to six in the fourth session. This steady rise in interaction could suggest that the group of students was gaining in confidence with each other, with the teaching methods or with the subject matter, but the upshot is that the quality of connections evident in the work also rose. I believe that the quality of the connections created by those students and of the work produced as a result makes it a viable suggestion that the impact of the active methods session has been noticeable.

The data also suggests that the students who showed the highest number of examples of empathy in their responses were more likely to achieve above the expected level when Learning Objectives were assessed. Since the ability to empathise is considered

the highest order of thinking within the 'Make Sense' LO at HPSS, it seems reasonable to suggest that the opportunities to engage in this higher order thinking also allowed students to demonstrate achievement at higher levels of the curriculum through creating personal and innovative meaning. 11 students showed at least one example of empathy during the recorded sessions, 4 of whom showed more than one example. 7 of the former and all of the latter were assessed as above their expected level in at least one LO. I propose that this outcome is linked to the way that these students used empathy to gain experience and understanding of the plays or characters in order to create knowledge that had specific meaning for them as individuals. The most interesting aspect of this data for me is the evidence that 13 of the 20 students (65%), chose to demonstrate empathy by performing as a character, or using other performative methods, in the outcome of their inquiries. Given the range of choices available for students to demonstrate their learning about their inquiry, 65% choosing this method suggests that exposure to active methods could have predisposed the students towards this type of demonstration. This being the case, I suggest that active methods could be applied in a wide variety of shared modules (English, Social Studies, the Arts) and so the potential to deliver personalised learning using these methods in my current environment could be substantial.

Since it is important in my context for students to create personalised learning, I believe that the outcomes of this project identify a valuable pedagogy for promoting this learning which works well alongside the inquiry-led learning that is a preferred way of providing deep challenge for all students. Indeed, since many students feel challenged by the idea of studying Shakespeare, both the teaching method and subject could be deemed to promote deep challenge. I feel confident that as a small first step towards understanding whether active methods can stimulate personalised learning, this project has achieved its goal by demonstrating that personalisation has certainly occurred for the students investigated in these case outcomes.

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How do we develop culturally-responsive contexts and practices in the Drama classroom?

A teacher-led innovation

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Abstract

With the assistance of tertiary educators and the Teacher-Led Innovation Fund (TLIF)¹, four experienced secondary drama teachers formed a professional learning group seeking to improve the impact of their teaching on achievement for Māori and Pasifika students. The research question “How do we develop culturally-responsive contexts and practices in the Drama classroom?” framed their inquiry. Their innovations were designed to build whanaungatanga, demonstrate manaakitanga, practice āko, and establish effective learning environments that would support success in Senior Drama. The outcomes of the project were evidenced by increased student engagement and agency in the classroom, increased attendance and retention of students at Senior level, and achievement in NCEA² Drama. Furthermore, the quality of participation, the level of student ownership, and the deepening relationship students had with Drama as a subject and an art form, were outcomes highly valued by these teachers. This article outlines the dimensions of culturally responsive practice explored in the 3 year project, and reflects on the impact this discipline-based professional learning group had in enabling each teacher to enhance their practice and understandings of cultural competence.

Biography



TRACEY-LYNNE CODY is an experienced drama educator, working in initial teacher education at Massey University. Her research interests include drama pedagogy and practice in (primary and secondary) school and applied theatre settings, culturally-responsive teaching practice, and education for social and emotional well-being.



RACHEL STEELE is currently the HOD Drama at Wellington Girls' College. Her previous experience included both the Primary and Tertiary sector. Her professional learning interests include, drama pedagogy, cultural competencies in practice and collaborative projects.

1 The Tcher Led Innovation Fund is an initiative of the NZ Ministry of Education <https://www.education.govt.nz/ministry-of-education/specific-initiatives/investing-in-educational-success/teacher-led-innovation-fund/>

2 National Certificate in Educational Achievement (NCEA) is the official secondary school qualification in New Zealand

Introduction

New Zealand's record in educational achievement for Māori and Pasifika peoples is an area of concern. Accordingly, it is an ongoing aspiration of the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Education Council to develop the capacity of New Zealand teachers to be pedagogically and relationally responsive to diverse cultures; in particular, to be able to provide an educational context in which Māori and Pasifika students can thrive. In response to initiatives to improve educational outcomes for indigenous communities (Ministry of Education, 2008, 2011, 2013a, 2013b), four secondary drama teachers formed a professional learning group with the goal of innovating their classroom practice and building their cultural competence. Together they engaged with current research into effective pedagogical practice for Māori and Pasifika learners (Bishop, 2012; Bishop and Berryman, 2006, 2009, 2010; Bishop and Glynn, 2003; Dreaver, 2009; Ho, Holmes & Cooper, 2004; Macfarlane, 2004), and with theory and research into effective and culturally responsive drama practice (Cody, 2013, 2016; Fraser, Price & Aitken, 2007; Greenwood, 2001 a, 2001b, 2012; Hindle & van Dijk, 2014). Having considered the literature, their particular school context and their own level of cultural competence, each participant selected a range of interventions to implement. The teacher-led nature of the project meant participants had autonomy over the nature and direction of these innovations. Using qualitative methodology, thematic analysis of the data (drawn from planning notes, professional learning conversations, student and whanau surveys, focus group discussions, classroom observations and interviews) identified the following innovations were undertaken by these teachers:

- Participating and collaborating with other drama teachers in a professional learning community
- Engaging student voice and sharing power
- Strengthening whanau engagement
- Engaging culture and identity through the selection drama contexts (place-based pedagogy)
- Incorporating te reo Māori and tikanga
- Building student criticality and critical literacy

Description of the Project

This TLIF project explored the programmes and practice of drama teaching and learning in four urban secondary schools. This group of teachers wanted to collectively investigate their teaching practice in order to identify areas in which they could deepen their responsiveness to culture and in turn, they hoped to raise the engagement and achievement levels of Pasifika and Māori students in Senior Drama. The focus and desire to improve outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students are in response to factors in the New Zealand policy environment, the mandate for education under the Treaty of Waitangi and the ethical and philosophical positions these teachers hold. The group wanted to extend their pedagogical practice in new ways in order to improve outcomes in Senior Drama for Māori and Pasifika students, with the view that all students would benefit from a teacher demonstrating cultural competence, inquiring into the effectiveness of their practice and fostering student agency and criticality. Over the 3 years, teachers met at least once a term to identify pedagogical innovations, formulate ways to track and reflect on their progress, probe and identify findings, trouble-shoot and celebrate. This collaborative group approach gave accountability and focus to the pedagogical innovations. Perhaps more significantly, the group offered a supportive environment teachers drew confidence from.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study that spanned three years from inception. It provides a collective case study into the implementation of culturally responsive practices in the secondary drama classroom. Each participant is an experienced drama teacher (including two tertiary educators) and all four teachers were teaching programmes in secondary Senior Drama. Teachers engaged in professional learning before they selected and applied a range of teaching strategies designed to improve outcomes within their specific school context. The study relied on a range of data sources appropriate to the interventions implemented: teacher field notes, peer-teacher observations, questionnaires (to students and parents), achievement statistics, attendance records,

focus group interviews, and interviews with teachers. Ethically, this was a low-risk project where participants had agency over their interventions and methods of data gathering. Surveys and questionnaires were anonymous and students were invited to participate or withdraw at any time.

Innovations for the drama classroom

It was important that each teacher was able to engage with interventions and strategies that were appropriate to their individual school contexts and sat well with their own practice and teaching philosophies. Initial investigation into research-based culturally responsive practice revealed a breadth of potential areas for innovation. From these discussions, each teacher identified the strategies they felt ready to trial. As the project continued, the shared successes across the group led to a deepening of this work.

Teacher A and her department initially chose to focus on the development of relationships - between teachers and students, and between students themselves. This was seen as a key area of culturally responsive practice and of effective drama teaching (Cody, 2016). Teacher B chose to develop the discursive nature of her teaching (Bishop and Glynn, 2003). Specifically, she wanted to establish a classroom climate where dialogue and discussion were integral to the teaching and learning, and where she moved from being the expert to create greater reciprocity in learning relationships with her students. Teacher C's initial goals centred around building whanaungatanga in the classroom. Teacher D drew together cultural concepts and identified the wider human questions they gave rise to, Working with her department (and its changing personnel over the 3 year period), these concepts informed a new department-wide vision which emphasised the significant place of students in the learning.

The following table provides a summary of the school contexts and the chosen innovations of each teacher:

Key Innovations across the project	
<p>Teacher A</p> <p>Decile 9 co-educational school.</p> <p>12% Māori, 4% Pasifika students (ERO³, 2013). In 2015, 27% of drama students were Māori or Pasifika.</p>	<p>Teacher A wanted to increase student agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o small groups and individual discussions were held around what students want to achieve within the first few weeks of school o gathering data on student achievement and engagement for all students and a particular focus on seven Level 1 students who identified as Māori or Pasifika in order to be more responsive to their needs. o two weeks of games and drama activities with students that establish a greater sense of whanaungatanga in the Drama classroom <p>She wished to establish greater connections with students and their whanau. In order to improve home-school relationships she:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Introduced a Drama hui (MacFarlane, 2004) where students and whanau met to share food and discuss Drama. o Actively encouraged whanau to attend performances and established a way this audience could respond to the learning they saw. <p>Development as project progressed</p> <p>After identifying a lack of engagement with external Achievement Standards, Teacher A undertook professional learning in critical literacy and examination writing support in order to lift the number of students (including her target Māori and Pasifika students) who attempted and/or achieved in the external Drama examinations.</p>

³ The Educational Review Office (ERO) is the government department that evaluates and reports on the education and care of students in New Zealand schools and early childhood services.

