TEACHING THE LIVE: 
THE PEDAGOGIES OF PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Theatre as an artform is ephemeral in nature and offers a lived, aesthetic experience. Attending theatre and analysing theatre performance is a key component of the study of drama in senior secondary education systems in Australia, and in many international education systems. The senior secondary drama curriculum in Victoria offers a unique context for analysing live theatre performances. Lists of performances are prescribed for teachers and students to select from and attend. The year prior to the lists being created, theatre companies are invited to submit productions for consideration. The written curriculum determines that students write a written analysis of one production. This task assesses students’ knowledge, skills and understanding of what they experience at school level, and they are assessed again in an end-of-year ‘high-stakes’ examination, the results of which contributes to students’ overall graduating academic score.

Methodologically, this study used case study methods to investigate the pedagogies of performance analysis, selecting four cases as a collective case study approach. Over a period of fourteen months the study investigated how the lists of performances were generated, how teachers and students selected a performance to attend, how teachers taught the analysis of live theatre performance to senior drama students in a high-stakes assessment environment, and critically examined the role of theatre companies within these processes. The data comprised document analysis, participant observation, field notes, semi-structured individual and focus group interviews, and researcher reflective journal.

Specifically the study examined pedagogy and how teachers’ pedagogical choices moved the written curriculum towards enacted and experienced curriculum. It explored what influenced and impacted these pedagogies in order to consider what constitutes effective pedagogies for teaching the analysis of live theatre performance within the research context and, more broadly, wherever the analysis of theatre performance is included in senior drama curricula.

The findings indicate that while the teachers who participated in the study sought to create rich educational experiences for their senior drama students, they needed to take a reductive approach and employ teaching strategies that reinforced capacities relevant to the exam rather than those that engaged with the live arts experience or recognised and incorporated the embodied practices of drama education. Consequently, the study questions the purpose of examining performance analysis. The study also revealed how theatre company practices impact the teaching of performance analysis.

As a way to structure an effective pedagogy for teaching performance analysis the study recommends that a purposeful, structured and sustained community of practice be established between curriculum authorities, theatre companies and schools. It is one that acknowledges the four stages of pedagogy identified and is a model that has potential application in curriculum where performance analysis is part of studying drama and theatre.
DECLARATION

This is to certify that this thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD except where indicated and that due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used.

The thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, images, bibliography and appendices.

Name: Megan Joy Upton

Signature:

Date: May 31, 2016
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every thesis is a textual representation of the author’s identity and as such projects a unique writerly voice situated in a specific historical, social and disciplinary context

(Aitchison, 2010, p. 85)

The journey of this thesis has had the deeply respected input of – at various times — Professor John O’Toole, Associate Professor Kate Donelan, Professor David Beckett, Dr. Madonna Stinson, and Professor Peter O’Connor. I acknowledge and appreciate their varying roles as supervisors, academic panel members and collegial advisors.

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Thanks to my colleagues in other academic institutes, other research fields, those in theatre companies, and in educational contexts.

Thank you to my partner Leo and my son Dominic for their support, their presence and their absence when requested.

…and for my Dad.
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Australian Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATAR</td>
<td>Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education (UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>Higher School Certificate (New South Wales)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KLA</td>
<td>Key Learning Area</td>
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<td>SAC</td>
<td>School Assessed Coursework</td>
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<td>SACE</td>
<td>South Australian Certificate of Education</td>
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<td>QCAA</td>
<td>Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority</td>
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<td>VCE</td>
<td>Victorian Certificate of Education</td>
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<td>VCAA</td>
<td>Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority</td>
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<td>VTAC</td>
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TEACHING THE LIVE: THE PEDAGOGIES OF PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

If theatrical art is capable of generating an educational, transformative process in its audiences and participants, what are the means at its disposal, and what are the aesthetic processes involved? Is it possible to identify those characteristic elements, elastic and eclectic and culturally specific though they will inevitably be, that contribute to the educational process? (Jackson, 2007, p. 5).

PROLOGUE: Seven Acts of Pedagogy

In the theatre a vignette is a short scene that focuses on one moment or gives an incisive impression about a character, idea, setting, or object. By way of introduction, the seven vignettes that begin this thesis provide fleeting but significant scenes captured from across the research period of fourteen months. I call them ‘Seven Acts of Pedagogy’.

ACT ONE: Early September 2009. A small independent Melbourne theatre company, Red Stitch Actor’s Theatre, has decided to submit the play Fatboy to be considered for study by senior drama students in Victoria 2010. This particular play is chosen from the Company’s main season after the Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre Schools’ Committee meets to consider which show “is going to be appropriate for kids”. For the Committee, Fatboy ticks several boxes with regard to its understanding of the submission criteria; it is non-naturalistic in form, it is based on a classic play, it is current in terms of its themes, all of which they decide are “kind of relevant to teenagers I think. There’s a lot they can talk about and a lot they can use…how it was staged, they can look at costumes, and they can look at set design”.

ACT TWO: Early October 2009. The Advisory Panel that selects theatre performances for the senior Drama and Theatre Studies curriculum is gathered in a formal meeting room at the offices of the curriculum authority. The Panel is reflecting on the selections of plays made for that year, 2009, as a precursor to the selection of plays for 2010. They consider which plays have been successful or provided strong learning opportunities, and they discuss issues around content and form. The Panel’s role is complex. Their remit is to select sixteen plays that address the requirements of the curriculum, that reflect a range of diverse works, that are able to sustain intensive study and analysis, but to also to ensure that community
standards are met with regard to content. Within this remit, the Panel begin the process of carefully considering over forty submissions from theatre companies and producers from across the State.

**ACT THREE:** Morning, March 16, 2010. It is early in the school day, a double drama lesson in a studio space at an inner suburban government senior college. The teacher is conducting a lesson that is designed as preparation for her senior drama students who will be seeing *Fatboy* on the evening of March 18. She begins with, “It is great to be able to talk about the production and really think about it. It will be great for your assessment task and your exam. Remember the exam is really, really important…So, what do we do when we go to the theatre?”

**ACT FOUR:** Evening, March 18, 2010. The senior drama students and their teacher have arrived to see a performance of *Fatboy* at Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre. Red Stitch is housed in an old church hall. The students are gathered picnic style on the nearby lawn on a balmy summer’s night, some snacking. One of the students tells the teacher that he researched the show while she was away. “His wife’s name is Fudgie so we reckon he eats her!” They head off to the theatre and the teacher gives the students a final reminder about looking listening and taking in the actor/audience relationship. Seventy-nine seats fill quickly and their occupants await the opening of the lush red curtain. It begins!

**ACT FIVE:** Morning, 23 March, 2010. In the studio of a senior secondary college the same group of senior drama students are seated in a circle in the middle of the floor. This coming Friday the students will be writing a response to *Fatboy*. They will have seventy-five minutes for the writing and the teacher states that it will focus on performance styles, dramatic elements, theatrical conventions and use of stagecraft. Kate, the teacher, reminds them that they had homework. They were to write down initial ideas about the play and then try and put them in the categories on the handout sheet but not many of them have. It is now five days since they saw the play.

**ACT SIX:** Evening, 24 March, 2010. It is after another performance of *Fatboy*. There is a quietening in the theatre after the show. The red curtain opens rather dramatically to reveal
the cast seated on stage in similar positions to those they occupied in the final scene of the performance. This is another Q&A Session. A long silence prevails. A student finally calls out, “Why are you so damn cool!?” There is general laughter and the silence and tension is broken.

**ACT SEVEN:** Morning, Monday 8 November, 2010. Senior drama students across the State of Victoria who attended the production *Fatboy* in March 2010 are sitting in an examination room charged with the task of responding to the following questions.

1. *Explain how the non-naturalistic performance style gave meaning to the theme(s) in the performance of ‘Fatboy’.*

2. *Evaluate how one actor used their expressive skills to create one character and how they manipulated the actor–audience relationship in the performance of ‘Fatboy’.*

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1 Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA, 2010) VCE Drama Written Exam p.14
CHAPTER ONE: An Introduction

1. 1. The research project

This thesis is concerned with live theatre performance. Specifically it investigates how teachers teach the analysis of live theatre performance to senior drama students, including what pedagogies and strategies they employ to do so, what influences and impacts upon these pedagogies and what constitutes effective pedagogy/ies.

In presenting the opening seven vignettes I draw the reader’s attention to the timelines, the stakeholders, and hint at the processes and pedagogies of teaching the analysis of live theatre performance in the context of the Victorian senior secondary drama and theatre curricula.

When the curtain closes, when the auditorium lights up and the applause dissipates, what remains of the theatre performance just experienced? When the purpose of the visit to the theatre is to critically analyse it, how does a student capture and retain what they have just experienced? How does a drama teacher ‘teach’ students to do this analysis and, further, what pedagogies are employed to assist students in shaping captured moments into a rich and rigorous analysis? What role does or can a theatre company play in this process? What theoretical frameworks can purposefully inform and possibly provide answers? In the years that preceded this study, it was these questions that prompted the eventual research.

There are four key stakeholders who comprise the teaching of performance analysis in this study. They are:

- The curriculum authority, in this instance the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), who oversee the development and writing of curriculum, and who appoint an Advisory Panel to select plays for the Playlists (lists of live performances of plays) for Drama and Theatre Studies, the two subjects that are available for study at senior secondary level in Victoria.
- Secondly, theatre companies that submit or nominate works to be considered for selection to the Playlists and who, if successful, program, direct, design and then perform the plays for students studying senior drama and theatre.
- Thirdly, teachers of VCE Drama and Theatre Studies who select one or more productions from the Playlists, then teach students to analyse and respond to the selected performance.

- Finally, there are the Drama and Theatre Studies students who are required to study and analyse a live theatre performance for a school based assessment task and also write about the production in an end-of-year externally assessed examination.

The multiple roles I have held – as outlined in the following discussion — generated an impulse to position the live theatre performances that are selected for the VCE Playlists at the centre of the research. While live theatre performance is studied by many drama and theatre students around the world, the VCE Playlists are a phenomenon unique to the senior drama curriculum in Victoria, Australia. The process of creating Playlists and the impact of such lists on studying performance analysis, generates a series of critical relationships between the key stakeholders.

1. 2. The Researcher

1. 2. 1. Researcher roles

In this thesis I am the researcher first and foremost but I have also embodied a number of other roles during the journey of the research.

The first role I bring is that of an experienced drama teacher, teaching senior drama and theatre studies, albeit within VCE Study Designs that pre-date 2001.

The second role is as an education manager for a major contemporary theatre company based in Melbourne. I held the role of Education Manager with Playbox Theatre Company (which became Malthouse Theatre in 2005) for over eight years. In this role I gained considerable insight into the theatre industry, and was responsible for engaging students and other young people in the company’s artistic program of live theatre performances. As part of that role I was required to select productions from the Company’s forthcoming season, then submit them to the VCAA for consideration. This role provided valuable insight into the VCE Playlist selection process from the theatre company’s perspective.
The third role is as a lead research assistant for the ARC Linkage project Theatre Space, a four year and longitudinal study investigating the theatre going habits of young people in three Australian states. I brought to this role previous research and industry experience. Firstly from completing a Master’s in Educational research ‘Articulating the Theatre Experience’ (2005), and from professional practice in the theatre industry.

The fourth role is as a pre-service education academic, responsible for facilitating pre-service teachers’ capacities to teach drama in primary and secondary schools. In this role I am deeply interested in curriculum and pedagogy, and theories of learning.

The final role that I bring to this research is that of a VCE Examiner/Assessor. In this role I have assessed students’ written responses to live theatre in the end-of-year Drama and Theatre Studies written exams. This role provided considerable insight into how students wrote about live theatre performance under examination conditions and posed questions with regard to how performance analysis was taught in schools.

My roles in these varying settings define me as ‘an insider’. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) advise that people who are intimately involved in a setting may find it difficult to distance themselves from “personal concerns and from their common sense understanding of what is going on” (p. 57). In considering the challenge this statement presents, I acknowledge that while I entered the field as a researcher I brought with me the role of a classroom practitioner and a VCE drama educator and examiner. My engagement with theatre companies throughout this research was accompanied by understanding of the industry from my role as an education manager. These multiple roles are ones I have wrestled with throughout the study and ones that have constantly required acknowledgement, examination and clarity. Creswell (2007) comments that the researcher has a responsibility to clarify their roles and to “comment on past experiences, biases, prejudices and orientations that have likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study” (p. 208). As O’Toole (2006) suggests, my researcher role is inextricably linked to my other roles. Conversely, the roles I have had and do have in the classroom, in academia, in the theatre, and as an assessor enabled valuable insights, ones that gave rise to the key research questions.

In drawing on these roles and in order to investigate this complex interplay of curriculum,
pedagogy, theatre and lived experience I have shaped the following key questions:

**Central Question:**

*What pedagogies are employed in the teaching of the analysis of live theatre performance in the context of the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curriculum?*

**Subsequent and related questions:**

- When does the pedagogical process begin? When does it end?
- What influences and impacts upon pedagogy?
- What constitutes an effective pedagogy for teaching performance analysis?

**1. 2. 2. Researcher paradigms**

Lincoln and Guba (1994) describe a paradigm as “a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world" the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, as, for example, cosmologies and theologies do” (p. 107). As a researcher in the field of arts education I am influenced by the theoretical paradigm of constructivism.

Within education, constructivism as a paradigm presents learning as an actively constructed process. Constructivism suggests that, “everything a person learns is mediated by their prior experiences and understandings” (Churchill et al, 2013, p. 11). Based on the work of social psychologists, particularly Piaget (1896-1980), Dewey (1859-1952), Vygotsky (1896-1934), Montessori (1870-1952), and Bruner (1915 -), constructivism suggests that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their experiences. Stake (1999) asserts that in the human construction of knowledge “we begin with the sensory experience of external stimuli which are given personal meaning” (p. 100). Charmaz (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) states, “Constructivism assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects’ meanings” (p. 510). Bruner (2004) argues that the constructivist view is one that takes as its central premise the concept of “world making”…whether in the sciences or the arts” (p. 69). In the constructivist classroom the focus tends to shift from the teacher to the students. The classroom is no longer a place where the teacher as expert pours
knowledge into passive students who wait like empty vessels to be filled, and both teachers and students think of knowledge as a dynamic ever-changing view of the world they live in. Constructivism as a learning theory and as “world making” has an important place in this study, the focus of which is the sensory experience of live theatre, and the interpretation and understanding of the performance’s meanings. The lived experience of theatre engages students in a broader, social and aesthetic experience, having the potential to be “world making” as Bruner would have us understand. At the theatre students are members of an audience, they participate in a performer/audience relationship as both individuals and as a social group. In the context of that rich, complex experience, my epistemological starting point is that students of drama and theatre construct are free to their own meanings.

Constructivist models of learning pose challenges for the researcher. O’Toole (2006) states that the researcher who adopts a constructivist approach sees the research field as “inescapably dynamic and shifting, unable to be positively pinned to a spot” (p. 32). Further, there are inherent tensions between the dynamism of embracing constructivist learning paradigms and what is arguably the more positivist paradigm of examinations and assessment at VCE level. By their very nature, examination questions create boundaries around concepts of knowledge and knowing. Indeed an examination question or assessment task generally requires the demonstration of quite specific knowledge. These tensions will be carefully explored in this thesis.

1.3. The need for this research

Extensive examination of the literature with regard to theatre and to audiences’ experiences of theatre enabled me to encounter a rich series of studies. Reception and performance studies theorists, Jauss (1982), Pavis (1982), Blau (1990), Bennett (1997), Sauter (1997), Schechner (2003), Tulloch (2004), van Maanen (2004), Freshwater (2009) and Thompson (2009) have written widely about how audiences read and receive theatre, how they navigate theatre’s semiotic language, its ephemerality and temporality, and how audiences engage with the dynamics of the theatrical event itself. Whitmore (1994), Auslander (1999), and Knowles (2004) have explored theatre as cultural production, its materiality and how audiences engage in a post-modern era. Lehmann (1999), Govan, Nicholson and
Normington (2007), and Harvie and Lavender (2010) have presented rich studies about the relationship between theatre makers, theatre audiences and theatre practice.


Wallis and Shepherd (1998) provide a comprehensive guide to “studying plays” and Rush (2005) offers students “a guide to play analysis”. Tulloch’s (2000) research with secondary school audiences’ experiences of a play by Anton Chekhov examines what he attributes as the ‘audiencing’ of students, how theatre companies select works specifically for schools’ audiences. Prendergast’s (2008), Teaching Spectatorship: Essays and Poems on Audience in Performance, offers a curriculum theory for critical spectatorship. These are highly useful and relevant research studies that richly inform this research by positioning theatre performance within an education paradigm.

The term performance analysis is also worthy of scrutiny here. It is a term specific to the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula. In other curricula across the country other terms are used – theatre review, critical analysis, play analysis. These are all terms that may be interchangeable with the Victorian curriculum’s understood term – performance analysis. Running parallel to my research, the study known as Theatre Space (published as Young Audiences, Theatre and the Cultural Conversation, O’Toole, Adams, Anderson, Burton & Ewing, 2014), investigated the theatre going habits of young audiences, barriers to attendance, and the role of theatre literacy in building engaged audiences. O’Toole et al
(2014) is particularly pertinent to this study because it draws attention to the relationship of attending live theatre to drama curriculum and to concepts of literacy. Donelan and Sallis’s chapter offers a broad exploration of the role of drama curriculum and the role that teachers play as mediators of students’ experiences of theatre, in order to create “engaged theatre goers” (Ch. 5, p. 65-82). This study differs from *Theatre Space* and previous studies in a number of ways. Firstly, it focuses on pedagogy, teacher practice and student learning. Methodologically, while teachers and students can report their understandings of practice and experience in interviews - as they did in *Theatre Space* - sustained observation in the classroom offers particularly rich opportunities to research a nuanced understanding of enacted and experienced curriculum. Further it offers insight into assessment processes and students’ understanding and meaning making of live theatre performance.

This inquiry, therefore, concerns a deep examination of pedagogy. It specifically enters the classrooms of drama teachers and drama students to investigate how different teachers introduce and apply particular pedagogical processes in order to enact the written curriculum and teach performance analysis. While Reason’s (2006, 2010) work with young children in their school contexts explores primary aged children’s responses to theatre, studies have not focused on teachers’ classroom practice. Further, the Victorian senior secondary context and VCE Playlists generate a unique theatre and education community, one that suggests a critical series of cross sector relationships. In my role as an education manager I observed and noted theatre companies needed to ‘buy in’ to the curriculum by submitting their work to the Playlist selection process. Within this context I was interested in directly observing and coming to know how teachers teach, how students learn, how to analyse a live theatre performance in the classroom when it is separated from the theatre context, how assessment is considered and positioned, and how theatre company decisions, practices and relationships with the education sector may directly impact pedagogy or, indeed, be informed by it. This is research that aims to inform and potentially impact contemporary curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in drama education as practice, and to inform the systems that develop and auspice it.

In generating new knowledge, this research investigates what might be a model or models of effective pedagogies for teaching performance analysis, ones that consider the Victorian
curriculum context and ones that may have broader application in other senior secondary curriculum, nationally and internationally.

1. 4. The research contexts
This section of the thesis provides the reader with background to the cultural, historical and educational contexts in which the research was conducted. The background information is deliberately quite detailed in order to set the scene.

1. 4. 1. Educational contexts: The Australian setting – state based education

Recent developments in education in Australia have resulted in a new Australian Curriculum. Phase One of the Australian curriculum, from Foundation (first year of primary school) to Year Ten (final year of compulsory schooling) was ratified for implementation in schools in 2015. It included the discipline areas of English, Mathematics, History and Geography. Phase Two, which includes The Arts – Drama, Dance, Media Arts, Visual Arts and Music – began an implementation process in 2016. It is important to note that even with the development of a national curriculum, schooling — particularly post-compulsory schooling — remains the remit of the each State government. The Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) states:

The state and territory authorities also determine assessment and certification specifications for their courses and any additional information, guidelines and rules to satisfy local requirements, including advice on entry and exit points and credit for completed study (ACARA, 2013).

In the state of Victoria the senior secondary curriculum is developed and assessed by its own curriculum authority known as the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). The curriculum is known as the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). The VCE is a two-year course offering a diverse range of studies including the subjects of Drama and Theatre Studies. A Theatre Arts course is also offered as part of the International Baccalaureate through several schools in Victoria but is not featured in this study.
1. 4. 2. The Structure of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

In Victoria, Australia, each VCE subject has its own detailed curriculum document called a Study Design. All Study Designs are constructed as follows:

- Rationale, introduction and key terminology
- Four Units which are studied across two years
- Areas of Study (AOS) within each Unit
- Key Knowledge (KN) to be learned and Key Skills (KS) to demonstrate for each Area of Study
- Assessment Outcomes for each Area of Study in each Unit.

In this curriculum model, Units 1 and 2 are assessed through School Assessed Coursework (SACs). Students studying Units 3 and 4 have both School Assessed Coursework and external written and/or performed examinations at the end of Unit 4. This structure applies to both Drama and Theatre Studies, the curriculum that are the focus of this research. To assist in implementing the Study Design, the curriculum body known as the VCAA provides an Assessment Handbook for each Study and an Advice for Teachers. For Drama and Theatre Studies teachers teaching the analysis of a theatre production, the VCAA Assessment Handbook offers an assessment rubric for Units 3 and 4 that includes a set of descriptors to assist in assessing students’ written analysis from ‘very high’ to ‘ungraded’ (Appendices 17 and 18). The Advice to Teachers document aims to complement the Study Designs and the Assessment Handbooks, offering ways to structure a course and types of assessment tasks that may possibly be set in order for students to achieve each assessment Outcome. These documents were analysed for this study in order to examine the structures of the written curriculum teachers enact in their classrooms.

The VCE curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated, and information is available via formal Bulletins and Notices to Schools on the VCAA website. These are important sources of information for teachers. In this study, reference is made to the 2007-2013 Study Designs for Drama and Theatre Studies which documents frame the timelines of the research. Where relevant, reference is made to the revised 2014-2018 Study Designs.

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2 In Units 3 and 4, a percentage of students’ School Assessed Coursework (SACs) contributes to their final study score and for this reason is considered to be high-stakes assessment.
1. 4. 3. Assessment in the VCE

The Victorian Certificate of Education is a curriculum whose end point is state-wide examinations, the results of which contribute to generating a final study score. Australia wide, final study scores at senior secondary level determine eligibility for entry to tertiary education. In Australia, a student’s final score is known as the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank or ATAR. Despite differing state senior secondary curricula and assessment processes, all students who complete their final year of secondary school in Australia and undertake formal assessment, receive an ATAR. In Victoria, school based assessment is reliant on School Assessment Tasks (SACs) which are assessed by teachers. However, a percentage of the SAC assessment, as determined by the VCAA, contributes to a student’s study score and thus their ATAR. School based assessment is also subject to an audit and review process, conducted in order to validate the quality of school-based assessment programs, to provide opportunities to recognize excellence in assessment design and practices and to provide feedback to the VCAA on the implementation of school-based assessment (VCAA, 2015, p. 1-5). Written examinations for all VCE studies take place in November each year and are prepared by a Panel appointed by the VCAA in consultation with the Chief Assessor for each study. The exams undergo an independent vetting process before they are finalized. A key document generated by the VCAA is the Examiners’ Report for each written examination. This document, published annually and available in the public domain, provides advice to teachers and students from the Study’s Chief Assessor as to what constituted a high scoring exam response and a low scoring exam response in that particular year. In some cases examples are provided.

1. 4. 4. Studying drama and attending live theatre performance

Drama as a subject is offered in secondary schools at senior level in each State in Australia. While the courses differ in structure and assessment processes, all clearly state that attending live theatre performance for the purposes of study is an integral component. An analysis across several state syllabus and curriculum documents reveals the following. In the New South Wales, students’ study of senior secondary Drama is designed for students “to experience, understand, enjoy, add value….drama is a social, collaborative and creative art form and as an expression of culture through making, performing and critically studying
drama and theatre as a reflective and analytical response to individual performances, to bodies of work by individual artists, performance groups and theorists, and to historical and cultural movements and performance traditions” (Board of Studies, 2009, p. 15). In Queensland students studying Drama “examine how the dramatic languages are employed in professional, independent or non–school-based productions” (QCAA, 2013, p. 5). South Australian students develop skills that allow them to “respond to performed drama and dramatic texts in a reflective manner” (SACE, 2015, p. 8). Students from Western Australia “reflect, respond and evaluate drama and become critical, informed audiences, understanding drama in the context of their own society and culture, drawing on a diverse range of drama from other cultures, places and times to enrich their inter-cultural understanding (WACE, 2013, p.1).

Attending live theatre performance while studying drama is not confined to the Australian context. An exploration of the curriculum in similar Western education systems indicates that students who are studying drama or theatre are guided towards or are, indeed, required to attend live theatre performance. In Canada, the Ontario Curriculum for The Arts mandates the study of Canadian theatre scripts and history and students are formally taught a critical analysis process. “Students use the critical analysis process (see pages 17–22) to identify and reflect on their response to dramatic works and develop their understanding of how dramatic purpose is achieved” (The Ontario Curriculum for the Arts, Drama, 2010, p. 13).

In the United Kingdom, the GCSE course for drama states that a core part of the drama course requires students to engage in “analysing and evaluating their own process of creating live theatre analysis and evaluation of live theatre work by others” (Drama GCSE, 2015, p. 5). Within the same curriculum British students study Shakespeare’s texts and performance as a core part of English and the curriculum makes direct links to the Globe Theatre in London, the Royal Shakespeare Company and their seasons of Shakespeare’s plays. It is clear that in comparable education systems around the world, both the attendance at live theatre performance and responding to theatre performance are critical components of studying drama.
In Victoria, a distinction is made between the studies of Drama and Theatre Studies. The subject known as Drama allows students to explore dramatic story telling, ensemble theatre making and solo devising through a form known as ‘non-naturalism’. The study of the subject known as Theatre Studies allows students to explore and interpret written scripts from historical and contemporary periods, and to explore the application of stagecraft. While neither Study Design provides specific definitions for ‘theatre’ or ‘live performance’, both documents state that as part of their studies, students must attend live theatre performance. The study of live theatre performance is mandated in writing. In VCE Theatre Studies, the curriculum document known as the Study Design, states that, “Through the study students’ work with playscripts3 in both their written form and in performance” (VCAA, 2007-2013, p. 7). “Students analyse and evaluate the relationship between the written playscript and its interpretation on stage” (VCAA, 2007-2013, p.23) and students “study the interrelationships between the acting and the theatrical style/s utilized in the production” (VCAA, 2007-2013, p. 28). In Drama Unit 3 the Study Design states, “[students] view and analyse performances by professional and other drama practitioners” (VCAA, 2007-2013, p. 7) and that, “This area of study focuses on an analysis of a performance that uses non-naturalistic performance styles” (VCAA, 2007-2013, p.7).

1.5. The VCE Playlists

The VCAA has determined that the Playlists will be the mechanism through which theatre performance is studied. The Playlists are lists of theatre productions that will be performed by theatre companies during the school academic year. There are three Playlists: the Drama Unit 3 Playlist, the Theatre Studies Unit 3 Playlist and the Theatre Studies Unit 4 Playlist. Each list consists of up to six performances from which at least one production must be selected by Drama and Theatre Studies teachers and students to attend and study. The detail in the following discussion is intended to provide insight for the reader into the system and structure that theatre companies are required to comply with and respond to.

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3 ‘Playscripts’ is a VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curriculum term. It refers to scripted plays either published or unpublished
Each year the curriculum authority known as the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) invites theatre companies and producers to submit scripts and plays to the Playlist selection process. This research focuses on the 2010 Drama and Theatre Studies Playlists. The invitation to submit to that Playlist was sent companies in 2009. Large, state funded theatre companies, independent theatre companies, commercial producers and interstate touring companies can all submit their work to the Playlist selection process. The theatre productions submitted can range from a large, main stage production to a small-scale intimate work touring to schools. The number of submissions can range from 40-60 in any given year. An application from a theatre company takes the form of a copy of the current script and a formal application form that provides details of the production including performance dates, creative team, the theatrical form/genre and any other information the company feels is relevant such as dates, costs and booking details. Some theatre companies provide images or vision of the work if it has had a previous production. In addition, each submission is required to address criteria. Appendices 1 and 2 offer examples of two participating theatre companies’ submissions (Case Studies 1 and 2) and provide insight re the criteria for selection.

To make the selections, the VCAA appoints a Playlist Advisory Panel of approximately ten to twelve in membership. The Panel consists of experienced teachers, industry representatives, academics and the Chief Assessors for each Study. The Panel applies the criteria and recommends sixteen to eighteen plays to comprise the three discreet Playlists. The recommended Playlists are ratified by the Board of the VCAA and are then published in the public domain. In the context of this study the Playlists were published late December 2009.

Once the Playlists have been published, schools select a minimum of one play from the relevant list. Attending one performance of the selected production is the minimum requirement but students may attend a performance of the selected production as many times as desired. Formal assessment processes require students to write an analysis of the live performance they attend. The written analysis forms part of the students’ School Assessed Coursework (SAC), a percentage of which grade, as previously indicated, contributes to the students’ individual study score at the end of their final year. Significant
to this research, both the Drama and the Theatre Studies courses an end-of-year written examination requires students to respond to questions about one of the performances they saw during the year.

For Drama and Theatre Studies, each end-of-year written examination is ninety minutes in length. As part of the examination each Playlist play has a question or series of questions that specifically draw on the Key Knowledge and Key Skills as published in the Study Designs. Students choose the questions related to the relevant play they have studied and respond under exam conditions. The examinations are then blind double marked⁴.

Examination marking is conducted by a group of assessors appointed by the VCAA each of whom is required to see a performance of each of the plays on the relevant Playlist for the exam they are marking. After the exam, a trial marking process is conducted in order to moderate towards high, medium and low responses across each question on the exam, including the performance analysis questions. This is the context in which VCE Drama and Theatre Studies students experience live theatre and the context in which it is taught. Such a context offered a complex and compelling series of opportunities for research.

1.6. The structure of this thesis

This thesis comprises eight chapters.

- Chapter One provides the reader with an overview of the research project, the researcher role, the key research questions, and the specific contexts in which the research is situated. It also presents the theoretical paradigms to which the researcher subscribes and that determine the methodological approach.

- Chapter Two positions the study within a number of fields of inquiry through an examination and critical analysis of key literature. In particular key terms are interrogated and defined – curriculum (including drama curriculum), assessment, pedagogy (including drama pedagogy), contemporary theatre practice, and the aesthetic experience of theatre. Some focus is given to research that investigates

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⁴ Blind double marking involves two examiners marking the same exam batch without knowledge of the other’s marks.
selecting texts for study, and to theories of communities of practice to honour the multiple stakeholders in this research.

- Chapter Three provides the details of the study’s research methodology and design, a qualitative approach using case study methods. In this chapter I justify decisions made with regard to selecting the four cases and participants, the project timeline, the research tools, data collection, data analysis, emergent themes and an overview of the narrative structure of the discussion.

- Chapters Four, Five and Six of the thesis address the discussion of emergent themes. These themes are framed through the lens of curriculum - written, enacted and experienced - and pedagogy as they are discussed and defined in the literature review. The order and titles of the chapters mirror the linear process of performance analysis – choosing a play, preparing to see a play, attending the play, analyzing the play and completing two assessment tasks.

In particular:
- Chapter Four critically examines aspects of the Playlist selection process at curriculum authority level, and then turns its focus on the classroom; the factors that impact selecting a production from the Playlists for the purposes of enacting the curriculum.
- Chapter Five explores how teachers and students understand and interpret the written curriculum through the chosen play, the pedagogies employed as preparation to see a theatre performance, and what guides or influences the enacting of curriculum at this point. It also explores the experienced curriculum both in the classroom and through attending live theatre performance.
- Chapter Six examines pedagogies teachers’ engage with after seeing the live theatre performance. The chapter critically examines how teachers and students use remembering as a tool for analysis and assessment, specifically when approaching the end-of-year exam. It also discusses ‘remembering’ and the apparatuses that assist it – notes, discussion, resources, images, and forum (Q&As).
- Chapter Seven purposefully moves away from the school context and explores the theatre companies’ role as a key stakeholder in the teaching of performance analysis,
and how they engage with the senior drama curriculum in Victoria. In particular, Chapter Seven, examines what plays are chosen, who chooses them, why they are chosen and what this reveals about theatre companies’ understanding of the written, enacted and experienced curriculum. The chapter includes significant discussion of boundary objects (Star & Greisemer, 1989), tools and artefacts such as curriculum documents, education resources and pre and post-performance question and answer forums that arguably fulfill a bridging function between stakeholders.

- Chapter Eight provides a conclusion. It concerns findings and recommendations and reflects upon the research questions, the pedagogies teachers employ to teach the analysis of a theatre performance within the structure of the senior VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curriculum in Victoria. It considers how the findings can be applied more broadly across contexts where live theatre is studied and analysed. The final chapter investigates the role and function of the physical theatre space itself, reconsidering it as a dynamic pedagogical space for assisting in and impacting on the teaching of the analysis of a live theatre performance. A new pedagogy is imagined and presented, one that derives from the phenomenon of the Playlist process, and one that is developed from an intentional and formalized community of practice.
CHAPTER TWO – Literature Review

2.0. Introduction

This literature review is situated within the discourses and practices of curriculum and pedagogy in arts education as they occur in Australia. Linked to the purpose of this study, which is to explore what pedagogies are employed in the teaching of the analysis of live theatre performance in VCE Drama and Theatre Studies, this chapter examines the literature with regard to number of fields of inquiry.

For clarity I have divided the review of the relevant literature into three parts. Part A focuses on literature addressing historical and contemporary theories of curriculum, including the development of drama and theatre curriculum. It seeks to position this study in relation to theories of written curriculum, specifically the structure of the written curriculum of VCE Drama and Theatre Studies. Further, in the context of this research it is necessary to address the literature that examines the definition and role of ‘high-stakes assessment’ with a particular focus on externally based assessment in senior secondary school systems.

Part A of the review also examines pedagogy’ as a theoretical field and as practice. Pedagogy has a powerful connection to curriculum. This section of the review critically examines key literature that defines understandings of pedagogy and drama pedagogy as they relate to enacted and experienced curriculum.

Part B of the review examines literature in the field of theatre as contemporary theatre practice and as an aesthetic experience in order to define the art form for this thesis and to foreground theatre as an aesthetic experience for students studying drama in senior secondary schools.

Part C of the review will provide a brief examination of the literature that accompanies choosing texts for study in senior secondary education, and theories of communities of practice as a field of inquiry that emerged within the life and focus of this study.
2. A. Curriculum & Pedagogy

Curriculum

This section of the literature review provides a historical overview of curriculum theories and models, considering four approaches that focus on the roles of the child, broader social constructs, schools as educational institutions, the teacher as connoisseur, and curriculum makers and writers. The discussion examines curriculum theory as developed from key theories espoused throughout the twentieth century. It considers the impact of these theories on contemporary education, and particularly on the construction of senior secondary drama curriculum. Specifically, the discussion addresses how the terms curriculum/curriculum are defined and applied in this thesis.

Some focus is given to historical understandings of curriculum insofar as they influence current theories, discourses and practices. The review of curriculum theory provides a foundation for the subsequent examination of how the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Drama and Theatre Studies Study Designs as written curriculum, is positioned within a series of established and understood models.5

2. A. 1. What is Curriculum?

*The curriculum is never simply a neutral assemblage of knowledge, somehow appearing in the texts and classrooms of a nation. It is always part of a selective tradition, someone’s selection, and some group’s vision of legitimate knowledge. It is produced out of the cultural, political, and economic conflicts, tensions, and compromises that organize and disorganize a people* (Apple, 1993, p. 222).

[There are] …three basic focal points – individual, society, and subject matter – around which all comprehensive conceptions of curriculum are formed (Marsh & Willis, 2007, p. 73).

*Most scholars and educators would at least recognize that curriculum encompasses a body of content knowledge to be learned in some way, shape, or form* (Au, 2007, p. 257).

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5 Note: the term ‘curriculum’ is adopted for consistent use throughout this thesis, as opposed to ‘curricula’. The use of curriculum accords with the how the term is used and discussed by key theorists in the field.
As emphasised in the above quotations, curriculum is a contested term. Its contestability is related to, as Apple states, “selective traditions” and ongoing “cultural, political and economic” tensions. The quotations presented above attempt to capture the complexity and contestability existing in any discussion around curriculum and there exists much literature and research that underpins any discussion of curriculum. In *Understanding Curriculum* Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman (2008) acknowledge such complexities. They present a thorough and comprehensive examination of curriculum including its relationship to epistemology and ideology, how it has been and is currently defined, the discourses within it and how they are used to describe it, how it is shaped by policy, how it manifests in textbooks and syllabi, how it is enacted and experienced and, importantly, how often these boundaries blur. Grundy (1987) asserts that curriculum “is constructed at a certain time and for certain purposes” and that at any historical moment, “the needs of the society and of the economy for a skilled citizenry are to be paramount in determining the curriculum” (p. 28).

Kelly (2009) states that curriculum is not one thing but is comprised of several parts. He argues for a number of distinctions to be drawn between what is understood as the “official or written curriculum” and the “received or actual curriculum”. He comments that the “planned curriculum is…what is laid down in syllabuses (or) prospectuses; the actual or received curriculum is the reality of the pupils’ experience” (p. 11). Kelly draws further distinctions between “formal” and “informal” curriculum, or between those activities for which “the school allocates specific periods of teaching time” and informal activities, often considered extra-curriculum (p. 12). Finally, Kelly directs our attention to the hidden curriculum; those things which students learn at school because of the way in which the work of the school is planned and organized and the materials that are provided “those things what are not in themselves overtly included in the planning” (p. 12).

Similarly, Marsh and Willis (2007) argue that curriculum has distinct parts. They state that it is most commonly discussed and understood in three ways.

- Firstly, they highlight the “planned” curriculum, including decisions around “what it should be” and who makes those decisions
• Secondly, they discuss implementation or “enactment” of curriculum in educational settings, highlighting curriculum’s capacity to change at this point.

• Finally, they draw attention to how curriculum is “experienced” which can only occur if it is first enacted and that, can only occur in the classroom (pp. 4-5).

In acknowledging scholarly theories that argue for distinctions to be made between the variously understood “parts” of curriculum, I adopt and apply the terms written, enacted and experienced curriculum, and I adopt the term curriculum as the overarching term within this thesis.

2. A. 2. Theories of curriculum – four approaches

In this section I focus on four key historical approaches to curriculum development that will enable me to position and define the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula and its construction development within a theoretical field.

Dewey (1938) asserted that curriculum was concerned with the balance between the “environment” inhabited by the child and the value of “experience”, and he believed strongly in a curriculum that honoured these two concepts and their relationship to learning. Further, Dewey believed that an educational curriculum should build upon environment and experience in order to enable teachers to guide children towards developing confidence to asserting themselves, to reach their capacity and fulfill their destiny. These aims could be achieved, by addressing the “four instincts” of children; social, constructive, expressive, and artistic and ought to be addressed through “experience”, the experiences that children bring and the experiences that can be further presented to them through interaction and social engagement. He believed strongly in the individual as a “social being”. According to Dewey (1938) schools were social institutions, education a social process and the school a form of community life in which “all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to…use his own powers for social ends” (p. 114). Dewey’s theories centred on the child’s experience of curriculum and how that experience could and should shape the ‘written’ curriculum. His theories and practice have greatly impacted how curriculum writers and educators have considered teaching and learning in the 21st Century.
Franklin Bobbitt’s (in Kliebard in Flinders and Thornton, 2009) curriculum construction, which many scholars consider as being the first theorized document of a written or planned curriculum, embraces the more scientific paradigms of the early twentieth century. Bobbitt approached curriculum planning scientifically, technically and theoretically in order to address curriculum as “educational outcomes”, mirroring the empirical outcomes that science offered at the time (p. 53). Bobbitt’s views on curriculum were determined by “finding the scholastic curriculum in the shortcomings of children and men” (p. 53) or, what children were unable to do or do not know that they need to in order to progress through adulthood. He asserted that the development of a written or planned curriculum requires the educator to engage in the study of life and, importantly, of work in order to “carefully identify needed skills and then to divide these skills into specific units, organize these units into experiences and provide these experiences to children” (in Eisner, 1967, p. 252). Bobbitt’s approach related curriculum not necessarily to the “now” but to broader social need and towards adult life. Like Dewey, Bobbitt believed that experience was important, but he argued that what couldn’t be learned through “experience” must be taught or learned through “directed training”. At the core of Bobbitt’s approach, though contrary to Dewey’s, is the belief that education is for “adult life”, not at all concerned with the life of a child (in Kliebard in Flinders and Thornton, 2009, p. 53). Curriculum as defined by Bobbitt, with its promise of “precision” and “objectivity”, had an immediate impact on schools, education systems and policy during the early decades of the twentieth century and continued to do so into the 1970s.

American educationalist Ralph Tyler’s publication *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* has also had significant impact on curriculum, assessment and pedagogy since it was first published in 1949. In the introduction Tyler states, “This small book attempts to explain a rationale for viewing, analyzing and interpreting the curriculum and instructional program of an educational institution” (p. 1). Tyler defined his approach as ‘rational-linear’, a procedural approach to education that provided a systematic application to curriculum development. Tyler’s approach to curriculum development identified four key areas: selecting learning objectives or outcomes, selecting learning experiences, organizing learning experiences and evaluation. These areas of focus were predicated on what Tyler (1949) believed were the four key questions that curriculum makers must ask;
• What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
• How can learning experiences be selected that are likely to be useful in attaining these objectives?
• How can learning experiences be organized for effective instruction; and
• How can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated (pp. 1-7)?

For Tyler, the answers to these questions were drawn from three sources of knowledge or information; learners or individuals, contemporary society, and subject specialists. Within this approach, however, lie competing epistemologies and differing priorities. While critics of Tyler’s model believe it is hierarchical and strongly weighted towards assessment and outcomes. Kliebard (1975) states, “It should be clear to anyone familiar with the current state of the art in the curriculum world that the scientific curriculum movement, with few adaptations and modifications, has been triumphant” (pp. 27-38). In more recent times, Pinar’s (2008) criticism of Tyler’s approach has been that “it is not a teacher’s statement of curriculum development; it is a bureaucrat’s” (pp. 8-9). Churchill et al (2013) believe that in the Tyler model “schooling is assumed to be the production of learning that is narrowly focused and ignorant of cultural capital and context” (p. 151).

Whereas Dewy focused on the child, Tyler on the teacher, Walker’s (1971) “deliberative” approach, focuses more specifically on those who are the curriculum writers. Walker’s theories posit that curriculum is improved when those engaged in creating it understand the complexity of the process. Walker argues that curriculum planners come to the process of curriculum development in three stages: creating a platform, deliberation and design (in Marsh and Willis, 2009, p. 79). Walker uses the term “platform” to describe any consensus that emerges between curriculum makers. The platform stage is critical because the agreed platform dictates what will happen next. Walker believed that curriculum planners come to the task with a range of individual beliefs, potentially differing epistemologies, and values that are proposed and defended until a consensus emerges that will inform future deliberations and, ultimately, the design of the curriculum. Deliberation is the second key factor in Walker’s model. During this phase Walker’s model specifies that the curriculum
makers identify relevant facts, generate alternative courses of action, consider costs and choose defensible alternatives (in Marsh and Willis, 2009, p. 81).

Each of these historical approaches poses important questions with regard to what constitutes ‘knowledge’ and who decides. Each offers insight with regard to curriculum development across the twentieth century. These theories will be revisited later in this chapter in relation to their impact on the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula.

2. A. 3. Drama curriculum and drama education

In providing the following overview of key literature in the fields of drama curriculum and drama education, I seek to provide a further basis for positioning VCE Drama and Theatre Studies and their curriculum within the fields of inquiry.

2. A. 3. 1. Drama education in Australia – influences and contexts

What drama is and how it has evolved and been constructed over many years directly informs this study. Gavin Bolton (in Bresler, 2007) comments that the drama education field needs “to attempt to untangle the confused strands of classroom drama” in order to build an understanding of what constitutes drama education in a 21st Century context (p. 45). In the following review I use ‘drama education’ as a holistic term. Within that term I acknowledge drama as practice and drama as curriculum, arguing that drama education practice informs curriculum and formalized curriculum informs practice.

In his paper entitled, *Framing a National Curriculum in Drama: Standing on the Shoulders of Giants*, Robin Pascoe (2009) provides a comprehensive overview of the development of drama education in Australia and its accompanying curricula across some forty years. He discusses these developments within the frame of curriculum’s relationship to its time and place stating, “Each formulation of Australian Drama Curriculum can be seen as a reaction to its context, in addition to the confluences of local and international theories, practices and personalities” (p. 76). Here Pascoe provides insight into the existence of contested views of drama curriculum and the competing influences on its shaping. That there have been numerous drama curriculums developed in Australia and that they have arisen from theories
of knowledge and practice at local, national and international level is important. It suggests a growing focus on and a developing status for drama education in this country. Stinson (2009) shares Pascoe’s view stating that curriculum, including drama curriculum is “shaped by the social, political, economic and cultural contexts in which they are situated” (p. 32). Drama as a subject and its subsequent evolving and developing curricula must be considered in the light of the questions posed already in this thesis, “What (drama) knowledge is of most worth? And whose knowledge is of most worth?” at any given point in recent history (Pascoe, 2009, p. 58).

Important influences on the development of drama curriculum and education in Australia can be traced to the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. While John Dewey (1915) was promulgating the concept of democratic and child-centred curriculum and education in the United States, simultaneously, two teachers in the United Kingdom were experimenting with drama as a medium for teaching other subject content, albeit independently of each other. Harriet Finlay-Johnson (1871-1956) and Henry Caldwell-Cook (1886-1939) were each departing from the broadly recognised view that drama was concerned with skill development and training in such areas as speech, movement, elocution and acting. Finlay-Johnson and Caldwell-Cook drew a clear distinction between the use of drama as skill development and standard setting, as endorsed by the British government of the time. They preferred the practice of drama whereby “the subject matter, or content, of the drama was all important” for experiencing learning (Bolton, 1985, p. 153).

In the late 1950s and early 1960s British drama educator Dorothy Heathcote began a revolutionary praxis in drama education while teaching at Newcastle-upon-Tyne University. She developed a process entitled ‘Mantle of the Expert’, as a way of empowering educators to use drama pedagogies in their classroom:

I consider that mantle of the expert work becomes deep social (and sometimes personal) play because (a) students know that they are contracting into fiction, (b) they understand the power they have within that fiction to direct, decide and function, (c) the ‘spectator’ in them must be awakened so that they perceive and enjoy the world of action and responsibility, even as they function in it, and (d) they
grow in expertise through the amazing range of conventions that must be harnessed (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995, p. 18).

Drawing on Heathcote’s practice, Bolton (1985), like Finlay-Johnson and Caldwell-Cook, determined that drama education should be experiential, spontaneous, and existential. It should not be ‘repeatable’. For Bolton, asking students to perform in drama was less spontaneous. It was public, was concerned with ‘demonstration’ and had an emphasis on ‘the external’. Such performance events were seen as antithetical to drama pedagogy.

Beyond the significant legacy of Heathcote and Bolton, British drama educators and drama theorists have influenced the shaping of Australian drama education and the construction of its various curriculum. They have done so in a number of ways that have acknowledged the tensions between drama education and drama as an artform. O’Neill (1995), Ackroyd (2004), Fleming (2011), and Nicholson’s (2005, 2009, 2011) work acknowledges the influences of Heathcote’s methodology and pedagogy while allowing the artistry of theatre making to influence the *artistry* of classroom practice. Courtney (1980), Winston (2005, 2010), Kempe (2007) and Neelands’ (2009, 2010, 2011) practice and research has contributed extensively to drama as curriculum in the United Kingdom and has had a distinct influence on Australian drama education. The debate about drama as pedagogy and drama as an art form, however, has been continual.

In the 1980s, British drama educator and theatre practitioner David Hornbrook offered a critique of drama education as it had been constructed and practiced during the 1950s and 1960s and since. He argued that a truly natural response from children – as espoused through process drama - wasn’t possible, even in the drama classroom. “Children know or can sense approval and disapproval, and in the main will seek to please, within the dramatic framework which the teacher has defined for them” (p. 354). Hornbrook (1985) claimed there was an irony that “drama in education…had to distance itself from the very art form with which it is most readily associated - theatre” (pp. 347-348). He argued stridently for a re-thinking of the distance that had been created between drama education and theatre skills calling that distance a “serious weakness” (p. 355). Hornbrook (1986) further argued that acknowledging and developing a critical history allows a subject such as drama to be
perceived as an art form with “a coherent body of practices…which make the word ‘drama’ intelligible to the world outside as well as inside the classroom” (p.17). Hornbrook states;

I also see a growing willingness especially among younger teachers to tackle the important question of what young people should be learning about drama and to worry less about techniques designed to help student learn through drama (1989, p ix – author’s italics).

In contemporary times, the development of drama curriculum in Australia draws on the rich practice and writing of many of the UK theorists and practitioners referred to in this review, but is also the benefactor of many Australian drama practitioners and curriculum developers including; Burgess and Gaudry (1986), Gately and Griffiths (1988, 1989), Haseman and O’Toole (1989), Burton (1988), Gadaloff (1991), O’Toole (1992), MacLean (1996), Bundy (2003), Gattenhof (2006) and O’Toole, Stinson and Moore (2009).

In Drama and Curriculum: A Giant at the Door, O’Toole, Stinson and Moore (2009) provide a comprehensive overview of an evolving drama curriculum in Australia and point to the ways in which drama education is present in contemporary state school systems.

In early childhood and primary education, the emphasis tends to be stronger on forming rather than performing or responding – on dramatic play and (where teachers know it and can help do it) on process drama and playmaking…in secondary schools, drama often gets a narrow perch on the junior timetable, where process drama turns towards play-building and leads naturally to performing and responding. By senior secondary levels, all students are expected to engage with major movements of world theatre and texts as well as their own drama (p. 141).

The critical drama education text, Dramawise: An introduction to the elements of drama, (Haseman & O’Toole, 1989) defined for many drama educators in Australia, the key elements and components of drama as a subject to be studied in schools. Both authors are practitioners in drama education and developers of drama curriculum, as well as key researchers in their field. In Dramawise, the elements of drama are articulated and identified. They include tension, focus, place, time, language, movement, mood, and symbol which the authors state, work together to create “dramatic meaning”. In another key text, Sinclair, Jeanneret and O’Toole (2012) state, “The dramatic elements are the fundamental building
blocks of drama – they are present to a greater or lesser degree in all dramatic activity, and it is their presence that signifies that an activity is dramatic”. The authors develop the argument that the elements of drama carry with them “the potential for aesthetic engagement associated with the artform” (p. 68). Sinclair (in Sinclair et al, 2012) draws attention to a broad belief that “much of the most profound learning that takes place through the aesthetic domain is, by its nature, highly personal, often affective rather than cognitive, and frequently non-linear and non-verbal” (Ch. 5, p. 48).

Theories of educational drama that argued for drama to be purely experiential, such as those previous referenced - Dewey, Finlay-Johnson, Caldwell-Cook, Heathcote, as well Peter Slade (1954), Brian Way (1967), and later Gavin Bolton (1995) - eventually had to be positioned against the need for drama education to establish its status and position in formal curriculum, particularly senior secondary curriculum. Such positioning has generated ongoing discussion in drama education in Australia with regards to its purpose. (Anderson, 2004; Pascoe, 2009; Jacobs, 2010). In particular, Jacobs asserts that for drama as a subject to exist within Australian senior curriculum “It must have a method to ensure comparability of standards across a system” (p. 50).

The new Australian Curriculum, the Arts, concerns itself with defining drama as a subject and what drama education is in the 21st Century. The Australian Curriculum, the Arts was ratified and endorsed in 2015 for implementation in schools. Through its consultation, shaping, drafting, and ratification stages – a process of some five years – drama educators, theorists and researchers nationwide had input into what a national drama curriculum should look like6. Within the Australian Curriculum, the Arts, ‘drama elements’ remain central to drama curriculum and to drama education:

Students encounter and explore the **drama elements** of: role, character and relationships, situation, voice and movement, space and time, focus, tension,

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6 The Australian Curriculum, the Arts was developed through the appointment of an advisory board for drama and other arts education specialists nationwide, the creation of a position paper for the arts, a draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum– the Arts (2010), consultation, final Shaping of the Australian Curriculum- the Arts (2011), a draft curriculum for the Arts (2012), consultation, Revised Draft, the Australian Curriculum- the Arts (Feb. 2013), and a final Australian Curriculum, the Arts - Foundation to Year 10 endorsed in 2015 (ACARA, 2016)
language, ideas and dramatic meaning, mood and atmosphere and symbol. Students who study drama encounter and explore: dramatic action, form, movement, **aesthetic effect**, design elements, audience, and practice (ACARA, 2015 – author’s emphasis).

The Arts – Drama also outlines certain skills considered critical to drama education:

In their drama, students develop their understanding of the processes of dramatic playing, role-playing, improvising, process drama, play-building, interpreting scripts, rehearsing and directing, and responding to drama as audience. As students progress, particularly in secondary school, they add specific skills and processes of drama practice: acting, directing, scriptwriting, dramaturgy, designing, producing, managing and critical analysis (ACARA, 2015).

The Australian Curriculum, The Arts (2015) draws on historical practices of experiential learning and role-play in drama, as advocated by early practitioners Findlay-Johnson, Caldwell-Cook, Heathcote and Way, as well as recognizing Hornbrook’s calls for “learning about drama” and drama skills. In the following section of this review I draw on the history of drama education and curriculum development in Australia in order to position the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Drama and Theatre Studies Study Designs as formal written curriculum.

2. A. 4. The VCE – senior curriculum as design

*In the early 1990s education reform, globally, was fuelled by a desire to equip a new generation with skills deemed essential for meeting the requirements of a complex, rapidly changing and increasingly technologically dependent society* (Brew & Leder, 2000).

McKinnon’s (1988) overview of upper-secondary education in Australia reveals that the VCE as the senior curriculum in Victoria has its origins in two significant education reports from the mid-1980s. In Western Australia, *The McGraw Report* (1984) sought to reconcile the need for a publicly justifiable way of selecting students for entry to higher education and to acknowledge the need for schools to have more freedom to provide for diverse needs (McKinnon, 1988, p. 501). In Victoria *The Blackburn Report* (1985) sharply challenged long-standing attitudes to post-compulsory education by asserting that since many students
would be coming to official adulthood while at school the content, learning modes, institutional practices and the curriculum of upper-secondary years must be oriented towards adult needs including; addressing youth unemployment, inclusivity, personal development and tertiary preparation, but also offer a qualification that attested to “the preparedness for further study” (McKinnon, 1988, p. 502). Sugett’s (2007) study of the role of curriculum and education in the 21st century states:

The global environment requires all Australia’s population to be equipped to make an economic contribution and social prosperity requires all our population to have access to productive work and understandings that will enable them to manage in an information rich global environment. The task of education is central to this and the role of curriculum and assessment is pivotal for success (p. 17 – author’s emphasis).


The aim is an entirely new curriculum across the total range of Victorian Certificate of Education subjects, each with an epistemologically justifiable approach to knowledge, and assessment which properly tests the knowledge aims of the course. These aims are supposed to include the anchoring of knowledge in its human project context, not free-floatin it as ‘natural’, positive truth. (p. 255)

Collins raises what appear to be common concerns amongst scholars and educators, “The most controversial issue in all states has been the extent to which the traditional relationship between university 'needs' and the upper secondary curriculum will be maintained” (p. 56). Central to these concerns is assessment and the role of examinations. Collins states that in developing the new VCE curriculum writers, governments and educators were required to accept “some of the conservative arguments for the fairness of common, centrally marked assessment on the one hand, and some of the progressive arguments for multiple, school-based assessment on the other” (p. 256). This resulted in the development of school assessed Common Assessment Tasks (CATs) for each Unit, in

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7 In Australia the legal age to vote, drive and consume alcohol is 18.
balance with externally assessed written examinations. McKinnon (1988) points out that the development of “credentialing bodies” in each Australian state has evolved in response to university controlled entrance examinations disappearing. The VCAA is one such credentialing body, an authority that is responsible for curriculum development and assessment for the VCE. Under section 2.5.3(2) of the Act, the functions of the VCAA are:

a) To develop high quality courses and curriculum and assessment products and services;

Under section 2.5.3(2) of the Act, the functions of the VCAA are:

Do any of the following by arrangement with other persons, bodies or agencies –

(i) design, develop and evaluate a curriculum or course and an assessment or assessment method for the course or any other course
(ii) oversee the delivery of the course and conduct assessments of students undertaking the course
(iii) design, develop and evaluate curriculum and assessment products and services

(VCAA, 2013)

The operations of the VCAA are overseen by a government appointed board, the membership of which comprises, primary, secondary and tertiary educators, government, independent and catholic representation, early childhood and the Indigenous community (VCAA, 2014). A Manager for the Key Learning Area – the Arts, oversees the subjects that comprise the focus of this research, VCE Drama and Theatre Studies. Within the VCAA’s function as the curriculum authority “other persons, bodies or agencies” are engaged for the purposes of developing and writing the curriculum and the developing and writing assessment tasks. In practice this means that the VCAA appoints subject matter experts to Study Design writing panels including performance and written examination, and the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies Playlist Advisory Panel. The inclusion of subject matter experts from a range of contexts to develop and write curriculum and assessment tasks, reflects the platform, deliberation and consensus approach to curriculum as determined by Walker (1975), including the potential tensions and disjunctions he identified between epistemological and axiological beliefs.

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8 The VCAA also oversees the alternative learning certificates known as Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning VCAL and the competency based stream called Vocational and Educational Training or VET
9 In 2010-2011 the dates during which data was collected, this was the managerial structure.
As curriculum, VCE Drama and Theatre Studies reflect models of outcomes-based education, for example Tyler’s rational-linear model which emphasised selecting learning objectives or outcomes, selecting learning experiences, and organizing learning experiences for evaluation. More recently, Spady (1994) states that outcomes as “clear learning results that we want students to demonstrate at the end of significant learning experiences”. He argues that a key component of outcomes-based education is “design down, deliver up”. This means when planning curriculum, educators start with the outcomes and work backwards; when planning instruction, teachers teach what students need to learn to demonstrate the outcomes (p. 2).

While it can be argued that all approaches to curriculum models have some form of outcome or assessment in mind, outcomes-based education foregrounds the outcomes as the purpose for having a curriculum or, its very “destination” (in Churchill et al, 2013, Ch. 6, p. 185). As discussed earlier in this thesis, the written curriculum that constitutes the VCE Study Designs speaks to an outcomes-based education quite specifically. It does this through emphasis on terms such as “Key Knowledge”, “Key Skills”, “Outcomes” and the determining of examinable content. Keating and Savage (2010) in their comprehensive research into the evolution of senior secondary certificates in Australian schools give credence to the argument that the VCE is indeed outcomes-based education by design:

The main purpose of the senior years, therefore, arguably remains the preparation of young people for tertiary entrance: an argument repeated in virtually every Australian review of senior secondary certification since the post-war years (p. 275).

Such an inherent design “purpose” evolves from what Keating and Savage (2010) regard as the “historical relationships between private grammar schools and elite universities” constructed in the first half of the twentieth century (p. 274). Cummings and Maxwell’s (2004) profile of educational assessment systems in Australian schools addresses similar issues. Their research demonstrated that assessment reform at senior secondary level sought, amongst other factors, “to reduce the curriculum control exercised by universities through externally set examinations” (p. 93). In so doing it repositioned those responsibilities and purposes onto state credentialing bodies.
Assessable outcomes are not foreign to contemporary curriculum models. Churchill et al (2013) comment that most contemporary curriculum design advocates for outcome or standards-based “backward design” model “where priorities for the learning and assessment process are determined and made explicit at the outset and represented as a part of the curriculum” (Ch. 12, p. 396). The Victorian Certificate of Education is indeed concerned with these priorities. For drama as a senior secondary subject to remain “comparable” (O’Toole, Stinson & More, 2009) in such a curriculum structure, it needed to adapt to the requirements of formal credentialing, reflecting Hornbrook (1985), O’Toole (2006) and Jacobs (2010) call for drama to develop and sustain such “comparability” with other disciplines and build capacity for drama students to engage with the broader theatre industry. In this study, how curriculum is written to address these purposes and then how it is enacted and experienced, particularly in the context of analysing live theatre performance, offers rich insights into the influences and impacts on drama pedagogy.

2. A. 5. VCE curriculum and high-stakes assessment

In the following discussion I introduce the term “high-stakes assessment” as a model of assessment, one that I will argue is a component of the VCE assessment processes. Au (2009) provides a compelling definition of high-stakes assessment and one that is pertinent to this study. He states that high-stakes assessment models are ones where “the results are used to make important decisions that affect students, teachers, administrators, communities, schools and districts …stakes are also deemed high because the results of tests, as well as the ranking and categorization of schools, teachers and children that extend from those results are reported to the public” (p. 287).

Polesel, Rice and Dulfer (2013) argue that “the rapid expansion of high-stakes standardized testing programs in recent years, particularly in the neoliberal Anglophone nations, has been based on arguments that such programs provide reliable information on student performance” (p. 640). Within the VCE, assessment contributes directly to statistical information about student performance and contributes to the final senior secondary school grade known as an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR). “The ATAR is not a score out of 100, it is a rank. It shows a student's achievement in relation to other students”
Such a ranking, however, determines a student’s entry into a tertiary institution course. Kelly (2009) argues that any external system of testing, examination or, indeed, inspection can only determine and control the form and nature of the school curriculum. He states that it has long been “accepted as a fact of secondary school life that the curriculum, especially in the upper school, is geared almost totally to the demands of external public examinations” (p. 149).

Au’s (2009) research found a correlation between the implementation of high-stakes testing and classroom practice. He determined that high-stakes assessment impacts both teaching content and pedagogy (p. 287). Several other studies have investigated the presence, function and impact of “high-stakes” assessment in education. Polesel, Rice and Dulfer (2013) conducted research with regard to the application of NAPLAN\textsuperscript{11} in Australian schools. They discovered that such testing leads to “an adjustment of pedagogical practice and curriculum content to mirror the tests” (p. 640). Barnes, Clarke and Stephens (2000) hypothesize that such assessment, mandated by an authority external to the school – in this study, the VCAA — significantly affects classroom pedagogy. They argue that this issue is of significance because “assessment is being employed in many countries in the belief that it will be a catalyst for curriculum change” (p. 624). Their study found that while students’ post-secondary educational pathway is no longer wholly determined by university entrance or externally set examinations, there remain significant forms of assessment that constitute high-stakes in Victoria at senior secondary level and in other Australian states. Barnes, et al (2000) also contend that:

Where forms of school-based assessment are themselves mandated, these assessments exercise a significant leverage on teaching and forms of assessment, especially where the assessment tasks are set by the examining [credentialing] body with extensive guidance for teachers in applying criterion-based assessment. By mandating the forms of school-based assessment in the senior secondary years and by providing extensive advice to teachers on how these assessments are to be

\textsuperscript{10} Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre
\textsuperscript{11} NAPLAN – National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy – a national standardized testing program
implemented, a powerful message is conveyed to teachers that these forms of assessment are to be taken seriously in the preceding years of secondary school (p. 645)

In a United States study, Madaus, Russell and Higgins (2009) examined the purposes, practices and consequences of such assessment. Their research found that a score on a high-stakes test “triggers a reward or a sanction” and is a form of Pavlovian conditioning whereby rewards and sanctions direct teacher and student behavior” (p. 140). Madaus et al (2009) argue, however, that there may be “positive” effects associated with high-stakes tests. Their research revealed that consequences provide extrinsic motivation for some students because “they focus instruction and provide administrators, teachers, and students with clear goals and useful information” (p. 140). In many education systems, high-stakes assessment is considered part of modern education and indeed modern life as Vlaaringerbroek and Taylor (2009) contend. They state that high-stakes assessment, specifically externally set examinations “recognises the necessity of selection”, that “examinations used for monitoring and for selection are necessary to all modern nations” and that “standardized external examinations serve many important quality assurance functions” (pp. 4-11).

Cumming and Maxwell (2004) note that in Australia, despite individual States and territories retaining autonomy with regard to the governance and development of their curriculum at senior secondary level “it is significant that high-stakes assessment and reporting is present in all states and territories in end-of-secondary schooling curriculum” (p. 93). This indicates that such testing is a considered an important part of curriculum development and implementation. Further, the results of such testing attract public interest. Students’ final year results can and often enter the public domain via the print media, and in Victoria newspapers publish VCE results and also rank schools. As Comber and Nixon (2009) argue, the publishing of such results contributes to an ongoing public and political discourse on the relationship of reporting and assessment and to what is understood to be “quality” education. Through the process of critiquing the development of written curriculum models, the emergence and establishment of state based high-stakes assessment as a means of

determining university entrance rankings, the structure of the VCE curriculum can be
determined as one that is outcomes-based and uses “high-stakes assessment” processes to
measure student learning.

PEDAGOGY

2. A. 6. Pedagogy problematized and defined

Key to the delivery of curriculum in any educational system is pedagogy. As a term
‘pedagogy’ is problematic and, like the term curriculum, it is contestable. Van Maanen
(1991) states, “Pedagogy is not found in observational categories, but like love or friendship
in the experience of the presence…pedagogy is cemented deep in the nature of the
relationship between adults and children” (p. 31). Murphy (2008) contends that it is the
“interactive nature of pedagogy” that makes it difficult to capture and represent (p. 29). Hall,
Murphy and Soler (2008) state that from a sociocultural perspective, pedagogy is concerned
with “the relationship between practice and the cultural, institutional, and historical contexts
in which the practice occurs” (p. ix). The complex status of ‘pedagogy’ as a term and as a
practice is compelling.

In different cultures at different points in time the meaning and status of the term pedagogy
has shifted. The term has been actively constructed, de-constructed and re-constructed by
scholars such as Dewey (1918, 1934, 1938), Fenstermacher (1978), Schwab (1983),
Schulman (1987) and Greene (1995). In recent times the term has been embraced by more
contemporary educational discourses including; productive pedagogies that are grounded in
constructivist methods; critical pedagogies as theorized most notably by Freire (1970),
Giroux and McLaren (1989) and Kincheloe (2008); dialogic pedagogies that draw on
Bakhtin’s theories of dialogism, championed by Alexander (2008); instructional pedagogies
based on the work of psychologist Skinner; and technological pedagogies introducing the
use of digital technologies as powerful teaching and learning tools requiring alternate
pedagogies (Churchill et al, 2013).

Alexander’s (2008) extensive educational research has determined that in Western education
systems such as the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia, the term ‘pedagogy’
is always discussed in conjunction with teaching and learning. He acknowledges that defining pedagogy is both problematic and complex and that in some educational literature and in certain syllabi or curriculum documents, the terms ‘teaching’ and ‘pedagogy’ can be and are used interchangeably. Alexander (2008) believes that while teaching is at the ‘heart’ of pedagogy, the two are not synonymous. Teaching has two irreducible propositions. Teaching in any setting “is the act of using method x to enable students to learn”. Further he argues that teaching is …situated in, and governed by space, time and patterns of student organisation; and it is undertaken for a purpose” (p. 50). For Alexander (2008), teaching is part of pedagogy but pedagogy is the overarching framework that shapes teaching. In adopting a more critical lens, he states that pedagogy can also be “a purposive cultural intervention in individual human development that is deeply saturated with the values and history of the society and community in which it is located” (p. 92).

A critical assertion that Alexander (2008) makes with regard to pedagogy is that it is “…the act of teaching together with its attendant discourses and dialogues” (2008, p. 4 – author’s emphasis). Alexander (2008) frames the significance of what he calls ‘classroom talk’ as follows:

Teachers and students talk as they do within generic constraints of space, time and power, and in response to the complex micro culture of the classroom. Their transactions take forms that in part are shaped by the inherited collective consciousness of being at school and in part are created out of each lesson’s unique meeting of personalities and circumstances (p. 97).

Alexander (2008) states that pedagogy is “not fixed”, that it is fluid and responsive, having the capacity to evolve according to developing curriculum imperatives, new technologies and learning environments (p. 121). This is useful to consider when focussing on ways to teach performance analysis, given that theatre is recognised as an ephemeral and evolving art form, and is generally experienced by students beyond the classroom. What is being flagged here is that pedagogies for teaching performance analysis may require a highly responsive and fluid pedagogical approach.
2. A. 7. Drama pedagogy and performance analysis

Earlier examination of the literature with regard to drama curriculum and drama education revealed that much emphasis is placed on embodiment. Deans, Meiners and Young (in Sinclair et al, 2012) state that art is “the embodiment of experience shaped into something else” and that learning in the arts “can help our student to make the most of their bodies as a sensory site for learning, for understanding, and to make meaning” (p. 128-129). In drama, embodied learning occurs most often through “role” — a circumstance where students step into another’s shoes and embody different characters or “roles”. Characterization and role-play are also practices requiring the understanding and “embodiment” of dramatic elements to empower students to create their own fictitious and imagined worlds. Such elements generally consist of role, focus, tension, climax, transformation of space and objects, and the symbolic use of space and objects (Sinclair, Jeanneret & O’Toole, 2012, p. 68) or, as Haseman and O’Toole (1989) determined may be tension, focus, place, time, language, movement, mood, and symbol.

Across all drama curricula in Australia two key strands for learning in the arts have emerged — making and responding. The VCAA describes the arts learning area, Drama, as follows:

The study of Drama focuses on the creation and performance of characters, narratives and stories. Students draw on a range of content and use role and expressive skills to create, embody and present dramatic works. They analyse the development of their performances and explore the actor–audience relationship. Students develop an understanding of dramatic elements, stagecraft and theatrical conventions appropriate to performance styles from a range of cultural contexts. They view and analyse performances by professional and other drama practitioners. The study provides students with opportunities to explore the ways in which drama represents social, political, and historical contexts, narratives and stories. Students develop an understanding of the language of drama including terminology and expressions appropriate to the context of the drama that students create, perform and analyse. Students develop an appreciation of drama as an art form through participation, criticism and aesthetic understanding (VCAA, 2011, p. 7 – author’s emphasis).
The bolded terms in the above description seek to demonstrate the parallels between the written curriculum that informs this research, and historical and contemporary understandings of drama pedagogy explored earlier in this review. Within the above description there is evidence of the two key strands of arts education – making and responding – as well as an acknowledgement of the aesthetic encounters and understandings that students have when engaging with and in the arts.

In the VCE studies of Drama and Theatre Studies “performance analysis addresses the “viewing and analysing of professional and other practitioners” and also the development of “an appreciation” of the art form through “criticism” and “aesthetic understanding”. In other curricula that process may be called theatre review or play analysis. This section of the literature review now examines drama pedagogy in relation to students’ responses to “the viewing and analysing of professional and other practitioners”.

Several studies have explored students’ responses to theatre performances. Bailin (1993), Tulloch (2000), Bundy (2003), Gallagher (2005), Klein and Schonmann (2009), argue that beyond or, indeed within drama as embodied practice and aesthetic encounter, students’ ability to respond, evaluate and analyse a theatre performance is a critical aspect of drama and theatre education and is a consideration in any pedagogical process that focuses on live theatre performance. Key scholars have argued that a language of live theatre analysis can be and even should be specifically taught (Davis 1988; Grady 1995; Prendergast 2004, 2012, 2015, Wallis & Shepherd 2010, Reason 2010, Klein 2011, O’Toole et al 2014). In particular, Schonmann (2009) wrestles with the notion of how we can “educate” young people to appreciate live theatre. She believes that if we accept that theatre is a form of “language” and is a form of “knowing” then these provide a basis on which “education of appreciation can be developed” (p. 597). Davis (1988) proposes “A model for Theatre Audience Education” based on the belief that the actual performance should be at the centre of the experience of studying drama. He asserts that, “Our work as teachers must come before and after that performance” (p. 8). Prendergast’s (2004) theory of “audience-in-performance” (AIP), specifically addresses the “responding” aspects of drama pedagogy. In the AIP model she develops a scaffolded approach to analysing theatre performance. More recently
Prendergast (2015) has determined a theory of spectatorship for theatre students, one she asserts will enable them to learn how to be a more critical spectator of theatre.

Reason (2010) argues that learning to respond critically to artworks will allow students to “better understand works of art while at the same time being able to express their own personal opinion” (p. 154). Reason has developed an approach entitled “Talking about Theatre”, one that provides “a structure for organising an enquiry into almost any theatre experience. It is designed to support a process whereby pupils can learn to provide reasons for preferences” (p. 154). Studies suggest there are discreet strategies and pedagogical processes for teaching performance analysis or play analysis. These are acquired through a visual or written theatrical language, one aimed at developing student appreciation of live theatre and an understanding of its forms. Such studies inform this research.

An important aspect of this study and of the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula is that students engage with contemporary theatre practice. The following section of this review addresses this practice and how it is defined in this research.
LITERATURE REVIEW PART B:
Theatre as contemporary practice and aesthetic experience

2. B. 1. Theatre – the ephemeral and the aesthetic

Theatre is an art form that still matters. For present purposes I will define it, if broadly, as performance practice that signals itself to be theatre, that presents plays and various performance and participatory events before an audience that itself knows it is an audience (Jackson, 2007, p. 10).

Jackson’s definition of theatre has been a starting point for this study, which has enabled me to develop a broader definition. For the purposes of this thesis I offer the following; theatre shall be defined as a performative art form, culturally situated, ephemeral and temporary in nature, presented to an audience in a particular time, particular cultural context and in a particular location. The definition is presented here in order to frame the following discussion of the relevant literature. This section of the chapter concerns itself with exploring the nature and characteristics of contemporary theatre. It considers theatre through a number of lenses.