<p>Teacher B</p> <p>Decile 10 single sex, state integrated (ERO, 2013).</p> <p>In 2015, 12.5% of drama students were Māori or Pasifika</p>	<p>Several of Teacher B's strategies were designed to increase democracy and student agency in the classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o encouraging debate and different viewpoints; accepting that there is no “right” way o favouring collaboration over competition o Enabling year 13 level 3 NCEA students to co-construct course at the start of the year o enabling greater choice in year 12 level 2 NCEA course o encouraging students to lead some of the teaching. <p>In addition she looked for ways to increase the connections between content and students' own lives (Aitken & Sinnema, 2008) by encouraging drama work in which students use their own experiences as a starting point.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o engaging community and whanau through regular emails o establishing a way audiences could give feedback on performances <p>Development as project progressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o use of the Habits of Mind framework (Costa and Kallick, 2009) to deepen students' metacognition and criticality and to support learners in understanding themselves as learners o identifying individual learning preferences o use of whakatauki (proverbs) to underscore classroom values and increase visibility of te reo and tikanga Māori
<p>Teacher C</p> <p>Decile 9 Integrated Boys' College with 14% Māori and 10% Pasifika students.</p> <p>In 2015 25% of drama students were Māori or Pasifika.</p>	<p>Teacher C's innovations spanned several key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o conferencing one-to-one with each student at the beginning of the year, to look at what they wanted out of the course and find out any perceived barriers to learning, cultural or otherwise. o increased networking with wider whanau through regular email contact home and invitations to performances o using ritual and cultural traditions in devised work o building a sense of community in the classroom o using personal and family story contexts to devise drama o investigating the ways students from differing cultures preferred to receive feedback on their work in Drama
<p>Teacher D</p> <p>Decile 10 single sex girls' school (ERO, 2013).</p> <p>In 2015, 19% of Drama students were Māori or Pasifika.</p>	<p>Teacher D chose to work on both departmental and classroom levels. She sought to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o use a hui/barbeque to establish connections with parents o develop a class “truth” (A ‘truth’ can be likened to an overarching Big Idea or Question) that underpins learning at a conceptual/thematic level. o work with year groups embedding selected cultural concepts into the learning: Year 11- whanaungatanga- who we are; links to whenua (land), mana tīpuna (ancestors), and mana tangata (ourselves); responding to what we share; family; building of local knowledge and Year 12 - political and social concerns became a starting point for production. This student-centered discussion allowed significant opportunity for student voice and agency over the artistic direction and vision of the production. o find opportunities to move towards a more dialogic classroom (Bishop & Glynn, 2003) including how to extend active student participation in the learning process. This included targeting specific Māori and Pasifika students through several ‘fit-to-purpose’ surveys followed by one on one interviews around their participation and sense of agency in Drama.

Findings and Discussion

Data were analysed according to central themes which captured both the innovative work of teachers and the impact of this work. Key themes arising in the data include: the impact of teachers' collaboration; engaging student voice; strengthening whanau engagement; enhancing drama contexts (place-based pedagogy), incorporating te reo and tikanga, and building student levels of criticality. These themes are discussed in the following section. Lastly evidence towards impact on student engagement and achievement in Drama is presented.

A community of learners - the impact of teachers' collaboration

For all teachers involved, their commitment to the group enabled them to move from aspiration to action. All teachers agreed that they had found themselves to be more committed to enactment, reflection and evaluation as a result of their involvement. Teachers committed to setting up action plans that would be reported on to the group at each collaborative session. They also reviewed how to gather data that would inform their practice and changes. Each teacher questioned and assisted one another to understand and move forward in their practice - initially using the "I Like, I Wish, I Wonder" strategy (Burnett, 2014) to frame the feedback. Further innovations evolved out of this questioning.

The discipline-based support and professional learning in effective drama teaching that took place opened new possibilities for how these teachers approached their programmes and their classrooms. Teachers were encouraged to trial new ideas after listening to each others' stories and finding common ground in the subject. For example, having shared the problems of student retention in senior classes, teachers found new ideas to increase the profile of Drama in their own schools. In 2016, Teacher D's Year 12 students were invited to develop an initiative to build the profile of Drama in the school. Students came up with an idea of running a Drama week, that included sharing of performances and activities across a week at lunchtime.

Following the reporting of this successful week, Teacher B trialed Year 12 and 13 students running lunchtime programmes in Drama for Yrs 7 and 9 students. This was described as a turning point for her, in relation to her students and to her sense of community within her school context: "This made me feel like I wasn't alone, and the students were part of "team drama" ambassadors". Such comments reflect the development of *whanaungatanga* but also illustrate a strong level of *āko* in this teacher's work.

The willingness to take risks and go further in engaging whanau was encouraged by involvement in the professional learning group. What one had started, another built on. For instance, when reporting on progress mid-2016 Teacher A described a Drama hui/ barbeque she had run in order to engage whanau and Teacher D spoke about how having an elderly visitor had inspired devising work based on local stories. As the discussion evolved, the suggestion arose that even greater authenticity for student devised work and whanau involvement might be achieved if Teacher D invited her Year 11 parents to a Hui/ Barbeque to tell their family stories. Teacher D followed this through. After attending the hui, Teacher B explained it, "... made me see what a bonding and inclusive experience it was. It emphasised to me how important whanau engagement is". Subsequently Teacher A has extended the purpose of her 2018 hui/barbeque. There was a strong sense of collaboration and reciprocity.

Student choice/voice

Increasing student choice was a significant feature in the innovations of these teachers. A range of possibilities as to how they might lift student agency and increase student voice in their programmes were discussed. The following areas were noted:

- Involvement in planning the year's programme (Teacher B and D)
- Involvement in selecting what pathway to take for assessment purposes (Teacher B and D)

- Regular check-ins through questionnaires and interviews to see how students were feeling about the choices they were making (Teacher D)
- Involvement in the Habits of Mind approach and close interviewing around this (Teacher B)
- Projects that were student initiated and led (all 4 teachers)

Teacher D described the way her students negotiated the choice of play texts and contexts for drama they wished to explore, using the class 'truth' to frame and guide their choices. She explains,

Each year level has a 'truth' (or Big Question) that frames the entire drama programme. Giving this broad framework allowed greater student choice. This is also a strategy to deepen critical literacy.

Teacher D maintained there had been a major shift to students' understanding their responsibility for their own learning as a result of the vision that Drama students be open and generous with what they bring and then explore in Drama. One teacher in the department reported she had more flexibility and students had more of a voice as a result of the departmental vision. She explained,

Next week I am starting with Theatre Form and I [the teacher] have no idea which one the class with choose. It makes me more flexible with this. I like the options. This is our vision in practice and,I am open to flexibility.

Teacher D in her work with her class's chosen theatre form, Epic theatre, provides another example of student voice and agency for learning was increased. She found students asking her about how they might incorporate devising [NCEA] credits into a second class production; they presented two reasons for this. Firstly, they felt as a small class (12) they has bonded really well, and secondly they felt they had stumbled upon something really important that mattered (relating to the big question). From a basis of this Big Question "What lies [beneath]?", they were drawn to the impact of social media on their lives. They wanted to draw together as many of their thoughts about this, research ideas and create a drama that would last beyond the assessment and be performed at the end of their school year. In this way, it was their voice and their learning that was important as well as what they could teach others, rather than the assessment driving their programme.

Students responded positively to a questionnaire that asked how they felt about making their choices wide open. A typical answer was that they enjoyed being able to choose their own play for production, for example, because it meant they could all have a say in what style of play they wanted to do and it opened their eyes to different plays that other people were interested in. For Teacher C, student choice was encouraged through play selection - particularly plays where students could explore their identities and through the use of devised theatre. She explains:

In the process of creating a drama the students find they are bringing certain aspects of themselves to the piece. This year they deliberately found themselves looking into their own lives but the revelations were controlled by them and they only showed us the parts of their lives they wanted to. At the start of rehearsals they were wary and less likely to share but as they went on and gave the characters names other than their own or just felt safer in the drama.

As a result of attending live Pasifika theatre performances, these students had greater desire to engage in their own devising work and saw their own stories and experiences had great value for theatre making. Two target students took their self-devised performance to the One Act Play National Finals and won. Being involved at this level brought pride and a strong sense of achievement for these students.

Teacher B identified her innovations as centering around developing a democratic classroom model (Bishop and Glynn, 2003) for teaching and learning. She implemented a number of opportunities for negotiation and consultation. She also embedded the *Habits of Mind* (Costa and Kallick, 2009) into her drama teaching as a way to increase both metacognition for students and her understandings of individual learning needs.