Theatre is ephemeral. This concept is acknowledged by a number of theorists and practitioners in the field. Barba and Fowler (1990) describe the ephemeral as “that which lasts but one day” but also “that which changes from day to day” (p. 96). Barba and Fowler goes on to state that the first description “evokes the image of death” and the second, “evokes the ever-changing flow which characterizes being-in-life” (p. 96), meaning that it is the performance itself that is ephemeral, while the institution of theatre endures across time. Theatre reception theorist Wilmar Sauter (1997) also acknowledges the ephemeral nature of theatre stating, “The most characteristic aspect of theatrical performances is the fact that they exist only for a limited time. After a while the show is over and, with the applause, the work of art ceases to exist” (p. 12). Sauter argues that “production and reception are parallel processes in time and that the work of art (the performance) is dependent on the performing artist (the actor)” (p. 12). For this reason theatre sits in contrast to other forms of art such as literature and painting. In these art forms production and reception generally occur at different times, the work of art existing independently of the artist (p. 12). Australian director, theatre teacher, and academic, Aubrey Mellor, believes that “unlike paintings and
films, for example, which can be viewed by different generations, or an orchestra which can be recorded and therefore speaks across the ages, a play exists only in performance” (1996, p. 2)\textsuperscript{13}. O’Toole (2006) states that, “Of course we can never fully reconstruct an ephemeral experience because we can never re-live it, but we can try to construct a history by relying on multiple sources...Because of the ephemeral nature of drama and theatre, the memory or the individual record of the experience is as significant as the facts relating to time, place, company and performers” (p. 47). Importantly, Barba (1992) states it is the spectator or audience who determines “to what extent the performance has taken root” and will thus be retained (p. 81).

Theatre is a sensory experience. Post-modern theatre director Jon Whitmore (1998) speaks of theatre as being a series of five sensorial communication systems often working simultaneously – the linguistic, visual, aural, olfactory and tactile. He argues that the director’s role is to manipulate these in order to “activate a full range of communicative mechanisms for an audience” (p. 15).

Theatre is an aesthetic experience. A number of scholars have provided definitions of what denotes “the aesthetic” and “aesthetic experiences”. Nicholson (1999) claims that the aesthetic is concerned with feeling fully alive “not just existing, following familiar routines and patterns of existence – but a particular kind of knowing and feeling which allows us to be both fully present in the moment and also conscious of its past and future” (p. 81). Abbs (1989) suggests that “the aesthetic denotes a mode of response inherent in human life which operates through the senses and the feelings” (p. 4). Magrab (2006) states that the aesthetic experience is “the transaction between the artist, the work of art and the viewer” (p. 7). Eisner (1998) discusses the aesthetic in terms of “the means through which we come to know the world” (p. 68). Greene (1995) argues that an active engagement between works of art...through reflective encounter [is an] aesthetic “transaction” (p. 130) and Vallance (2011) argues that aesthetic experience is “fundamental” to both the making and experiencing of works of art” (in Bresler, p. 702). If we accept, as these scholars contend,

\textsuperscript{13} Directorial critique for Playbox Theatre Company 1998.
that the theatre experience activates our senses and the aesthetic is concerned with senses and feeling, then it follows that theatre is an aesthetic experience.

McLean (1996) demonstrates the centrality of the understanding of the aesthetic and the importance of placing an aesthetic understanding at the centre of teaching and learning in drama. McLean’s development of an “Aesthetic Framework” provides teachers with an approach for understanding the position of aesthetics within drama teaching and learning. In acknowledging McLean’s work, Readman and Wise (2004) argue that:

The aesthetic foundations underpinning our method of instructional design include Neelands’ (2004) description of a para-aesthetic approach, which acknowledges the social/artistic dialectic, intended to develop a broader range of social and cultural learning. Boal’s (1979) desire to influence reality, not merely reflect it, and Freire’s (1985) urge to identify the transformative purpose of education and see it as a humanistic and liberating task were also critical components of our pedagogical approach. McLean’s (1996) and Abbs’ (1987) research into the aesthetic, link the broader philosophies of aesthetics to the pedagogical practice central to this design (p. 93).

Theatre requires audience. Grotowski asks, “Can theatre exist without an audience? At least one spectator is needed to make it a performance” (1980, p. 32). In his seminal text The Audience, Herbert Blau (1990) critically dissects the role of the audience in the creation and production of theatre performance. He and theorists such as Bennett (1977/1997) examine the role of audience and its purpose within the construction of theatre. In this study, students of Drama and Theatre Studies are audiences and scholars simultaneously. These roles are critical to the lens of their spectatorship.

Theatre is culturally constructed. Theatre may be seen to serve particular cultural and theatrical communities at certain historical times. Jackson (2007) argues that a community or audience’s relationship with art, our ability to understand and talk about it is “culturally constructed” (p. 29). Knowles (2004) sees theatre productions as being sites for “the negotiation, transmission, and transformation of cultural values, the products of their own place and time that are nevertheless productive of social and historical reification or change”
Further, classic plays from the historic theatrical canon, performed to contemporary audiences, unbounded by the cultural period in which they were written, provide challenges as to their worth or meaning. Mellor (1998), states a play script can be re-interpreted if its content appeals to another country or time, “What it communicates to its audience depends on many factors: sometimes its continuing relevance turns into a classic, at other times its very foreignness can be its fascination” (p. 4). Importantly for this thesis is Whitmore’s (1998) assertion that much of theatre’s cultural production resides in audiences themselves. He states, “The frames for a performance are many; they vary according to the given circumstances of each performance and with each spectator. Spectators will bring their individual horizons of expectations to an event, including their knowledge and experiences of historical, social, and theatrical codes” (p. 33).

Theatre as a performative art is eclectic. Arguably theatre practice in the 21st Century can be described as eclectic, deriving styles and forms from a broad range of theatre practices, particularly in a postdramatic context. Hans-Thies Lehmann’s book *Postdramatic Theatre* (German 1999: English 2006), critically examines a wide range of contemporary theatrical forms, including devised work and live art. For Lehmann, postdramatic theatre is one whereby the makers register a dissatisfaction with drama’s two fundamental processes: the representation of the external world and the structuring of time. Harvie and Lavender (2013) extend on Lehmann’s theory, stating that postdramatic is theatre that no longer focuses predominantly on the dramatic text or characters as represented by those more “traditional” texts. Postdramatic text “emphasises the visual (for our media age)” and can also “sacrifice a sense of coherent narrative synthesis”, replacing these more familiar structures with “dense and intense theatrical moments” (p. 12).

### 2. B. 2. Theatre as text

*Spectators are thus trained to be passive in their demonstrated behaviour during a theatrical performance, but to be active in their decoding of the sign systems made available. Performers rely on the active decoding, but passive behaviour of the audience so that they can unfold the planned on-stage activity* (Bennett, 1997, p. 206).
In acknowledging the quote above, the following discussion considers live theatre production as a ‘text’, one to be read and de-coded. Identifying theatre in this way, enables the performance analysis of live theatre performance in VCE Drama and Theatre Studies Study Designs to consider theatre performance as a “text” to be studied.

Semiotic and performance studies scholars regard live theatre performance as “text”. They consider it so because as a form and medium, embedded within it are identifying signs, signifiers and codes that enable meaning making. In semiotic theory “a signifier” in live performance may be “meaningful sounds or marks” such as a heartbeat, a still moment, a red sash (Elam, 1980, p. 1). Barthes (1997) draws attention to the complexities of codes that are activated in theatre performance. He states, “At every point in a performance you are receiving (at the same second) six or seven items of information (from the scenery, the costuming, the lighting, the position of the actors, their gestures, their mode of playing, their language) but some of the items remain fixed (this is true of the scenery) while others change (speech, gestures)” (in Bennett, p. 61). In order for an audience to find meaning in the signs and signifiers presented, they must understand the “codes” that are at work, including the codes for current theatrical practice and codes unique to a particular performance (Whitmore, 1994). Theatrical codes are accepted and understood norms that allow theatre as a performative art to have meaning for an audience. Schechner (1977) argues that “a spectator need not intervene in the theatre to prevent murder as he may feel compelled to in ordinary life – this is because the violence on stage is actually a performance. That doesn’t make it ‘less real’ but ‘different’ real” (p. 122). Here Schechner is describing “suspension of disbelief”. Whitmore (1994) explains “suspension of belief” as the audience understanding that “what is happening on stage is real…that if a character speaks an aside to the audience the other characters onstage do not hear the remark” (p. 9). This is a key theatrical code.

Another key ‘code’ is an audience’s understanding of the presence of a ‘fourth wall’ or its absence, and understanding the traditions of mise-en-scene or “the director’s reading of the author’s text” (Pavis, 1982, p. 150). Such codes require an audience to have understanding of the roles of the actor, the performance space, the design, the lighting and sound, all working simultaneously to create the narrative. Whitmore (1998) argues that audiences who
are familiar with such codes, either through repeated observation or education, will develop a sophisticated understanding of theatrical conventions. Bennett (1997) emphasises the significance of the “decoding” required in the theatre. She contends that in order for audiences to be able pay attention to the embedded codes, they are generally trained to be “passive” in their behaviour while witnessing a theatrical performance, but to be “active” in their decoding of the sign systems made available. She asserts, “Performers rely on the active decoding, but passive behaviour of the audience so that they can unfold the planned on-stage activity” (p. 206). Bennett’s theories foreground strategies teachers may use to “activate” students’ decoding of a performance while adhering to commonly understood rules of theatre etiquette.

Wallis and Shepherd (1998) state that the difference between a script and a performance is that “the dramatic text is read on the page, the theatrical text is read by an audience from the stage” (p. 2). However, because VCE Drama and Theatre Studies students’ analysis of a theatre performance is assessed and examined - as it is for students who study texts for VCE Literature - there is an argument for considering the similarities between a theatrical text and a literary text and the ways in which each group of “readers” engage. Literary theorists, Misson and Morgan (2006) describe a literary text as one that has a sense of “composition”, carefully constructed to elevate the reader’s engagement to that of an aesthetic experience. The material in the literary text “has been purposefully (if not necessarily consciously) laid out in this form for the audience, that space and time have been organized with care to produce certain effects and (frequently) that the kind of language used is itself meaningful…when this is noticed, the perception is moving into the realm of the aesthetic” (p. 36). Rosenblatt (1986) suggests that when a literary text is “read” it evokes “images, emotions and concepts…in the act of reading” (p. 16). Rosenblatt calls this evocation process “a reciprocal, mutually defining relationship” between the reader and the text (p. 18).

Rosenblatt (1986) resists the term “interaction” and argues that readers “transact” with a literary text. For her, interaction “conjugures a picture of separate objects encountering one another but remaining essentially unchanged”. Transactional theory proposes that the
relationship between reader and text is one whereby “each works its effects upon the other, each contributes to the shape” (p. 18). She states:

Reading is a transactional process that goes on between a particular reader and a particular text at a particular time, and under particular circumstances. All of these factors affect the transaction. The reader does not approach Shakespeare’s text in order to uncover an already defined entity, the meaning, the literary work of art. The physical text is simply marks on paper until a reader transacts with them. Each reader brings a unique reservoir of public and private significances, the residue of past experiences with language and texts in life situations. The transaction with the signs of the text activates a two-way, or better, circular, stream of dynamically intermingled symbolizations that mutually reverberate and merge (Rosenblatt, 1986, p. 123)

The parallels between a reader’s transaction with a literary text and an audience member’s transaction with a live theatre performance are evident. Sauter’s (1997) theories support this. He calls the theatre experience “a communicative process… where…mutual interaction [or trans-action] marks the nucleus of scholarly interest” (p. 97). He argues that live theatre performance offers a mutual reciprocity through a “transactional” mode on a number of levels - performer and audience, design/stagecraft and audience, audience and audience, recounting the images, emotions and concepts that Rosenblatt is also referring to but presented through the lived experience. Schechner (2003) deepens the understandings of a transactional encounter, arguing that not only is the theatrical experience a transaction between audience and performance but also one within the elements of the performance itself as defined by “the shifting combination of players’ [actors], the rhythmic occurrence of moves, and the directions of players’ [actors’] choices [which] create a complex texture” (p. 19). Jauss (1982) introduces the concept of “horizons of expectation” as an important aspect of a reader’s encounter with a text. He states that all readers of texts come to a new text – in this instance a theatre performance - with a “horizon of expectation” that is constituted from previously known or experienced works (p.79). A “horizon of expectation” is the structure by which a person comprehends, decodes and appraises any text based on cultural codes and conventions that are particular to a time in history. Such horizons, Jauss states, are “historically flexible”, and an audience can interpret and value a text differently
from a previous generation. According to Jauss, the reader approaches a text armed with the knowledge and experience gained from interactions with other texts. For Jauss, such a horizon of expectation creates a critical response in a reader when the new work either “frustrates or exceeds what the spectator expected to see” (pp. 79-80). As such, Jauss’s research enables an examination of how students arrive at the theatre and what their “horizon of expectations” might be. Chapters Four and Five will examine this in detail.
LITERATURE REVIEW PART C:
Text selection, choice and communities of practice

2. C. 1. Selecting text lists in secondary schools

This section of the literature review offers an examination of studies that have explored models for selecting educational texts. Nearly all studies have been conducted within the contexts of teaching English and Literature. Freeman and Johnson’s (2001) study examines how choosing texts is impacted by teachers’ tendency to self-censor when choosing literature for students to find “appropriate” texts. Mayes’s (2010) study explores fostering student choice when selecting Year 11 English texts. These studies are helpful in positioning this thesis. They suggest that a number of cultural and pedagogical factors; including the appropriateness of content, knowledge of learners, classroom context and dynamics, and relevance to broader curriculum, all impact on choosing texts. McCurry (2010) is critical of too much choice at classroom level stating that it is potentially detrimental. He argues, “Where there is complete choice, perhaps one cannot be surprised if curriculum content degenerates into a lowest common (or populist) denominator” (p. 64). McCurry argues that a set list of texts determined by an appointed body safeguards curriculum content. This is a contestable assertion. It is the model of selection process for the VCE Playlists and it is a model that receives considerable scrutiny in this thesis.

2. C. 2. Choice

This review has also considered aspects of choice theory, particularly with regard to how choices and decisions may impact on the enacted and experienced curriculum and the teaching of performance analysis. For the purposes of this research it has been useful to examine theories of choice that derive from organisational management practice. The relevance of this decision lies in the fact that the VCAA is an organisation and its remit is the management of curriculum and assessment. It assembles a panel to select the Playlists drawing on criteria determined by the VCAA.

March (1978) recognizes an underlying tension that he believes exists between the intention of choices and their perceived consequences. He argues that choice or decision-making is in
fact “an intentional consequential action”, whereby those making choices do so with “knowledge of alternative consequences” (p. 589). Further, when organizational leaders are making choices they are generally concerned “about minimizing ambiguity and maximizing certainty” (p. 589). March’s arguments are valuable with regard to this study. They have particular application to the Playlist Advisory Panel’s process of selecting plays to the VCE Playlists where a panel of subject matter experts make choices aimed at maximizing certainty with regard to “best resources”, and further application with regard to how such resources are enacted in the school context. The role and practices of the Advisory Panel are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

2. C. 3. Communities of Practice

Communities of practice theory is relevant to this research. It enables ways to consider how key stakeholders engage within their own and other communities to enable the curriculum to move from the written, to enacted and experienced.

Constructivist researchers, Rogoff and Lave, introduced the concept of “communities of practice” in the 1980s noting such communities as being authentic, contextualised learning environments. They argued that knowledge is not transmitted from one person to another through abstract and decontextualized means, instead, knowledge is co-constructed through social processes. Developing this concept, Lave and Wenger (1991) coined the term “situated learning”. In this model, “Learning is a process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind. This means, among other things, that learning is mediated by the different perspective among the co-participants” in the learning community (p. 15). Wenger’s (1998) additional research determined that, “Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (p. 1). He noted that this definition does not assume ‘intentionality’, instead it suggests that learning can be an incidental outcome of members’ interactions, or it can be the ‘reason’ the community comes together. He argues that a community of practice defines itself by “joint enterprise” as understood and continually renegotiated by its members, “mutual engagement” that bind members together into a social entity, and “shared repertoires” such as routines, artefacts, vocabularies, and styles that
members have developed over time (p. 2). According to Wenger (1998), membership involves whoever participates and contributes to the practice and members can participate in different ways and to different degrees. He comments specifically that a community of practice exists because it produces a ‘shared practice’ as members engage in a collective process of learning (p. 4). In this research I will consider the potential of a deliberately established and “intentional” community of practice between stakeholders, its potential impact on written, enacted and experienced curriculum and how it might generate effective pedagogies for teaching performance analysis.

**Concluding remarks**

The literature review was undertaken in order to provide a framework for the study, to identify the historical and contemporary contexts in which the study is set – drama education, theatre, curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy - and to consider what has not yet been considered in the field.

Specifically the literature review has enabled me to identify the following:

a. There are many ways of considering curriculum but for the purposes of this study curriculum will be identified as **written, enacted** and **experienced**.

b. Within the discourses that attend ‘curriculum development’ and ‘curriculum theory’, the review enables the Victorian Certificate of Education to be considered as an outcomes-based model, emphasizing Key Knowledge and Key Skills that are designed to address and enable assessment processes.

c. While VCE curriculum documents do not describe or define assessment as “high-stakes” the literature review has foregrounded parallels between VCE assessment processes and how scholars define the process and purpose of high-stakes assessment.

d. The review demonstrates that concepts and definitions of pedagogy are broad and contested but in this instance pedagogy will be defined as “the act of teaching together with its attendant discourses and dialogues”, also adopting Alexander’s concepts of “teacher talk” as having a critical role in pedagogy, particularly with regard to “dialogic” pedagogy (Alexander, 2008, p. 4).
e. For the purposes of this thesis, “theatre” is defined as a performative art form, culturally situated, ephemeral and temporary in nature, presented to an audience in a particular time and in a particular location. Further, attending theatre is an aesthetic experience.

f. The review also supports the concept that theatre performance is a ‘text’ that can be studied by drama students for the purposes of analysis.

g. Finally, the review identifies communities of practice as theory and as practice as a basis for considering how the key stakeholders – curriculum authority, theatre companies, and teachers - communicate and relate with regard to the pedagogies for teaching performance analysis.

In examining the fields of inquiry, identifying and defining the key terms used in this study, the following chapter, Chapter Three, presents the research design, the methodological choices, and application and administering of the chosen research methods, data collection, data analysis and emergent themes.
CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

3. 1. Introduction

In order to investigate the identified complex interplay of written, enacted and experienced curriculum, and pedagogies for teaching performance analysis, this thesis is guided by the following questions:

<table>
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<th>Central question:</th>
<th>What pedagogies are employed in the teaching of the analysis of live theatre performance in the context of the Victorian VCE drama and theatre studies curriculum?</th>
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| Supporting and related questions: | When does the pedagogical process begin, when does it end?  
What influences and impacts upon these pedagogies?  
What constitutes an effective pedagogy for teaching performance analysis? |

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the methodological choices, research design and relevant research tools, to outline the data analysis, and to consider some limitations to the research. It highlights the dynamic and evolving role that qualitative inquiry and case study methods have played in the research project. The chapter describes key aspects of qualitative research and traditions aligned with research in drama education. It then describes the four cases I have chosen to investigate in detail including the plays, the research sites, the selection of participants, the research tools administered, the data collection period, and examples of the execution of the fieldwork, called ‘stories from the field’. What then follows is an outline and explanation of the processes of analysis from which key themes emerged. The chapter concludes by discussing how the methodological approach has impacted the structure of the research report.

3. 2. Qualitative research

...in her analysis of texts on qualitative research Tesch (1990) compiled a list of forty-six terms that social scientists have used to name their versions of qualitative research...the sheer number is mind boggling (Ely, 1991, p. 3).

This quotation from Ely identifies the complexity and richness of qualitative research. Guba and Lincoln (1984) state that because qualitative research is so involved “it is not possible to provide a simple definition” (p. 8). Creswell (2007) believes that “qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of
research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 36). Bogdan & Biklen (2003) define the qualitative researcher as someone “who doesn’t attempt to come to a consensus or seek to find a definition, but rather someone who embraces the ambiguity of the diverse meanings and seeks to study each one and how they can simultaneously exist” (p. 8).

Taylor’s research in arts education defines qualitative research as “the practice of investigating and interpreting a culture” an approach he contends has been widely adopted in drama education research (in Ackroyd, 2006, p. 6). Specifically, Taylor believes that drama educators have found “the thick descriptions that qualitative research yields can help to thoroughly recapture the lived experiences of participants when they encounter dramatic activity” (p. 7). Creswell (2007) outlines several elements that characterise qualitative research; qualitative research occurs in the natural setting

- The researcher is the key instrument of data collection
- The outcomes are about process rather than product
- Analysis occurs inductively
- There is a focus on participants’ perspectives and their meaning
- Expressive language enriches the research report (p. 16).

Qualitative inquiry serves this research in a number of ways. It speak to me as a researcher and practitioner working in the field of drama and theatre education and as an educator who subscribes to constructivist theories of learning and knowledge. I am mindful that qualitative research has its detractors and questions concerning the authenticity, trustworthiness, power and privilege that may be present in qualitative research have been posited in recent years (Taylor, 2006). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stress the value-laden nature of qualitative inquiry, as well as the situational constraints that shape the inquiry, but point to the significance of the relationship between the researcher and subject(s). I embrace qualitative inquiry as a means of collecting data that generates rich description and expressive language in order to bring the reader into the world of the participants. It is noted that deep and sustained rigour is required.
3. 3. Case study methods

Within the tradition of qualitative inquiry I have elected to draw on case study methods. Case study research involves the investigation of an issue or phenomenon explored through one or more cases. Key scholars in the field have presented ways to clarify and define case study research and offer insight into how such methods may best serve research intended to investigate pedagogy in action; in the classroom and at the theatre. Flyvbjerb (2004) contends that case study methods enable the researcher to get close to “real life situations and its multiple wealth of details” and that case study research can enable a researcher’s own learning processes to develop the skills required for quality research (p. 392). Stake (1995) describes case study research as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). Creswell (2007) contends that a qualitative approach is one in which “the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audio-visual material, and documents and reports)” (p. 73, author’s emphasis). Merriam (1998) states that, “Case studies are differentiated from other types of qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system, such as an individual, program, event, group intervention, or community” (p. 14). O’Toole (2006) identifies case study research as a useful method for examining a phenomenon, allowing the researcher to identify, observe, and then document “a ‘typical’ or an ‘untypical’ or deviant example, and then analyse the data” (p. 44), and Yin (2009) states that a case study “investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). Freebody (2003) argues that case study methods are very applicable to educational settings because cases are ‘prevalent’. By this he means teachers are always teaching subject matter, with particular learners in particular contexts and under conditions that significantly shape teaching and learning practices. He calls these moments “lived dimensions that are indigenous to each teaching-learning event” (p. 81). They are a constant series of “cases” in waiting. The goal of case study in education he says “is to generate research whereby both researchers and educators can reflect on education practice” (p. 81). Some scholars argue that case study methods can lack rigour, produce doubtful
generalizability to other cases or context, and that the data collection lacks routine and structure (Yin, 2009, pp. 14-15). However, case study method has its champions, particularly in drama education.

Carroll (in Taylor 1996) believes “case study fits drama…the case study honours he agency of the participants and sees them as experts not just a source of data for analysis (p. 7). Winston’s (2006) discussion on case study research in drama education is also useful. He argues that the real power of case study is that “it can challenge and disrupt our common sense understandings. It can help us see problems where we had not seen them before…understand a familiar experience viewed from other perspectives” (in Ackroyd, p. 44). Simons (1996) highlights the inherent paradoxes in case study between particularity and generalizability stating that “case study celebrates the particular and the unique, and frequently yields outcomes that are inclusive” (p. 227). For Simons the particularity and potential subjective nature of a case is actually a strength of the research method. Simons asserts that by studying the uniqueness of the particular we can actually come to understand the universal and that this should encourage the case study researcher to engage with the paradox and “live with the tension…holding it open to disbelief and re-examination” (p. 231). Similarly, Stake (1995) argues that, “the intent of qualitative researchers to promote a subjective research paradigm is a given. Subjectivity is not seen as a failing needing to be eliminated but as an essential element of understanding” (p. 45).

In considering the research questions and the intention to examine enacted and experienced curriculum in a range of contexts, the choice of case study methods for this research felt highly applicable. This study acknowledges that there are tensions in the methods employed in the selected qualitative inquiry. These tensions exist in the processes of observing the enacted curriculum, capturing the experienced curriculum and then analysing for meaning and understanding. Further, as indicated in the introduction to this thesis, I bring multiple roles to this study that require constant acknowledgement. I have sought to address all tensions through the application of carefully selected research tools, and rigorous data analysis. Yin (2009) determines three ‘types’ of cases, these being exploratory, explanatory and descriptive and that each demand different evidence bases (pp. 8-9). Stake (1995) also distinguishes between three types of case studies he calls; intrinsic (derived from a particular
curiosity), *instrumental* (potentially to accomplish something) and *collective case studies* (a representation) (pp. 3-4). For this study I have adopted a collective case study approach.

### 3. 4. The research worlds

*Theatre education always involves a negotiation of different organisational structures, cultural practices and interpersonal relationships, and place and space have become increasingly important concepts through which to interrogate [them] (Nicholson, 2011, p. 11).*

As a research project, *Teaching the live: The Pedagogies of Performance Analysis*, required entry into and sustained time within several ‘worlds’ or research contexts – the world of the theatre, the world of the classroom, and the world of the curriculum authority. As Nicholson’s quote above alludes to, negotiation between these different worlds was critical.

### 3. 5. The research design

Stenhouse (in Eliot & Nori, 2010) claims that the importance of case study research in education lies in “the understanding it can give us of the context of action, and the inter-play of action with context” (p. 30). Constructing multiple case study design (Yin, 2009) enabled the key research questions to be interrogated across the relevant sites; the classrooms and the theatre spaces. The research design draws significantly on case study methods and its practices of participant observation, field notes, reflective journal, document analysis and the interpretation of lived experience, student experiences and learning at a meta level (Stake, 1995, O’Toole 2006, Yin, 2009, Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

#### 3. 5. 1. How many cases? Which cases?

Yin (2009) outlines a series of protocols for selecting cases that involve identifying the single, unique case, or cases available through special arrangement or access (p. 91). Others scholars of case study methods advise the researcher to consider each selected case carefully, accounting for its uniqueness, its context and to look carefully at “the alternative selections, for these may aid or restrict our learnings” (Stake, 1995, p. 4). Winston (in Ackroyd 2006) alerts the researcher to the tensions inherent in choosing cases, “A key tension at the heart of case study is the relationship between the uniqueness of its terms of
reference and the generalizability of its results” (p. 43). Stake (1995) proposes that the selection of cases should aim to maximize what can be learned. He asks, “Which cases are likely to lead us to understandings, to assertions, perhaps even to modifying of generalizations?” (p. 4). Further he states that “our time and access for fieldwork are almost always limited. If we can, we need to pick cases which are easy to get and hospitable to our inquiry” (p. 4). Yin (2009) offers as one protocol a selection of cases made available through “special arrangement or access” (p. 91).

Several scholars (Stake, 1995; Creswell 2007; Yin, 2009) agree there are often very practical reasons for the final selection. Further, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) claim that in selecting the cases within a multiple study the selected sites should aim to “illustrate the range of settings or subjects to which your original observations might be applicable” or to “compare and contrast” (p. 70). While the selection of cases for this study was, by necessity, predicated on which plays would be included in the 2010 Playlists and then contacting schools that would be attending one these plays, the selection had to respond to some very practical problem solving — balancing the timelines of curriculum and assessment requirements, theatre company programming, which schools were attending which plays and when, and which teachers were willing to participate and grant access to the classroom context. As identified in the introduction to this thesis, there are key stakeholders in the process of teaching performance analysis and the case studies needed to accommodate them. For each case, four key factors needed to align.

- The selection of a play on one or more of the three Playlists for 2010
- The willing participation of the play’s producing theatre company
- A teacher and a cohort of students who had chosen to study either VCE Drama or Theatre Studies and were attending one of the plays
- Access to the VCAA Playlist selection process.

I also made the decision to focus on plays being programmed in the first half of the school year (February to June) providing an opportunity to return to the field if additional data was required, and in order to consider the processes and timelines for teaching performance analysis in the second half of the school year that are referenced in the Prologue and the
introduction to this thesis. Careful negotiations with schools and theatre companies resulted in the identification of four cases that were four plays from the 2010 Playlists:\textsuperscript{14}

- \textit{One Hundred}, presented by Machinations Theatre Ensemble (Drama Unit 3)
- \textit{Fatboy}, presented by Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre (Drama Unit 3)
- \textit{Shakespeare’s R&J}, presented by Riverside Theatre Productions (programmed by Arts Centre Melbourne) (Drama Unit 3)
- \textit{The Threepenny Opera}, presented by Victorian Opera (as co-producers with the Malthouse Theatre) (Theatre Studies Unit 4).

The research questions provided a critical framework for selection. O’Toole’s (2006) encourages determining of a single research question to enable “a clear line through your study” (p. 72). O’Neill (in Taylor, 1996) contends that, “The guide problem or question must be refined and clarified before it can be serviceable in research” (p. 140). Yin (2009) advises that the naming of the questions or propositions must “clarify the boundaries of your case study(ies)” with regard to its research contexts and sites (p. 28). In considering this commentary and the original research questions, I initially chose five cases to comprise the study, eliminating one for the purposes of clarity and research focus. The eliminated case focused on the teaching of live theatre in the context of the English classroom. However, in considering Stake’s (1995) advice that choosing a case may “aid or restrict our learning” as researchers, by eliminating the case I was able reconsider and reword the original, rather broad research question, “What is the role of live theatre in the curriculum?” and find a specificity to the central research question in order to focus on the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curriculum. The teaching of live theatre performance in English added a complexity to the study that was worthy of its own research project.

\textsuperscript{14} The identification of the plays and the theatre companies is done with permission. It proved impossible to discuss the plays without identifying the plays and thus, the presenting company. Participating personnel, however, are de-identified and only their position titles used.
3. 6. Selecting case studies and recruiting participants

3. 6.1. Theatre company participants

As indicated above, the selection of theatre companies was closely linked to a number of factors including timelines and aligning with a participating school. Agreement to participate required detailed discussion with artistic directors and producers, introducing the research and its purpose. The artistic director of one participating company asked candidly, “What’s in it for us?” Suddenly I needed to ‘pitch’ the research, to an artistic leader who was also a well-known arts educator. The timing was late 2009 and a new Australian Curriculum – The Arts was being shaped. Broad consultation with the arts education and theatre community had begun, and lobbying and advocacy for all art forms was front and centre. The relevance of arts education was being rigourously debated. “What’s in it for us?” was a relevant question and a reminder that research seeks to establish new knowledge for both the researcher and, significantly, for the broader profession, industry and field of inquiry. Further, in the Victorian context, the status and function of the VCE Playlists in determining what senior drama students experience and see remained highly relevant to the theatre industry. This was evidenced by the large number of submissions to the VCAA for the 2010 Playlists. In framing a response to “What’s in it for us?” I was justifying the research to myself and to a key stakeholder.

One theatre company was based in New South Wales, Riverside Productions, touring a production selected for the VCE Drama Playlist. The production of Shakespeare’s R&J was submitted by Arts Centre Melbourne who was the presenting organisation in Victoria. The participation of Riverside Productions provided an opportunity to collect data from a producing company new to the Playlist process, new to the Victorian curriculum, and touring to regional venues in order to “illustrate the range of settings or subjects to which your original observations might be applicable” and to “compare and contrast” (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007, p. 70). I was fortunate that those companies approached were “hospitable” to my inquiry (Stake, 1995, p. 4).

The choice of which participants within the theatre company would best serve the research was shaped by a number of factors. In particular I considered what roles might have a
connection to the research questions and possibly to the enacted and experienced curriculum. Potential key personnel included:

- The artistic director in each company — their role determines the artistic vision and season programming or the performances themselves
- The schools or education manager/officer – their role has a direct connection to schools
- The director - responsible for envisioning and shaping the performance for an audience
- The performers from each production - they are directly involved in the production at its point of connection with the audience (this also enabled capturing data that attended post-show Q&As\(^\text{15}\) with performers).

As each case is a discreet case, and in keeping with constructivist paradigms, complete replication wasn’t considered. Across each theatre company there were indeed some variations and these will be discussed as the chapter proceeds.

### 3. 6. 2. Schools, teachers and student participants

*They fear that your presence will interfere with their routines and work...share with them your intention of fitting your schedule around theirs* (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 87).

Securing schools required the willingness of teachers and principals. I developed a set of criteria to assist this process.

- Teachers would need to be drama teachers teaching either VCE Drama or Theatre Studies in 2010 and have selected one of the case plays
- Teachers and students would need to be comfortable about my presence in their classroom
- Participating schools needed to represent a range — where possible — urban, regional, co-educational, single sex, government and independent teacher and student experiences.

\(^{15}\) The theatre industry in Australia generally adopts the term ‘question and answer session’ for any post-performance forums or discussions. This is often shortened to Q&A.
A Plain Language Statement outlining the purpose of the research was forwarded to approximately thirty Drama and Theatre Studies teachers who were both known and unknown to me. This approach is deserving of comment because it concerns the multiple roles I bring to this research. Bonner and Tolhurst (in Unluer, 2002) have identified three key advantages of actually being “an insider”; having a greater understanding of the culture being studied; not overly altering the flow of interaction amongst participants; having a degree of intimacy which promotes “trust” and capacity to identify “authenticity” (p. 1). Bonner and Tolhurst (in Unluer, 2002) have also identified problems associated with being an insider such as greater familiarity that may lead a loss of objectivity, and unconsciously making wrong assumptions about the research process based on prior knowledge. My role as Education Manager at Malthouse Theatre resulted in the development of professional relationships with a broad range of drama teachers across the State. In this study two participating teachers were known to me through professional networks, and two were unknown to me.

Recruiting and selecting teacher participants also required sensitivity and understanding. Some teachers I approached were anxious to know the impact of the research on their students’ time, and what they would have to “do”. Some teachers were also anxious about their practice being observed. They commented that their perception was one of being potentially “judged”. Mishler (1991) emphasizes the “importance of reducing the power differential between the researcher and the research participants by involving the participants as collaborators” (p. 59). Stake (1995) comments, “The researcher should not expect people to (automatically) admire the work of researchers” (p. 58). Being open to and being able to manage these types of responses was critical to the recruitment process. While I was not enrolling the teacher as co-researchers, there was a need to regard them as collaborators in the field and willing participants in the research study.

Although many teachers were contacted, four teachers agreed to participate and were selected because of their willingness, the type/location of their school, and the production they had selected met the criteria outlined earlier in this chapter. Stake’s (1995) suggests that “many respondents consider it a compliment to be asked, and some will use the request to indicate that this verifies the high position their organisation has attained” (p. 58). One
teacher chose to participate because she felt that by being involved in the research process it would enhance her students’ learning (Case Study 1). Another teacher believed that participation would provide an opportunity for her to reflect on her practice (Case Study 2). The process of recruiting teacher participants also emphasised the notion of the teacher as a mediator or ‘gatekeeper’ within the research process. Students became participants because their teacher was a participant, bearing in mind that students were able to opt in or out of the project if they wished. Fielding (2001) calls for a “radical collegiality” in the way students are researched, consciously considering and indeed including them as co-researchers in the project. While this was not an initial consideration when recruiting, Fielding’s research deeply influenced the need to consider developing a high level of trust and respect with the student participants in order to “truly honour their voices in the research” (pp. 123-141).

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and the Catholic Education Office exercise jurisdiction over research in certain schools in Victoria, and a formal application process to both these authorities was required. Further, permission to work with students needed each school principal’s approval. This was sought by providing a separate Plain Language Statement, a Formal Letter of Request and accompanying permission from the relevant education body. In Victoria conducting research in independent schools does not require permission from a statutory body or higher authority but does require formal acceptance from the school’s principal.

3. 6. 3. VCAA participants

As the introduction to this thesis explains the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) are considered a key stakeholder in the research – as curriculum developers, and in their role as managers of the Playlist Advisory Panel. The VCAA were approached in a formal capacity through the Director of Curriculum, then through the Manager, Key Learning Area, The Arts. I obtained permission to observe the VCE Playlist Advisory Panel process and to interview the Manager KLA, the Arts with regard to the written and enacted curriculum and the Playlist selection process.
3. 7. The final cases

The following is an outline of the cases and the case participants:16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case One  – <em>One Hundred</em> by Christopher Heimann, Diene Petterie &amp; Neil Monaghan, presented by Machinations Theatre Ensemble, Drama Unit 3 Playlist 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Company</strong> - Machinations Theatre Ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The play - <em>One Hundred</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theatre Company</strong> - Artistic Director, Performer and Education Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School S</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent K-12 girls’ school located in the inner eastern suburbs of Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Participant - Melissa, Head of Drama (one of two drama staff), experienced teacher of some 25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Participants - Twelve girls aged 16-17 studying Drama Unit 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Two  – <em>Fatboy</em> by John Clancy, presented by Red Stitch Theatre, Drama Unit 3 Playlist 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Company</strong> – Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Play – <em>Fatboy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theatre Company:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools Committee/Administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools Committee/Production Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cast of <em>Fatboy</em> – five performers, one designer – six in total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School C</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-educational 10-12 Government Secondary College located in the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Participant - Kate, Head of Drama, sole drama teacher, new to teaching VCE Drama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Participants - Eleven students – five female and six male - aged 16-18, studying VCE Drama Units 3 and 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 NOTE: Synopses of each of these plays are available in Appendices 19-22
**Case Three** – *The Threepenny Opera* by Bertolt Brecht & Kurt Weill, presented by Victorian Opera (co-presented with Malthouse Theatre Company), Theatre Studies Unit 4 Playlist 2010

**The Company** – Victorian Opera
The Play – *The Threepenny Opera*

**Participants**

**Theatre Company** - Artistic Director and Education Manager

**School G**
A co-educational 7-12 independent school in inner suburban Melbourne
Teacher Participants - Jess, VCE Theatre Studies Teacher, new to VCE
Simone, Head of Performing Arts, experienced VCE teacher
Student Participants - Nine students, 1 male and 8 female, aged 16-18, studying Units 3 and 4 Theatre Studies

**Table 3**

**Case Four** – *Shakespeare’s R&J* by Joe Calarco, presented by Riverside Theatres Productions, Drama Unit 3 Playlist 2010 (touring regionally)

**The Company** – Riverside Theatre, Parramatta
The Play – *Shakespeare’s R&J*

**Participants:**

**Theatre Company**
The Cast of *Shakespeare’s* – touring regional Victoria with the production – four members in total

**School B**
Regional co-educational Government 7-12 secondary college located approximately 120 kilometres South West of Melbourne
Teacher Participants - Andrew, exchange teacher, Canadian, new to the VCE curriculum
Janelle, students’ usual drama teacher, returned from exchange to Canada to take over the class and prepare them for the exams, nine years’ experience teaching VCE Drama

Student Participants - Combined Year 11 and 12 class of fourteen students, 5 girls and 9 boys aged 16-18, studying VCE Units 1/2 and 3/4 Drama

**Table 4**

In this research teachers and students have all been given a pseudonym which will be used hereon in where relevant. Further, **Case Studies 1-4** are bolded in order to clearly identify them as separate cases.
3. 7. 1. Acknowledging variations

I need to account for some variation in participants, particularly with regard to the theatre companies. While it is understood that in qualitative case study methods each case is unique, in selecting the cases consideration was given to meta-analysis of data in order to compare and contrast. The school-based participants were common across the four case studies – drama teacher(s), senior drama class and drama students. Theatre company participants vary from company to company and were dependent on company size, company structure, availability, and production timing.

3. 8. Data collection

The most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation and corroboration. (Yin, 2009, p. 116).

As discussed in this chapter, case study methods draws on multiple sources of evidence collected by applying a range of research tools. Creswell (2007) emphasises “multiple sources of information” (his emphasis) including observations, interviews, audio-visual material, documents and reports, a case description and case based themes (p. 73). Similarly, Yin (2009) states there are six major sources of evidence relevant to case study research, documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation and physical artefacts but that “no single source has a complete advantage over all the others. In fact, the various sources are highly complementary, and a good case study will therefore want to use as many sources as possible” (p. 101). This research project applied the research tools of observation, field notes, researcher reflective journal, individual and small group/focus interviews, and document analysis relevant to each stakeholder. A more detailed table of the data appears within this chapter.

3. 8. 1. Data collection timeline

Data that constitutes this study was collected over a period of fourteen months. It began in September 2009 with the examination of documentation that framed the research and the timing of its collection is reflected in the Prologue and the Seven Stages of Pedagogy that begin this thesis.
From that starting point in September data collection moved to observing the selection process for the 2010 Playlists, field work in classrooms and in theatres, and concluded with data focused on how teachers prepared their students for the Drama and Theatre Studies written examinations in mid-November 2010.

3. 9. Executing the methodology: stories from the field

At one extreme is the complete observer...at the other end is complete involvement at the site...fieldworkers stay somewhere between these extremes (Adler & Adler, in Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 91).

As an active listener and attentive observer, it is important to closely honour the seen and heard, while capturing also the unintentionally seen and overheard in the field within the parameters of good ethical practice. There are broadly recognised tensions for the researcher in the field. Adler and Adler’s (1987) membership roles – peripheral, active, complete – demonstrate that no researcher is values free and the act of ‘observation’ is arguably never only that. As a researcher, I aimed to observe the participants in their usual daily practice and to do so by considering, “What would have happened had the researcher not been there?” (Stake, 1995, p. 66).

3. 9. 1. Observation in context

To develop vicarious experiences for the reader, to give them a sense of being there, the physical situation should be well described – the entry ways, the rooms, the landscape, the hallways, its pace on the map, its décor...the more the case study is an intrinsic case study, the more attention needs to be paid to the contexts (Stake, 1995, p. 64).

In this research project I entered the field as an observer with a desire to carefully listen, observe closely and record in detail the teaching of performance analysis in the sites I had identified as being important, and with the key stakeholders who had become participants. Scholars offer a range of ways to define the practice of observation. Yin (2009) describes two types of observation in qualitative research; direct and participant. Participant observation is considered the most usual and most useful of observer frames. DeWalt and DeWalt (2010) state that in the social sciences, “Participant observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals and interactions as one of the
means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their lives and culture” (p. 1). Wolcott (1988) outlines three types of participant observers; active, privileged and limited.

Other scholars describe the observation process more intimately. Ely (1991) uses the term “privileged observer” for one who is “known and trusted and given easy access to information about the context” (p. 45). Marshall and Rosman (1999) state that “some sort of direct and immediate participation in the research is important to building and sustaining relationships” (p. 71). My observational roles proved to be so. I entered the field with the intention of being a privileged or direct observer but circumstances occasionally meant I wore the hat of an active participant observer. In the following analytic memo, I reflect on ‘being’ an observer in Case Study 2, Fatboy.

I find it is best to let them (the students) set the pace and to remain on the outside with greetings and focus until I am ‘invited’ in via glances, questions, or comments or even a more relaxed body language. I find my experience as an educator across the years allows me to look carefully for this and try and sense it. I always have to curb my desire to speak too early or even to speak at all. It is a matter of territory and acceptance or, if not acceptance (and sometimes this is not possible) of being referenced or acknowledged (Analytic Memo to Observational Field Notes, Case 2, March 13, 2010)

Analytic memo 1.

As a researcher, Analytic Memo 1 reflects the inherent tensions faced when using observation as a research tool. It points to a rigorous ongoing awareness of my role as a researcher in the field and the need to attend to it.

In Case Study 4, the regional school, I found it easiest to remain what Yin (2009) calls a “direct observer”. My relationship with the teacher was new. Andrew, the drama teacher, was on exchange from Canada and teaching an unfamiliar curriculum. These points were interesting to me as a researcher for a number of reasons. Firstly, I was interested in what the unfamiliarity of the context would demand of me as a researcher, what data could be collected and what it might reveal about how a teacher who was very new to the VCE curriculum approached teaching performance analysis. In this new context I thought carefully about my presence in the classroom, opting for a seat to the side of the students but not behind them. The students could see me if they chose to, as could Andrew. From there I
simply observed, took notes and listened attentively. I had only briefly met the teacher in Case Study 2, Kate, in another context and her school too was very new to me.

In Case Studies 1 and 3, I knew each of the participating teachers at a professional level - Melissa, and Jess and Simone. In their classrooms, my role tended to shift from a privileged observer to a more active, participatory one, in one instance from the first fieldwork session. In these sites I can best describe my presence as an invitation to participate in a dialogic practice (Alexander, 2008). I was invited to sit with or sit in a circle with the teacher and students and contribute to discussion. Culturally, circles suggest intimacy and intention to share. As a researcher I would have found it difficult to sit silently writing field notes on the periphery. This was a clear research choice, one that evokes Mishler’s (1991) notion of collaboration and a consideration of what could be gained by participating in the classroom process. Ely (1991) presents the researcher with a question in such situations; how do you participate, observe and still take field notes? The answer was a reflective journal. This became a powerful research tool. I recorded my responses to the sessions on a digital recorder immediately after fieldwork. They presented as a stream of consciousness, capturing words, images, expressions and remembered moments before they disappeared into the mists of time and the peak hour traffic.

The reflective journal also illuminated some tensions between my researcher and other roles that the following extract indicates.

I take a seat at the table and open my notebook. This placement is a mistake as I later discover. When the girls come in they are wary – a stranger in their space… Melissa (drama teacher) commented later that the girls were very quiet! My presence and where I sat was a bit intrusive I think. (Observational Field Notes, School S, March 9, 2010)

Extract from field notes 1

It appeared that the girls’ propensity to remain quiet in that fieldwork session was based on something I had not envisaged. Two students had recognised me from another context, the Theatre Studies Season of Excellence, a VCAA program that acknowledges excellence in the arts at Year 12 on which program I had auditioned students and two were in this class.
Authentic participant responses, particularly when the research moved to the interview stage were important and the incident indicated the authenticity of the data was at risk. I began a conversation with the students and teacher in order to rebuild trust. At the conclusion of the following fieldwork visit, I determined that trust had been re-established to a point where the research could continue in Case Study 1. This incident was a reminder of the status and power roles between adults and young people in a research context. It brought to mind Fielding’s (2001) call for a “radical collegiality” and the need to rigorously develop trust and respect with the student participants in order to truly honour their voices in the research. The incident disrupted my thinking and refocused my role with regard to the impact of the research on student participation and learning.

3. 9. 2. Interviews

The interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subject’s own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 103).

Denzin (2001) calls interviews a “way of writing the world” (p. 25). In this study, the decision to conduct interviews was purposeful — to explore and gain a deeper understanding of the world, rationales, choices, motivations and actions of teachers, theatre company personnel and curriculum managers that impacted the enacted and experienced curriculum. As the quotation above indicates, however, there are inherent tensions in conducting interviews, especially with students. While case study methods draw on interviews as a research tool in order to “seek the words of the people we are studying, the richer the better, so that we can understand their situations with increasing clarity”, the researcher must aim for an authentic representation of that data (Ely, 1991, p. 58). Further, as both Yin (2009) and Stake (1995) argue, diverse data sources enable verification of other data and interviews were but one of the research tools or “instrumentations” (Miles et al, 2014) adopted in this study.

Freebody (2003) speaks about the “deceptive complexity of interviews”, particularly in educational research where the practice of education operates in and with continuously changing cultural and pedagogical configurations (p. 132). Bogdan & Biklen (2007) point to the fluid nature of the education context and, indeed, what may even constitute an interview,
“Sometimes an interview has no introduction; the researcher just makes the situation an interview [stating] have you got a minute? I haven’t had a chance to talk with you alone” (p. 103). In this study data was frequently enriched by such moments when a participating teacher asked a question on the way to a class, or opened up after a formal interview. Such unanticipated moments necessitated detailed reflective journal entries recorded at the conclusion of each fieldwork session.

3. 9. 2. 1. Designing interviews

Freebody (2003) states that beyond attentive listening and acutely observing, the researcher also needs to ascertain the validity of their interpretation of the interview. They need to be able to demonstrate if any guidance occurs, if such guidance is visible in the “talk” of the interview, and how the interviewer designates a “role” to the interviewee. (p. 167). For Freebody, guidance refers to the way the questions and the interviewer’s approach “shapes the ground or the footings on which the participants can and should speak” (p. 137).

In this study, types of interviews and interview questions were carefully considered. Merriam (2002) states that in qualitative research, interviews range from the “highly structured” with specific questions and their order determined prior to the interview, to “unstructured” where neither the questions nor the order are determined (p. 12-13). Most fall somewhere in between. Two types of interviews were conducted in this research, individual interviews and focus group interviews, both semi-structured in design (See Appendices 3-8).

Small group or focus group interviews were conducted with students. This decision was guided by a number of factors. Creswell’s (2007) suggests that group interviews provide an advantage when the researcher feels “that interaction amongst interviewees will be likely to yield the best results” (p. 133). Yin (2009) comments that “case study interviews require you to operate on two levels at the same time, satisfying the needs of your line of inquiry…while simultaneously putting forth ‘friendly’ and ‘non-threatening’ questions in your open ended interviews” (pp. 106-107). Teachers indicated that students would feel more comfortable with peers, and would be encouraged by their presence. A group setting might neutralise or minimize any power relationships that resulted from adults interviewing young people and
may reduce the possibility of compliance by the young people being interviewed (Mishler, 1986; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). As Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state, “Kids are used to being treated like children and they are ready for it. They have developed particular strategies in dealing with the full grown. They may seek their approval, withdraw, or even conspire to mislead” (p. 95). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) also highlight the tendency of adults, particularly in school settings, to take charge of young people, directing the conversation and taking more responsibility in discussions. They suggest adopting the role of a “tolerated insider” (p. 95) whereby the pre-interview conversation and set up is actively made less formal by the researcher; the researcher actively seeks to establish that they are not in a traditional staff/student role and thereby endeavour to balance the power relationships in the interview context.

In order to minimize the impact of researcher presence, student interview times were arranged with teachers. In one instance I conducted an individual student interview where no other group members were present on that day. In other instances, I negotiated interviews at lunchtime or the end of lessons. This occurred in Case Studies 1 and 3 and in these two instances focus groups consisted of six to eight participants, or a majority of the class. These types of variances were important to record when considering Creswell’s (2007) note above about interaction. The variation in the sizes of focus groups required mindfulness with regard to whose voices were heard, whose were potentially silent, or whose were absent in the larger groups.

In all student group interviews teachers were not present. The intention here was to release the students from the relationship with their teacher and suggest to them they could possibly speak more freely. In all cases a Semi-Structured Interview was conducted (Appendix 5). This decision was predicated on the need to obtain data that related to the research questions, but also, as Freebody (2003) states, would “allow for latitude in the breadth of relevance” (p. 133). I allowed the interviewees to follow particular lines of talk with prompts or follow up questions that sometimes ‘guided’ the interview in order to address the research questions.
Individual interviews were conducted with each participating teacher, each artistic director, each theatre company education officer (where companies had one) and the Manager Key Learning Area – The Arts at the VCAA. KLA. Creswell (2007) suggests individual interviews are preferred when the researcher has determined that the individuals concerned will “not be hesitant to speak or share their ideas, and be able to provide a setting in which this is possible” (p. 133 – author’s italics). The settings for interviews included classrooms, meeting rooms, offices, rehearsal rooms and coffee shops. These settings reflected both ethical and practical considerations. In the case of teacher participants, discussing individual students, or discussing policy and curriculum in the case of curriculum managers, required a setting that would offer confidentiality and privacy. There was a preference amongst artistic directors to prefer off site interviews that involved coffee.

Teacher interviews were arranged by appointment and conducted in staffrooms or common rooms, away from the students, within school environs chosen by the teacher. In one instance the teacher was very happy to be interviewed in her staff room with colleagues working at other desks. For Teacher interviews I administered a Teacher Participant Interview schedule and a follow up interview near to the exam (Appendices 3 and 4). A comprehensive interview with the VCAA Manager, KLA, The Arts was conducted at the VCAA at a time specifically arranged. An Interview Schedule, semi-structured in design was administered (Appendix 8).

Theatre company personnel applied themselves with enthusiasm to the interview process (Appendices 6 and 7). From a total of ten interviews with the theatre company personnel and the casts of three theatre productions, all but two were conducted in coffee shops, generally in the vicinity of the theatre company or performance space. Ely (1991) talks about the challenges of setting up interviews posing the question, “How will I be able to influence the choice of the physical setting for the interview? Will there be sufficient privacy?” (p. 59). The sites for the interviews with the theatre company participants were completely guided by the participants themselves and the need for privacy did not appear to be important. Here my researcher role intersected with my theatre industry role – a shared understanding of the way in which meetings and discussions are enacted, very often over coffee in public spaces. While creating a sense of ease, these interview sites did offer small challenges with regard to
ambient noise and voice recognition during transcription, but the free flowing conversation that resulted from the selection of such an interview site was rich and valuable to the study.

3. 9. 3. The researcher reflective journal

_The [journal] log is the place where each qualitative researcher faces the self as instrument through a personal dialogue about moments of victory and disheartenment, hunches, feelings, insights, assumptions, biases, and ongoing ideas about method_ (Ely, 1991, p. 69).

The researcher reflective journal was an invaluable source of data for this study, particularly with regard to establishing validity and in considering triangulation between data. In this study the reflective journal played a role not dissimilar to that outlined by Ely above. O’Toole (2006) also emphasises the important role that recording “immediate reflections and responses, feelings and thoughts, about what is happening as they occur” can play in research (p. 102). Maintaining a reflective journal is a strategy that can facilitate reflexivity, whereby researchers use their journal to examine “personal assumptions and goals” and clarify “individual belief systems and subjectivities” (Ahern in Russell & Kelly, 2002, p. 2). Capturing ideas when they occur is arguably the beginning of analysis. Writing notes to one’s self permits a researcher to discover things in their head that they did not know were there.

Researcher reflective journal entries were recorded often in the car or in a quiet place not far from the fieldwork site. A digital recorder provided an anonymous listener to thoughts and reflections captured about time spent in the field, especially those aspects observational field notes may not have accounted for – feelings, facial expressions, pauses, and tone. There were also instances when the recorder had been turned off at the end of the ‘formal’ interview, but the teacher kept speaking as we walked along the corridor, sometimes offering critical comments and observations. Momentary panic set in at the thought of valuable data evaporating; the teacher’s reflection on a moment in class, an opinion on a choice or decision, an observation about an aspect of the curriculum. In the absence of being able to “reflect in action” the reflective journal became an invaluable repository as the following extract from field notes illustrates (Schön, 1983).
Just before the class, as she gathered her things from her desk, Kate was talking about the word pastiche and said she couldn’t find it anywhere in the curriculum documents or anywhere on the VCAA sites and wondered if it was a term that was recognisable and useable in response during an exam situation and when she rang the VCAA they had no answer to give her. Also, she hadn’t had any feedback from the theatre company at all. She asked for my opinion as we walked to class.

(Researcher Reflective Journal, 23 March, 2010)

**Extract from field notes 2**

In this example, the methodology is exposed in a number of ways. Firstly, it highlights that in the field, data is everywhere and often at unexpected moments. It demands alertness and recognition from the researcher and immediate action. Secondly, in this moment the participating teacher’s discussion and request sharply highlighted one of several roles the researcher brought to this study that of a participant in the field of drama education and a privileged observer. It demanded a clear demarcation in order to approach the analysis and interpretation of data. The reflective journal enabled the researcher role to be constantly privileged.

### 3.9.4. Documentation

Documents as data formed a significant part of the study. I drew on documents from all stakeholder sites – the VCAA, theatre companies, and teachers. The VCAA documents that inform this research are those that represent the written curriculum.

- VCE Drama and Theatre Studies Study Designs 2007-2013
- Assessment Handbooks for each Study
- Advice for Teachers for each Study
- Written examinations from Years 2009-2010
- Chief Assessor Reports for the Written Examinations 2009-2010
- Playlists for 2009 and 2010.17

From schools I obtained documents that included coursework handouts and school assessment coursework tasks (SACs). I considered these as data that reflected enacted and experienced curriculum. From theatre companies I obtained company mission statements,

17 These documents are referenced in the Bibliography
production programs, education resources created for the show, and Playlist submissions as data that in part reflected companies’ responses to the requirements of the written curriculum.

The collection of multiple sources of observational field notes, interviews, researcher reflective journal, and documents for each case provided a rich basis for analysis, and addressed accepted practices of case study research. As Yin (2009) argues, “A good case study will want to use as many sources as possible” (p. 101). By design, the research project, aimed to replicate data sets across the four cases and within what O’Toole (2006) calls “unexpected factors” this was achieved (p. 102). Full details of the data is provided in Tables 5-9.

3. 10. Ethical research

Authors have an obligation to address the ethical decisions that shaped their research, including how the inquiry was designed, executed, and organized. Incentives for participating, consent waivers and confidentiality agreements, and conflicts of interest should be presented and discussed (Denzin, 2009, p. 15).

Like the words ‘sex’ and ‘snake’, ethics is emotionally charged and surrounded with evocative and hidden meanings…two issues dominate…informed consent and the protection of informants from harm (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 48).

Having outlined the research design, the research tools, the sampling and participants it is timely to complete this section of the methodology by highlighting ethical considerations and practices. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) outline key guidelines for honouring good ethical practice when working with participants in a qualitative study. These include avoiding coercion, honouring privacy, maintaining anonymity, cooperation, negotiating permission, telling the truth when writing up the finding (pp. 50-51). Creswell (2007) discusses the “many sensitivities” that the researcher must bring to the research project including awareness of power imbalances, the processes of seeking consent, avoiding deception, and maintaining confidentiality (p. 44). This research project was not one that placed participants at undue risk but, nevertheless, it needed to be grounded in sound ethical practice. In addition to initial permission to research in government and catholic schools, and obtaining principals’ consent, all participants in the research were provided with appropriate Plain
Language Statements introducing the research, its aims and what would be required from them should they consent to participate. Student participation was optional. Those who chose not to participate were not interviewed nor were they identified or referred to in the observational field notes. All who agreed to participate received appropriate Consent Forms including Parental Consent Forms for students under the age of eighteen, to be signed and returned to the researcher as a record of that consent.

One other ethical concern that needed to be addressed for the purposes of transparency was my involvement as a research assistant in the ARC Linkage project, *Theatre Space*, while also embarking on my PhD. Although *The Threepenny Opera*, was a production common to both studies, the co-producing company Victorian Opera was not. I made the distinction of only collecting data from that company.

**3. 10. 1. Identification and de-identification**

Freeman and Mathison (2009) maintain that confidentiality and anonymity in research is “made more complex when participants are children and adolescents…made even more so in particular institutional contexts such as prisons, hospitals, and even schools”, stating that “parents and other gatekeepers view children’s worlds as their business” (pp. 48-49). To maintain confidentiality and in order to not identify individual schools and participants, schools, teachers and students have been de-identified. Teachers have been given pseudonyms and where student names appear, they are the chosen pseudonym of that student. There are tensions within the research design with regard to identifying the theatre companies, as referred to earlier in this chapter. By identifying the play, the case is identified “accurately” (Yin, 2009) but also identifies the theatre company who produced or presented the work. Theatre company personnel initially agreed to be identified, but I have de-identified them. Who may read this thesis and the subsequent publishing of articles from the research mitigates this decision. In this report theatre company participants will be identified by titles such as Artistic Director, cast member pseudonyms, or Education Manager. Anonymity cannot be guaranteed and the stance taken here is a compromise the researcher believes constitutes an acceptable level of ethical practice. Theatre company participants were informed of this limitation to anonymity prior to their agreeing to participate.
3. 11. Data Tables

Having described the research design and the multiple data sources, I present the following five tables. Table 1 presents what I have called ‘auspicing’ data, or data that I argue significantly informs the research design and case study data. This concept is discussed in detail under the analysis section of this chapter. All other data is organised into case studies, representing the data types collected from each stakeholder group within each case, reflecting the research sites and the key stakeholders identified as being significant to this study - The VCAA, the four theatre companies, and the four schools, four teachers and four student cohorts.

AUSPICING DATA: The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documentation accessed from the VCAA website or available in the public domain</td>
<td>- VCE Drama and Theatre Studies Study Designs 2007-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Assessment Handbooks &amp; Advice for Teachers for both studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Drama and Theatre Studies Written Exams for 2009 and 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Chief Assessor Reports for Written Exams for 2009 and 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Playlist submission criteria for the 2010 VCE Playlists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- VCAA Memorandums and Bulletins, 2009 and 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informant Interview</td>
<td>Extended interview with The Manager, Key Learning Area, the Arts (60 minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher Reflective Journal</td>
<td>Reflective notes on observing the selection process for the 2010 Playlist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5
Case Study 1: *One Hundred*, Machinations Theatre Ensemble

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theatre Company Data</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Company artistic mission statement (from website)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Production Program of <em>One Hundred</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- VCAA Playlist submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Education resources created for schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Artistic Director of Machinations Ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Cast member/Education officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observational Field Notes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Performance of <em>One Hundred</em> with School S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Post-show Question and Answer Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Researcher Reflective Journal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **School Data**           |                                                                             |
|                          | **Documentation**                                                           |
|                          | - School educational vision statement (from website)                         |

| **Teacher Data**         |                                                                             |
|                          | **Documentation**                                                           |
|                          | - Detailed post show handout School                                          |
|                          | - Interviews                                                                 |
|                          | - Extended individual Teacher interview prior to seeing *One Hundred*        |
|                          | - Individual Teacher interview conducted prior to end-of-year exam (10 minutes, over phone) |
| **Observational field notes from:** |                                                                             |
|                          | - Extended class with VCE Drama students in preparation for seeing *One Hundred* |
|                          | - At the theatre                                                            |
|                          | - Extended class with VCE Drama students analysing *One Hundred*             |
| **Other**                | Teacher’s theatre going habits                                              |
| **Researcher reflective journal** |                                                                             |

| **Student Data**         |                                                                             |
|                          | **Interviews**                                                             |
|                          | - Focus group interview with students conducted post – performance           |
| **Observational field notes from:** |                                                                             |
|                          | - Extended class in preparation for seeing *One Hundred*                    |
|                          | - At the theatre                                                           |
|                          | - Extended class analysing *One Hundred*                                    |
| **Researcher reflective journal** |                                                                             |

Table 6
## Case Study 2: *Fatboy, Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theatre Company Data</strong></td>
<td>- Company artistic mission statement (from website)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Production Program of <em>Fatboy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- VCAA Playlist submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Education resources created for schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>- Artistic Director of Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Education officer and Schools Committee member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Full cast interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observational Field Notes</strong></td>
<td>- Performance of <em>Fatboy</em> with School C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Post-show Question and Answer Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Data</strong></td>
<td><strong>Documentation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- School education mission statement from school website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher Data</strong></td>
<td><strong>Documentation:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Handouts in preparation for School Assessed Coursework (SAC) assessment task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>- Extended individual Teacher interview prior to seeing play (30-40 minutes, in person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observational field notes from:</strong></td>
<td>- Extended class with VCE Drama students in preparation for seeing <em>Fatboy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- At the theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Extended class with VCE Drama students analysing <em>Fatboy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Extended class with VCE Drama students preparing for end-of-year exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Data</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interviews:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 3 focus group interview with students conducted post-performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- VOX Pop interviews after the performance of <em>Fatboy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observational field notes:</strong></td>
<td>- Extended class time prior to seeing <em>Fatboy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- At the theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Extended class time analysing <em>Fatboy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Extended class time preparing for end-of-year exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other:</strong></td>
<td>Teacher’s theatre going habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Researcher reflective journal</strong></td>
<td>- Teacher’s theatre going habits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7
Case Study 3: *The Threepenny Opera*, Victorian Opera

<table>
<thead>
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<th>DATA</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Theatre Company data</td>
<td><strong>Documentation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Company artistic mission statement (from website)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Production Program of <em>The Threepenny Opera</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- VCAA Playlist submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Education resources created for schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>- Artistic Director of Victorian Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Education Manager of Victorian Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Field Notes</td>
<td>- Performance of <em>The Threepenny Opera</em> with School G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Post-show Question and Answer Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher Reflective Journal</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School data</th>
<th>Documentation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- School education mission statement from school website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher data</th>
<th>Documentation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Handouts in preparation for School Assessed Coursework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>- Extended individual Teacher interview prior to seeing play (30-40 minutes, in person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Extended individual interview with Head of Drama who accompanied the class to the theatre</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- Individual interview with key teacher prior to written exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observational field notes</td>
<td>- Extended class with VCE Drama students in preparation for seeing <em>The Threepenny Opera</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Extended class with VCE Drama students analysing <em>The Threepenny Opera</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>- teacher’s theatre going habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher reflective journal</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student data</th>
<th>Interviews:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 3 focus group interview with students post-performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- VOX Pop interviews after the performance of <em>The Threepenny Opera</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational field notes</td>
<td>- Extended class time prior to seeing <em>The Threepenny Opera</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- At the theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Extended class time analysing <em>The Threepenny Opera</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher reflective journal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8
Case Study 4: *Shakespeare’s R&J*, Riverside Theatre Parramatta

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Company data</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Company artistic mission statement (from website)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Production Program of <em>Shakespeare’s R&amp;J</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Online interview with Arts Centre Melbourne programmer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Education resources created for schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>- Full cast interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Producer interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Field Notes</td>
<td>- Performance of <em>Shakespeare’s R&amp;J</em> with School B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Post-show Question and Answer Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher Reflective Journal</td>
<td>Documentation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- School education mission statement from school website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher data</td>
<td>Documentation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Handout for reviewing the performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>- Extended individual Teacher interview with exchange teacher prior to seeing play (20 minutes, via phone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Extended individual Teacher interview with returning teacher prior to written exam (15 mins via phone)</td>
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<td>- Extended class with VCE Drama students in preparation for <em>Shakespeare’s R&amp;J</em></td>
</tr>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>- Researcher reflective journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher’s theatre going habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student data</td>
<td>Observational field notes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Extended class time prior to seeing <em>Shakespeare’s R&amp;J</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- At the theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Researcher reflective journal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

3. 12. Data Analysis

3. 12. 1. Re-situating the researcher self

Qualitative research in social sciences and educational traditions highly values the process of reflection with self-critical analysis. It is a means whereby researchers are able to explore their own subjectivity and thus become more aware of the impact they inevitably have on the research data collected. As Denzin and Lincoln (2011) note, it is understood that “research is an interactive process shaped by one’s personal history, biography, gender,
social class, race and ethnicity and for those people in the setting, any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity” (p. 5).

3. 12. 2. Analysis of documentation

Yin (2009) suggests that a key strategy for beginning analysis is to follow the theoretical propositions that led to your case study, which in turn reflect the research questions and reviews of the literature (p. 130). The very first analysis that the project demanded was a close scrutiny of the auspicing documentation prior to fieldwork. Documentation analysed in this project is categorized as “official” in status. Official documents may be considered to incorporate internal documents, those that are circulated within an organization, and external communications that refer to materials produced for public consumption (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 137).

Formal VCE documentation is published on their website. Written curriculum documents are produced with the intention that their content be enacted in classrooms. I analysed the Study Designs to examine discourses and key terminology used to construct the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies Study Designs, and in order to consider how the documentation may reflect the contexts in which this study is situated. I cross-referenced the content of the Unit Outcomes and their Key Knowledge and Key Skills for performance analysis in the Study Designs with the Advice to Teachers and the Assessment Handbooks for each study. I looked for synergies, dissonances, tensions, omissions and generative questions. Chief Assessor Written Examination reports provided commentary on students’ approaches to the examination. In particular they provided teachers and students with examples of or suggestions for exemplary or high-level responses. For the researcher the analysis of VCAA documents also provided insight into any embedded assumptions Chief Examiners may have of enacted curriculum.

I then examined the Playlist selection criteria, as developed by the VCAA, and the Department of Education resource selection criteria which informs the VCAA text selection. The Playlist selection criteria are the official document that must be addressed by theatre companies intending to have their work selected, and are the criteria applied by the Playlist
Advisory Panel. Analysis focused on exploring the selection criteria’s relationship to other VCAA documents and examined the language of the selection criteria and how its relationship to the VCE written curriculum and performance analysis tasks. The analysis then turned to examining the theatre companies’ submissions to the Playlists and how the companies responded to and interpreted the criteria for selection.

Formal mission and vision statements of case study schools and case study theatre companies provided important contextual information with regard to organisational purposes, practices, philosophies, and values contributing the creation of case study descriptions (Stake 1995, Yin, 2009). Further documents provided useful insights for considering “shared repertoires” such as routines, boundary objects, vocabularies, and styles relevant to communities of practice (Wenger 1998, p. 2). Theatre company mission statements provided insight into types of artistic practice and some provided individual company’s perspectives on education.

Other documentation was analysed as it became available, often as a direct product or strategy of pedagogies encountered in the field. This type of documentation included; theatre company education resources, class lesson plans, and copies of school based assessment tasks. Data collected as the study progressed enabled an analysis of documents produced in-action, as responses to other documents and as processes and products of pedagogy.

3. 12. 3. Analysis of interviews, field notes, and reflective journal

I transcribed all interviews conducted in this study. While Stake (1995) argues that “rather than tape-record or write furiously, it is better to listen, to take a few notes, to ask for clarification” an interview, I found that the act of transcribing the audio taped words of the participants with the accompanying noise, interruptions, pauses, tone and inflection, immediately generated a recollection of “being there” (p. 66). Transcribing became an act of ‘re-listening’. It heightened my recollection of the interview context, providing a deeper level of listening that also indicated my own role in the interview, or “reflection-on-action” (Schön, 1983). It indicated when I spoke, when I listened, if I shaped or framed questions, identified any prompting of answers, if I editorialised, or re-focused the interview when it
diverged or digressed. Stake (1995) asserts that what is “covered in the interview is targeted and influenced by the interviewer” (p. 66). I argue that the transcription and re-listening process provides critical insight and enables valuable triangulation with other data such as the researcher’s reflective journal and observational field notes. Indeed, O’Toole and Beckett (2013) recommend that researchers transcribe all interviews in order to “recall the key pauses and the interviewee’s changes of expression or intensity, the nervous fidget or unexpected gesture…the giggle” (p. 160).

Analytic memorandums (memos) were a highly useful tool in this study. The use of analytic memos is drawn from Ely’s (1991) suggestion that memos become “conversations with one’s self about what has occurred in the research process, what has been learned, the insights this provides, and the leads these suggest for future action” (p. 80). Merriam (1997) suggests researchers use memos to reflect upon findings from previous observations which, in turn, may guide the next observation. An example of such a memo is as follows: “I really like this observation by [the artist]. It may inform further understandings around meaning-making and pedagogical processes – the advantages of seeing a work twice” (In-transcript analytic memo, Key Information Interview, CS1, March, 2010). Memos such as this prompted ways to consider additional inquiry.

3.12.4. Deeper analysis – emergent themes
The research design offered a significant challenge with regard to managing competing timelines, and organising the volume of data. The organizing mechanism of Tables 5-9 presented on pages 80-84 enabled me to generate a clear representation of the data that comprised each case.

Having used the transcription process and analytic memos as a first level of analysis, the next stage of analysis applied a methodical and detailed reading and re-reading of transcriptions, observational field notes and the researcher reflective journal. This was done case by case, purposefully and painstakingly. Geertz (in Ely, 1991) comments that the open forms of data that qualitative research offers are often known as “thick description” and require time to allow the data “to speak to you” (pp. 168-169). This contributes to the
The process of triangulation whereby “we look to see if the phenomenon or case remains the same at other times, in other spaces, or as persons interact differently” (Stake, 1995, p. 112). It was crucial to be consciously aware of comparing and contrasting Teacher interviews with observational field notes and cross-referencing these with student interviews. Such analysis demanded examination with regard to what each component of data said or revealed about a particular moment in the classroom. It was critical to compare and contrast the cast interview and what it revealed about the performers’ experiences of performing and perceived audience response, with observational field notes that captured the students’ response to the performance and post-show question and answer sessions (Q&As). Deep reading enabled “patterns” to emerge within and across cases, identifying dissonances, surprises and themes enabling a coding and categorizing process that was guided by the research questions. This process aimed to “distil categories” while endeavouring to “keep hold of the large pictures so that the categories are true to it” (Ely, 1991, p. 87).

In my approach to this more detailed data analysis I drew on a number of theorists. Particularly Stenhouse (1978), Schön (1983), Ely (1991), O’Toole and Beckett (2013), and Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014). All scholars offer approaches to data analysis, particularly with regard to coding and categorising. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) state that “codes are labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (p. 71). Charmaz (in Miles et al, 2014) describes coding as the “critical link” between data collection and their explanation of meaning, and that, “A code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to the data” (pp. 3-4).

Stake (1995) offered valuable insight with regard to “patterns” and “reappearance” in analysis. While the researcher may find significant meaning in a single instance, Stake argues that it is likely that “important meanings will come from reappearance over and over” (p. 78). Often the patterns will be known in advance, drawn from the research questions serving as a template for the analysis. Sometimes the patterns will emerge unexpectedly from the analysis (pp. 78-85). Both occurred in the data analysis for this study.
While the research questions offered a beginning point for analysis, when coding and categorizing the data to discover emergent themes, I also considered:

- How the coding may be framed by the written, enacted and/or experienced curriculum
  AND
- The timelines and processes that determine the fourteen-month period from play submission in September 2009 to VCE examination in November 2010.

In particular the structure of the timeline and the VCAA auspicing data provided a way of considering the question: When does the pedagogical process begin, when does it end?