Classroom observations of Teacher B provided supporting evidence that she was shifting towards a more discursive classroom through increased negotiation with her students. Teacher B noted this letting go was innovative as it forced her “to look differently; to concede control and trust it will still work”.

In addition to these innovations around student choice and negotiation in the classroom, all teachers increased their use of student surveys to ascertain engagement levels, attitudes, perceptions and specific feedback/feedforward on their teacher. Results from surveys were used to inform text selection and to inform individualised programmes in NCEA Drama as students selected the Achievement Standards they would undertake.

Whanau engagement

Each teacher became interested in exploring ways to increase the connection between school and home. Much of the literature regarding successful teaching for Māori students emphasises the need for schools and teachers to connect with whanau and engage in dialogue about learning (Bishop, 2012; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bishop and Glynn, 2004; MacFarlane, 2004; McLeod, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2011; 2013a, 2013b). Drama Hui have been one way teachers have sought to strengthen whanau engagement. Hui were held at two schools. Parent survey responses to the hui at one school at the start of 2017 showed that 78% of parents felt more involved as a result of the experience and 84% of parents felt that their child had learned a lot. Parent feedback about the hui included: “a relaxed and friendly experience. A great idea of what the emphasis is for the year”...and that “it is nice to be involved in a specific school exercise and see the girls performing; otherwise we have very little idea of the output from Year 11 Drama.”

Teachers noted that more frequent correspondence with whanau through regular emails and sharing of work via the Internet led to more parents attending performances. Teachers also reported a correlation between invitations to whanau to see performances and improvement in grades. Teacher C noticed her class was more cohesive and engaged after getting students to bring their whanau to barbeques. For one teacher, the intention to involve more whanau developed into a future project where whanau stories will be central to student research for devised work.

Understanding Drama in Context

Another significant theme in the innovations of these four teachers concerned making connections between student lives and the place of drama in society. Such connections are related to “enhancing the relevance of new learning - one of the New Zealand Curriculum’s “Effective pedagogies” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p34) and supported by research such as Aitken & Sinnema (2008). Experience of theatre in authentic contexts was a major area of focus for Teacher C’s students. She wished to raise the status of achievement in the subject by providing the students with quality performance experiences - both as performers and as audience members. Winning a national award at the New Zealand One Act Play Festival for a self-devised performance was powerful for two target Pasifika students in Year 13 in 2016. Class visits to Auckland and the International Festival of the Arts in Wellington had given them first hand experiences of high quality live theatre. Teacher C observed that the professional experience of live theatre for Pasifika and Māori students gave them confidence to be bold. The students were able to perform with confidence in front of a class of Auckland drama students they had not met before. This was a huge shift from a group of students who early in 2015 she had found to be “wary and less likely to share”.

Survey results at the end of 2016, showed that students overwhelmingly felt they had gained a lot from their experiences and student success and pride in their work after these experiences was clear. Following on from seeing a very strong self-devised work by Massive Theatre Company⁴, for example, students returned enthusiastic to complete their own self-devised work based on personal stories. A subsequent survey showed that only 7% of students would have preferred teacher-given topics. Teacher C felt that making theatre that reflected their own place and people was very relevant and powerful. Target students who had been surveyed about their experiences said:

⁴ <https://www.massivecompany.co.nz/>

For me personally, with the amount of visits to different performances and workshops it truly helped me gain more knowledge about theatre life and aspects in general. Now I am confident that I can apply that knowledge and teachings to anything I do. *STUDENT A*

I really benefitted from the extra opportunities that I was given this year; especially the one act play festival as I really benefitted from partaking in the experience. *STUDENT B*

Place-based theatre making was an important aspect of the drama programme for three teachers. Work in Teacher A's department has extended into community theatre through the use of place-based pedagogy and site-based theatre. Such drama contexts provide a powerful way to connect authentically to students' lives and the communities around them. These theatre approaches also encapsulate something of the key function of theatre in society and community. Teacher A's work included taking students to the local marae to meet with elders and experience a pōwhiri which included the local intermediate and two high school students, who are members of the kapahaka team at the marae. Three different locals told stories that brought to life the connections to whenua. From this work, students created devised work that was later performed at the marae. Of this experience, students said,

- I've never been here
- This was amazing - I love it here
- That's my Koro [grandfather] there - *pointing to a photo in the corner*
- I realise that I can make a good drama out of Maori myths

Further examples of Drama contexts which which connected students to local communities and their stories came from Teacher C and D, whose students performed in local museum spaces to audiences that included parents. Parents commented:

- I absolutely loved the Museum performance - it was amazing to see how much the girls are progressing, and the setting was great. I really enjoy being an audience member
- I was impressed by the girls' confidence and enthusiasm. The venue for the Museum performance was innovative and challenging for the girls.

Teacher A now wants more devised work to be based on local stories and legends using the local marae as place to perform. She acknowledged that making connections with local iwi was a big step for her. She explains she overcame her concern to get it right and her advice now is to: "just do it - let the students know that you are keen to explore te reo and tikanga Māori and then just go for it and ask for help where they can give it." Having the support of teachers in the project to meet her goals has given her confidence, and her commitment to making a difference for her Māori and Pasifika students has driven her to form a stronger community bond.

One final example comes from Teacher D who had Year 11 students performing parents' stories that were shared at the Drama hui three weeks earlier. A survey following this performance indicated that 84% of parents felt that students had learned something about their own and/ or each others' heritage from this exercise. Responses to the work included:

- It was nice to be involved in a specific school exercise and see the girls performing;
- It's wonderful to see the girls acting with imagination and enthusiasm
- The gathering, mixing, talking, sharing the meal, meeting the others- the sense of involvement!
- Integration. Interesting fun learning and education all in one.
- Involved their own heritage and their families. Useful to listen to others.
- I just thought it was a great idea to use our real stories. I thoroughly enjoyed it!

Building Critical Thinking and Drama Literacy

This theme in the data related to the development of students' critical thinking skills in regards to both texts and examination responses, and the concept of critical literacy in Drama.

Teacher A aimed to raise student engagement in attempting examinations. For her students, Drama was not a written subject but a practical subject, so a lot of work was done in developing strategies that would help students understand more about what makes a good answer in an examination. Using work of Shirley Clark (2001) as a framework for student feedback and feedforward, as well as SOLO Taxonomy (Hook, 2011), students could be more critical about what made a clear answer. The teacher reported that for the first time in her experience at the school, all students attended the examination at her targeted Level 1, even though this particular examination was the very last NCEA exam timetabled for the year. She puts this attendance down to the increased confidence students had in their ability to sit the examination because of the work they had undertaken. On surveying them about the examinations they said they now realised how important the exams were for endorsement and that being helped in these different ways gave them a greater understanding of what was required. For these students it was a significant shift.

Another example of a strategy that aimed to develop students critical thinking skills came from the work of Teacher D. In the development of her programmes, she employed the use of thematic frames - such as Big ideas and Big Questions - as a lens to view performance texts through. The use of Big Ideas in education is a way to support students in their meaning making, activating deeper thought and connections (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In approaching performance texts this way, this teacher deepened her students' understanding that drama worlds are a means to explore the real world and in fact, this is central to the value and purpose of the artform in society. Drama had become something bigger than the NCEA Achievement standards or assessment students undertake:

Year 12 Drama students are excited about taking their concerns
about the impact of social media on young people further by ...
they want to use theatre to create a change in other students' lives.
TEACHER D

One student noted: "I now have a wider world understanding and relate to what we do in the world; Drama doesn't need to be a traditional (Naturalistic like TV) performance to be art."

While not specifically an intervention of cultural responsiveness, this was a feature of effective drama pedagogy and essential to enabling all students to engage in the kinds of critical thinking needed to achieve in Senior Drama and to appreciate the possibilities the subject offers students to critique and challenge social and political worlds.

This leads us to the notion of critical literacy. Heather Coffey (2008, p1) defines critical literacy as "the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand power, inequality, and injustice in human relationships". She explains that teachers who actively develop critical literacy in their students enable them to interrogate societal issues and institutions and to discover the inequalities that exist for many peoples in our world.

Having selected and explored Pasifika play texts with her students, Teacher B was feeling discomfort around statements the students were making following the performance of the Pasifika play, *The White Guitar* - written by Fa'amoana John Luafutu, Matthias Luafutu and. Malo Luafutu. This included students concluding that family violence was a cultural aspect of being Samoan. The question around how this could be discussed with the students without statements that framed negative aspects of the family's life as cultural was explored by the TLIF group. With the help of a tertiary educator, they looked again at questioning the voice and the lens that texts are constructed from. In understanding the constructs of the text, they were then able to identify their bias. Discussions were held with the students around the fact that the cultural displacement

of moving to New Zealand created levels of stress that lead to the violence and not that violence was a feature of Samoan culture. This is an important dimension that needs to be highlighted for all drama teachers working with texts that depict cultures and feature cultural stereotypes. A common choice for NCEA Drama is the play *Niu Sila* by Dave Armstrong, which also features stereotypes of Samoan characters and social issues that are experienced in some Samoan communities in New Zealand. Michelle Johansson's (2012) work, *Dusky maiden- noble savage: Pasifika representation in the NCEA drama classroom* is an important resource for drama teachers and their students wishing to confront the negative stereotypes that often can be drawn from a less critical reading of these play texts.

Te reo and tikanga Māori

The increased visibility of te reo Māori has been an aspect that may have helped engagement of Māori students. Teachers in this project looked for ways to integrate te reo authentically in their classroom practice while working at their current levels of competence. Teacher B made purposeful application of whakatauki. Whakatauki offer wisdoms and insights into life and community, and became a means to reinforcing the cooperative classroom culture needed for successful drama work. These whakatauki were also related to the *Habits of Mind* principles the teacher was working with in her classes. The teacher explained, "I felt nervous and self-conscious – but the students enjoyed it and took an active part in unpacking and translating these. It was interesting to relate the whakatauki to some aspect of the class."

Similarly, Teacher A introduced waiata at Year 9, as well as ongoing use of greetings, instructions and dates in te reo Māori. She reports that this has strengthened relationships with her Māori students, and her own confidence and willingness to grow in her understanding of tikanga Māori.

The innovations went beyond the use of te reo and whakatauki as teachers sought to bring Te Ao Māori into the classroom. The use of Māori texts with Teacher D's Year 13 students had been a strength in the programme for a while. These texts provided insights into Te Ao Māori and the experience of Māori as a colonised people. In addition to this, Teacher D sought to integrate tikanga more deeply by having the principles of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga actively underpin the department's vision. A waiata that supports the vision of openness and generosity is now being introduced by the department .

When Teacher C moving to a new school context, issues of biculturalism in predominantly non-Māori classrooms for arose and were discussed by the group. Teacher C had been struggling to find as many meaningful links as she would have liked within the current curriculum programmes. Going back to the Tātaiako cultural competencies (Ministry of Education, 2011) as a guide was helpful - she chose to focus on whanaungatanga, supporting the learners and bringing as many Māori and Pasifika aspects to her programme as she could.

Impact on student achievement across the four secondary schools

While all participants felt that the quality of student relationships, their collaboration, engagement and motivation was improved as a result of the interventions not all of these outcomes are reflected in achievement results. When examining the attendance and attainment in NCEA, the following outcomes were reported by each school:

Teacher A

In 2016, Teacher A reported students gained greater confidence in knowing the kinds of answers that were expected in an examination by using the SOLO taxonomy to mark practice answers. The teacher was pleased to see a big shift in attendance between 2015 and 2016 at the examination for Level 1. This teacher reflected that her personalised learning programme (where she targeted students early in the year through interviews about what they would like to achieve) and the accountability to the group to report on progress was what drove her. In doing so she discovered that "taking the time to talk to the students means that they really understand that I am there for them in the classroom."

Teacher B

In 2016 the target group was made up of eight Year 13 students. All these target students achieved, maintained or improved on their grades of the previous year. Interestingly, one student (Samoan), dropped off in all other subjects, not achieving an overall pass for the year; however, she continued to achieve at Merit level in Drama. Another target Māori student achieved a grade higher in 2 of the 4 assessments.

Teacher C

Students achieved highly when they had been fully engaged in both seeing and devising theatre. Teacher C found there was a positive correlation between whanau attendance at performance assessments and results. This was shown with the target group who were in the play that their whanau did attend. Teacher C strongly believes that it was whanau support alone that took her target student all the way to Invercargill for the One Act Play Final.

Teacher D

Modelling, and peer assessment of practice questions were used to deepen students' understanding of examination requirements. Level 2 external results showed that overall there was a 30% increase in endorsements for that cohort from 2015 to 2016. 75% of targeted Māori and Pasifika students increased their endorsements across Level 1 and Level 2 in 2016.

Conclusion

Teacher shifts in practice - reasons and impact on teaching, learning and student achievement

The task of moving beyond their own cultural norms can seem daunting but the support and encouragement offered by the group was instrumental in enabling these teachers to take new risks. Through professional learning facilitated by experts, teachers engaged with current literature into culturally responsive teaching and gave attention to key MOE policy documents supporting these aspirations. Drawing on key documents such as Tātaiako (Ministry of Education, 2011) and Bishop's Effective Teaching Profile (Bishop and Berryman, 2009), teachers were increasingly able to embed cultural competencies into their programmes and daily teaching.

As the findings reveal, these teachers made several key shifts in their teaching practice towards being increasingly responsive to culture in their classes - particularly to the Māori and Pasifika students they teach. Māori and Pasifika students' engagement and achievement was seen to improve. There was an increase in use of te reo and waiata as well as a greater openness to Te Ao Māori, and to the values of whanaungatanga and manaakitanga that enrich the development of an effective drama ensemble culture. Rather than being seen as a layer of teaching practice that must be added to address disparity, these teachers came to appreciate the power of these values to build and enrich an effective classroom community who make theatre together - theatre that matters and reflects their identities, their histories and their stories. Considerable thought was given to develop strategies to increase student voice in classroom and to share power with their students in innovative ways. When the stakes of NCEA achievement outcomes are high, these teachers' willingness to take risks and let go, not knowing the outcomes of student choice, show both fortitude and adaptive expertise.

Innovations also saw teachers opening out, to bring in the wider communities of theatre and drama practitioners and whanau. This broadening has enabled the perceived status of Drama as both a subject and a contemporary artform to rise in the minds of students and their whanau. In turn, the relevance of engaging in drama practice and achieving in this discipline was enhanced. Teachers achieved this through attention to finding opportunities to increase place-based drama, community theatre and in their selection of drama contexts. Students were exposed to live theatre and increased their involvement in live theatre performance, particularly where Māori and Pasifika players and texts were featured. Local resources such as museums and stories from both whanau and local iwi provided powerful contexts. Along with greater engagement, it was noted that students had an increased sense of pride in their work and an appreciation for Drama as a practice. Some teachers found students wanted to be ambassadors for Drama

across their school and noted a change in classroom culture characterised by greater student ownership.

Finally, working together in a community of learners, across schools and with tertiary experts, had a positive impact of the engagement of teachers in this initiative, and on the nature of their innovations. The group provided support, accountability, fresh ideas and a means to bridging research and classroom practice. Advice and guidance from professionals was seen as particularly valuable. This included timely classroom observations that informed the overall picture, undertaking student interviews and providing assistance in clarifying teacher direction.

It was challenging to gather data that could prove a direct correlation between interventions and the impact on student achievement due to the many factors that play into student performance in NCEA. However, teachers did use a range of measures to gauge impact - their observations of student attitude, motivation, attendance and achievement; their experiences and the reported responses of whanau (through surveys and other exchanges) and their conversations with their students. Many of the dimensions of Bishop's Effective Teaching Profile for Māori learners (Bishop and Berryman, 2009) are dispositional and require the inner life of teachers to align with the wairua (spirit) of this kaupapa. As such, the impact of these dispositional and attitudinal shifts on student achievement needs to be measured over a longer period of time.

Certainly, the data suggests that this project has allowed for a deeper and more authentic relationship to develop between students and the subject of Drama; between students, their whanau and the school; between teachers and their students, between students of diverse backgrounds, and between teachers and their peers in Drama education. These relationships are characterised by aspirations towards whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, mana motuhake, kotahitanga, wānanga, tangata whenuatanga and āko (Bishop, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2011)

It is important to note the significant role of funding that enabled this group to engage in the project. Teacher release time was vital in order for the group to study and reflect on culturally responsive pedagogy with the help of tertiary drama educators, to apply these understandings to their plans of action and later, to reflect on progress. This also provided teachers the time to collaborate with each other, talk about their learning, ask questions of one another and seek further clarification in understanding the innovations they might implement. Funding also enabled the group to engage in professional learning, where they explored teaching strategies that might enhance critical literacy and thinking, as well as enabling drama educators to observe the teachers in the classroom and give specific feedback. Teachers valued this critical eye, which helped them to reflect further on their cultural responsiveness, their own practice and clarify ways forward. In addition, this independent drama educator interviewed individual students - enabling greater distance to obtain more objective views from students for the teachers concerned.

Challenges

The challenges of the project centred around two key areas - the practicalities of carrying such a project with time-poor teachers and the challenges that arise for teachers wishing to develop their cultural competence in an authentic way, while working in school contexts and institutional systems that may not necessarily be ready to embrace the outworkings of these aspirations.

Although teachers did receive release time to gather and record evidence, this still posed a significant challenge. Time away from the classroom has been valuable but the pressures of the classroom do not disappear and coordination of relief and students were still demands teachers needed to meet. The project leader was under considerable pressure as the driver of the project and the key writer of milestones. Although interesting, she explains that the work has "eaten into a lot of personal time".

The challenges arising from the aspiration to implement culturally responsive pedagogies centred around fears of tokenism, of unintentionally causing offence and the risk that teachers might alienate their target students further by choosing to highlight

their cultural differences. For Teacher A, the visit to the local marae had necessitated time for her to work through her own fears of getting it wrong. In the end, she negotiated with the marae through emails to take her Year 13 students and they ran the day according to the marae's suggestions. The teacher had wanted to do this for a long time but had wanted to get it right. She described her own personal journey as one of learning to be brave and reaching out.