Table 10 below captures the categories and themes that emerged from the data. The left-hand column reflects the stages of teaching performance analysis, and also suggests each stage’s relationship to written, enacted and experienced curriculum. The central column references what was ‘noticed’ with regard to which stakeholders were engaged with which aspect of the process. The right-hand column reflects categories and themes that emerged from the analysis across all four cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIMELINE</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Categories - emergent themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Reasons for submitting a play | Theatre Companies | Theatre as educative tool  
Aesthetic experience  
School audiences  
Contemporary theatre practice  
Discursive languages |
| (Responding to/engaging with curriculum) |                     |                                                                  |
| 2. Play selection | Advisory Panel  
VCAA  
KLA Manager | Written curriculum priorities and/or imperatives  
Discursive languages  
Assessment  
Selection criteria – meaning and application  
‘Getting it right’ |
| (Transitional space – between states of curriculum) |                     |                                                                  |
| 3. Choosing a play to analyse | Teachers  
Students | ‘Getting it right’  
My students and my context  
Assessment  
Discursive languages  
Aesthetic form  
Timing and practicality  
Personal aesthetic/artistic practice |
| (Written and enacted curriculum) |                     |                                                                  |
| 4. Pedagogies for preparing to see the play | Teachers  
Students | Analytic  
Transmissional |
| (Enacted and experienced curriculum) | Dialogic  
| Predictive  
| Discursive language  
| Descriptive |

### 5. Pedagogies for encountering the performance for study
(Enacted and experienced curriculum)

| Teachers | Experiential  
| Students | Imaginative  
| Theatre Companies | Analytical  
| Written |

### 6. Pedagogies for remembering a play
(Enacted and experienced curriculum)

| Teachers | Classroom:  
| Students | - Analytical  
| Theatre Companies | - Transmissonal  
| - Dialogic  
| - Discursive languages  
| - Assessment |

| Theatre - observable  
| - Dialogic  
| - Spatial  
| - Disjunctions  
| - Discursive and other Languages |

### 7. Applying High-stakes assessment – School
End-of-year written exam
(Written, enacted and experienced curriculum)

| Teachers | “Getting it right”  
| Students | Dialogic  
| VCAA | Transmissonal  
| Images | Embodied  
| Discursive languages  
| Assessment |

### 8. Intersectional points
(Across written, enacted and experienced curriculum)

| All | ‘Curriculum’  
| ‘Languages’ – discursive and other  
| Pedagogy  
| Practicality  
| Aesthetic  
| Experiential  
| Space  
| Boundary objects  
| Communities of practice |

Table 10: DATA – categories and emergent themes
3. 13. Validity

Validity is a contested term among selected qualitative researches. Some feel that this traditional quantitative construct...has no place in qualitative inquiry. Alternative terms such as verisimilitude and a persuasively written account are preferred. But other qualitative methodologist continue to use the term purposefully because it suggests a more rigourous stance toward our work (Miles et al, 2013, p. 201).

Internal validity asks the researcher: What other methods can be used to check for the same phenomenon? External validity refers to how well the data can be applied beyond the circumstances of the case to more general situations, for example, across industry or other contexts. The following discussion considers validity as it applies to this study.

Ely (1991) believes that the process of validation begins before the researcher enters the field. For Ely validation has a basis in trustworthiness, the researcher is “a personal belief system that shapes the procedures in process” (p. 93). Stake (1995) describes validity in research as the researcher having a commitment to interpretation, a focus on the issues, on the value of stories - verifiable and otherwise - on the need for validation through multiple accounts of a phenomenon, and with the aim of making principled but naturalistic generalisations. He states, “It is true that we [qualitative researchers] deal with many complex phenomena and issues for which no consensus can be found as to what really exists – yet we have ethical obligations to minimize misrepresentation and misunderstanding” (pp. 108-109). Guba and Lincoln (1985) consider that validity can be achieved through prolonged engagement in the field, through the use of thick description and “triangulating” with other data sources (p. 300).

Testing internal validity requires the administration of different research tools to “triangulate” the data. Triangulation is discussed by several key qualitative research scholars. Stake (1995) proposes the analogy of “celestial navigation” whereby the pilot of a ship plots its position in the vastness of an ocean by use of three separate stars or celestial points (p. 110). Yin (2009) states that triangulation in case study research encompasses the analysis of multiple forms of data to capture multiple perspectives on the experience of the phenomenon under study. Ely (1991) discusses the word triangulation in terms of
“convergence”. She suggests that this may be convergence of differing data – observation, interview, documentation — or convergence within the same types of data gathered over time, or by different researchers (author’s italics). In order to verify, the researcher looks to see if the phenomenon or case remains the same at other times, in other spaces, as persons interact differently, and when multiple case studies can act as an example of triangulation (Stake, 1995, p. 112).

In her compelling paper, *Why Triangulate?* Mathison (1988) states, “Triangulation has arisen as an important methodological issue...In particular, naturalistic and qualitative approaches to [research] have demanded attention to controlling bias and establishing valid propositions because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with these alternate epistemologies” (p. 13). According to Mathison, triangulation can have three outcomes - convergence, inconsistency and contradiction and that all of these are valuable outcomes of the process. The value of triangulation is not as a technological solution to a data collection and analysis problem but “as a technique which provides more and better evidence from which researchers can construct meaningful propositions about the social world” (p. 15).

Mathison’s discussion of triangulation as a means of validating data is compelling for me as a researcher. It argues that in discovering inconsistencies and contradictions, the researcher does not “throw their hands up in despair because we cannot say anything about the phenomenon we have been studying”, rather the researcher attempts to make sense of what they find (pp. 15-17). The three distinct sites for the research – classroom, theatre and curriculum authority, represented through the four case studies, provide simultaneous multiple realities. They challenged my researcher self to make sense of them, to consider how I was positioned to interrogate the research questions and to tell the story or stories of the research that needed to be told.

### 3.14. Writing the story of the research

O’Toole and Beckett (2013) describe writing the story of research as a reflexive relationship between the ontological and epistemological. “How we write is both a reflection and a constitution of self and practice” (pp. 181-182). In acknowledging my researcher self and
other roles I bring to this research — educator, examiner, education manager — I am mindful of that reflexive process. Stake (1995) states that in qualitative research the researcher is an “interpreter and gatherer of interpretations” (p. 99). I am, therefore, very aware of potential subjectivities in my analysis and interpretation of the data, hence the choice to adopt a multiple case study approach.

I tell the story of this research using the framework of a ‘timeline’, one that tracks the process of teaching performance analysis from selecting a play, to examination. It is a structure that reflects the Seven Acts of Pedagogy presented in the Prologue to this thesis. The story of the research begins in Chapter Four where I account for selecting plays, beginning with the VCAA’s role. This chapter specifically examines the Playlist Advisory Panel’s play selection process, its interrelationship with the curriculum, and then examines what determines teachers’ and students’ choice of which performance to study.

Recalling Davis’s (1988) assertion that “our work as teachers must come before and after the performance”, Chapters Five and Six position the teacher centrally and focus on pedagogies associated with teaching performance analysis. These two chapters examine what teaching strategies emerged across four identified pedagogical stages; preparatory; in-theatre, post-performance and examination.

Chapter Seven returns the reader to the beginning of the timeline and examines theatre companies’ roles as key stakeholders. In particular this chapter explores why theatre companies engage with the Playlist process, why and how they select plays, and how their practices impact on the pedagogies of performance analysis.

The concluding chapter to the thesis revisits the research questions and offers new knowledge to the field. It directly addresses how the study responds to the research questions, and it offers a series of recommendations that consider what constitutes effective pedagogies for teaching performance analysis as well as considerations for future research that have emerged from this study, ones that apply to ongoing practice in the field.
CHAPTER FOUR: 
Choosing plays – Transitioning from written to enacted curriculum

4. 1. Introduction
There are key moments in the teaching of performance analysis that occur in order for the written curriculum to transition towards the enacted curriculum. Within these transitional moments are a number of stages characterized around a significant theme in this study, that of choice. Choice emerged as a theme at four major points within the study; at the point where theatre companies choose plays to submit for selection to the VCE Playlists; the process of selecting a Playlist Advisory Panel; the Playlist Advisory Panel (the Panel) selecting plays for the Drama and Theatre Studies Playlists; and at school level when a particular play or plays are chosen to be studied.

As Chapter 2C of this thesis discussed, key literature in the field identifies that in the process of making choices complex interactions are at play regarding intentions, consequences, possible/knownable alternatives, and the desire to minimize ambiguity (March, 1982, p. 30). For the key stakeholders choosing a play(s) from a series of alternatives is an intentional action and such choice has consequences for students and teachers, examiners and theatre companies across Victoria. The perceived consequences of choice are based on a set of understandings and assumptions that concern; the qualities and purpose of studying live theatre, the written, enacted, and experience curriculum, and externally based assessment.

The first section of this chapter will develop these ideas through a discussion about the Panel’s process as it relates to curriculum. The discussion considers what choices are possible within such a framework, how the written, enacted, and experienced curriculum is positioned within that process, and points to any impact on pedagogy for teachers. The second section of this chapter positions the teacher centrally re concepts of choice, interrogating what the data suggests are key drivers for choosing a play to study as teachers begin to consider the pedagogies that transition from written to enacted and towards experienced curriculum. While theatre companies are a key stakeholder and are referenced in this chapter, their role will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven.
4. 2. The VCAA Playlist Advisory Panel

As has been identified the development of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) curriculum model is one that adopts a platform, deliberation and consensus approach to its development (Walker in Marsh & Willis, 2007), is an outcomes-based curriculum and implements assessment processes identified as high-stakes. The deliberation process of curriculum development is, as Schwab (2013) argues, “complex and arduous”. It charges curriculum developers with consistently considering both the ends and the means and to fully understand that they mutually determine one another (p. 618). Curriculum developers also bring to their role a series of individual beliefs, epistemologies and values that need to be accounted for in order to reach consensus. I contend this is also true of the Playlist Advisory Panel, whose membership represents a range of views and approaches to education, understandings of curriculum, and knowledge of contemporary theatre practice, a membership within which consensus must be reached.

The Playlist Advisory Panel (the Panel) is “formally invited” by the VCAA via an expression of interest process, and final Panel membership represents a range of “expertise and experience” (Interview, Manager, KLA, The Arts, February, 2010). According to the Manager the Panel is “deliberately varied”, comprising “ex officio such as chief assessors of the written examinations for Theatre Studies and Drama, teachers from each of the three school sectors as well as academia and industry. Some people wear more than one hat because they represent more than one interest, and there is a policy at the VCAA of trying to maintain a balance of experience and freshness” (Interview, Manager, KLA, The Arts, February, 2010). The range of representation on the Playlist Advisory panel highlights the VCAA Manager, KLA, The Arts’ understanding that differing “interests” will ensure a range of perspectives, differing epistemologies and values. Such a process is, according to the Manager, a well-recognized text selection panel mechanism within the VCAA. It is one that is replicated across the study areas of English, Literature, Dance and Music. The important distinction for the VCE Playlists is that the texts selected for Drama and Theatre Studies are live and are experienced in real time.
Data suggests the Panel’s role is complex. They are required to choose plays for three Playlists, lists that will fulfill the multiple requirements of written curriculum. According to the Manager KLA, the Arts, plays that are chosen need to align with the “specifics” of the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies. They need to enable enacted curriculum, and they need to allow assessment tasks to be generated, implemented and marked. The Manager states, “We’re in the business of providing the very best set of resources for students to meet the requirements of the study design” (Interview, Manager, KLA, The Arts, February, 2010).

Such a remit suggests that the job of Panel demands construction of what Wenger (1998) calls a “community of practice”, albeit a temporary one. The Panel’s remit requires shared understandings and the crucial characteristics of “mutual engagement…joint enterprise…and …shared repertoire” (p. 73). The data suggests, however that where differing epistemologies, sector interests, discipline knowledge, understandings and application of particular criterion are present, the role of such a community of practice and its capacity to effectively progress the written curriculum towards the enacted curriculum is problematic.

4.2.1 Reviewing the previous year’s Playlists
I observed the Playlist Advisory Panel review of plays that comprised the 2009 VCE Drama and Theatre Studies Playlists. The Manager stated that as part of the overall selection process, “The Panel meet initially to discuss the criteria…to discuss feedback from the current list…and any other issues that might be coming through” (Interview, Manager KLA, The Arts, February, 2010). The analysis of all plays on the 2009 Playlist occurred in the first 2010 Panel meeting framed as an informal discussion of each play by those members of the Panel who had seen a performance. The Manager stated that time is deliberately set aside to “discuss feedback from the current list” (Interview, Manager, KLA, The Arts, February, 2010). In the discussion of the 2009 Playlists, the criteria appeared to be informally applied. Key words such as; worth, merit, excellence, interesting, challenging, accessible, appropriate, and suitability tended to be distilled into the terms such as “successful” and “unsuccessful” and even these terms were applied in a number of ways. Certain plays from the 2009 Playlists were “successful” because they had “much to offer the students in terms of transformation and the form of non-naturalism”. One play choice was described as being
“too text heavy” and not very non-naturalistic. Other plays provided “lots to write about” or had “a diverse range of production values”. Some plays were thought to have contained too much “strong language”. One particular theatre company’s productions were considered to be “too much the same, as if it was concocted for the submission”, that it contained “too much non-naturalism and not enough story” (Field notes August, 2009). Marsh and Wills (2009) draw a distinction between the “informal” and “formal” evaluation processes of curriculum considering how the former can lead to the latter and what that may mean for curriculum review. While the discussion of the 2009 Playlists was not a formal review, it was considered an important part of the Playlist Advisory Panel process. The tension between its perceived importance and its informal nature raises questions about its efficacy.

4.2.2. The tricky question of the script

The following discussion problematizes the role of a written script in the Playlist selection process. In the methodology chapter of this thesis I outlined the detailed document analysis undertaken in order to gain insight into and knowledge of the Study Designs. Two of the Units of study; Drama Unit 3, Outcome 3; Theatre Studies Unit 4, Outcome 3 as written curriculum don’t require the written script to be studied in order to complete the performance analysis task. This point is confirmed by the Manager who states, “The students for Drama (Unit 3) and Theatre Studies (Unit 4) are just supposed to be studying the production itself, the live theatre performance” while in Theatre Studies Unit 3 “They must study the script, it is a requirement” (Interview, Manager KLA, The Arts, February, 2010). A written playscript, however, is a key component that contributes to the selection of plays by the Advisory Panel. The purpose of a playscript precipitates the following discussion.

A close analysis of VCAA bulletins and notices published during the scope of this research notes inconsistencies that appear in the VCAA formal documents with regard to the role and purpose of a script. For example in 2009, the formal VCAA Bulletins and Notices for Theatre Studies Unit 4 (which does not require the study of a script) state, “Students will undertake an assessment task based on the performance of a play on the Playlist…Teachers

18 “playscript” is the term used for a written script in the Study Designs for Drama and Theatre Studies
should note that this outcome requires analysis and evaluation of ways a written playscript is interpreted in production to an audience”. Further scrutiny of the documents noted that the Playlists for both Studies and all Units during 2009-2011 (within the scope of the data collection for this study) published details about how teachers could access the written playscript despite the script not being mandated for study.

Arguably, copies of playscripts provide the Panel and teachers and students with key information about the play including narrative structures, characters, styles, eras, themes, any written stage directions that may hint at theatrical styles and design choices, and the worlds of the different plays. They also provide indications of “risk management” by providing evidence of contentious content (Interview, Manager KLA, The Arts, February, 2010). However, the role of a written script in contemporary theatre making is fluid. Adaptations or re-imaginings of classic or established texts19 are increasingly common in contemporary theatre practice and even though the playwright may be familiar to Panel members – such as a Shakespearean or Greek play — the final performance may differ considerably from the original intentions of the playwright in terms of performance, design, language and meaning20. While a script remains a key component for the Panel’s approach to choosing plays, arguably it is not always helpful in a process aimed at choosing the “best resources” for students studying live theatre particularly as many contemporary theatre companies do not create new work using a written script. The text box below is included to illustrate how one contemporary theatre company, a participant in this research, considers the process of creating their theatre performances.

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19By adaptation and re-imagining is meant that companies/directors adapt and in some cases re-write or edit elements of plays such as Ibsen’s The Wild Duck, Shakespeare’s Hamlet, Pirandello’s Six Characters in Search of an Author, Genet’s The Maids, Sophocles Antigone, and Williams The Glass Menagerie, all of which plays, as adaptations and re-imagined productions, have been selected to the VCE Playlists in recent years. 

20In recent years some adaptations of classic plays or published texts have differed markedly from the original text or its translation so as to be unrecognizable.
Machinations Theatre Ensemble is an evolving company of performers and collaborators working to create visual / physical theatre that is original in form, challenging in content and engaging to our audiences. We are dedicated to the exploration, development and production of new theatrical forms combining physical theatre with contemporary practice, and relevant issues with a focus on ensemble work. Our aim is to create new, dynamic, exciting performances; that are not didactic but genuinely engage, entertain and challenge our audience. This belief drives Machinations’ work; impacting upon both the form and content of the work we create
– (Machinations Theatre Ensemble, One Hundred, Mission Statement, 2010)

**Text Box 1**

Gattenhof (in Strube et al, 2010) states that contemporary theatre practice is often characterized by “hybridization of forms and genres, the mixing of styles of different cultures and times, the erosion of the distinction between high culture and popular culture” and that it is exploratory, investigative, evolving, experimental, and embraces ephemerality (p. 257). Lehmann’s (1999, 2006) concept of the postdramatic, is one where contemporary theatre is in search of a new aesthetic logic and is one whereby narrative, text, action and character have fragmented into “bricolage” (p. 21). Govan, Nicholson and Normington (2007) state that, “Contemporary theatre making is…breaking the authority of the written text. [It is] a balance between authorship and performance” (p. 6).

Such descriptions serve to highlight the potential dissonances that exist between contemporary theatre as practice and a script-based selection process. Certain performances selected to the VCE Playlists are often very contemporary in form and creation, developed from highly collaborative and devised processes. For these performed works a script may simply be a jumping off point. In these instances the creative and development process will dismiss “the authority of the written text”, or a script may simply be developed from process in order for the stage manager to call the show. New theatre works invariably undergo several stages of development and often a radical re-drafting before being performed. A printed play is something quite different from the version that is eventually performed. As Wallis and Shepherd (1998) note, it is only a “pretext” for the theatrical performance.

The VCAA indicates that VCE Playlist selections are often determined by the Panel being able to see excerpts of or an entire performance of a submitted work on DVD or online. “It
is excellent to have vision… what is most valuable in the process is an excerpt from the actual production…that demonstrates the claims in regard to stagecraft that is mentioned in the submission” (Interview, Manager, KLA The Arts, 2010). Data also indicates that some theatre companies invite Panel members to performances with a view to submitting their show for the following year. The Manager’s interview suggests that both these practices enable a submission to become a “known” product for the Panel. The Panel can see how a script is being interpreted, how particular design choices are being realized or, as the Manager states, “how sound and music are used in a dramaturgical sense”. In being able to see and hear all or at least aspects of the submitted production, the Panel is able to consider how the production may meet the selection criteria and possibly address the requirements of the curriculum and the assessment tasks. Such possibilities mitigate “risks” for the Panel with regard to choice or, as March (1982) argues, they “minimize ambiguity and maximize certainty” (p. 30). Observations indicate, however, that the processes of selection don’t offer a consistent approach because some submissions offer vision and others only a written treatment. Arguably such processes advantage certain companies and certain submissions, particularly those works that are already made or have already been produced.

Within the timelines in which this study has been conducted and written, the VCAA has adapted its process to acknowledge the development of new work and since 2015 has offered companies the opportunity to submit a second version of the script prior to final selection. This signifies a greater understanding of how contemporary theatre is made. Requiring a script as part of the selection process, however, still places pressure on directors and creative teams to “know” what the work will be sometimes twelve months before opening night. This indicates a potential disconnect between the imperatives of the enacted curriculum and assessment, and the practices of contemporary theatre making.

4.2.3. Understanding and applying key selection criteria
The VCAA requires that the Playlist Advisory Panel apply seven key selection criteria when choosing plays. The criteria themselves are “signed off” by the VCAA Board. They are built upon “general VCAA text selection processes and criteria but are particularized for drama and theatre studies” (Interview, Manager KLA, The Arts, February, 2010). This section of
Chapter interrogates understandings of criteria, how criteria are applied in selecting texts, and the subsequent impact of those selected texts on enacted and experienced curriculum and the pedagogies that emerge. According to the VCAA, the VCE Playlists will:

1. Contain performances of dramatic merit and be worthy of close study
2. Consist of plays that cover a range of styles and are excellent examples of their form
3. Consist of plays that will sustain intensive study, raising interesting issues and providing challenging ideas
4. Be suitable for and accessible to a wide range of students
5. Contain a range of both new and established works
6. Provide access to contemporary repertoire
7. Consist of texts that are appropriate for the age and development of students and in that context reflect current standards and expectations (Playlist Criteria for Selection, Nomination Form, 2010)

Table 11

The meaning of such terms as worth, merit, excellence, interesting, challenging, accessible, appropriate, and suitable are contestable. Differing epistemologies, sector interests, discipline and theoretical knowledge, knowledge of contemporary theatre practice and application of particular criterion greatly influence and are influenced by individual understandings of these terms as well as Panel members’ “life history, gender, race, and theology” (Pinar, 2008, p. 8).

The Manager advised that the VCAA Board takes on the role of “a cautious observer of the impact of texts” and that this position informs which plays are ultimately selected. Criterion 7 states that, “[The Playlists will] Consist of texts that are appropriate for the age and development of students and in that context reflect community current standards and expectations.” The observational data from the 2010 Playlist selection process indicated that Criterion 7 provided the most robust debate. In practice this meant that discussion centred on “words that are not acceptable… references to drug use…binge drinking…self harm…suicide…sexual harassment…abuse. It’s not that a Playlist can’t include these things, it’s how they are treated” (interview Manager, KLA, The Arts, February, 2010 – my italics). The Victorian Department of Education and Training provides guidelines for selecting resources for schools. The guidelines state that, “Controversial topics will often be appropriate and important subjects of study in schools and, at times, cannot be avoided in
the context of teaching and learning”21. The Department website advises that potentially controversial topics include:

Themes related to magic or fantasy, racial and religious themes, sexual activity, nudity and related themes, drug misuse or addiction, crime, violence and cruelty, suicide and excessively bleak scenarios, the depiction of revolting or abhorrent phenomena, satirical or comparative perspectives on race, religion or gender (Department of Education and Training, September, 2013).

It isn’t that these concepts can’t be considered it is more about how they are treated and, in contemporary theatre practice, how they are treated cannot be guaranteed, nor can how performances are read and interpreted by teachers and students. Such considerations are rendered more complex by the growing cultural diversity in secondary schools in Australia.

The Manager states that the Advisory Panel’s remit is to select a range of works that consider equity and access in terms of time, location, cost but also “intellectually”. Selection criterion 4 requires the Panel to select productions that will be “accessible to a wide range of students”. The Manager states that accessible means “both the physical and geographic sense for touring and ticket prices but also accessible intellectually” (Interview, Manager, KLA, The Arts, February, 2010). The inclusion of productions that are perceived by the Panel to be more ‘intellectually complex’ will arguably both challenge and enable students’ capacity to analyse, and will impact pedagogy. For the VCAA, accessibility also requires the inclusion of a performance that is touring to a range of venues across the State, and consideration is given to ticket prices being “affordable” for a range of schools. For the Panel, seeking to apply all criteria to the selection process suggests that some criteria may be elevated over others in order to generate the “best possible resources”.

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4.3. The Playlist selection process – effective and affective

Compellingly, questions arose in the research between how the Panel selection process accounted for plays that were effective, providing a platform for teaching performance analysis, and plays that were affective, evoking a deep response that may distract or detract from that teaching. In the literature review to this thesis, theatre as a performative art has been defined and discussed in relation to its aesthetic qualities. Further the review identified that key elements of drama education and drama pedagogy incorporate the experiential, the embodied and the aesthetic. As Abbs (1989) argues, aesthetic experiences are those that affect us. Thompson (2009) contends that drama education and applied theatre are limited if they concentrate solely on effects. He argues for theatre that is affective so that it “encourages a commitment to pleasure, passion and enjoyment” as a starting point to social change (pp. 4-5). Hurley (2010) argues that affect can only arise through encountering a range of “emotional registers” in theatrical performance such as the “intensity” and “completeness” (pp. 23-25). Within the data that captured the Playlist selection process, the following discussion problematizes understandings of what constitutes effective and affective.

The Manager states that the plays selected “must raise interesting issues and those issues in Drama and Theatre Studies are issues of dramaturgy and staging” [the effect] and “what the ideas are is not as important as the way in which they are presented” [the affect] (Interview, Manager KLA, the Arts, February, 2010 – author’s italics). Early discussion in the Panel’s selection process focused on addressing community standards and expectations, and as such, content and ideas presented in submissions were rigorously debated and discussed. Mediating content through the lens of community expectations acknowledges that theatre can be highly affective in form and content, in its impact on our emotions, senses and feelings. Hurley (2010) acknowledges that theatre offers “vicarious experience” ones that can create the same “neurological imprint as doing or feeling them oneself”. She argues “vicarious experience is very intimate indeed” (p. 76). While some Panel members indicated highly affective pieces of theatre could also be effective choices, for other Panel members, the vicarious experience generated by content will impact its effectiveness as a teaching resource, generating too large a “gap” between the lived experience of the audience and the
new territory it explored (Simons, 1994). In the Panel’s review of the 2009 Playlists two performances, *The Shape of a Girl* and *A Dream Play* generated discussion that addressed these ideas.

*The Shape of a Girl*, a powerful solo performance, told the true story of a young woman who committed suicide after prolonged bullying. Coincidentally, and tragically, the performance season aligned with an increase in youth suicide in Victoria. This was not to be predicted. It highlighted for the Panel, their responsibility with regard to selecting texts that would enable close analysis and yet be an effective tool for study. *A Dream Play* presented a highly abstracted world occupied by strange dream like characters, considered by some panel members to be too intellectually challenging, and thus ineffective as a teaching tool for teaching performance analysis. These are responses from the Panel after the performances were selected and created. Both productions were selected for the 2009 VCE Drama and Theatre Studies Playlists based on theatre companies appropriately providing scripts and detailed treatments and being subjected to the criteria (Observational field notes, 31 August, 2009). This discussion raises powerful questions with regard to how the written curriculum — via the Playlists — impacts selection, affects the enacted and experienced curriculum, and what pedagogies teachers might employ to effectively teach the analysis of an *affective* theatre performance that is not necessarily considered to be so at the point of selection.

4. 4. **Choosing a Play – the school context**

The publication of the VCE Playlists in late November/early December each school year precipitates the enacted curriculum. The discussion in this chapter now focuses on schools, teachers and students, and what the data suggests with regard to how Playlist documents are interpreted, understood and used as a guide to choosing a play for teaching performance.

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23 *A Dream Play* by August Strindberg, written in 1901 it was first performed in Stockholm in April 1907. It remains one of his most admired and influential plays and seen as an important precursor to dramatic Expressionism and Surrealism. This was a contemporary re-imaging of the work by a Melbourne independent theatre company, Ignite
analysis. Herein, choosing a play is framed by six themes that emerged from the data: teacher talk, constructing learners, teacher identity, connecting with the broader VCE curriculum, practicality as limiting and liberating, and “getting it right” for assessment.

4.4.1. ‘Teacher Talk’

*Teachers and students talk as they do within generic constraints of space, time and power, and in response to the complex micro-culture of the classroom. Their transactions take forms that in part are shaped by the inherited collective consciousness of ‘being at school’ and in part are created out of each lesson’s unique meeting of personalities and circumstances (Alexander, 2008, p. 97).*

Previous studies including Grady (1994), Tulloch (2000), Reason (2010), Donelan and Sallis (in O’Toole et al, 2014) have concluded that teachers, in almost every instance, choose the plays they want their students to see. In this research the data supports this argument. While there is some indication that students were invited to contribute to that choice, the data suggests that their choices were secondary.

Teachers introduced the Playlists to their students, talking about the Playlist document and describing each of the listed plays. As the opening quote to this discussion indicates, “telling” is an integral part of what Alexander (2008) refers to as “teacher talk” in pedagogy. Alexander argues that “talk is embedded in the wider structures and dynamics of classroom life” and central to every teaching context is a “discourse between the teacher and his or her pupils” linked to pedagogy (p. 36). Alexander outlines six important aspects of teaching and pedagogy - as transmission, as initiation, as negotiation, as facilitation, as acceleration or as technique (pp. 109-110). Within these, Alexander argues there are “versions” of talk including rote, recitation, instruction/exposition, discussion and dialogue (p. 110).

In this study, “teacher talk” in the classroom was integral to selecting a play for study. In **Case Study 3, The Threepenny Opera**, a key type of talk between teachers and students was “instructional”. One student stated, “We were *told* by our teacher we were going to see it because we *needed* to see it for our studies. The school *tells* us throughout the year which productions we need to see to successfully complete the exam so we don’t get to choose” (Student focus group interview, CS3, July 2010 – author’s italics). Other forms of talk that
teachers and students engaged in with regard to choosing a play were identifiable as “discussion” (Alexander, 2008). In Case Study 1, One Hundred, students stated that they had a class discussion then a vote in class about which play they would see. However, the final choice of play to see was highly influenced by their teacher, Melissa, who told the students she “knew the director” and that there would be a DVD recording of the performance which would enable them to revisit the play after seeing it (Student focus group interview, CS1, March 2010).

In Case Study 2, Fatboy, the talk suggested a combination of discussion and dialogue. When asked if the students had chosen the play, their teacher Kate replied, “I talked to them about two possible performances for them to go and see, Fatboy or One Hundred”. After examining the plays on the Playlists, she went and spoke to her students about the plays and then said, “Here are two plays. My suggestion would be to go and see Fatboy but…it is miles away. And they said, ‘Oh, we’ve got to go see that play! We don’t care how far we have to travel!’” Individual students indicated that Kate had “talked through [the plays] and she advised which ones she was interested in” but then he said, “We decided” (Student interview, Sam, March, 2010). Sam’s comments suggest that the drama class considered Kate’s recommendation to be worthwhile and authoritative.

The data suggest that “teacher talk” and student response to that talk is impacted by what has been identified in this study as “high-stakes assessment”. The relationship between selecting a play for study, the value students placed on teacher talk, and the implications of assessment were clearly indicated when speaking with students about choosing a play for analysis. Students across Case Studies 1, 2 and 3 stated that they “valued” what their teachers told them because their teacher “knew” what they were talking about. They indicated that the teacher’s choice would result in the performance being “helpful” for assessment, and students felt confident that their teacher had sufficient “knowledge” to guide them towards making the right choice (Student focus groups, Case Studies 1, 2 and 3, 2010). In Case Study 4, Andrew’s choice was more aligned with the fact that Shakespeare’s R&J was being performed locally. It transpired that this was an important choice factor for a regional school.
4. 4. 2. Constructing learners - ‘My students’, ‘Our kids’

These kids...
The kinds of students that we tend to have here...
They’re very different from my class last year...
If all my kids could have seen...
‘We’ absolutely loved...
This group of kids...
I think it’s good for our kids...
(Teacher interviews from Case Studies 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Extract from field notes 4

There are complex relationships at play in individual classrooms. The above discussion on “teacher talk” indicates that students trusted what their teacher said and they valued their teacher’s subject matter knowledge. That teachers and students talk as they do within generic constraints of space, time and power, and in response to the complex micro-culture of the classroom arguably results in such valuing and trust (Alexander, 2008) However, the data indicated that how teachers construct and come to know their students is also significant. Teachers referring to young people as “my students” and “our kids” is not an unusual practice in educational contexts, but it suggests that the impact of knowing and of understanding is crucial to enacting the curriculum (Churchill et al, 2013).

In the classroom shared meanings are constantly being constructed and they provide rich ways to navigate learning. Hamilton (1999) suggests that teachers’ understanding of their students is determined by the way they “frame” them. This means teachers consider their students within the particularities of school culture, the social and subject specific contexts in which they work, and how best to account for these in their teaching, in the classroom, in the broader school, and at any given time in their interactions with students. Alexander (2008) believes that each classroom is a “micro-culture”. He says, “[teacher and student] transactions take forms that in part are shaped by the inherited collective consciousness of “being at school” and in part are created out of each lesson’s unique meeting of personalities and circumstances” (p. 97). Mason (2002) states that the discipline of “noticing” is critical to teacher / learner relationships. “They observe closely and notice systematically allowing affirmation, or questions that can disrupt their theorizing and ideas about their students and thus their teaching” (p. 239). Classrooms are also communities of practice. In classrooms
teachers and students are immersed in what Wenger (1998) calls the crucial characteristics of “mutual engagement, joint enterprise [and]…shared repertoire ” that can enable them to build and sustain a unique community of practice (p. 73). These scholars provide insight into the complex interplay in the classroom, at the theatre, and ways in which teachers come to “know” their students. Talk is a key factor in that interplay. The following discussion draws on the data to examine ways of “knowing” students in order to consider how such knowing contributes to “teacher talk” and leads to choosing a play to study for the purposes of performance analysis.

In Case Study 1, Melissa, chose a play based on knowing her students’ previous and current experiences of theatre. She felt that as a group, her students’ experiences of theatre were “too narrow” and had mainly been in musical theatre. She chose One Hundred because she wanted to “widen them up a bit more so that they appreciate other styles of theatre as well” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March 2010). In Case Study 2, Kate referenced the broader school culture. She stated, “The kind of students that we tend to have here at the school can kind of grasp the concept [of non-naturalism] (author’s italics)” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March 2010).24 Kate commented on the specific group dynamic or “micro-culture” (Alexander, 2008) that had developed within the senior drama cohort for that year. “They’re really supportive of each other as a group…there is always a sense of discussion between them and everyone’s sharing opinions and they kind of have this deep learning experience. They’re quite different from my class last year where there wasn’t that sense of…peer support”. Alexander’s (2008) notion that each classroom offers up a “unique meeting of personalities and circumstances” seems very present in these two case studies (p. 97). It suggests that teachers’ relationship with and knowledge of a particular class demands the selection of a play that reflects the class as the teacher has come to know them.

In Case Study 3, the teacher, Jess, stated, “This group of kids needed to do a SAC25 early so that at the first Parent-Teacher interview I can say to their parents, ‘These are the steps that

24The teacher had recently moved to this school from another government school in the inner Eastern suburbs of Melbourne
25SAC – School Assessed Coursework. Contributes to the students’ final external assessment grade or tertiary ranking
they are not taking”’ (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). Jess chose a play that was programmed early in Term One of the school year in order for students to be assessed, to indicate progress in student learning, and to inform parents.

**Case Study 4.** *Shakespeare’s R&J,* provided a counterpoint to the first three cases. Case Study 4 indicated that the teacher and students had limited opportunities for developing any deep knowledge of one another. Andrew was an exchange teacher from Canada, working in a regional Victorian secondary school with a new curriculum. The class cohort was a combination of both Year 11 and 12 students studying both Units 1 and 3 Drama. Drama classes at this regional school were taken outside the school’s boundaries nearby in a shared community arts space. In the arts space, one multi-purpose room was provided for the school to teach drama. While there were some echoes of ‘reciprocity’ and ‘knowing’ between students and teacher that occurred in other case studies, this case study indicated a new and, as it transpired, a very temporary relationship. The potential impact of these circumstances will be explored more fully later in this thesis.

4. 4. 3. **Teacher identity, personal aesthetic and artistic practice**

Teacher identity refers to how a teacher understands and constructs their teacher self. Connell, (1985) states that, “The complex interaction of what teachers do and the conditions under which they do it form an integral part of who teachers are – their identities” (in Churchill et al, 2013, p. 58). In this study, two aspects of teacher identity emerged as being important; a teacher’s personal aesthetic, and a teacher’s sense of themselves as an artist.

Personal aesthetic in this study refers to a teacher’s preferred interpretations and representations of theatrical form or style. Concepts of the aesthetic have been discussed in detail in this thesis. Additionally Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson describe the aesthetic encounter as “an interaction between the viewer, the work of art, and the artist”. They argue that to this encounter, the viewer brings their skills in aesthetic appreciation, ones that are more or less developed according to the viewer’s “training and previous viewing

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26VCE Drama has 4 Units of work. The Playlist is designed for Unit 3 and students studying Unit 1 have different learning outcomes and assessment tasks
experience” (in Lachapelle et al, 2003, pp. 78-79). I argue that a teacher’s personal aesthetic is one developed from a series of previously apprehended theatrical experiences, and their own creative practice. The following discussion offers some insight into teachers’ personal aesthetic and consider this in relation to “teacher talk”, ways of knowing students and choosing a play for the purposes of teaching performance analysis.