The project also challenged traces of deficit thinking in participants, challenged school norms and presented each teacher with the challenge of change. This not only impacted teachers but whanau too - who were not necessarily used to engaging with teachers and performances to the extent these teachers were now seeking. The challenge of sustaining interest from whanau was an aspect experienced at one school - once the barbeques and trips were over and the devising work was complete, audience numbers dropped and the gains in achievement were not sustained.

Next steps

All teachers involved in this project have asked for further informal collaboration between one another as Critical Friends. Accountability to their respective personal learning focus and goals they feel has been hugely beneficial. Continuing with the innovations across different cohorts and with new staff has been workable because of the clear vision and direction they gained through the professional collaboration, and it would be good to see this develop further.

As Heads of Department, these teachers were not only considering their personal teaching practice, but how they might lead and model innovations that would deepen the cultural competence of their staff and the cultural responsiveness within their departments. These HODs noted that clear communication, being collaborative in terms of ensuring staff feel empowered, having time to hold staff members accountable through regular meetings, and one on one conversations were essential factors in sustaining this focus and effecting change.

It would be interesting to explore whether increased whanau engagement does lead to greater retention of drama students or increased popularity for the subject. Drama teachers often report feeling their subject is undervalued against more traditional disciplines, an attitude that could be encountered in staff rooms as well as homes and increasing the subject's impact and visibility for whanau may give students increased permission to engage with the subject throughout senior secondary school.

Authentic shifts in the cultural competence of school teachers needs to be supported on a systemic level so bringing the project to school leaders, and to professional learning conversations with other teachers seeking to develop cultural competence, will be a positive next step.

Glossary

āko – reciprocal learning between teacher and student

hui – meeting of people

iwi - tribe

kapahaka – traditional Māori performing arts

kaupapa – agenda, policy, approach

manaakitanga – support and hospitality towards others

mana motuhake – self-determination and autonomy

marae – a communal meeting place for both social and ceremonial use

pōwhiri – an official welcome ceremony

Te Ao Māori – the Māori world

te reo Māori – the Māori language

tikanga – the customs and protocols of Māori iwi

waiata - songs

wairua - spirit

whakatauki - proverbs

whanaungatanga – a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging

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I am illiterate, they are educated; what can I say to them?: A playful exploration of the impact of performative presentation of case study data.

JANINKA GREENWOOD

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Abstract

How will data change if it is presented not only simply in written text but through dramatic presentation? The data for this exploration comes from a doctoral project investigating rural parents' engagement in education in Bangladesh. The data revealed not only a lack of engagement but also a major communicative gap between rural parents and teachers in local schools. Illiteracy and poverty, differences in social status and power and the impact of prevalent social discourses were identified as key, and apparently insuperable, problems. However, the study also found a rural head teacher who broke through perceived barriers by visiting parents in their homes and in market tea stalls and so created a basis for communication and engagement. This paper shares part of the data as a dramatic script. In this way it is a kind of dress rehearsal of experimentation with the use of hand puppets, overhead projections and recordings in the expectation they will allow the data to be understood as a social drama and so highlight the interplay of experiences of frustration, inadequacy, courage and hope that are the human aspects of what is sometimes seen by policy as a statistical problem.

Biography



JANINKA GREENWOOD is Professor of Education at the University of Canterbury, and Director of the Research Lab for Creativity and Change. Her current research focuses on teacher education and the development of criticality and the processes of change. She has a long-standing engagement with the uses for arts for learning and with arts-based research, and strong interests in learning communities, cultural difference, post-colonialisms and practice-based research methodologies.



MAHAMMAD ABUL HASNAT is from Bangladesh and recently completed his PhD in Education from University of Canterbury, New Zealand. The title of his PhD research is "Parents Engagement in Education in Rural Context in Bangladesh: Problems and Possibilities". His research interest is in exploring how the social discourses in the rural context influence parental engagement practices. Currently, he is exploring how parents' and teachers' perceptions and practices become

normative in the rural context and how the norms could be disrupted and changed. He is also keen to involve himself in project-based research work where he can contribute his knowledge and continue his own professional development.

Introduction: why play with data?

One of the affordances of arts-based research approaches is the power to bring data to life and to make it easily accessible to its intended audiences. Art is a process that engages individuals in ways that involve their emotions and visceral experiences as well as their intellects. It invites multi-levelled responses and it allows subjectivity and ambivalences. A playwright like Brecht can rigorously critique social inequalities, travesties of justice, corruption and individual cruelty and at the same time manipulate his audiences to alternatively engage with characters and be repulsed by their actions. A painter like Picasso can saturate a single canvas with fragmented images of war that evoke pain in the viewer as well as cerebral identification of the wastage of war. The way arts play with aesthetic awareness offers a communicative space that can go beyond verbal analysis or persuasion.

Researchers who draw on arts-based methods may use arts processes to elicit data, to analyse it or to present it. Sometimes two or three of these functions are integrated in the arts process. This article uses arts processes to re - present previously reported data, and to perhaps find further layers of analysis in the course of doing so. Similar approaches may be found in the work of Owen (2009) who engaged a composer to set to music data from his British study of school closures and in that of Belliveau (2015) who presented a keynote at the IDEA conference in Paris where he performed a discussion of his work in teaching Shakespeare to elementary school students. Presented as a community opera Owen's transcriptions of interviews with parents, teachers and local authorities about a school threatened with closure became a swelling debate between policy decisions and small people's hopes. By slipping in and out of role in his keynote Belliveau not only vividly illustrated the processes of his work with the children, he also challenged the static and authoritarian nature of conference proceedings.

The data we propose to play with here has already been reported in a doctoral thesis (Hasnat, 2017). It emerged from an investigation of rural parents' engagement in schooling in Bangladesh. By presenting a portion of the data dramatically we hope to reaffirm the humanity of the data, the ways it represents, albeit anonymously, real people's hopes, problems, frustrations, fears and courage.

Very many of the parents interviewed were illiterate. The total literacy rate of this region is about 46.8% percent of the population. In addition, while the teachers interviewed were literate they are very unlikely to read an extensive academic report in English. Therefore the very people the study is about are excluded from the audience of reported findings, be it in the form of the thesis or of ensuing journal articles. The idea of playing with the data comes from a search of how the local people could be reached by a report and could be encouraged to further discuss the findings. We see this writing as a kind of experimental rehearsal for real presentation back in the field.

The word play has several wonderful layers of meaning: as a noun it can denote a dramatic artefact or childlike fun-filled exploration; as a verb it can represent thoughtful arrangement and re-arrangement of forms or ideas or the act of making an instrument come to life. We use the word with all those embedded connotations. The original research that produced the data is the work of Hasnat, and the concepts for dramatisation come from Janinka. The playing is something we are both engaging in.

Social drama, direct theatre, and human stories hidden in statistics

The connection between drama/theatre and real-life events is often made. In colloquial language we frequently talk about the drama of everyday affairs. Shakespeare's Hamlet (Act 3, scene 2, 17–24) instructed the actors he hires to "hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure". Drawing on the construct of social anthropology

Turner (1988) examined the performativeness of social processes and proposed a concept of social drama. He used the concept to examine significant periods in history and argued that “social interactions of a conflictive, competitive or agonistic type” are “processually structured” (pp. 33-5) and identified four historically recurring phases. We suggest that Turner’s theorisation of social drama could be extended to include contemporary power plays between poverty and capital gain, first world privilege and third world dependency, war and migration, forces of hegemony and movements of liberation. Some of these social dramas cross the stage where we will present out data, others lurk in the wings. Schechner (1993) developed the concept of direct theatre to explain how public events, and particularly political actions transform public spaces into “theatre where collective reflexivity is performed” (p. 83). He gave the example of Tiananmen Square where the protesting “students improvised in public while the officials, as always, rehearsed their options behind closed doors” (p. 86). He stressed that he did not use the word theatre metaphorically: people were deliberately playing out their history to an audience who they reached through the means of watching media as well as live. Numerous contemporary examples of direct theatre could be added to Schechner’s illustrative example: the refugee boats landing on the shores of Italy, the wall whose foundations are being laid between the United States and Mexico, the genuflecting rows of sportsmen refusing to stand for the flag they believe has become compromised.

Whereas some acts in the making of history deliberately seek and find the public eye, others, perhaps equally important, are played out on small unseen stages. The voices of some of the players in the shaping of history are only heard through the reports of others. The issue of rural parental engagement in schooling in Bangladesh is one such case. The investigation of the experiences and perceptions of rural parents and teachers captured some of the nuances of their stories and of the complexities that are played out in village attitudes and politics. However, in the form of an academic thesis, those voices may never be heard by the shapers of policy. An intention of performing the presentation of their voices is to bring out the personal human stories that tend to be hidden behind statistics. The scenes that follow depict the absence of constructive interaction between rural parents and the teachers of the local schools, and suggest the complex and apparently insurmountable economic and social factors that create the communication gap. They also evoke some of the reasons why interaction is sorely needed.

Scene1: The indifference of parents

There is a small stage, like a high table top. Two hand puppets lie on the table ready to be picked up and brought to life. One is dressed in a lungi; the other in a short-sleeved shirt and dark trousers. On the screen above is the image of two groups of people, a little apart and not quite facing each other. All the faces are a little blurred. One group are dressed in similar lungis; the other in shirts and trousers.

The teacher puppet, in shirt and trousers, is picked up first.

Teacher: Students of those families in which parents are communicating with the school to know about their children’s performance and providing their care at home are doing well and changing their attitude to learning. However, the numbers of such parents are microscopic; you can count them on your fingers.

The parent puppet is picked up, and stands turning slightly way. Silent.

Teacher: *(with voice showing concern)* When we find any problem with any student’s irregularity with attendance in the class or about a student’s performance then we need to make contact with the parents.

The parent moves slightly, but remains silent.

Teacher: If we can consider school as a family and consider every stakeholder as a member of this family, then we need to work together for any problems or making any functions successful.

Parent: *(in a half-hearted tone)* In some point teachers know more about my son than me. It could be because of the bustle in my life for earning money and food for my family. Communication will make me updated about my son's performance, and I will get information about any gap in my son's learning. Then I will get a chance to fill up the gap by discussing it with his teachers. Without communicating with the teachers, it would not be possible to improve.

Teacher: *(stepping forward and speaking with energy)* We are experiencing a problem every day: some students come and then run away after a few classes. It happens mostly after the tiffin break. After the tiffin break, we find very few students in the classroom. There is a huge chance for the students to involve themselves in different illegal activities in this time.

Parent: I send my children to attend school. If they do not go to school and go to other places to play then it would not be possible for me to know about it. *(He turns to squarely face the teacher.)* The teacher can inform us. If teacher informs us, then we could be conscious and make our children aware that we are concerned about them.

Teacher: Whenever we invite parents to the school, parents do not attend on that day. Parents do not consider the importance of our school invitation compared to their work. *(He pauses, and when the parent remains silent he continues.)* During the result announcement time a tiny number of parents join us. The average percentage of the attendance of the parents is maximum five percent. Those who do not attend do not even inform us whether they will attend or not and also do not share the reason of their inability to participate.

Parent: *(mumbling slightly)* I might not be able to respond to comments about my son's result.

Teacher: *(firmly)* When we invite parents to come for parents assembly, most of the parents do not come; they show their apathy about it. *(He looks back at the parent and then turns to face the audience.)* If parents can collaborate with us and look after their children at home then it would be easy for the students to develop their education.

There is a pause, as both look away from each other. Then the parent slowly moves forward.

Parent: Usually, I do not visit the school as I do not get time and I do not need to visit, but this time I am visiting to talk to the teachers about reducing my children's fees. I am unable to pay that amount now. Without fees, they will not allow my kids for the exam. So I am here to convince teachers to reduce how much I have to pay.

Teacher: Usually, parents do not visit the school; they visit only when their children failed to get a promotion to the next class. In visiting school, they frequently criticise us about why their children failed to get a promotion to the next class. I do not pay less money for my children, they might say; you people do not take care properly.

Parent: My daughter is studying in this school for four years. However, I have not received any invitation for any meeting or any parental assembly. If I could receive any letter, I would come. The invitation letters never come to us.

Teacher: Please look, here is my invitation letter and here is a register, where I kept the names of all those I sent letters to. It is nothing but a complaining tendency by the parents. Not only do they refuse the invitation letter, parents do not even respond after seeing the result card that we send through our students.

Parent: I do not know about a result card; my son never gave it to me. So what can I say about that? (*He turns to the teacher.*) Today I will discuss with my son to know about this and find out the reason behind this.

A further pause, then the parent continues, speaking to the audience.

Parent: I am busy with my livelihood and am busy with my work; I forgot the date of invitation, and I missed attending. After sending a letter for a meeting or any event in the school, it would be nice if teachers would remind me. Teachers can contact us or can use a mike for an announcement to remind all parents.

Teacher: Truly speaking we are too busy with our classes and already crushed under the teaching load. After conducting our classes, we lost our courage to do that. We do not get time to check with parents.

Parent: I attended different activities before. However, I did not get any constructive discussion there. Everyone delivered aimless discussion, mainly political. I have not got anything for my learning. So, I prefer to go for my work, not to attend a school function.

Teacher: Because of parental illiteracy they have an inferiority complex, and this keeps them away from school. When a parent does not know what their children are studying in the school, they cannot look after their children. They usually say to us: what will I do to go to school, as I do not know anything about education?

Parent: I am illiterate, I cannot understand what education is, and I cannot even figure out what is inside the education. That is why I never attend the school programmes.

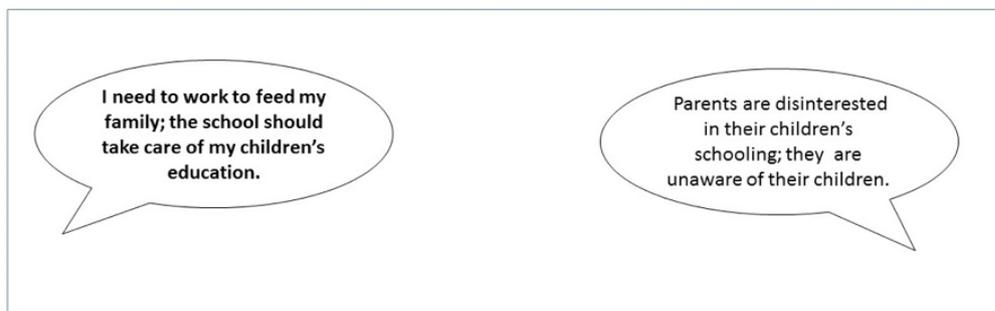
Another short silence. Then the parent speaks again.

Parent: I do not feel comfortable communicating and participating in school activities because of highly politicisation of each and every aspect. Politicians always consider their interest in the decision-making process rather than school related interests.

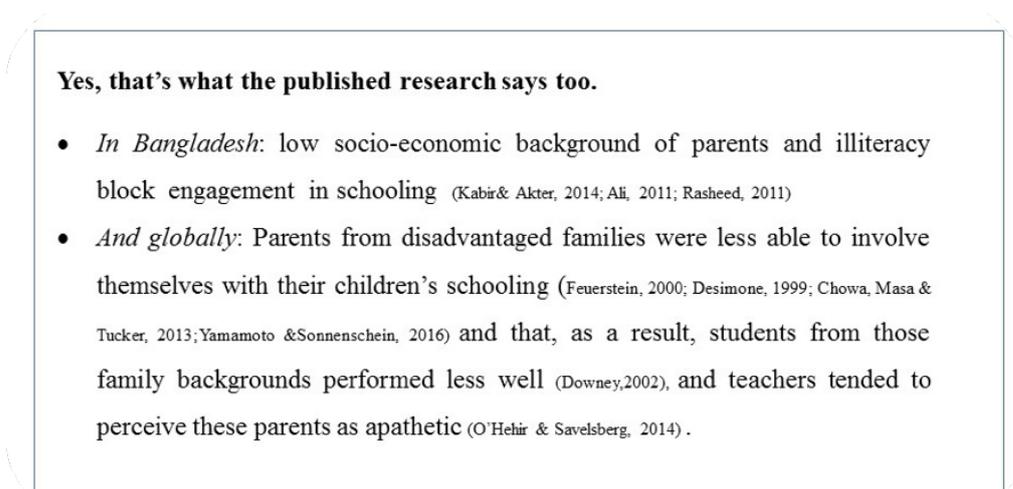
Teacher: Political figures are the local means for any government support for the school. We need to take their favour as they are holding power within our locality. They are the local decision makers for distributing government allocated funds for the support of any school. So if we do not involve them in any of our programmes, they will not consider giving support to our school.

At this point both puppets freeze.

On the overhead screen, over the groups of figures, the following two speech bubbles appear:



The image then gives way to the following words on a blank screen:



The next image comes in with a flash:



Scene 2: No. Not the whole story! And it's not just about individual attitudes....

The same stage. The two hand puppets are standing on either side. Behind each one now stands a cluster of cut-out figures on sticks. On the parent's side some wear a lungi and some a sari. On the teacher's side they all wear short-sleeved shirts and dark trousers and some wear a tie.

The screen above shows the inside of a rural classroom with its open windows, worn tin roof, mud floor and eighty or so students crowded onto the wooden benches.

The teacher puppet walks towards the audience and gestures towards the cluster of parents:

Teacher: The parents in this region are so simple and dwelling in the village. They do not show any vision for their children's education, the way conscious parents do. Most are involved with their work in others' fields as day labourers. Because of their illiteracy, they are not knowledgeable about their children's education. (*He takes a deep breath with disappointment*). Mainly they do not know what to do with their children schooling, or how to do it. Because of that, they cannot take care of their children.