In Case Study 1, Melissa indicated that while her students enjoyed musical theatre she personally didn’t. She stated, “It frustrates me, I don’t like musical theatre. I really annoys me and I know that’s my own prejudice, but they adore it” (Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). Melissa stated that she “loved” the work of the Artistic Director from Machinations Theatre Ensemble. Melissa loved the way the AD “used chorus and her way of working as an ensemble (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). Melissa’s history of seeing all of Machinations Theatre Ensemble productions since 2007 resulted in a growing friendship with the Artistic Director, and an invitation to the AD to visit the school as an artist-in-residence. “When I was working with the Year 12 Theatre Studies students on Jean Anouilh’s Antigone last year (2009)...I had [AD] come in as an artist-in-residence and have her actually work with them on creating their sense of chorus and working with synchronized movement” (Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). “Her work is so multi-layered…I like that…I love visual theatre, I find it really evocative” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). Such statements clearly indicate that Melissa’s personal aesthetic impacts both choosing a play for her students and also hints at the type of creative and embodied practice she introduces her students to.

In relation to the study, teachers’ personal preferences included theatre companies, playwrights, practitioners and the experiences teachers believed these offered them and their students. In Case Study 3, Jess stated that The Threepenny Opera was her choice because she “liked Brecht” (Teacher interview, CS3, July 2010). Her colleague, Simone, observed that she specifically chose that production in order to teach performance analysis because it was a “good” play. For Simone this meant, “A play I know really well and think is going to have guts to it”. Simone enjoyed the fact that with The Threepenny Opera the students were going to study a text of “quality” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, August, 2010). In Case Study 2, Kate, commented very particularly on her interest in Ignite Theatre, a local theatre
company in Melbourne that produced experimental work by post-modern practitioners such as Jerzy Grotowski and Antonin Artaud\(^\text{27}\). She stated, “[I love] Olivia Allen’s [the Artistic Director] pieces of theatre...I’ve seen *Jet of Blood* by her Ignite Theatre and *A Dream Play*’ and the way that those plays unfolded and the characters and the physicality…” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010).

Teacher’s knowledge and understanding of contemporary theatre practice also emerged as influential in choosing a play. Reason (2010) highlights the value and importance of teachers feeling “confident in dealing directly with theatre as art” (p. 14). He suggests that such confidence is created through ongoing exposure to art and appropriate training. Kempe (2009) suggests that a teacher’s subject knowledge includes “an understanding of varying theatrical forms, demonstrated through knowledge of plays, practitioners, and methods for interrogating and realizing texts” (p. 413). Donelan and Sallis (2014) comment on the value and importance of a school culture where teachers have “an awareness and appreciation of theatre” (in O’Toole et al, Ch. 8. p. 80).

Some teachers’ knowledge of theatre was continually being developed through professional learning. In **Case Study 3**, Jess commented she felt “lucky” because her school usually paid for theatre tickets as “professional development” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). In **Case Study 1**, Melissa stated that her school paid for her to “go to the MTC each year”\(^\text{28}\) (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). Melissa believed that regularly attending theatre “fed her own imagination”, was “stimulating” and “educational” and she tried to go to “as much theatre as possible” in order to widen her own “repertoire”. Such engagement suggests there is a direct correlation between theatre knowledge, how this is communicated to students through teacher-talk, and choosing a play for teaching performance analysis to students.

\(^{27}\) Jerzy Grotowski, Polish theatre practitioner and Antonin Artaud, French experimental theatre practitioner

\(^{28}\) MTC – Melbourne Theatre Company, Victoria’s state theatre company.
4. 4. 4. The ‘artist-teacher’

Thornton (2005) describes an artist-teacher as “a person who both makes and teaches art” (p. 167). My personal arts practice, knowledge of the education and industry sectors, and pre-service education teaching across several years indicate that senior secondary Drama and Theatre Studies often have backgrounds or roles as performers and artists that run either parallel to their teaching, or have preceded their teaching. Participating teachers all considered themselves “artists” in some capacity, either within or beyond their drama teaching practice. Most commonly, participant teachers felt their role as directors and producers of large-scale school productions clearly defined them as “artist-teachers”.

In Case Study 2, Kate, was a practicing independent artist, an experimental dancer who regularly choreographed and performed. Her online profile described this practice as follows:

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EXPLODE, an ongoing performance night of improvised theatre that provides a platform for artists to develop and showcase their work. [Kate] has been developing her own improvised solo work that combines dance and physical theatre with storytelling.
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During the data collection period for this study Kate was presenting EXPLODE at Dance House in Carlton while teaching drama full time in her school. Thornton (2005) states the dual or merged role of artist-teacher is a dedication to “both activities”. Further he describes the artist-teacher as one whose “motivations and convictions are based upon their art practice and exposure to the culture of art [drama]” (pp. 167-168). It was noteworthy that Kate invited and encouraged her students to see her perform at Dance House. One of Kate’s students, Tom, commented he found her performance “really good”. Kate’s response was, “Yeah, it puts us on a level playing field”. (Field-notes, 23 March, 2010). The term “level playing field” suggests Kate saw similarities between her own artistic practice and that of her students, acknowledging the critical aspect of making in drama education.

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29 Dance House is a not-for-profit Melbourne venue and arts organisation that focuses on contemporary dance, offering a range of workshops, programs and performances throughout the year.
Kate’s practice as an artist impacted on selecting a play for study in a number of key ways. Firstly, the artistry and knowledge she brought to teaching VCE Drama from her own practice. Secondly, her personal artistic practice, with its focus on physicality and non-conventional work correlated with the desire to give her students access “something that’s more gritty and real and gutsy”, more “physical, grotesque and exaggerated”, “more absurd” and more “symbolic” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March 2010).

In other case studies, teachers had strong backgrounds in performance. In Case Study 3, teachers, Jess and Simone were both actors. Jess was a semi-professional musical theatre performer and Simone had been a professional actor with many years’ experience, including performing with such revered Melbourne theatre companies as Anthill. The interview data revealed they both prided themselves on the directorial work they did in their school and Jess acknowledged that their school was a “big production” school. Both teachers directed a minimum of two major school productions per year as well producing performance work with Theatre Studies and International Baccalaureate students in their roles as senior drama teachers. Jess and Simone’s artistic practice clearly impacted on choosing a play for their students to study. This was strongly implied by their discussion of “quality” work. Jess and Simone spoke specifically about how a selected play could offer a “quality” experience and serve the “big production” processes they and the students engaged with in their school. Malthouse Theatre was considered to be a company that offered students performances of “quality” and performances that used “really good production values”, ones that enabled students to “understand that the theatrical world is more than [acting]” (Teacher interviews, Jess and Simone, CS3, July, 2010). In their opinion, selecting The Threepenny Opera offered such “quality”.

In Case Study 4, Andrew identified as both a teacher and an amateur actor in his home country of Canada, with an emphasis on “performing and teaching scripted works” including classics and Canadian playwrights (Andrew, Teacher interview, CS4, May, 2010). Andrew stated that his choice of play was due to it being performed locally, but was also influenced

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by its relationship to a traditional Shakespearean text, *Romeo and Juliet*, and something he felt was familiar.

Kempe (2009) argues that personal aesthetic is part of a teacher’s construction of their identity as a drama educator. The data suggests that a teacher’s sense of “self” as an artist, their ongoing connection to particular theatre companies, and their knowledge of contemporary theatre are all highly influential factors in selecting a play for performance analysis. Such choices and their influences cannot but have an impact on enacting the curriculum and pedagogy as “the agency that connects teaching with learning” (Churchill et al, 2011).

4. 4. 5. Connecting the choice of play to the broader VCE curriculum

*The Playlist* obviously informs and is a basis for them making critical response, which is also in the curriculum, but it’s in the curriculum again to support their activity as makers and participants in Drama or Theatre Studies (Interview, Manager, KLA The Arts, February, 2010).

The following section of the chapter discusses how choosing a play for analysis relates to the broader VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula at senior secondary level. It discusses how choosing a play to teach performance analysis is also carefully considered by some teachers with regard to where it may intersect with students’ own creative work. The literature review and previous discussion indicate that making and seeing theatre are interrelated and central to drama education and drama curriculum.

In Case Study 1, Melissa clearly related the choice of play to the other areas of the coursework that her students were undertaking. She stated “[Seeing the performance of *One Hundred*] gives the kids lots of ideas while they’re working on their own ensembles…how are they supposed to create their own solos and their own ensembles when they haven’t got enough experience?”31 (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010).

31 In VCE Drama Unit 3, students devise a short ensemble performance and in Unit 4 they create a devised solo performance.
In Case Study 2, Kate stated that she always considered the “through line” between what her class will be working on in their ensemble performances and the choice of play for them to analyse. She explained that her students had explored “the grotesque” in their performance work and then stated, “They really understood how that [the grotesque] could be a way to look at some fairly narky, deep issues in the world. So when Fatboy appeared on the Playlist [for Drama]…I wasn’t really sure what performance style it was going to be but I could tell it was going to be about revolting characters” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010). Kate actively sought out and saw a strong connection between the written curriculum, the enacted curriculum and the experienced curriculum. She believed that Fatboy would have relevant “parallels” with the elements of the Theatre of Cruelty style the students were exploring (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010).

In Case Study 3, The Threepenny Opera, there were complementary understandings between the two drama teachers of the relationship of live theatre to the requirements of the written curriculum. The Theatre Studies curriculum requires students to explore a range of theatrical styles across pre-modern and modern theatre. In the contexts of Theatre Studies, The Threepenny Opera sits within the context of modern theatre (Post 1880 in the Study Design that influences this research) and students are required to study production areas – acting, directing, stage management, publicity and a range of design areas. Further, in Unit 4, students focus particularly on the actor in performance. The Head of Drama, Simone, was familiar with the script and predicted, “The Threepenny Opera…might be good for [Unit 4] Actor in Performance because of the Macheath character” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, July 2010). Her colleague, Jess, stated that plays on the Playlists that present clear “theatrical styles” were important because they gave her students “a way in” to understanding theatrical styles. She felt strongly that Theatre Studies students needed to “see” theatrical styles. “If a show is described as ‘eclectic’ it’s rather difficult for students to grapple with…if you ask students what the features of theatrical styles are in The Threepenny Opera they can sit down and they can list them…there’s so much!” Further, Jess stated that plays with “really good production values” were important for the students’ own production work as required by the written curriculum, and the production of The Threepenny Opera offered that experience. (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010).
In Case Study 4, Andrew directly commented on the choice of play enabling students to discuss the “non-naturalism”. Upon her return to the school in term four of 2010, Janelle, emphasized that a component of her “usual” approach to choosing a play incorporated the factor that the students can actually “use those elements within their own performance” (Andrew, Teacher interview, CS4, October, 2010). This case study offered a powerful counterpoint to the other cases. A teacher experiencing a new curriculum and a teacher suddenly returning of overseas generated tensions and revealed that disruption to the timeline and process of approaching performance impacted significantly.

Data indicated that the desire by teachers to relate the play for analysis to students’ broader studies in Drama or Theatre Studies, reflects a key intention within the curriculum. The VCAA’s focuses on generating Playlists of live theatre performance is one that allows students, “To see models and be exposed to productions [and] theatre styles beyond the scope of their school experience. [Live theatre performance] is in the curriculum to support their activity as makers and participants in Drama or Theatre Studies” (Manager, KLA The Arts, interview, February, 2010). The relationship between the stated intentions of the written curriculum, the construction of the Playlists and how teachers enact the curriculum, however, is problematic. Chapters Five and Six explore pedagogies for teaching performance analysis that consider this problem.

4.4.6. Practicality as both limiting and liberating

It’s hard to get up to Melbourne, most [shows] are in Melbourne, for the good stuff and Malthouse is probably the only one that does offer [teacher previews]...but I usually try and choose ones that are in Melbourne in order to give the kids that experience of extra culture (Returning Teacher interview, CS4, Shakespeare’s R&J, October, 2010).

Choosing plays for the purpose of performance analysis has revealed itself to be a complex and multi-layered process. Teachers believe that “their” students have particular learning needs and preferences. Teachers believe that a play’s potential to relate to broader curriculum requirements is important, that their own personal aesthetic, preference and in some cases, artistic practice will often impact choosing a play. However, even within such complexity choosing a play may also become an exercise in practicality.
The VCAA’s remit is to ensure that text lists reflect accessibility in terms of “both the physical and geographical sense for touring [and] ticket prices (interview Manager KLA, The Arts, March, 2010). Ewing (in O’Toole et al, 2014) identifies that teachers found “logistical issues including cost, increasing organizational and bureaucratic demands associated with excursions [and] distance” were barriers to attending particular theatre performances (p. 89). Sinclair (in O’Toole et al, 2014) discusses the barriers to attendance in detail. She identifies that confidence, knowledge, access, and capacity to purchase tickets were significant to enabling attendance (pp. 33-44). While Sinclair presents these as barriers to young people’s attendance, the data in this study suggest there are other barriers, ones that relate to the structures and contexts in which teachers enact the curriculum.

As outlined earlier in this thesis, a key requirement of a play being selected to the Playlists is that the performance season falls within a teaching term or semester. Plays that are being performed from February to late-May in Semester One and late June to mid-September in Semester Two are a key part of the selection process. The VCAA provides this advice to theatre companies on the submission documents. Several teachers talked about “timing” as being highly influential with regard to choosing a play, both the timing of the productions on the Playlists themselves, the timing requirements dictated at school level, and assessment.

In Case Study 3, the production season of The Threepenny Opera ran parallel to the participant school’s senior examinations and assessment period and parallel to the staging of a major middle school musical. Jess commented that getting students “out of school” during the day was highly problematic. She said, “In an ideal world I would like to take the students [during the day] but I would struggle to get Year 12s out of class” so only evenings were an option (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010).

In Case Study 4, timing was also problematic. Teacher, Janelle commented “It’s hard to find a good time to go...trying to get away from school and leaving extras...especially for us being in [regional Victoria] (Janelle, Returning Teacher interview, CS4, October, 2010). There was tension for Janelle in terms of accessing a performance and finding the right time, and it was often dependent on the fact that, “A lot of the kids can’t make it [to the theatre] after school because of work and things like that...that’s why we try and do it in school
time”. The requirements by the VCAA that there must be one touring show on each Playlist seeks to alleviate such problems for regional schools, but if the touring show is the only option then effectively there is only one choice.

In Case Study 2, an inner urban school travelling south of the CBD to see a play was considered to be “miles away”. However, rather than being onerous it became “an adventure” for the teacher and the students. Kate stated that when she informed her students where the play was being performed, the students replied that they had to see the play and “didn’t care” how far they had to travel (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010). In this instance the anticipation around the play and the experience it potentially offered, outweighed what might normally be considered a barrier or a limitation.

Costs associated with attending theatre performances emerged as having an impact on choosing a play for study. In Case Study 4, returning teacher, Janelle, stated she was limited to what “could be afforded” or “what the students can afford themselves”. The cost of tickets and travel to see Shakespeare’s R&J was $30.00 per student and so, “It does limit you in that respect” (Janelle, Returning Teacher interview, CS4, May, 2010).

In Case Study 2, Kate stated that she must keep theatre visits to “a minimum” because students are “doing it out of their own pocket” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010). In both these case studies, students saw only one production on the relevant Playlist and saw it only once due to cost.

In Case Studies 1 and 3, financial circumstances differed considerably from the other case studies. Jess commented that, “The Year 12s see at least two, sometimes three. Usually we aim for three [plays] in Unit 3 and just two in Unit 4, just because of time” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). In Case Study 1, Melissa stated, “I’m taking [the students] to quite a few actually…I’m taking them to One Hundred, Silence, Ruby Moon and to Fatboy” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). In total her students saw four productions from the Drama Playlist for 2010. While each teacher generally chose one play as the main focus for performance analysis in the relevant unit of study, other plays seen by students were considered powerful “options” as theatrical experiences, being relative to their own
making and creating and also as an option for writing about in the end-of-year written exam. Jess stated, “The stronger kids will aim to have two plays prepared for [each of] Questions 2 and 3 in the [Theatre Studies] exam” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010).

Data revealed that an unusual but significant impact on choice was the risk of a production being cancelled or “dropping off” the Playlists. In 2009, the year prior to this research study, the Theatre Studies Unit 4 Playlist suffered two cancelled shows, an unplanned and unpredictable outcome. Simone commented specifically about this. “I sometimes worry about…cancellations. [My colleague] who had the Year 12 class last year was really stressed when two productions were cancelled” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, July 2010). Such incidents are beyond the control of the VCAA but they highlight uncertainties that exist in the broader theatre ecology and the mutual reliance of the stakeholders in generating the Playlists.

Teachers also indicated that the Playlists were inconsistent with regard to quality. Simone stated, “You can’t predict quality and some productions get up because they are touring and then you see them and they are absolutely rubbish. Other productions get picked but for the wrong unit and would suit Unit 3 but are in Unit 4. I think a limitation of [the Playlist] is the timing and the quality” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, August 2010). Previous discussion in this chapter outline the challenges faced by the Advisory Panel in applying criteria, and in selecting plays that will be of “dramatic merit”, meet community standards, and provide access. As March (1982) indicates, in making choices “maximizing certainty” isn’t always possible.

What constitutes a “quality” play is subjective. In this study it is determined by such factors as a teacher’s personal aesthetic and taste, their knowledge of theatre styles and playwrights, and the expectations they hold of particular playwrights and also of theatre companies. In Case Study 3, Simone commented that while the script of The Threepenny Opera by Bertolt Brecht was a quality script. She found the quality of the actual production to be less than satisfying and the “re-contextualizing” of The Threepenny Opera was “trying too hard to get kids engaged” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, August, 2010). Conversely, her colleague Jess felt that The Threepenny Opera was a quality production. “I enjoyed it because I like
Brecht and I like Michael Kantor [director] and I think it was a good interpretation” (Teachers interview, CS3, July, 2010).

In Case Study 1, Melissa’s knowledge of Machinations Theatre Ensemble, and her personal preference for physical theatre contributed to her belief that One Hundred would be a “quality” work. She admitted she was initially “disappointed” because it deviated from her “expectations” and her experiences of previous work, but admitted that “repeated viewings” shifted that perception (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). Such data suggests repeated viewings of a work enable deeper understanding and that repeated viewings can also shift opinion. How might repeated viewings impact students’ capacity to respond in the exam? How might repeated viewings impact written curriculum?

4. 4. 7. Choosing the “right” play

It’s hard to know which play to choose. Will it be the right one? (Kate, Teacher interview, CS1, One Hundred, March, 2010).

The comment above goes to the heart of the following discussion, one that will focus on the impacts of assessment on choosing a play. Comber and Nixon (2009) claim that it is almost impossible to discuss education “without the insistence on reporting, standardized curriculum and assessments metrics” (p. 219). As has been discussed in detail in the Introduction and Literature Review, the VCE as a senior secondary school qualification incorporates high-stakes assessment, an assessment process that teachers believe places considerable pressure on them and on students to “get it right”.

This study suggests that high-stakes assessment has a constant “presence” and creates a pressurized environment when choosing a play for study. Among the participant teachers there was a perceived requirement to choose the “right” play in order to be able to prepare students for the end-of-year exam. In Case Study 3, Jess stated, “The exams are where the big marks are so we constantly reference the exam. Almost everything we teach, the exam comes into it” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2020). Her colleague Simone stated, “You are working towards that exam whether you like it or nor…I always call the VCE a hurdle’s race…You’re just jumping over hurdles to get to the end” (Simone, Teacher
In Case Study 4, returning teacher Janelle stated that the pressure of a written examination for Drama was a very difficult process for her students. “I don’t know about other schools…but our kids tend to go quite badly and this is in the last eight years that I’ve taught here. The written exam is probably their worst result for the year” (Janelle, Returning Teacher interview, CS4, October, 2010).

In Case Study 1, Melissa stated that the exam completely “dominates” her thinking around choosing a play because “you don’t know what’s going to be on the exam” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). Part of Melissa’s choice was in response to Machinations Theatre Ensemble creating a DVD of the production. This enabled the students to “see” the play repeatedly before the exam. Having a DVD, according to Melissa, was “fantastic” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010).

Selecting the “right” play suggests there might be a right response. Performance studies theorist Wilmar Sauter (2000) states that the development of performance analysis theories allows for notions of a “true” or “near truthful” interpretation to be considered (p. 25). In Case Study 2, Kate believed there was a “true” or “right” response to a performance at least, she believed that “when [students] get to the exam and the VCAA examiners read their work” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010). In Case Study 3 Jess stated that from past experience choosing the right play was about allaying the worries that students associate with the exam. Jess commented that her students worried “very much” about the performance they see, the performance the assessors see and how this converges in the exam. She stated that this worry manifested in some students saying, “Well, I saw something but, what happens if the examiners don’t see it and I put it in my exam and then they didn’t see it?” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010).

In Case Study 1 Melissa stated that because theatre is “three dimensional” students and teachers are not only analysing the acting but “you’re also analysing the music, the set, the props and the costumes. There is so much to analyse because it is three-dimensional”. For her the “multi-layering” means there is the risk of “missing things” when seeing the performance only once (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010).
In Case Study 3, one student expressed her experience of theatre performance and its relationship to assessment as follows:

If you look at a play it’s a text on two levels, the action and the words. You are only allowed to see half of its meaning once and so half the meaning comes from the direction and action you see and the other half from the dialogue that’s been written in the script. So, you’re basically, you know, you’re trying to write an [assessment] on something that you’ve only got fifty percent of the information on at your disposal (Hermia, focus group, CS3, July, 2010).

For some teachers and students, the data indicates that selecting a play to study for performance analysis was impacted by trying to predict who will assess the analysis and how that assessor may have experienced and understood the performance. In Case Study 2 Kate expressed this impact as, “I’m so fearful that if my kids put something on that exam that doesn’t make sense to a particular examiner who happens to be marking that and if they lost marks because of that…yeah. I feel this overwhelming sense of responsibility there. You don’t know who’s going to mark it” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010). Kate said she felt “bound” by the examination process and “worried” that the choices of plays might send her students down “the wrong track”. She was deeply interested in the processes of marking the written exam. She stated that she had met several assessors who had told her, “Oh, we don’t really know more than anything that you guys do as teachers”. She stated, “I’m sure there’s something more that I can learn about assessment aside from being an assessor myself” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010).

VCAA Examiners’ Report for each of the Drama and Theatre Studies Written Exams, published annually, aim to provide advice to teachers and students from the Chief Assessor as to what constitutes a high scoring, a mid-range and a low scoring response. Within the scope of this study, the 2009 Examiners’ report was produced to act as a guide to teachers as they approached the written exams for 2010. Within that report examples of high achieving responses in 2009 included descriptors such as; thorough, insightful, high level of, clear, perceptive, pertinent, accurate, appropriate, and specific. Low scoring responses were described as; limited, confused, had little understanding, incorrect, and scant, (VCAA, Drama and Theatre Studies Examiners Reports for 2010). These descriptions are quite
generalized and don’t necessarily assist teachers and students in understanding how the assessment process occurs and how examinations are marked. For the first time in 2011 the Theatre Studies Examiners’ Report incorporated a sample of a high-scoring response to illustrate the meaning of “high-scoring. Here the data offers insight with regard to what aspects of the assessment process are made public, what remains confidential, how those decisions are made and how such information may impact pedagogy.

CONCLUDING REMARKS
This chapter has discussed the Playlist selection process identifying that it occurs within a transitional space whereby what is being selected is neither written curriculum nor enacted curriculum. The Panel’s role has been problematized in relation to the research questions and such problematizing examined how the Panel needed to determine what each theatrical treatment suggests and assess it against the VCAA Playlists selection criteria. The chapter identified that the Panel’s annual de-brief session is considered “an important curriculum review” by the curriculum authority. Its informality, however, raises questions about how such an informal process responds to and impacts upon the selection process, how Panel actions impact enacted and experienced curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

For teachers and students, the data indicates that choosing a play to study and analyse is motivated by a series of factors such as construction of teacher identity, personal aesthetic and an understanding of what constitutes a “quality” production. Further, teachers’ choices respond to their understanding and construction of their students as learners, and in response to the unique micro culture of their classrooms, broader school contexts, school timelines, opportunity, and affordability. Significantly, assessment was a dominant consideration when choosing a play. Teachers and students sought to choose “the right” play in order to meet assessment requirements.
CHAPTER FIVE:
Pedagogies of performance analysis – enacting and experiencing the curriculum

Perhaps we need to think of the experience of a performance as involving a duality of perception. At one level invested engagement with the thing in front of us (living it, feeling it experiencing it) and at the same time reflective consciousness of this very investment. There exists a kind of slippage between modes of perception, with a sophisticated and engaged spectator able to maintain mutually contradictory levels of belief and disbelief (Reason, 2010, p. 20).

5.1. Introduction
Chapter Five considers the narrative already presented around choosing a play and develops that narrative through an examination of pedagogies for preparing students to see a live theatre performance, and to analyse it. The chapter centrally positions teachers as they enact the written curriculum, and explores what the data indicated with regard to students’ experiences of the curriculum. Within the systemic timeline that this narrative follows, the discussion in this chapter begins with the teaching that occurs after selecting a play, to the point where students and teachers leave the theatre. The quote from Reason that begins this chapter identifies the complexities that exist for students when they attend theatre. As the chapter will examine, students are required to be an “engaged spectator”, maintain a “reflective consciousness”, and do so within certain curriculum frames and timelines.

The data identified four significant stages in teaching performance analysis in the VCE: The pre-performance stage — preparing to see the play; the in-theatre stage – experiencing the performance; the post-performance stage – remembering and analysing the performance and the examination stage – re-remembering for the end-of-year examination. I begin by discussing the discursive language of the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curriculum in order to position it within the four identified stages of pedagogy.

5.2. VCE Curriculum – discursive language as a frame for analysis
As several scholars argue, the ephemerality of theatre demands preparation. Prendergast (2004) believes that preparation and its accompanying talk “assists students in acquiring the critical skills to discriminate in selecting and responding to performance with taste and
judgement” (p. 48). Grady (2000) suggests that “students should be given a range of interpretative tools and creative opportunities as a way to better understand the connection between making and responding” (p. 114).

While the data reveals these are indeed approaches to teaching performance analysis, VCE Drama and Theatre Studies Study Designs introduce a unique discursive language for analysing live theatre performance. This language has significant impact on enacted and experienced curriculum. The Theatre Studies Key Knowledge and Key Skills state that students will have “an understanding/use of appropriate theatrical language, terminology and expressions”, and similarly Drama students will engage with “the language of drama associated with performance styles, traditions, and practitioners from contemporary and/or cultural traditions relevant to non-naturalistic performance” (VCAA, Drama Study, 2007-2013, pp. 27-29). All four teachers in this study recognised that in preparing students to see theatre, teaching took place in the absence of the live performance and such teaching needed to scaffold students’ capacity to remember, including what to look for and what to remember when they were in the theatre and experiencing the performance.

In this study the discursive language of VCE Drama and Theatre Studies provided a powerful frame for teaching performance analysis. Chapter Two, the Literature Review, outlined theatrical languages as they have evolved through reception theories and semiotic concepts of signs, signifiers and the signified. The review noted that within these fields of inquiry it is understood that audiences make meaning, not from the words on a page, but from what they see, hear and feel during the lived experience of the performance. For example, signifiers such as a colour or sound become meaningful when they signify something to an audience member. For teachers and students attending theatre, “signifiers” are carefully framed by curriculum terminology – dramatic elements, stagecraft areas, theatre conventions and performance styles. Theatrical signifiers need to be initially understood by students, teachers (and assessors) and then given meaning, or be “signified” in the performance through the lens of that language. In semiotic theory “a signifier” in live performance may be “meaningful sounds or marks” such as a heartbeat, a still moment, a red sash (Elam, 1980, p. 1). In the language of VCE Drama the “meaningful sounds or marks” that Elam discusses could be understood to mean one or more of the following; “rhythm”,
“stillness and silence”, or “symbol”. The written curriculum states that students need to use Drama or Theatre Studies terminology in their analysis. Teachers need to understand the terminology, and also to consider how it is present and interpreted in the theatre - what it looks, sounds and feels like in a live performance. Interpretations and understandings of the discursive languages of VCE Drama and Theatre Studies are central to teaching performance analysis.

Two examples emerged to illustrate the significance of accurately understanding and applying the discursive language for performance analysis. In Case Study 3, Simone stated, “Once we have grounded ourselves in the language of the Outcome and taught that this is what the students need to be able to understand…once you’ve covered that then you can…start to be a bit more exploratory” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010).

A second example identifies how the presence or absence of particular terms can generate uncertainty. In Case Study 2, Kate was concerned about accuracy in applying the language. In particular she was concerned about using the term ‘pastiche’ - a theatrical term she and the class decided described the theatrical style of the production of Fatboy. Kate said she “couldn’t find it anywhere in the curriculum documents or anywhere on the VCAA sites and wondered if it was a term that was appropriate to use during an exam situation” (Reflective journal, CS2, March, 2010).

The first example presented illustrates that for some teachers, addressing the discursive language of the VCE is critical, and any broader exploration of the performance is subservient to that. In the second example, the data suggests that terms not written or prescribed in the written curriculum and/or glossary is concerning for some teachers, as is who might assess student responses, how an assessor may have understood the play, how an assessor will apply the terminology, and whether it will be consistent with the teachers’ and students’ understanding.
5.3. Pre-performance - preparation and prediction

In this study I define pre-performance pedagogies as those that occur prior to seeing the performance. Further I have determined from analysis of the data that teachers engage in two aspects of pre-performance pedagogies – the “preparative” and the “predictive”. Observation revealed busy and complex classroom environments where teachers and students engaged with a range of tasks to build a rich context for the theatre performance they were going to see. In all four case studies, talk dominated.

Chapter Four discussed “teacher talk”, revealing its influence on how teachers and students made decisions with regard to which play to see and why. The data revealed that “teacher talk” is also vital to pedagogies of pre-performance. As Alexander (2008) contends, “Talk vitally mediates the cognitive and cultural spaces between adult and child, among children themselves, between teacher and learner, between society and the individual, between what the child knows and understands and what he or she has yet to know and understand” (p. 92). Significantly, in the pre-performance context, talk had a vital role in mediating across space, place and time, between the classroom, the theatre and what was yet to be experienced.

Table 12 presented below outlines the types of preparative and predictive teaching strategies observed in practice across the four case studies prior to seeing the performance. Not all teachers used all strategies and in some instances students received information in the form of handouts that wasn’t explicitly taught. The bolded questions that head each column are those posed by teachers in response to the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula. The strategies used encapsulate what were revealed to be the key factors in the pre-performance context; not only ‘what’ teachers taught, but ‘why’ they do.
## Table 12

What did such strategies look and sound like in the four different classrooms that comprise this study? While the confidence, experience and skill level of each teacher differed – as Chapter Four has outlined – all teachers introduced the play through the lens of assessment. Teachers considered what their students already knew and then considered what students “needed to know” in order to use appropriate terminology in their written response to the assessment task. Teachers in the three of the four case studies specifically stated that the assessment requirements were “really, really important”, that “these are things you are going to have to look through” and students were given “a list of things” to go through” so they “knew what to look for when they were sitting in there” (from Teacher interviews, CS2,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREPARATATIVE</th>
<th>Predictive</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What do you already know?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>What do you need to know?</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>How will you learn to know it?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What do you imagine?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Why do you imagine it?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enacting the Written Curriculum: Handouts&lt;br&gt;- Lists of assessment criteria for performance analysis outcomes&lt;br&gt;- Lists of VCE theatrical conventions, dramatic elements and stagecraft areas</td>
<td>Enacting the Written Curriculum: Embodied Learning&lt;br&gt;- Applying the discursive language and terminology in a ‘theatre styles’ workshop&lt;br&gt;- Applying the discursive language and terminology through practical scene work&lt;br&gt;- Guided visualization, imagining the play in performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previewing the play&lt;br&gt;- Teacher action: seeing the play before the students&lt;br&gt;- Teacher action: reviewing education notes</td>
<td>Previewing the play&lt;br&gt;- Using preview knowledge to inform prediction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and research&lt;br&gt;- Reading the VCE Playlist synopsis&lt;br&gt;- Reading the script&lt;br&gt;- Reading reviews&lt;br&gt;- Researching the playwright&lt;br&gt;- Researching previous productions&lt;br&gt;- Researching theatrical styles</td>
<td>Reading and research&lt;br&gt;- Predicting and imagining from reading and research&lt;br&gt;- How the reading and research presents possibilities for interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Talk’&lt;br&gt;- As transmission or instruction, imparting information and explaining</td>
<td>‘Talk’&lt;br&gt;- Dialogic: as negotiation, jointly predicting and imagining</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers in all case studies stated that the terminology and language of the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies written curriculum was something that students “all needed to know”. This language and terminology was very present in the classroom and was an integral part of the preparatory stage. “Teacher talk” across all case studies was often transmissive in nature. At its most powerful it adopted a dialogic form, where teachers asked questions that gave rise to new questions and “creating meaningful exchanges” (Alexander 2008, p. 104). Often “teacher talk” took the form of explicit instruction (Bernstein in Luke, 2014).

The following extract illustrates how in one case study “teacher talk” and focused questioning was used in the classroom during the pre-performance stage of teaching performance analysis, and how the discursive language of the curriculum was present.

Kate’s preparation begins with a written handout (see Appendix 10) that provides a checklist of the elements of non-naturalism using the specific language of the VCE Drama curriculum.

‘What’s stagecraft?’ Kate asks.
There are lots of things stated by students about stagecraft including references to set, costume, lighting and sound. They seem to know what stagecraft is in terms of VCE Drama. Kate then asked a series of related questions, ‘How does stagecraft shock? How does stagecraft make meaning?’
This time the students responded but pose their responses as questions.
‘Is it Mood?’
‘Is it Tension?’
‘Dreamlike?’
‘Symbol?’
(Observational field notes, CS2, 16 March, 2010)

**Extract from field notes 5**

In Case Study 2, Kate’s initial questions were concerned with establishing her students’ prior knowledge about VCE Drama terminology and emphasizing the importance of having that knowledge. When the questioning moved beyond simply what a dramatic element was and more towards how it created meaning, there was a marked level of uncertainty in the tone of the students’ responses. Their answers were posed as questions. When the discussion and questioning shifted from the language of the curriculum, however, to a broader concept such as ‘oppression’ (a theme identified as being present in *Fatboy*) students engaged quite differently as the following excerpt from the field notes explores.
Kate says, “You need to think about the idea of Oppression in Theatre of Cruelty. What is Oppression?”

One student begins to talk about South Africa and Apartheid, how oppression existed in this regime in both a physical and mental way. The others listen intently.

Kate then talks about solitary confinement as oppression.

A student responds by saying, “But if someone kills someone like a baby then they deserve it.”

Kate says, “Sometimes it might be better to inspire people rather than put them in there.”

Another student responds, “If someone in your family was hurt you would want them to be in there!”

(Observational field notes, CS2, 16 March, 2010)

**Extract from field notes 6**

Kate engaged in dialogic questioning as a way to evoke rigorous thematic discussion. In this moment I observed students intensely listening and valuing what each had to say. In this class, moving the preparatory discussion away from the discursive language of the curriculum shifted the students’ focus towards large ideas and considered the possibility that the production of *Fatboy* was social commentary. Kate skillfully wove questions into the discussion engaging students in imagining the performance through *predictive pedagogies* (see Table 12). She then re-focused the discussion, asking them, “So, let’s imagine, how will Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre use their own space? What do you think the characters might be like? If the play is Theatre of Cruelty what do you think you will see?” She also drew on students’ previous experiences, “What do you remember about symbol from *A Dream Play*?” (Observational field notes, CS2, March, 2010). Significantly, Kate seemed to be on a similar preparatory and predictive journey as her students. She didn’t see the play prior to taking her students, nor did she introduce the script because she believed “it is harder for them to make meaning from the words on the page” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010). In enacting the curriculum, Kate was quite clear that she didn’t want her students knowing too much “stuff” before they saw the production. Kate aimed to ensure that some preparation also focused on students’ experiences, by building their anticipation.

Kate’s final preparation strategy before attending the theatre to see *Fatboy* was to set her students a practical task, devising a scene in small groups exploring oppression and the concept of the grotesque. She adopted this strategy “as a way [for students to be] thinking about that ‘world’, and what *Fatboy* might be like” (Observational field notes, CS2, March,
From the data in both individual and small focus group interviews, Kate’s teaching in the pre-performance context generated excitement, anticipation and imagination in several students but was also constructed differently by others. Sam said, “I was really excited about it. I couldn’t wait to see a live performance” (Student Individual interview, Sam, CS2, March, 2010) and Patrick recalled that they all did “some research” about what the play was about. Tom, Ash and Mel felt they had little or no preparation. Tom said, “We knew it was about a king and his wife…and that was it”, and Mel stated that she “had no idea at all” (Student focus group interview 1, CS2, March, 2010). The differing constructions of “preparation” offer significant insights with regard to teaching performance analysis but also indicate that all students don’t necessarily engage with the preparatory stage.

There are three further occurrences in the pre-performance context that are worthy of comment. In Case Study 1, Melissa’s approach to the preparation stage was detailed and thorough. In the first lesson she provided the students with the VCAA assessment criteria for the School Assessed Coursework (SAC) and the Key Knowledge and Key Skills. She said, “I gave them a list and we went through and I explained what they had to look for when they were sitting in the theatre” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). Melissa admitted that her teaching of performance analysis in the preparation stage was driven by a fear of missing things, “I’m scared that if I leave something out, that will be the exact dramatic element on the exam!” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). In a second lesson on preparation for One Hundred, Melissa used a detailed guided visualization exercise. This consisted of a narrative and questions as provocations. Melissa asked the student to lie on the floor, relax and close their eyes. She stated, “Girls we’re going to do a visualization exercise that explores how the narrative [of One Hundred] is going to be brought to life using non-naturalism”. Across a period of five minutes Melissa asked the girls to picture and imagine “colour, set, texture, sound, themes, multi-media, lighting states, costume, props, metaphor, expressive skills, personification, gaze, stance, vocal quality, movement”, saturating the students with the terminology of performance analysis (Observational field notes, CS1, March, 2010). At the conclusion Melissa stated, “Now, I want to hear what you were imagining. Theatre is 3D. How will they put the script into the space? Shake out your body and come and join me” (Observational field notes, CS1, March, 2010). Melissa’s reasons for using this strategy were clearly indicated in her
interview where she spoke enthusiastically about the nature of theatre in a manner that seemed to demand a visual inquiry. “It’s because [theatre’s] three dimensional…You’re not only analysing the acting but…also the music, the set, the props, the costumes, everything is layered with symbol and metaphor” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010).

Whitmore (1998) states that the live theatre experience is concerned with “the five senses”. He argues that a director can manipulate these systems in order to activate an audience’s responses during a performance (p. 4). In Melissa’s use of the visualization exercise in the pre-performance context it asked students to imagine all the elements and sensory qualities of the performance in order for them to consider all its dimensions. Student data revealed differing responses to this exercise and differing effects. Rebecca “loved” the visualization exercise because “you get so relaxed…my mind is completely blank at that time…and then she starts shoving images into your head…you can visualize it so clearly at that moment and it’s really good”. Kristen, however, stated, “I have trouble lying on the floor and I feel very small and I don’t visualize very well. It’s like I’m thinking the words and not the images” (Rebecca and Kristen, Student Focus Group Interview 2, CS1, March, 2010).

There is an understanding at VCAA level that teachers and students will most probably only see a performance once and that the one viewing is the basis for both the school based and end-of-year assessment. The research demonstrates the challenges offered with one viewing. To counteract these challenges some teachers requested that their students undertook multiple viewings of the selected performance, usually at their own expense and in their own time. In Case Study 1, One Hundred and Case Study 3, The Threepenny Opera the teachers required students to see the production twice, the second time independently of their class and in their own time. Melissa stated that she took the girls as a group but “they need to organize to go again themselves”. She believed that “they can’t write about the performance unless they see it twice” (Observational field notes, CS1, 9 March 2010, pre-show visit). One student commented, “You miss so much the first time and you don’t realize that until you see it again. I really noticed bits I had missed previously” (Georgia, Focus group interview, CS1, March 2010). This approach suggests that teachers know more than one viewing offers advantages to their student’s capacity to remember, and to notice and process the “multi-sensory” mise-en-scene that theatre presents to an audience (Whitmore, 1997).
In Case Study 1, Melissa saw the production prior to her students. Not all teachers do this but Melissa felt she “must” in order to create a strong preparative and predictive context for her students. She believed that such a strategy embraced the realities of high-stakes assessment and the challenges of studying an ephemeral text such as theatre. Arguably, a teacher previewing the play will mean the performance then becomes a ‘known’ entity and will generate a particular way of preparing students. Classroom discussion was clearly impacted by Melissa’s pre-existing knowledge of the production. After the visualization exercise, Melissa begins the class discussion by offering her own interpretations of the themes from having seen the show. “It is interesting to compare what is happening in the discussion and Melissa’s statement at the conclusion of the visualization that she ‘wants to hear what you were imagining’”. In reality little of what the girls were imagining is exposed at all” (Observational field notes, CS1, March, 2010). Instead Melissa’s “teacher talk” was transmissional in nature, aimed at providing a strong platform for viewing the work, and was clearly directed towards the assessment task. Melissa concluded the class by telling the students, “So that’s what it’s all about! Tonight when you’re looking at the play focus on the non-naturalism” (Observational field notes, CS1, March, 2010).

Despite some students in Melissa’s class stating the preparatory stage “kind of loses the fun of it” and they would prefer to let themselves go in order to “be involved in the performance and kind of, I don’t know, be carried away with the performance”, Melissa’s detailed preparation was highly valued by her students. One student stated that prediction and preparation provided a capacity to “focus” her viewing of the play. She stated, “I think you take more in because you’re not focusing on the obvious like what’s happening in the storyline and the actors so you notice the smaller things” (Rosie, Student Focus Group 2, CS1, March, 2010). Another student recognized that preparation provided an understanding of the narrative so that, “You’re not spending as much energy on what’s going to happen because you already know what’s going to happen. You’re kind of a little bit detached in that sense, but then you can focus a bit more on how they’re using their expressive skills and like all of the stagecraft and how they’re using their props and stuff” (Kristen, Student Focus Group 2, CS1, March, 2010). This case study suggests providing students with a predictive and preparatory frame that includes knowledge of structure, narrative and plot, enables them to recognize the “codes” and “sub codes” of the specific theatre performance and to
purposively move towards performance analysis is highly valuable (Elam, 1980/2001). Burton, Bundy and Ewing (in O’Toole et al, 2014) support this suggestion, exploring the efficacy of building theatre literacy in students and arguing that it enables a powerful and critical response to theatre (pp. 145-158).

In Case Study 4, Shakespeare’s R&J, VCE Drama teacher, Andrew, he stated, “I’m actually on exchange from Canada for this semester and, as much as I’ve learned about the non-naturalistic style, I’m still fairly new to it” (Andrew, Teacher interview, CS4, May, 2010). In the pre-performance class I observed, Andrew moved back and forth between the VCE curriculum and its discursive language, and his own knowledge from teaching in Canada, using “teacher talk” that was often transmissional and explicit, at other times engaging the students in remembering a previous production, Small Metal Objects by Back-to-Back Theatre. He elicited what the students already knew from that experience about the criteria for the assessment task. Andrew provided a handout on Goethe’s (1749-1832) model of theatre criticism (Appendix 12) that contrasted in structure but was not necessarily in opposition to the VCE Drama Key Knowledge. Goethe’s three key questions concerning theatre criticism are: What was the artist trying to do? Was he/she successful in doing it? Was it worth doing? These questions could roughly be translated to “discussion”, “analysis” and “evaluation”, with supporting evidence. Andrew also used visual material as a means of preparation, specifically a recording of the VCE non-naturalistic Solo Performances from 2005, asking students to identify and note down if certain theatre conventions and dramatic elements were used within the performance they saw. Student responses indicated that seeing direct examples of non-naturalism provided greater understanding of non-naturalism. Showing students a recorded performance, versus the abstract “visualization” used in Case Study 1 provided a counterpoint for understanding how students engage with predictive and imaginative pedagogies, and how abstracted and imagined approaches compare with visual or more concrete examples.

In this discussion of preparation and prediction, a third occurrence worthy of examination is Case Study 3, The Threepenny Opera. Jess, suffered a double loss to her usual pre-performance teaching process. Through school demands and then illness, Jess was unable to spend time in the classroom with her students and then unable to attend the same
performance. Simone, the Head of Drama, attended instead. Jess commented specifically on the impact. “It was a real shame. I would normally…have a talk about what we expect we might see and then we go off and see the performance and have a chat afterwards…and then one of the first classes [the students] had back I was ill” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). For Jess, an ideal pre-performance teaching scenario would include “doing more” with Theatre Studies Outcome 3 criteria “before we see the play”. She also commented that not seeing the same performance as her students was a liability because “you never really see the same show” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). Jess’s strategy to compensate for her absence was to provide each student with pre-purchased copies of the script and the Company’s education resources. She commented, “In that way I was saying—these are things that are very important and these are things that you are going to have to look through” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). The absence of “usual” preparation was commented on by one student who said, “Talking about preparation, I think it is good to know what’s going to be marked. I didn’t know what *The Threepenny Opera* was going to be marked on so I didn’t realize I needed to pay attention to the facial expressions!” (Hermia, Student focus group, CS3, July, 2010).

5. 3. 1. The tricky question of the script…again

_The dramatic text is read on the page, the theatrical text is read by an audience from the stage...How can we think usefully in general terms about how the play, which we read as a script relates to the play we see as a performance? ...A useful way of thinking about this is to consider the dramatic text as a ‘pre-text’ – something that comes ‘before’ the thing the audience actually reads in performance, the show. The dramatic text is ‘previous’ to the theatrical text_ (Wallis & Shepherd, 1998, p. 2).

What is the role of the script in the pre-performance stage of teaching performance analysis? Chapter Four of this thesis discussed the script and its role with regard to decision-making by both the Playlist Advisory Panel and teachers. For the four case studies that comprise this study — which represent Drama Unit 3 and Theatre Studies Unit 4 — the written curriculum does not mandate studying the playscript, stipulating that analysis is to be of the _live theatre production_ only. There are no rules or steadfast approaches with using or studying script in the preparatory stages of teaching performance analysis. Some teachers directly used the
script as Melissa, and Jess and Simone do, but others did not as in the case of Kate and Andrew.

In **Case Study 1** and in **Case Study 3**, Melissa and Jess and Simone ensured that the students had a copy of the script. Conversely in **Case Study 2**, Kate specifically didn’t offer a copy of the script to her students, “We didn’t read the script. We actually…well I have tended not to get the script beforehand because I’m…we’re sort of looking at [other things]”. In **Case Study 4**, Andrew talked about the original Shakespearean script but didn’t include it in his teaching. Students in some case studies “confessed” to not reading the script despite having been provided with a copy and despite advice to do so. In **Case Study 1**, one student stated, “It’s something that [Melissa] suggests. She recommends it...but it’s not like you have to”. In the same case study another student stated, “It was helpful in studying it because you knew what you were expecting” (Student Focus Group, CS1, March, 2010).

In **Case Study 3**, similar stories emerged. One student stated, “Nobody does preparation as such. Maybe we’ll read the script. But nobody does preparation as far as I know” and another said, “I usually read the script but leave out the last page. So I know what happens but not the ending, but go in with a pretty good idea of what’s going on” (Student Focus Group, CS3, July, 2010). One student’s understanding of the script clearly mirrored the concept of a script being a “pre-text” (Wallis & Shepherd, 1998), for the live experience. I think it helps you critique it more easily because you have your ideas in your head of how it should be so when it’s different you can either say ‘oh that’s better or no I didn’t like that’. It helps you with the SAC process because when it comes to questions that ask you to evaluate it you can go ‘Oh no I didn’t like that’ or ‘I didn’t think that worked’ (Brittany, Student Focus Group 2, CS1, March, 2010).

The approaches to and valuing of the script by teachers and students in the pre-performance frame suggest that its function and purpose differ across teaching and learning contexts. The role of the script will discussed further in Chapter Six – the post-performance frame.
5. 4. In the theatre - capturing the experience

_The theatre’s central magic is that it can make both audience and actor, each in his own way, feel himself other, which does not mean that does not feel himself at the same time_ (Levy in Bailin, 1993, p. 65).

This chapter has already discussed how teachers use preparatory and predictive pedagogies – predominantly transmissional and dialogic talk - to scaffold students’ ability to “read” the play they are about to see. In particular, the discursive language of the Drama and Theatre Studies curricula and its key terminology forms part of that transmissional and dialogic talk in order to provide students with ways to see the performance and identify examples of the key terms. The next section of this chapter examines how teachers consider practical ways to remember as much as possible while in the theatre.

The prevalence of smart mobile phone technology affords young people the opportunity to film or photograph all aspects of their personal and social life and to capture lived experience. In the theatre, however, mobile phones are switched off and, for copyright reasons, photography or filming is often not permitted. Traditionally theatre reviewers take notes while in the theatre to record key moments, but in the context of this study writing notes offered two issues. The first issue is whether note taking is effective in assisting students’ and teachers’ memories, the other is its appropriateness as theatre etiquette. In this study both issues produced a level of discomfort.

Theatre scholars contend that in order to respond to the production, to register and interpret the signifiers and their signified meanings and to unlock the embedded codes, audiences need to fully experience the performance by seeing, hearing, and feeling it all (Jauss, 1982, Bennett, 1990, Whitmore, 1998, Elam, 2001). In this study teachers adopted differing approaches to note taking as a means of capturing aspects of the performance. In **Case Study 1** Melissa instructed her girls to take notes during the performance. She told her class to “come with a little thing to write on, not a big one because people will see!” Later Melissa commented that she understood that note taking was “frowned upon [but] If you don’t take notes, you miss stuff…They’re terrified that if they don’t take notes they’re going to just miss stuff, they’re going to forget it” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). In **Case Study 3** Simone stated “sometimes” she asks her students to take notes. “I would
certainly say that when they walk in they draw the set, draw anything they can see as a visual cue, and a visual reminder” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). Simone directed her students saying, “If the light allows you to, make notes while you are watching but if it doesn’t, then just watch it” (Observational field notes, CS3, July, 2010). Simone admitted that it was hard to write while you are watching, so she also advised student to write the next day. In Case Study 4, Shakespeare’s R&J, Andrew didn’t suggest note-taking to his students. Similarly, in Case Study 2, Kate’s class were instructed not to take notes, “In terms of taking notes I would encourage you not to. I want you to be immersed and consumed by the play and taking notes doesn’t allow you to. When you go home, take some notes then” (Observational field notes, CS2, March, 2010).

The differing approaches to note taking while watching a live performance raise questions with regard to its efficacy in recording and remembering aspects of the performance. In Case Study 3 students commented that note taking “has to be done to an extent” but felt it “detracted” from the experience. One student stated, “I don’t enjoy it because you miss things”. Significantly, another student commented, “It takes away from it because when you get to watch it through from beginning to end and you don’t have to think about taking notes you take more of it in, in more of a chronological level...and you have a clearer understanding” (Student focus group interview, CS3, July, 2010). Further, what should a student actually write down? The following field notes extract suggests one student’s dilemma, confusion and uncertainty about this.

I spoke to three girls, who were analysing this show as their SAC for Unit 4. I sat next to one student who had a notebook and she told me. ‘I have to write, I have to write’. She seemed concerned. I asked, why don’t you just write at interval? At interval I asked her, ‘What are you going to write?’ and she said, ‘I have no idea!’
(Observational field notes, Case Study 3, The Threepenny Opera, July, 2010)

Extract from field notes 7

The notion of writing during a performance appears contradictory to the theatre experience when note taking requires you to physically looking down rather than at the production itself. Thus, in Case Study 1 Melissa’s comment, “They’re terrified that if they don’t take notes they’re going to just miss stuff, they’re going to forget it” is somewhat ironic.
Some theatre companies ask students, for etiquette reasons, not to write while they are in the theatre, particularly if they are seated in the first few rows. While there is no evidence in this study, even from the participant theatre companies’ perspective that note taking is regarded as breaching theatre etiquette, in this study the strategy of note taking as a way of recording the show tended to be a covert practice. When teachers and students are anxious to hold on to particular moments in the production, and they attempt to record the event while it is happening, what to record coupled with the perception of having to do so covertly impacts their capacity to fully engage with the theatre performance.

5.5. In the theatre - the Question and Answer session

The curtains opened, the red curtains. They swung open and they were all sitting there. The cast and the designer and there was no facilitation. So everyone was just sitting there, on the stage and...no one said anything and we were all looking at each other... (Observational Field Notes, Case Study 2, Fatboy, 24 March, 2010)

Extract from field notes 8

At the conclusion of many VCE Playlist performances, theatre companies offer a question and answer session, commonly known as a Q&A. The following discussion explores the Q&A sessions that immediately follow a theatre performance, their relationship to the enacted and experienced curriculum, and their relationship to pedagogies for teaching performance analysis.

The VCAA states that there is “no obligation” to offer Q&A sessions, nor are students and teachers required to attend to complete the assessment task, but it is common practice amongst theatre and producing companies whose work has been selected to the Playlists. These sessions generally have members of the creative team and cast on stage after the performance, and students and teachers are invited to ask questions. As the Q&A sessions occurred in the theatre, I have chosen to examine them within the in-theatre context.

In Case Study 2, at the end of the performance of Fatboy at Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre, a Q&A was announced. When the curtains opened to reveal the cast on stage, for quite some
time “no one said anything. The audience looked at the cast, the cast looked at the audience. There was a tangible tension in the space between the actors on stage and the student audience. Finally one student called out, ‘Why are you so damn cool?’ (Observational field notes, March, 2010). It transpired that the Q&A was informal and was to be facilitated by the cast themselves. The structure and content was emergent, and responsive to whatever was asked which varied considerably. Kate felt that the Q&A was adequate but wished that there had been more “relevant” questions.

A different Q&A structure and focus was experienced in Case Study 1, One Hundred. The Q&A observed was facilitated by the director and addressed key interpretative choices made by the cast with regard to the ‘non-naturalism’ in the production. The director sometimes offered interpretations without questions being asked, focusing on what things “meant” in terms of the visual, oral, and aural symbols in the production. Further, the discussion focused on the written curriculum, specifically Key Knowledge and Key Skills. Melissa stated her students laughed at some questions asked by students. She commented, “When it’s a SAC and not all the questions are relevant to what they have to cover…why would you bother?” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). Melissa and her students clearly had expectations re the purpose and function of the Q&A and the director’s facilitation seemed to meet those expectations, whereas other students present didn’t share the same understanding.

Case Study 4, Shakespeare’s R&J, performed at a regional performing arts centre, included a Q&A consisting of a thirty-minute discussion with the full cast facilitated by the venue’s education manager. Andrew found the Q&A to be very effective for the reason that it allowed the students to engage in a conversation with the actors. He said, “I think the actors…knew what they were talking about quite a bit…some of them had in depth answers to things and gave a lot more than was required”. Andrew commented that he “really enjoyed the students having the chance to talk to the actors”, that the actors “displayed an understanding of the ‘yes/no’ questions that students tend to ask” and they were “able to expand on it [the question] and give the kids a feeling there was a lot more going on with them as performers” (Andrew, Teacher interview, CS4, July 2010). From this data, it appears that Andrew’s expectations of an effective Q&A concerned how accessible
performers were for students and how their responses enabled a greater understanding of the production for students.

In Case Study 3, Jess spoke about “quality” Q&As. She stated that quality was determined by whether those presenting or facilitating it “understand the Study Design” and were “able to use the language of the Study Design that the kids need”. Further, a quality Q&A should mean that students are “able to ask good questions…like – Tell us about the actor-audience relationship?” and that such questions be answered (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July 2010). Jess offered positioned this definition of “quality” by discussing a less successful model she and her students experienced the previous year. She said,

It was absolutely disastrous. They [the actors] didn’t understand the kids’ questions. They didn’t understand the terminology the kids were using. They couldn’t answer questions about direction, design or deliberate choices. I don’t think they had been briefed…we sent a ‘blistering’ email to [the company] about not seeing [a company] show in the future because we aren’t given the curriculum support and the resources to make them effective (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July 2010).

Jess believed a quality Q&A would enhance her practice. “It’s not just as a Year 12 teacher but as someone who also directs production. To hear a director talking about the choices they’ve made and the purposes they had and their thinking around whether they succeeded and ‘Did you read it in the way it was intended?’” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). Further, Jess believed that when students are exposed to the thinking of a creative team during a Q&A, particularly if the theatre company is one she respects, their learning is extended. “Our kids are at a big production school and tend to look very much at the actors…it is good for them to understand the theatrical world is more than that. What they are seeing on stage is not just the product of actors” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July 2010).

Davis (1988) contends that good post performance discussions “have the effect of joining performers and audience in a community” (p. 54). Communities of practice theories incorporate what Star and Greisemer (1989) calls “boundary objects”. Boundary objects are artefacts, objects, documents, designs, systems or tools that are generated within or across
communities in a manner that renders them “adaptable to different viewpoints and robust enough to maintain identity across them” (in Wenger, 1998, pp. 107-108). The data generated in this study suggests that a question and answer session, held in the theatre in the shared presence of teachers, students, performers and creative team members adopts the qualities of a boundary object. The “identity” of the Q&A as a boundary object, how it is constructed and understood across educational and theatre communities, and its potential impact on developing an effective pedagogy for teaching performance analysis will be explored further in Chapters Six and Seven.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:
In summary, the chapter has presented an analysis of preparatory and predictive pedagogies that teachers in this study have developed in order to scaffold students’ learning, experiences and remembering of a live theatre performance for the purposes of analysis. The discussion suggests that explicit teaching and transmission of information is highly valued by students and is privileged as a practice by most teachers. More embodied forms of drama pedagogy are much less apparent despite the written curriculum advocating live performance as valuable to “making” theatre.

The discussion in this chapter reflects the tensions that exist between “the experience of performance and any one individual’s conscious and reflective ability to externalize that experience” (Reason, 2010, p. 15). The chapter has illuminated earlier discussion in this thesis with regard to the impact of high-stakes assessment on pedagogy. The pressures and requirements of assessment had a strong ‘presence’ in the preparatory stages of teaching performance analysis. At the performances, some teachers had expectations that theatre companies offered ‘quality’ Q&A sessions when the participating artists were able to address the written curriculum in response to the assessment task and be able to understand the discursive language.

As the chapter journeyed with the teachers and students into the theatre, the discussion in this chapter explored how several teachers used strategies to assist their students to record and remember a performance. They noted that capturing the live experience in writing is difficult and may even be anxiety producing. Taking notes during a performance was
problematized as a practice, while the opportunity to attend the performance more than once was deemed “essential” by some teachers. Chapter Six returns to the classroom for the next stage of the narrative timeline to explore pedagogies for remembering and for assessment.
CHAPTER SIX
Pedagogies of performance analysis – pedagogies for remembering

What does remain of a theatrical experience in us when the experience is over? In the short run, what remains is a confusion of sensations, impressions and half-thoughts, bits of dialogue, moments of acting, strong visual images, lights, sounds, a sense of atmosphere and mood, a physical memory of the play’s energy, and, overall, a blurred but vivid sense of occasion. But what remains in the long run? That is, I think, the essential question we have to ask if we want to understand how the theatre teaches (Levy, 2005, pp. 24-25).

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Six is an exploration of enacted curriculum in the post-performance context. When students and teachers finally attend the theatre, the performance ceases to be unknown. What has been prepared and predicted for becomes known through lived experience. Schoenmaker and Tulloch (in Cremona et al, 2004) argue that, “The final interpretation and evaluation of the theatrical stimulus can only take place at the end – when all the elements are known and…have disappeared” (p. 142). The post-performance context for teaching performance analysis is concerned, therefore, with remembering and the pedagogies that teachers engage their students with when what remains of the performance is, in the first instance, memory. The discussion in this chapter focuses on three key points; ways of remembering after the performance, remembering for school-based assessment, and remembering in order to prepare for the end-of-year written examination, or as I have named it - re-remembering.

As Levy suggests in the opening quotation to this chapter, immediately after seeing a performance memories consist of “impressions and half-thoughts, bits of dialogue, moments of acting, strong visual images, lights, sounds, a sense of atmosphere and mood, a physical memory of the play’s energy”. Reason (2010) argues that the temporary nature of a theatre experience and its presentational style mean that audiences feel that what they have just experienced “needs to be interpreted, discussed and re-communicated afterwards in order to complete the experience” (p. 137). Reason also argues, “Once one leaves the theatre performance, such conversations represent the only method of affirming our memory of the event (pp. 137-139).
There are examples in the data that capture the “fragments” Levy refers to and that also refer to Reasons’ argument that audiences “need to talk” immediately after the performance. The following extract from a focus group interview captures these ideas.

We were on the train station, waiting about half an hour for the train…and we could not stop talking about the performance. When we were on the train that’s all we were talking about until we got home, and then the next day, we were updating our status [on Facebook]
(Pat, student focus group interview, March, 2010)

Extract from focus group interview 1

Beyond these immediate post-performance conversations, this chapter draws on data to explore the manner in which memory and talking about the production are channelled into a formal process, one that seeks to enable students to write a detailed analytical response.

6. 2. The post-performance context - timing
As has been stated in this thesis, teaching performance analysis follows a timeline. The timeline begins with selecting a play to analyse at the beginning of the school year, and ends in November with the written exam. In each case study, analysis of the performance took place between three and eight days after the performance. Assessment tasks were timetabled between seven days (Case Study 1 and 2) and twenty-one days after seeing the performance (Case Study 3 and 4). Revision for the written examination occurred before the end of October. The interrelationship between timing, remembering, analysing, re-remembering and assessment suggested that elapsed time impacts on the performance analysis process.

6. 3. Ways to remember a play – individual and collective memory
In the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies performance analysis tasks being in the theatre means that the “experiencing self” and the “remembering self” must occupy the same space (Kahneman, 2011), and that students need to engage with a process involving “a duality of perception” (Reason, 2010, p.20). This study revealed that retaining aspects of the performance for each student is critical for re-constructing, and any “resonances” are highly significant (Reason, 2010).
Within each case study, at the beginning of the post-performance analysis stage, teachers engaged with strategies that included; ways to prompt memory, focusing what was remembered, aligning memories with the written curriculum, and ensuring ways of capturing or recording what was remembered in writing. Teachers variously described the classroom process of remembering the play as a process of “breaking down” and “pulling” or “ripping” apart the production “within an inch of its life” (Teacher interviews, CS1, CS2, CS3, March/July, 2010). Invariably such processes took place in a whole group context. Donelan and Sallis (in O’Toole et al, 2014) speak about this as “collaborative memory”, suggesting that students are actively working together in order to remember (pp. 65-79). This idea mirrors an earlier study by Halbwachs (1992), which argues that individuals who are located in a specific group “draw on that context to remember or recreate the past”. Halbwachs calls this “collective memory”. He states, “It is individuals who remember, not groups or institutions [but] if such individuals are located in a specific group context they draw strongly on that context to remember or recreate the past” (p. 21).

In Case Study 1, a post-performance analysis class took place three days after the students had seen the production of One Hundred. For the session, Melissa had prepared a seven-page handout of her own notes on the performance (Appendix 9) which she distributed to each student. Essentially, the handout provided Melissa’s analysis of what happened in the performance, its intention and its meaning. It offered the students a complete analysis of the production and linked it directly to non-naturalism and assessment requirements.

Chapter Four revealed that Melissa placed significant demands on herself with regard to teaching performance analysis. In her individual interview Melissa stated that there was not enough classroom time. The “enormous amount of detail” required to be remembered in order to address each theatrical convention, dramatic element, expressive skill and theatrical style as dictated by the assessment task challenged both her and her students’ time. Melissa was scared that if she “left something out, that will be the exact dramatic element on the exam!” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). The sense of pressure and demand that Melissa felt translated into a pedagogical process that was highly transmissional and explicit. Explicit instruction features “strong classification” and “strong framing”, is clearly defined by boundary knowledge and skills, and teacher-directed interaction (Bernstein in
“Explicit instruction” refers to teacher-centred instruction that is focused on clear cognitive goals and outcomes. These in turn are made ‘explicit’ or transparent to learners (Bernstein in Luke, 2014). The following extract from field notes suggests the pressure Melissa was under. It includes a series of statements, questions and answers all asked and then immediately answered by the teacher within a highly compressed time frame.

So, let’s analyse the non-naturalistic performance styles of ‘One Hundred’. A set in a naturalistic play has to duplicate life but ‘One Hundred’ was non-naturalistic. Tell me about the screen? It was minimalist and symbolic. Why did they use white? To project their internal states and the subconscious mind. Remember?

(Field notes, CS1, March, 2010)

Extract from field notes 10

In this session the students wrote continuously. Writing appeared to provide a powerful way of re-constructing the performance and recording what was remembered both individually and collectively. Many of the girls had actually taken notes during the performance. The class was instructed to create a folder specifically for the exam. “That is most important…then you’ll open it and it will all come back to you!” (Field notes, CS1, March, 2010). “Remembering” was given purpose and was clearly directed towards assessment especially when Melissa said, “When you are responding remember to use the right terminology” (Field notes, CS1, March 2010). As the session progressed, the analysis became more sophisticated and complex. For example:

Let’s focus on Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty, specifically the use of visual poetry. How was this represented in the play? The set was an empty space, Grotowski’s empty space with a focus on the actor. It was symbolic of and literally a void. A feather is a symbol of Ascension…The closing of the book symbolized closing the book on Sophie’s life (Teacher, Field notes, CS1, March, 2010).

Extract from field notes 11

Beyond the explicit and instructional teaching, Melissa sometimes re-enacted moments from the play. In one instance she physically lay down on the floor to demonstrate how the character of Sophie was lifted onto a door, simultaneously narrating what she believed was meant or symbolized, sometimes closing her eyes to focus. During this moment of re-enactment a student commented, “I was confused. The doors were meant to be this and this and this but when were they? Why did they swap doors between the characters? I thought
that their own door was their only door in and out?” (Student, Field notes, CS1, March, 2010). Melissa didn’t appear to hear. She continued with her re-enactment and commentary. When Melissa was suddenly called away by another staff member the girls, left alone, became quite animated. Below is a snapshot of the types of comments and discussion that ensued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student 1: There was no dramatic tension at all in the choices!</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
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<td>Student 4: When I read the script I sort of freaked out about that part but it wasn’t like that!</td>
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(Field notes, CS1, March, 2010)

**Extract from field notes 12**

In the absence of their teacher, the girls actively generated their own analysis and evaluation. This moment seemed to give the girls courage and as the post-performance class continued, they began to contribute with more confidence.

After seeing the production of *One Hundred*, Melissa met with the Artistic Director of Machinations Theatre Ensemble. The impact of this meeting became evident in this post-performance session by Melissa prefacing many statements with “the director said”. This suggests the status given to directorial intentions. When asked if students were happy to make up their own minds about what things meant Melissa stated, “I don’t think they trust their own ideas yet. So they voice them…but they always want to know what everyone else is thinking” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). How did this correlate with the students’ own memories of the production? When asked if they felt comfortable offering what they remembered, one student commented that after they offered their own ideas “[Melissa] would put in her influences saying what was right or wrong and how we could expand on that” (Rosie, Student focus group, CS1, March, 2010). Melissa invested an authority in the Artistic Director’s intentions and interpretations and she felt pressured by the need to “get it right” for assessment. The girls deeply appreciated the amount of effort that Melissa contributed to their preparation for assessment. She collated everyone’s memories about each dramatic element as a handout which one student described this as being “very cute”.

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</table>

(Field notes, CS1, March, 2010)
In Case Study 1, student comments with regard how and what they remembered proved insightful. One student said, “I find that the things I remember are the things that I want to use again… and the things you recall are the things you are going to want to use [as a performer]” (Kristen, Student Focus group, CS1, March, 2010). Another student commented on the relationship between preparing and predicting to see the play and what she actually experienced. “When you are reading something you picture it completely differently and you’re surprised. You see it in your imagination and then see what they have done” (Rosie, Student Focus Group, CS1, March, 2010). This comment suggests that the analysis of a theatre performance is a continual process. The performance is constantly being constructed and re-constructed through both preparatory and remembered stages, through both individual and collective memory, with students drawing strongly on their learning contexts “to remember or recreate the past” (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 21).

In Case Study 2, Fatboy, Kate commented on the importance of the time between seeing the performance and “writing something substantial about a live experience” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010). Kate noted the challenges with regard to critically recalling something that happened live on stage as an aesthetic encounter concerned with “the senses and the feelings” (Abbs, 1989, p. 4). She described the experience of live theatre as “feeling it in your own self” but problematized how students might transfer those feelings into “being able to articulate [their] opinions and ideas” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010). Kate was also concerned that she was very new to teaching VCE Drama. She stated she wanted to make sure that, “I’ve got it right and that I’m teaching them the right things” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010). She expressed particular concern about assessment processes about which she knew “very little”, and wondered about “the experience the assessors have”. This concern translated into her adhering closely to the written curriculum documents in order to not go “down the wrong track” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010).

In Case Study 2, the post-performance session for Fatboy took place five days after the students had seen the performance. The students arrived with a sense of anticipation and were met with a similar sense of eagerness by Kate. This session began with Kate delivering a series of instructions about the impending assessment task known as School Assessed
Coursework (SAC). She stated, “You will have 75 minutes for the writing the task this coming Friday, not 90, and so it [the SAC] will be adjusted to accommodate this. It will focus on performance styles, dramatic elements, theatrical conventions and use of stagecraft” (Field notes, post-performance session, CS2, March, 2010). Kate reminded the students that their homework had been to complete aspects of a handout that broke down the dramatic elements (Appendix 11). They were to write down initial ideas and then categorise them on the sheet. Few had done this so, it became the focus of the class.

Kate used several approaches during the class but “talk” dominated, of the type that included; structured cumulative questions, discussion that guides and prompts, reduces choices, minimizes risk and error and expedites the “handover of concepts and principles” (Alexander, 2008, p. 110). Further, Kate strongly filtered the talk through the lens of the discursive language of the curriculum. She prompted with questions such as: How was costume used to enhance the non-naturalism? What about the performance styles? The prompt questions closely guided the remembering, arriving at a point where the class believed that Fatboy consisted of a medley of ideas and forms, pieces taken from various sources. A “mash-up” as one student said. Kate suggested that Fatboy could possibly be a “pastiche” and the class proceeded to investigate the meaning of this term, one that did not appear in any of the VCAA’s official documentation. The class then received a handout entitled Theatre of Cruelty, and were asked to read and highlight what theatrical conventions they had seen and experienced in the performance. The class worked in pairs and small groups around the room and I observed the following.

| The remembering appears to be conversational and discursive. The constructing of a response is made through conversation and dialogue in small groups. Any one conversation around the group is full of free association both about the play and not about the play but most of it ends up on the page.  
(Field notes, CS2, Post performance session, March, 2010) |

**Extract from field notes 13**

Closer listening revealed that students found the language of the curriculum difficult in terms of relating it to what they had experienced. When the class reconvened in the centre of the room the students’ responses were framed as questions rather than statements. Kate reiterated their questions, reframed them as statements, fleshed them out and then posed
other questions, seeking to engage them in a dialogue that scaffolded their understanding. One student commented particularly on this as a process, “She already has all the knowledge of what was going on and it was really good to inform us of what we thought and then maybe straighten out some things that we didn’t know as well” (Sam, Student interview, CS2, March, 2010). Another student commented specifically on what she perceived was the valuable process of “collective memory” (Halwachs, 1973), the collating of those memories by Kate and in their own logbooks. She was aware of differing interpretations and meanings. “There were things I had to ask to be explained because I didn’t pick them up like others did and I didn’t see that and then I would go, ‘Oh, my gosh! I can see it because you’ve explained it to me’. So it was different, like how some people can see something and I couldn’t” (Mel, student focus group interview, CS2, March, 2010). As in Case Study 1, students relied heavily on writing as a means of recording and responding, and were spurred on by the imminent assessment task. Such recording was emphasised by their teacher who said, “Write all this down. You want to have the easiest time you can on the SAC…remember that some of these ideas can be used multiple times and can be included in several sections on the sheet and in your SAC…don’t come on Friday with an empty page or an empty head” (Field notes, post-performance session, CS2, March, 2010).

In Case Study 3, The Threepenny Opera, the post-performance session took place one week after the students had seen the performance. The performance experience was not a shared one. The students attended a performance with Jess’s colleague Simone, and Jess attended on another evening. Further, in Jess’s absence Simone had already conducted an initial post-performance discussion with the students. The post-performance session, therefore, offered rich discovery. Students gathered in the black-walled drama studio and sat on the floor. For Jess, the first class after seeing the performance was critical for remembering, “A lot of the time it is…just about getting some notes down. They do need to write it down and they do need to focus on specifics and examples so everything is fresh. It’s our shared memories” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July 2010).

Jess demonstrated two strategies. One as a facilitator prompting the discussion, the other as an interested observer, sitting back and allowing the students to take control of the analysis. In a similar manner to Case Study 1 and Case Study 2, Jess framed the session around the
discursive language of the curriculum and the requirements of the assessment task. Her approach was very direct. “Okay give me a facial expression, when did it happen and what did it do? Be very, very specific!” which she said “They need for this unit” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July 2010). Even more specifically, Jess instructed the students, “For the exam you need to remember to write the full name of the actor first, then the last name after that when you are talking about them. So, the first character is Polly Peacham. Let’s get a list of words together” (Field notes, CS3, July, 2010). The observed discussion was rich and complex, and sometimes combative. Jess pushed the students to “give examples about the character of Polly Peacham and asked them to consider movements, gestures, voice, singing and vocal quality” (Field notes, CS3, July, 2010). One student, Hermia, begins to pull the character apart in a highly sophisticated manner, commenting on the actor’s singing and emphasising her belief that the acting was unconvincing” (Field notes, CS2, July, 2010).