The parent puppet looks up at the screen, nods slowly and turns to the audience:

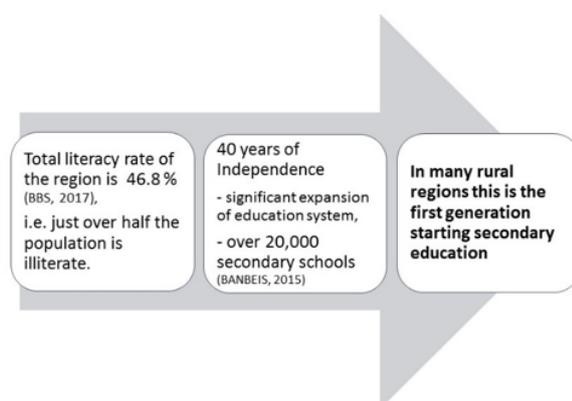
Parent: My son is going to school and learning something. That is enough for me.

Teacher: Parents have a type of fear about school and us teachers. When I met any parents, I would ask why they are not attending functions and they would reply: 'I am not well informed about my son's education, so what would I do if I was there? What can I say there about my children education?'

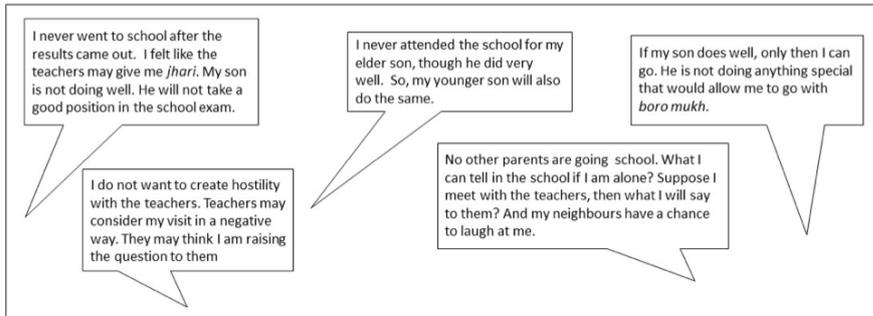
He looks up at the image of the students in the classroom and then at the cluster of parents and shakes his head.

Teacher: Rich and conscious parents have migrated to the urban areas.

The following flashes up on the overhead screen:



The overhead image changes to a cluster of villagers with the following speeches bubbles appearing one by one:



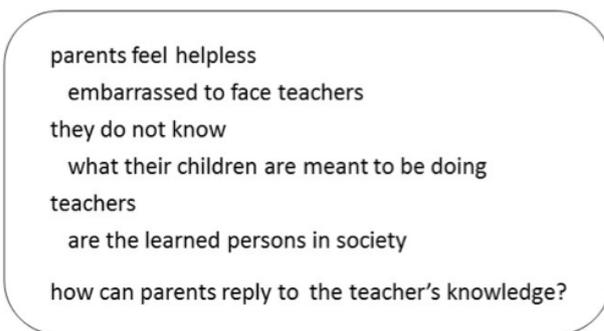
The parent puppet nods as each of these speech bubbles appears and indicates the speaker in the cluster behind him. He turns back to the audience and says:

Parent: I cannot maintain the school environment, as I am a man of the field. That is why I stay in my own area. *(He pauses for a long moment and then continues.)* How can I go to the school, meet with the teachers and introduce myself saying 'I am father one of your students'? Is it possible? If they call me, only then can I go there.

Teacher: *(pointing to one of the group behind the parent)* Look at him; he is a shopkeeper, selling fruits in the street. It is the first time he is sitting in front of me. He is not feeling comfortable about seating in front of me. That is why he is not talking too much.

The parent puppet nods in agreement.

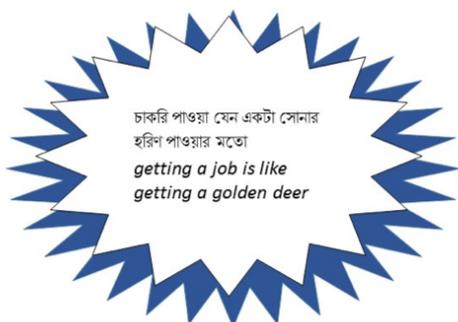
The overhead screen displays the following words:



Parent: Higher education is so expensive in our country, and I am not able to bear those expenses. At the same time, my son will not be a judge or a barrister. My son is going to school and learning something. That is enough for me.

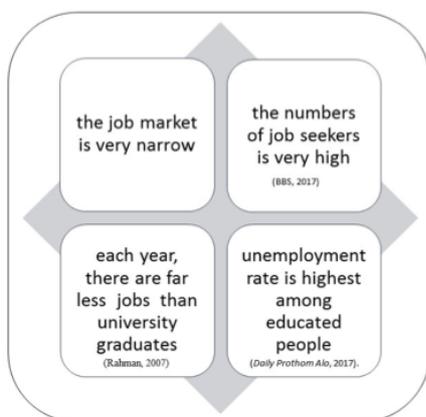
Teacher: A few parents are trying to educate their children, overcoming their financial struggle. But some fail to continue their children's education and have to stop in the middle because of not being able to bear educational expenses.

The overhead screen flashes:



Teacher: A certificate is needed to get any job now in our job market. At least a class eight certificate. So, many parents send their children to school up to the level eight. After that they can get a job in the garments sector. (*He pauses, looks towards the parent cluster, and continues.*) Some students attend class only just before exam time and then sit for the examination. They only want to get promotion to the next class and get a certificate.

The overhead screen flashes:

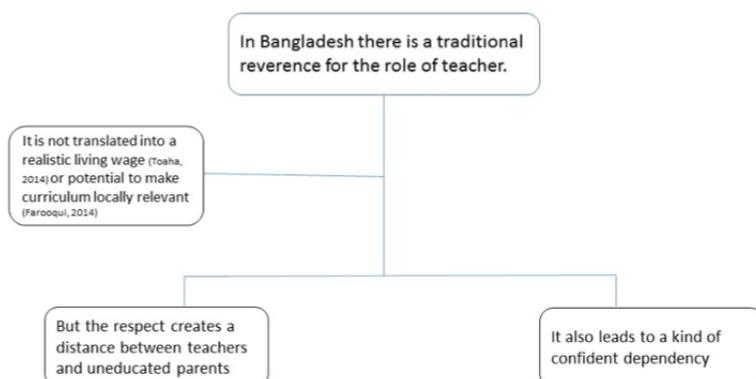


Parent: My neighbour's son began higher education and failed because his father could not bear the expenses. He had to come back to the village and he now work beside his father.

He looks up at the overhead above, shakes his head, looks at the cluster of parents around him, looks at the cluster of teachers, turns back to the audience and says with an assumed confidence:

Parent: Maybe my son is doing well, and that is why teachers are not complaining to me. When everything is fine, then I do not need to go to school.

The overhead screen flashes:



Parent: Teachers are *Shikkha Guru*. They teach everyone education, etiquette. That why I always feel scared to talk to them, in case I do any wrong. I entrusted my son to the teachers. They will do everything, whatever they need for my children's education. I am only concerned about if they misbehave in any way.

Teacher: Parents' expectations are all teacher centred. Parents desire that teachers be more than enough for taking care of their children's educational needs.

Parent: Sir, you are our people, and you are there for taking care of my son. I am hopeful you people will look after my children.

Teacher: They are firm in insisting that they are not able to do anything because they do not have education themselves

Parent: What can I do for my children's education? It is the teachers' job and let them do it. I hope teachers are playing their role, and will be doing their job for the benefit of my children as well.

Teacher: We face a problem when any student fails to get the promotion to the next class. Parents come to school and force us to allow those failed students into the next class. They claim that it is not their doing that their children are been unable to get the promotion. Parents blame us for their children's results.

The overhead screen brings up the following words:

Perhaps there is too great a gap
between the goals of schooling
and the experience of rural parents...
Perhaps engagement is not possible...

Perhaps the gap is inevitable
because of the extent of educational change...

Policy asks parents to engage,
but where are the resources to teach parents and schools
how to engage?

This is not a problem that exists in Bangladesh alone.

The Parent and Teacher look at the screen, look sadly at each other, and nod. However, the screen flashes again:

BUT

there are problems with schools
and problems with young people

These need parents and teachers and the wider community

What will happen if they can't work together?

Scene 3: The cries of need

The same small stage and overhead screen.

The parent and teacher puppets stand to the sides to the stage. The focus is on the overhead screen where a series of scenes are portrayed in captions and succession of images. The parent and teacher add occasional comments.

*The screen shows the following title: **Limited scope for teachers to reach all students***

It is followed by a succession of images showing the crowded classroom, the school closed because of flood, an Eid celebration, crowds of students and their parents coming to the examination halls.

Teacher: *(indicating the succession of images)* You can have a look our academic calendar, where you could see that we spend most of the time on holidays, internal examinations and celebrating different formalities of school programmes. Within this short period, we cannot get enough time to finish our syllabus.

Parent: *(thoughtfully)* During the time of the flood, it overflows the school premises. The school remains closed. Students could not get to school anyway because the routes have been flooded.

Teacher: do not get enough time to repeat my lesson for the second time. So, in order to remember any topic of a subject, students need to study at home. There is no any other alternative. Students' absenteeism increases when they do not understand any topic from the lesson. They lose interest to attend school. Sometimes they would end up by dropping out.

*The overhead screens shows a new title: **Young people are out of control.***

It is followed by a succession of images showing boys watching television at a tea stall late at night, boys smoking and joking, a group of boys teasing a nervous-looking girl.

Teacher: *(indicating the images)* I can see my students are spending their time outside at the tea stall and watching TV at night. Sometimes I turn up there and then they leave the place.

Parent: Every day I return in the evening from my hard work, feel tired, and do not get that head space to check on my children activities.

*A new title is seen on the overhead screen: **Students' irregular attendance***

The succession of images that follows a classroom with some empty seats, harvesting, a boy helping his father pull a cart to the market, A girl helping her mother cook, another boy with his father on a small boat loaded with produce, a village marriage ceremony. Parent and teacher watch.

Teacher: As a result of students' irregularity they are staying in the race behind any lesson. I can see irregular students failed to interact and receive the lesson that I discuss, because of lack of the previous lecture.

Parent: At the harvesting time the landowner asks me to bring my son to work.

Teacher: Some families from here go to Sylhet district for employment with their sons, sometimes with their whole family. After finishing their work, they return home with cash and crops as their wages. At that time students cannot attend school. It becomes very tough for us to do anything effective. We close our school and utilise the rest of the day for our family needs. But this time impacts on our whole academic period.

Parent: Sometimes I send my son for work, but not every day. When my job giver needs additional support and asks for my son, then I bring him to that work. His little contribution has helped my family a lot.

Teacher: When a parent can see that he does not need to pay educational expenses and on the contrary his son is contributing his family and he is getting relief from financial pressure, then he wants to see his son continue working rather than sending him to school.

*The overhead screen shows a new title: **Child marriage***

A succession of images show a group of young girls in the classroom, a village marriage, a young girls washing pots, cooking, hanging clothes on bushes to dry.

Teacher: Most commonly parents cannot bear the educational expenses for their daughter; they decide to cut down the expenditure. A young daughter is in high demand for marriage so parents decide to marry off their daughter when they receive an offer from a good family.

Parent: My neighbours and other community people criticise me for my daughter's literacy. They ask me: are you planning to make your girl a barrister? Do not keep your adult daughter with you!

Teacher: Some parents decide to arrange a marriage for their daughter to save her from eve-teasing.

*The overhead screen shows a new title: **Eve-Teasing***

A succession of images show a group of young girls walking to school, a group of boys laughing among themselves, boys calling out to the girls, a boy with his hand on his heart talking to a girl who looks nervous, a couple of boys with mobile phone cameras snapping photos of girls.

Teacher: Good looking girls are mostly affected by the eve-teasers. Sometimes the boys take a picture or a video without getting permission. They may pull at a girl's scarf, and even make proposals of love. Parents also do not feel secure about sending their daughter to the school for that reason.

Parent: My daughter was receiving a proposal for love from an eve-teaser on the way to and back from school. When eve-teaser did not get any positive response from my daughter he came to me and wanted to marry my daughter. He was not doing anything so he could not take responsibility for my daughter. Naturally, I refused his proposal, and then he became angry with me and said he would look at me further. To avoid any other further incidences I took my daughter to her grandfather's house and arranged her marriage with a suitable groom.

*A new title comes to the overhead screen: **Addiction***

The images that follow show boys offering each other cigarettes, smoking with older men at a tea stall, lounging back in a classroom bench, outside the school laughing among themselves as they smoke.

Teacher: In the classroom the students who are addicted to tobacco look different. Most of them cannot follow my lectures, and they create a disturbance in the classroom.

Parent: My son does not smoke. I cannot accept that blame.

*A new title appears: **Above all there is a matter of money***

The images that appeared before in this scene are circulated again, in random order. They are interspersed with the following captions:

To some families, education seems like laughing at low level

কম্বুধার রাজ্যে পৃথিবী গদ্যময় পূর্ণগমি- চাঁদ যলে ঝলসানো । বুটি

The world is devastated by hunger that is rendered so matter-of-fact that the full moon looks like grilled bread

Pressure piled on pressure (মরার উপর খাড়ার ঘা)

The images continue as the parent and teacher speak.

Teacher: Besides the support from the government, students need other support from parents when they are enrolled in school. There are expenses like paper, pen, examination fees, session charge, supporting books and so on. Without that students cannot continue their study properly.

Parent: When I have failed to provide very basic requirements for my children's educational needs, such as good clothes, food, books, pencils, guide books, and examination fees, then how I can provide private tuition for my son? In this region, I have seen that without attending any private tuition no one can get a good result.

Teacher: In the morning I spend two hours with fifteen students in each hour for teaching them privately. I lose my energy there. When school time starts, I

can manage the first two hours; after that my body and brain do not allow me to give my full effort in the class lecture. Because I know that after school time I will be involved with tuition.

Parent: My son always requests me to send him to any teacher for private tuition, as he is facing problems and not getting full support from the teacher in the class. He expects everything will be okay if he can work with any teacher.

Teacher: I involve myself in teaching privately because of some extra money, for surviving in this society in a right way.

Both parent and teacher look up at the screen together and then at each other.

The teacher slowly turns back to the audience and begins to speak hesitantly and thoughtfully.

Teacher: Still I can realise the gap between both teacher and parents, and we are blaming each other. Without filling the gap, expecting a response from the parents will not be possible.

Back to the authors

Our play stops here, but the research did not. In a final group discussion involving parents and teachers, suggestions evolved about how to improve communication and about ways to engage parents that were meaningful to them and that fitted their need to earn a living. Whether the suggestions would be translated into practice was still to be seen. However, the discussion in itself proved that, despite all the entrenched differences, effective communication between rural parents and teachers was possible.

The research also found the case of one head teacher in the district who had already taken an extensive personal initiative to go out to parents instead of simply expecting them to come to the school: he talked with them in market tea stalls and visited them in their homes. He engaged them in dialogues about their everyday lives as well as about the schooling of their children. Leading by example, he involved his teachers and his school committee in the process of meetings. He showed that illiteracy need not be an obstacle to parental involvement in education and, working within the cultural traditions of the community, he made sure all parents were welcome and respected at the school.

In shaping this article, we talked about how much to include in the dramatisation. We played with different possibilities, including ways of bringing the head teacher and the motorbike he rode around the community onto the stage to tell his story. And perhaps there may be a sequel where he does so. In the meantime, however, we decided to end the script with the problem. While government policy in Bangladesh calls for parental engagement as means to extend and improve schooling, in practice there is very little engagement, particularly in the rural regions which contain about over two thirds of the population. The absence of engagement is recognised, but the causes have not previously been explored in any detail.

In as much as the writing of this article is an exploration of a way the research can be shared in Bangladesh rural communities, and perhaps elsewhere, we thought it more useful to let the voices and the socio-economic realities stand on their own without resolution. Perhaps audiences might then join the debate. Perhaps we could develop some kind of forum theatre where audiences could explore their own preferred strategic interventions. And if needed, the head teacher could still eventually rev up his motorbike and ride in.

The advantage of play is that it allows further possibilities.

So what does this way of approaching the data mean?

We have already suggested that this dramatisation of the data can serve as a dress rehearsal for presenting the data and the ideas arising from it to audiences who are closely concerned with the issues but are unlikely to read an academic document. However, this particular play with the data is appearing in an academic journal: does its form have any value for the journal readers? We believe that it has.

Firstly, it is an embodied reminder that research is not an abstraction but rather that it is a capture of the needs and voices of real people. Academic conventions require processes of analysis and interpretation, often through the lens of a particular theoretical position. The thesis in which this data has been originally reported proposed that a theory of social discourse (Gee, 1992) would illuminate how a community's discourses circulate to reinforce particular ways of talking and believing, and argued that this was happening not only in the rural context but also at the national administrative level. Such theorisation is indeed useful as it allows the researcher to probe further and examine the issues of poverty, first-generation-schooling, and dysfunctional practices that underlie the surface content in the statements made by teachers and parents. The dramatisation here takes a different approach: it brings the participants onto the same stage so that they can face each other and so allow an imaginary dialogue to evolve. The academic theorisation is valuable but it can give the impression that the problems are rendered manageable by being encapsulated in the theory. This dramatisation keeps the positional arguments alive and emphasises that they are the expressions of real people who are still living with the experiences they are describing. It also suggests that it is these real people on the ground who can address the problems they experience if they can find the means to trustfully communicate with each other. And they will probably do it without recourse to theory.

Secondly, our dramatisation is an invitation to further play by readers, just as it is hoped that future audiences will want to interject with questions or accounts of their own experiences and to improvise further developments. Academic writing tends to assume an authoritative tenor and so may not allow enough space to allow the reader or the audience to enter into the text. Issues of parental engagement in schooling are important in most of our societies, not only in rural Bangladesh. In New Zealand, too, there are on-going and important debates about how much say parents should have in education and about what areas they should have a say in. There are also concerns about which parents in our community are empowered to have a say, and questions about how schools can create better opportunities for engagement by all kinds of parents. The issues presented in this article may in themselves provoke questioning and opinions about parental engagement in New Zealand, and in other countries where this journal is read. We hope that the accessible way that they are presented through this dramatisation will facilitate the questioning and debate.

And finally, we hope that this approach, while preserving a respect for the research, allows readers to enjoy the reading process.

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