This capacity to respond is captured by Burton, Bundy and Ewing (in O’Toole et al, 2014) who state, “Theatre literacy is demonstrated by the ability to respond critically to a play, deconstructing both the text and the performance in depth, using learned conceptual frameworks”, in this context, curriculum frameworks (p. 158).

The individual interview data captured from the interviews with Jess triangulated with observational data. She explained that her teaching strategies were all focused on preparing the students for assessment, “We give them work sheets to take home and do. It can be as simple as, ‘What is a characteristic, and where’s the evidence?’ It’s pretty structured. Then on the day we use the Study Hall and [the assessment task] its 100 minutes”. She explained that this year she would be allowing the students to use their annotated scripts in the exam. “I don’t always do that but I will allow them to [this year] because I think it will allow them to remember quotes for the exam” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July 2010). Jess was very clear to ensure that “this is what the students need to be able to understand” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). She explained that only after a forensic exploration and curriculum related discussion could their post-performance analysis become more broadly exploratory.

**Case Study 3** also highlighted the individual teachers’ interpretation of performance. Jess’s colleague, Simone, had accompanied Jess’s class to see the performance of *The Threepenny*
Opera. Simone had quite a different response to the play. Jess stated, “That was interesting because [she] hadn’t liked the play and I had, so I think there is an influence there. They had a class with me and I talked about how it was very good and they had a class with [Simone] and she didn’t like the production” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). This difference in opinion is confirmed by Simone who said, “I don’t think [the students] particularly liked it. They came away and said it was okay but they thought it was a bit too in-your-face, too forced, too crude…unnecessary” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). Simone noted that some students left at interval. Chapter Four discussed the role of a teacher’s personal aesthetic and its impact on selecting a play for analysis. The data suggests that personal aesthetic and preference also impacts on a teacher’s approach to teaching performance analysis, including the remembering, de-constructing and re-constructing of the performance with and for their students.

While the post-performance class in Case Study 3, *The Threepenny Opera*, occurred within a week of seeing the performance, a three week mid-year school holiday intervened between discussing and remembering the play and the assessment task. Students commented specifically on class discussion as a necessary tool for remembering and to generate interpretations of the performance, particularly collective memories and shared interpretations. Hermia stated, “It is absolutely essential because the collective remembering helps create the evidence for the exam. If you have no remembering then you have no evidence and therefore you are stuffed…without this collective memory…you can only make statements and if you can’t justify them then you won’t get marks!” (Hermia, Student focus group, CS3, August, 2010). Hermia stated that peers who offer totally different interpretations inform everyone else’s. She commented, “It can be helpful because you can get a new idea from somebody or someone might have a contrasting view that could either make you change your mind or confirm your own. It’s a collective process that develops ideas” (Hermia, student focus group, CS3, August, 2010).

In Case Study 4, *Shakespeare’s R&J*, circumstances intervened preventing me from collecting data in a post-performance class. Major timetabling changes interrupted the research and also Andrew’s teaching process. The following discussion, therefore, is informed by a detailed Teacher interview. In the interview Andrew stated that he found
several of his students to be quite inexperienced theatregoers and possibly less confident. Sinclair and Adams (in O’Toole et al, 2014) determined that theatre confidence is “a key factor in young people accessing the theatre, enjoying it while they were watching and making productive meanings out of the experience” (Ch. 8, p. 130). Andrew stated that both lack of confidence and immaturity impacted on some students’ responses to the performance. He stated, “Unfortunately, a lot of them expect to be entertained like it’s a movie when it comes to theatre. They expect to see car explosions and things like that. For those students who don’t have that expectation, who have had more of an immersion in theatre and know what to expect, have more of an open mind, they really enjoyed it. They have seen the greater value in it” (Andrew, Teacher interview, CS4, June, 2010). Andrew stated that several of the students “didn’t get it...some of them had a really difficult time with it” whereas others “had a very good focus on it...they knew what they were talking about” (Andrew, Teacher interview, CS4, June, 2010).

As outlined in Chapter Four of this thesis, Andrew, an exchange teacher from Canada, was teaching in a context that was complex. His class comprised students studying Drama Units 1 to 4, and was a combined Year 11 and 12 class. Andrew indicated that he therefore adopted a transmissional style with an emphasis on “talk” as a pedagogical tool, replicating practices present in all other case studies (Alexander, 2008). Andrew discussed the level of analysis his students were able to achieve after seeing Shakespeare’s R&J. He explained that many of his students were able to “identify key VCE Drama non-naturalistic processes such as the transformation of object, the transformation of place and character, the somewhat disjointed time sequence. They were able to identify and reflect on the importance of those different aspects of the production...they did really well across the board...when they wrote their assessments” (Andrew, Teacher interview, CS4, June, 2010).

The data in all four case studies that addresses preparation, remembering and interpretation aligns with what Jauss (1982) and Whitmore (1998) refer to as “horizons of expectation”. Jauss (1982) argues that all readers come to a new text – in this instance a theatre performance – with a series of expectations constituted from previously known or experienced works (p.79). For readers their “horizon of expectation” is structured around
what they already comprehend, the codes they have knowledge of, capacities to decode, and the conventions of the text or performance that are particular to its cultural construction.

Theories relevant to horizons of expectation indicate that particular responses in a reader or spectator will eventuate in the theatre. Further such horizons of expectation are flexible and are responsive to changing times, values and practices. Jauss (1982) argues that such a horizon of expectation creates a critical response in a reader when the new work either “frustrates or exceeds what the spectator expected to see” (pp. 79-80). Jauss’s research enables ways to consider how students in different learning contexts bring a horizon of expectation to their theatre experience based on previous theatre experiences and, importantly, based on teachers’ pedagogical approaches.

6. 3. 1. Aesthetic and affective memories

As the Literature Review in this thesis examined, drama as an artform is able to offer powerful aesthetic experiences for young people, and determined that the lived experience of theatre is an aesthetic one. Sinclair (in O’Toole et al, 2014) points to the “affective” nature of the aesthetic domain (Ch. 5, p.48). Hurley (2010) asks what it might mean to put the affective dimensions of theatrical experience and its production centre stage. The affective nature of the performances and the impact on their effectiveness with regard to teaching performance analysis has already been discussed from the Playlist Advisory Panel perspective. In the classroom, student responses demonstrated that affective moments were often those that made them ‘feel’ something particular – anxiety, awkwardness, uncertainty, delight.

In Case Study 4, Andrew spoke of the moment in the production of Shakespeare’s R&J where two of the male characters kissed. The tension that developed in the auditorium as a result of the anticipation of the kiss and then its realisation was electric. Some students became very vocal and shifted around very physically in their seats. You could hear some students saying ‘No!’ as the two boys leant in. Andrew recalled that just prior to the kiss, he could feel all the students in the theatre “sort of holding their breath as to what was going to happen”. Andrew felt that the kiss was “too difficult for a lot of [the students] to get over.
For some that was the focal point rather than the development of the play. The ones who are more involved in theatre...have a more open mind...they were able to look past [it]” (Andrew, Teacher interview, CS4, August, 2010). In Case Study 3, The Threepenny Opera, particularly affective moments included the appearance of “the boob”. One character’s exposed breast was the most remembered scene from the two and a half hour performance. In other instances, for example in Case Study 2, students found the language in Fatboy to be really “out there” and couldn’t quite believe that an actor could “do that”.

Students’ memories of such moments suggest that when content is highly affective and prompts a strong emotional response, much time is given to it in post-performance discussion. For most students in this study, it seems that such affective moments were less effective for the purposes of analysis. The data suggests there are two possible reasons for this. One is that students felt they simply couldn’t write about them in an assessment task and chose other less “gross” moments as examples. The other reason is that students were engaging in sophisticated analysis, were evaluating directorial choices, and finding them ineffective as choices. The latter seemed to be true in Case Study 3 where students decided that “the boob” was simply a distraction. The data suggests that the aesthetic and affective nature of theatre may be too difficult to encounter in a written assessment or may be evaluated as inappropriate.

6. 4. Remembering the performance – boundary objects
Chapter Five introduced the concept of “boundary objects” and their relevance to this research. In sociology, a boundary object is information or artefacts used in different ways by different communities. Boundary objects have a plasticity, are interpreted differently across communities but with enough immutable content to maintain integrity. Boundary objects are those objects and artefacts that cross the boundaries between multiple social worlds, are used within them, and are able to be adapted to many of them. Effective boundary objects “simultaneously sit in the middle of a group of actors with divergent viewpoints. They adapt to local needs within a social world yet are robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites” (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p. 46). I have introduced the concept to this study in order to consider how particular artefacts such as a script, a
theatre program, education resources, post-show Q&As and recordings of performances can operate effectively or “translate” across two or more communities. The following discussion identifies particular boundary objects and considers how teachers used them in the post-performance stage of teaching performance analysis.

6. 4. 1. The script

Prior to and beyond the lived experience of the performance, a script exists as an artefact, a representation of the performance that will be, and then will have been. As an artefact I claim it is also a boundary object, one that is “adaptable to different viewpoints” such as the viewpoints of the Playlist Advisory Panel, teachers, students, directors, designers and actors. Further it is “robust enough to maintain identity across them”. A script is as Davis (1988) argues a pre-text for the performance. In all four case studies theatre companies used scripts as the basis for rehearsing and producing the performance. In all four case studies, the playscript is not required to be studied. However, the script was used extensively in one particular case study for the purposes of remembering and analysing a performance.

In Case Study 3, The Threepenny Opera, both teachers felt that the written script enabled students to remember the performance. Jess asked students to use the script as a prompt and to “to write down in the script [things from the show] and then we can remember when something happened” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). Jess’s colleague, Simone, believed the script was an essential part of teaching performance analysis, even when a script is not a mandated part of study. Simone stated that in analysing characters for Theatre Studies Unit 4 the script was essential. She stated that a direct strategy she used was to have students identify a character and then interrogate the script asking, “What is in the written text about them? What do the other characters in the script say about them? What do the stage directions say about them? What do they say about themselves?” Simone stated, “It’s in the text. If it is a good text you find everything that you need…you have to have the text, without text it is very difficult” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, August, 2010).

For Jess and Simone’s classrooms, the script became a powerful artefact for provoking memories, providing memories and possibly proving memories. In this instance the written
script managed to traverse different contexts – as a text for study in the classroom, as a text to be staged in the rehearsal room — yet remain “robust enough” to maintain its identity across them” (Star & Griesemer, 1989, pp. 388-389). Conversely, in other case studies the script was far less valued as an artefact. In VCE Drama script is not a focus within the Study Design, but the data raises interesting questions with regard to how a script may be positioned as an effective boundary object in the teaching of performance analysis in all contexts.

6. 4. 2. Education resources

My own perception is that the specificity of some production resource packs and the way they are tailored to particular productions and designed to bring out particular themes is a limiting factor – they can make watching resemble a decoding exercise of spotting themes and responding accordingly. Anecdotally, I find that such resources tend to flatten and homogenize the experiences and responses produced (Reason, 2010, pp. 112-113).

Despite Reason’s misgivings, education resources created by theatre companies were considered of value to some teachers in this study. The resources created by companies varied in content, focus and detail. They generally included, as a minimum, information about the presenting company, the cast and creative team, a synopsis of the play, contextual information about the playwright and possibly some images from the production. Beyond this, some companies included more detailed materials such as interviews with directors, designers and performers, and even activities and analysis questions that focused specifically on the assessment tasks for performance analysis. Published just prior to the performance season, in more recent years many education resources have included links to digital material.

In this study, each participating theatre company created a set of education resources for their production (See examples in Appendices 13-16). The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) do not mandate that education resources be created by theatre companies as a condition of being selected to the Playlists. However, the letter to successful companies within the timelines of this study reads, “Whilst there is no requirement for education notes or forum discussions many theatre companies do provide
these resources for students and they are much appreciated by teachers and students” (VCAA, Post selection process information, 2010). The Manager stated, “There’s been a sense of growth in the industry with notes and resources in hard copy and some companies moving into online forums”. The Manager spoke of such education resources as “value adding” to student learning. In some instances she believed producing resources allows industry practice and the study design to “align” or “connect” (Manager, KLA, The Arts, interview, March 2010). This is a comment that contributes significantly to the discussion. It supports Star and Greisemer’s (in Wenger, 1998) stance that boundary objects such as education notes and Q&As enable a “nexus” of perspectives, and possible alignment or connection (p. 108). The following discussion examines how teachers regarded, valued and used the education resources in order to teach performance analysis.

In Case Study 1, Melissa obtained the education resource from Machinations Theatre Ensemble. She stated, “I tend to use them, then give [the students] my version but not the whole notes I get from the theatre company” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). Melissa integrated into her teaching what she felt was “relevant” from the education resource. She selected from the resource, adapting it for the purposes of her “local needs”. The final notes Melissa presented to her students provided a highly detailed examination and interpretation of One Hundred through the lens of the Outcome, Key Knowledge, Key Skills and the performance style of non-naturalism (See Appendix 9).

In Case Study 2, Kate believed education resources provided by theatre companies were “very valuable”. She spoke about the “affirming” effect the resources could have with regard to her own and the class’s interpretative and analytical choices. Kate felt that education resources could provide “new meaning” to and even the “right” understanding of a performance, particularly in the context of assessment. She stated, “It’s nice to have something in black and white that clarifies. That says, oh yes, that was a piece of absurdist theatre. Good, I’ve got that right!” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2 March 2010). Kate’s discussion suggests there is an authoritative voice within education resources one that determines the “right” way to remember and analyse a performance.
In Case Study 3, *The Threepenny Opera*, Jess gave each member of the class a copy of combined script and education resources to emphasise their importance (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). Jess’s colleague Simone believed that the value of an education resource was completely dependent on “who writes them” and value was directly related to the way in which the content referenced “the key criteria that we need addressing” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, August, 2010).

In the post-performance context, Jess’s students used the education resource to vigorously discuss the interpretation of the character of Jenny. In the Victorian Opera and Malthouse Theatre co-production of *The Threepenny Opera*, the role of Jenny was played by a man and was portrayed as a transvestite. Actor Paul Capsis stated that this was how the director saw the character and that it was a symbolic choice (Education Resources, Malthouse Theatre, 2010 – see Appendix 15). Jess’s students found this choice highly “confusing” and “a really pretentious way of explaining it”. Jess stated that the students “didn’t understand why he said [the character of Jenny] was a man when there is no reference in the script to Jenny being a bloke and no other characters treated her like a bloke…there was an inconsistency there” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July 2010). While students heartily disagreed during class discussion with the actor’s interpretation of the role and the director’s reason for casting a male in a female role, the students seemed to accept the interpretation when the time came to write their assessment task. It is possible that the students were deferring to a perceived immutability and authority within the education resource, despite their initial disagreement.

In Case Study 3 education resources had further significance as a boundary object for Jess. She valued them as “someone who also directs productions”. She appreciated reading about “a director talking about the choices they’ve made and the purposes they had and their thinking around whether they succeeded and [whether] you read it in the way it was intended” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). In this case study, the education resources provided both value and meaning for Jess as a teacher and as an artist. In Case Study 4, Andrew didn’t access the education resources for *Shakespeare’s R&J*, nor did Janelle, the returning teacher. The resources were available for download from the Arts Centre Melbourne website but when asked, Andrew didn’t seem aware of their availability.
and Janelle said she “just didn’t access them”. In this case study, disruptions to the timelines and access to resources clearly impacted.

The data suggests that an education resource potentially has the qualities of an effective boundary object. Chapter Seven will examine the role of education resources from the perspective of the theatre companies in order to explore the concept further and determine their efficacy.

6. 5. Assessment

Within this chapter, the discussion has examined the pedagogies teachers engage with in order to assist their students to remember, de-construct and re-construct the performance. The discussion now focuses on how teachers’ adopt pedagogical practices in order to address assessment tasks, both school based and externally examined.

There are two assessment tasks in VCE Drama and Theatre Studies. One is school based (commonly known as a SAC) and the other is an externally written examination set by the curriculum authority, the VCAA. The Assessment Handbooks for both VCE Studies provide teachers with advice for setting school based assessment tasks including the scope of a task, its relevance to the Key Knowledge and Key Skills, the recommended timelines and conditions of assessment, and a series of descriptors that serve to act as indicators for high, medium and low achievement (VCAA, 2007-2013). Appendices 18 and 19 present the assessment descriptors for the performance analysis tasks for Drama and Theatre studies. The following is an example of one school based assessment task created for Drama Unit 3 that draws on the requirements of the task, the Key Skills and the Assessment Handbook:
UNIT 3, OUTCOME THREE
ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF A NON-NATURALISTIC PERFORMANCE

NAME: _______________________________________________________

The written report should focus on the ways in which non-naturalistic performance styles and theatrical conventions are used, how characters are represented and the ways in which dramatic and stagecraft elements are manipulated in a performance.

CRITERION ONE: Understanding of non-naturalism in performance
1. Analyse the way in which the space was used in the performance – how did this impact on the actor-audience relationship and the non-naturalistic performance style? 3 marks

2. Evaluate how effective the use of set was in enhancing the non-naturalistic style of the performance. 3 marks

(Case Study 2, Drama Unit 3, Fatboy, March 2010)

The following is an example of part of an assessment task that one teacher created for Theatre Studies Unit 4, drawing on the Study Design, the Assessment Handbook and the Key Skills:

1. Choose two characters from the play and analyse his/her status, motivation and characteristics
Your answer should be succinct and is to be presented in the tables provided. You are not expected to answer in full paragraphs and may use dot points for this response.

Character 1..........................................................Actor: ..........................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of Character</th>
<th>Examples that demonstrate the character’s status from the playscript</th>
<th>Examples that demonstrate the character’s status through the actor’s use of expressive skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You may wish to compare the Character to other characters To define their status</td>
<td>Dialogue or stage directions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motivation of Character Give specific examples of how the character’s motivation is revealed and/or explored through the production

(Case Study 3, Theatre Studies Unit 4, The Threepenny Opera, July, 2010)

It is evident from the examples presented how the language of the written curriculum shapes the assessment task questions and assumes teacher and student knowledge of key
terminology. The language of the written curriculum permeates teaching performance analysis through all three stages of pedagogy — pre-performance, in theatre and post-performance explored presented so far. As discussed in the Literature Review, the focus on such curriculum specific language and the emphasis teachers place on assessment generate a “backward design” approach to teaching (Wiggins & Tighe, 2005). From the beginning of this chapter, the analysis and discussion has noted that teachers acknowledge they must prioritize students’ understanding of the language of the curriculum before any further exploration can be undertaken.

Beyond the requirements of the written curriculum, the data suggests that practical circumstances also determine when assessment tasks take place. These include school timetabling, VCE administrative demands, school holidays, and student and teacher readiness. As indicated earlier, in Case Study 3 students completed their written assessment after a three-week holiday break. In Case Studies 1, 2 and 4, students wrote their assessment within ten to fourteen days after seeing the performance. If, as Levy (2005) suggests that all that may be left of a live performance is “fragments”, the timing of an assessment task may be critical to capturing, making meaning from and analysing those fragments. This process is important when students are being assessed. The following discussion examines how teachers and students consider ‘remembering’ and its relationship to assessment.

6.5.1. Remembering for assessment – the teachers’ perspective

Teachers recognized school-based assessment as both a task in itself and as “practice” for the end-of-year written exam. In Case Study 3, Jess stated that preparing students to approach the SAC began with worksheets to take home then, on the day of the assessment, they “use the study hall and it is one hundred minutes and [this year] they were allowed to have their annotated script. (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). Her colleague Simone is quite strategic. She stated that her students “will look at which two characters we can get the most out of in light of the SAC and we look at it in light of what could be the exam question be? So I give them a series of Unit 4 SAC questions and say, well which character gives us more to write about?” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, August, 2010 – author’s emphasis). The bolding of the phrase is purposeful. In this case study, a character is
selected by the teacher for its capacity to provide “more to write about” than for any other reason. Simone also emphasised the importance of using a quote to “go with each comment they want to make” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, August, 2010). The assessment task for Theatre Studies Unit 4 does not require students to study the script nor quote from the script, but Jess and Simone wanted students to use the script. They drew on it as a powerful tool and as evidence to prompt remembering.

In Case Study 4, Shakespeare’s R&J, the students’ usual teacher Janelle, stated that her process or the SAC would be to have the students do a practice in class focusing on questions “they need to answer”, ones that link to criteria. At Janelle’s school the final assessment task was usually open book and constructed in a manner that “prepares [students] for the actual exam time” (Janelle, Returning Teacher interview, CS4, October, 2010). As discussed within this chapter, Janelle’s usual approach to the SAC assessment was significantly interrupted, impacted by circumstances such as; timing, the absence of shared knowledge, and the absence of recorded notes of students’ initial experiences.

In Case Study 2, Fatboy, Kate felt that “it’s really hard to recall something that happened live on stage and feel it in your own self and then be able to articulate your opinions and ideas about something, I think” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010). Kate commented that her inexperience as a VCE Drama teacher was also a factor in the way she approached teaching the actual assessment task. “When [the students] are putting pen to paper and anything that is going to be a SAC, anything that goes towards an Outcome where I have to quantify their learning and understanding…I really want to make sure my students don’t put something down that’s ambiguous” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010). The concerns expressed here identify that some memories may be more valuable than others. “What to remember” in Kate’s class links directly to her teaching, to the class’s shared remembering and to the contexts in which the play was experienced, but her deep concern was will it be the “right” response? This raises questions with regard to whether external examinations encourage multiple meaning-making and if so, is this evident to teachers and students?
6.5.2. Remembering for assessment – the students’ perspective

As part of the study, students were asked to consider any challenges the performance analysis assessment task offered them, especially in relation to the written examination. In Case Study 1, students had retained substantial notes from class discussions and handouts from their teacher, notes that recorded many moments and memories from the play, ones that specifically related to Key Knowledge, Key Skills and to assessment criteria.

Some students admitted to feeling pressured in exams, not pressured necessarily to remember, but pressured for time. “We get an hour and a half. We did Theatre Studies last year and were pressed for time for every SAC. Often someone would leave out a question…pretty much most people did…because of last year I wrote so quickly I finished it all” (Ruby, student focus group, CS1, March, 2010). Another student commented that the exam task, rather than being about remembering, was about technique. She realised that she didn’t need to write “massive sentences” but to “write dot points and give an example and that’s enough. Once you understand that, it becomes easier to grasp” (Emma, student focus group, CS1, March, 2010).

In Case Study 2, Sam and his classmate Pat commented on the pressure of needing to use “drama terminology” in the assessment. Pat stated, “It was my first drama SAC so I was unsure but you gotta know...you gotta know all the terminology and…what it is…all the drama language so you can understand it and incorporate it with the questions and that’s really important” (Pat, student focus group interview 2, CS2, March, 2010). The data in this interview also highlights an interesting point, the relationship between enjoying theatre and analysing theatre. Pat commented that “boring” performances made writing challenging but because “Fatboy was fun! I wrote a bit over school time to finish writing my answers. It was good!” (Pat, student focus group interview 2, CS2 March, 2010).

In Case Study 3, some students felt that the exam provided challenges because they couldn’t fit everything they remembered in the response. They expressed frustration about having very little time to write about something they had spent a great deal of time remembering and analysing. Honour spoke with considerable passion saying, “I am someone who looks into things in great detail and I want to write all my feelings in it like
emotional feelings and about characters and stuff like that and I want to write as much as possible…but you only get a really short amount of time to write a ridiculous amount of work…which I find really, really hard. How are you meant to write about it in detail and be correct and well written in such a small space?” (Honour, student focus group interview, CS3, August, 2010).

The perceived restraints of time and space to write responses, meant that in some classrooms collective memories and group interpretations became important. In Case Study 3, Maurice stated that practicing SACs in class often generated the same ideas amongst peers and that “the easiest thing to do is to have the same idea and remember that one because that’s how you can write the SAC” (Maurice, student focus group interview, CS3, August, 2010). In the same case, Hermia commented that a whole class interpretation of the play could be highly advantageous. “The thing is that you are told that your final SAC marks are dependent on your end-of-year exam. Everyone might say the same thing in the SAC but at the end of the year we are all compared [across the State]. If our collective ideas are better than the other 1000 kids, what’s to stop us from getting the highest marks?” (Hermia, student focus group interview, CS3, August, 2010). Georgia agreed that you sometimes needed to discard certain memories and ideas because they were simply going to be “really hard and time consuming to explain” under test conditions (Georgia, student focus group interview, CS3, August 2010). For some students in this study, writing a performance analysis assessment task was more concerned with strategy and technique than it was about genuine responses.

6. 6. Remembering for the exam – students, teachers and examiners

*Everything is dependent on the end-of-year exam. It seems that all teachers teach towards the end of-year exam. It's the system more than anything* (Hermia, student focus group interview, CS3, August, 2010).

As has been indicated, VCE Drama and Theatre Studies Written Examinations occur in November each year. They are created by a panel appointed by the In the VCAA. In 2010 the Theatre Studies written exam for performance analysis stated, “Students will answer a series of questions requiring short and extended responses. Stimulus material may be provided for some questions” (VCAA, 2007-2013, p. 31). The VCE Drama written exam required that, “Students will answer a series of questions requiring short and extended responses. Stimulus material, dramatic element/s, performance style/s and/or theatrical
convention/s may be provided for some questions” (VCAA, 2007-2013, p. 26). The exam questions set for the Playlist performances for 2010 are included in Appendix 19.

As has been previously noted, the time between seeing the performance and being examined varies between two and nine months. For example in Case Study 1, the performance of One Hundred, was seen in mid-March, while in Case Study 3, the performance of The Threepenny Opera, was seen in mid-June. In some years plays may be seen as early as February or as late as mid-September but all plays are examined in November. Written exam assessors are appointed before the beginning of the school year, in January. The Theatre Studies and Drama written exams require all appointed as assessors to see a performance of all plays selected to the Playlist of the VCE Study they will be assessing. The contexts in which assessors see the plays are varied, and the processes by which they remember and record it are not on the public record.

6. 6. 1. Assessing performance analysis – the written exam

A powerful message is conveyed to teachers that [high-stakes assessment] is to be taken seriously in…secondary school (Barnes, Clarke & Stephens, 2000, p. 645).

The following discussion examines how teachers engaged with pedagogies for preparing students to write a performance analysis in the written examination.

In Case Study 1, Melissa felt concerned about the balance between the marks allocated and the time given to respond. She felt that having to write what she felt were two essays in twenty-five minutes was “huge”. She commented, “That’s one essay in twelve and a half minutes. Even one worth eighteen marks would be fairer…but to get your head around two!” (Melissa, Teacher interview 2, CS1, November, 2010).

In Case Study 2, Kate understood the purpose of the written exam as a way to provide benchmarking across the State. She stated, however that “in terms of them really articulating the experience of being there, in the theatre world, I don’t think it has a very strong bearing”

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32 The structure of the Drama Written Examination has been restructured across the years. It varies in the length of responses required by students, sometimes consisting of up to four short answer questions, at other times requiring a combination of short and extended answers.
(Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, October, 2020). Kate believed that when students come to write about the play in the exam it is simply a task of memory recall because, “It’s not live anymore. It’s kind of dead” (Kate, Teacher interview 2, CS2, October, 2010 – author’s emphasis). In Case Study 4, Janelle felt that writing performance analysis under exam conditions was achievable for students provided they have “kept all the information from Semester One read for the end of the year and we are able to go over it again with enough time” (Janelle, Returning Teacher interview, CS3, November, 2010).

Like a theatre performance, the examination process is also lived experience. You can prepare and predict but you cannot “know” until the experience or the exam actually occurs. In Case Study 1, Melissa expressed how this created anxiety within her. She stated, “You don’t know what’s going to be on the exam. I’m scared! There will be a dramatic element they’ll ask about and [the students] won’t know how to respond!” (Melissa, teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010).

Concerns with regard to what may constitute a “right” response have previously been discussed. Data indicates such concerns are elevated by the forthcoming written examination. In Case Study 3, Jess stated that because “you never really see the same show” this was of concern when it came to the exam and “that’s what [the students] worry very much about. They say, ‘Well I saw something but what happens if the examiners don’t see it and I put it in my exam and they didn’t see it?’ ” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). In Case Study 2, Kate spoke about “getting it right” quite honestly. Her concerns were about who may be marking the exam. In the context of that she said, “I suppose there is a ‘right’ when they get to the exam by the VCAA examiners… I’m fearful that if my kids put something on the exam that doesn’t make sense to a particular examiner who happens to be marking it and if they lost marks because of that… yeah, I feel this overwhelming sense of responsibility. You don’t know who is going to mark it” (Kate, Teacher interview, CS2, March, 2010).

What were the pedagogies for preparing students? Essentially, exam preparation became an act of re-remembering aspects of the performance through studying and examining a variety
of class notes, school assessed responses, the script, and education resources. These were essential artefacts of the remembered performance.

In **Case Study 3**, Jess stated that having the playscript for revision is important because “you are talking about productions you’ve seen a long time ago” (Jess, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). Her colleague, Simone, stated that she and her students used their notes, the education resource and the script as a basis for trying to “re-live” the performance.

In **Case Study 1**, Melissa believed that comprehensive notes taken during and immediately after seeing the performance were absolutely critical to “revisiting” the play. She stated, “Last year quite a few of them lost their notes on ‘Realism’. Some of them lost their notes and they couldn’t answer [the exam] properly” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). For Melissa, exam revision essentially came back to notes. “[The students] know that when they go and see [the play] that the exam is going to be in November which is, you know, a ridiculous time away from when they’re seeing it…so, they’re going to have to be really careful about writing everything down” (Melissa, Teacher interview 2, CS1, November, 2010). Despite Reason’s (2013) argument that “conversations” are the only remaining representation and affirmation of remembering the theatre event, Melissa believes that through comprehensive and detailed written notes it is possible for the performance to “come back to you”.

In **Case Study 2**, Fatboy, Kate’s teaching process for preparing for the exam moved beyond revising notes, and incorporated an imaginative practice she called ‘Post Box’. Kate placed a series of envelopes in a circle in the centre of the space with prompt questions written on them. For instance: *Write a brief synopsis of the play. List the characters in the play. What is the main performance style? How did the space impact on the actor-audience relationship?* Students sat next to one envelope, wrote a response and placed it in the envelope then the circle rotated. Once the cycle was completed the students took one envelope each, read all the responses and were required to “collate the responses to the question in your post box, read them all, select the best responses and report back to the class. You have seven minutes to do this” (Field notes, CS2, October, 2010). Kate stated that the aim of the strategy was to keep the pressure on with timing, to require the students to think quickly and write
efficiently “or at least that’s the theory”. One of Kate’s students, Olivia, stated that she had started to “get back into Fatboy” through the dialogic and inventive approaches that Kate had established in the revision sessions. “Getting it right” was still important for Kate and the way in which she taught her students. In the final revision session a student offered an interpretation of the themes in the play, one she had gleaned from online reviews. Kate advised the student not to use it in the exam because she felt the director hadn’t necessarily intended this, it was a new interpretation and not one the assessors may know about (Field notes, CS2, October, 2010).

Teachers drew heavily on past exams for clues about what could be on the exam. In Case Study 3, Simone used past exams questions, saying to her students, “Here is a question they could ask, how can we answer this and how else could they ask this?” She stated that the process was “a bit hideous but there’s no other way to bring it back to life because we don’t have a recording of it” (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). Arguably a particular memory captured in note form sits as evidence for a response, hopefully able to be manipulated to meet all contingencies. In Case Study 1, Melissa used every single past exam paper she could find from both the current Study and past Drama Study Designs. She stated, “[The students] ended up doing essays on all of them, on every paper so they were preparing themselves for every possible contingency basically” (Melissa, Teacher interview 2, CS1, November, 2010).

The importance of seeing the play with students and then co-remembering the play afterwards was particularly highlighted in Case Study 4, Shakespeare’s R&J. Returning to the school after an overseas exchange, Janelle encountered having to revise her students’ understanding of the play in order to write about a performance she hadn’t seen. She stated that her normal pedagogic process included, “discussing the performance [but] it was a bit harder for me…a lot of the kids couldn’t remember it…they actually couldn’t even tell me what it was about…I don’t know where their notes are” (Janelle, Re-turning Teacher interview, CS4, October, 2010). An accumulation of circumstances including having not seen the performance, the absence of individual students’ notes, no script or education resources, Janelle felt frustration and great concern about how the students were “going to go this year” in the exam. Yet, as Chapter Four examines, Andrew had deeply engaged the
students in many of these processes at the time of seeing the play and they had successfully written a response.

“Notes”, “keep notes”, “look at notes”, “read our notes over and over again”; these were the catch cries of students when asked about how they prepare for the written exam. Students in Case Study 3, The Threepenny Opera, were also candid in their opinions of the performance analysis component of the exam. They referred to it as “the memory game”. Hermia likened examining performance analysis to literature but with very different expectations. She stated, “Imagine if for a film study, you saw a film once and then you had to write an essay on that film based purely from your memory and perhaps a script!” (Hermia, Student focus group interview, CS3, August, 2010). Her classmate Georgia felt that the exam questions were a case of “regurgitating what you’ve already said. You aren’t displaying your understanding just using key words in an order that the examiners are going to like it” (Georgia, Student focus group interview, CS3, August, 2010). These struggles with and criticisms of the examinable component in the end-of-year exam pose questions about its relationship to learning. Further they problematize the difference between remembering the play as part of the rich experiencing of it and re-remembering the play in order to prepare for the exam.

6. 7. Questions of liveness – the recorded performance

In this thesis, theatre is defined as a performative art form, culturally situated, ephemeral and temporary in nature, presented to an audience in a particular time, particular cultural context and in a particular location. As the Literature Review explored in detail, this definition derives from the scholarly fields of semiotics, theatre studies, and drama education. In all instances scholars emphasise the ephemerality of theatre, its aesthetic qualities and celebrate its immediacy. Reason (2010) states that uniqueness of theatre is in part because, “We are unable to control the speed at which we watch a live performance, cannot re-play, re-read or re-watch and cannot re-consult it after the event” (p. 114). The following discussion reconsiders the above definition and Reason’s statement by examining the existence and function of filmed recordings of Playlist performances.
In **Case Study 1**, Machinations Theatre Ensemble produced a DVD recording of their performance of *One Hundred* specifically as a resource for schools. Providing such a resource is not a requirement for having a play selected to the Playlist and producing one can be fraught for reasons most commonly associated with copyright including coordinating the rights of the performers, the creative team, and the design team. It does, however, enable teachers and students to re-visit the performance. Melissa stated that having a DVD of the Playlist production was an invaluable tool. She commented that because her students had access to a DVD they “watched the DVD again and again…It was amazing how much we had forgotten even though we did pull [the performance] apart within an inch of its life” (Melissa, Teacher interview 2, CS1, November, 2010). In Chapter Four Melissa commented that the availability of a DVD recording of the performance was in fact highly influential in her choice of play for study. One student confirmed that a key reason the class chose *One Hundred* as a play to analyse was because “there is a video” (Emma, student focus group CS1, March, 2010). Melissa believed, “Having the DVD is fantastic. The kids love it…and a few girls took it home and just watched it over and over and over again and took more notes” (Melissa, Teacher interview 2, CS1, November, 2010).

While the Playlist Advisory Panel may refer to available digital recordings of productions in order to assist with play selection, The VCAA Manager, KLA, The Arts commented specifically on the difference between the live experience and seeing a recording. “A memory of a live event is different to a memory of a recorded event because you can’t replicate, not just what you saw, but how you felt…I think most people would agree that my feelings about my memory of seeing a live event are different from my feelings of seeing a recorded performance” (interview, March, 2010). What the Manager identifies here is that one memory is not the same as another and that the “felt” memory from a live performance is significantly different. While it is clear that access to a video of a VCE performance is an advantage when studying for an exam, such availability arguably undermines theatre as a live experience, and the multi-sensory and aesthetic qualities that scholars — and the participants in this study — agree is its uniqueness. Bundy’s et al (2012) research stated that for young people liveness meant, “Being in the audience, the comfort and discomfort of present-ness, performer vulnerability, risk and uncertainty, proximity to live action, perceptions of realness, intensity of engagement, a sense of a relationship with the actors
Affective moments such as, “the kiss”, “the boob” and the “gross language”, discussed earlier in this chapter are testament to the impact of live aspects of theatre experience. The presence of a DVD of a Playlist production poses the question; what is really being examined?

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Chapter Six explored the pedagogies that relate to the enacted and experienced curriculum after students and teachers had attended the performance of a selected play. It discussed remembering a play and then re-remembering a play. What emerged from the discussion and analysis was the importance of *time* and *timing*. Capturing memories, de-constructing and re-constructing the performance worked most effectively when they occurred as close to the experience of the performance as possible. Secondly, the timing of the school based assessment task worked best when it occurred soon after the post-performance analysis session. The gap between the school-based assessment task and the end-of-year exam varied from between two months and nine months, depending on a theatre company’s programming and the particular VCE Unit being studied. This placed pressure on teachers and students to generate written records of the performance that would enable effective re-remembering of the performance after considerable time had elapsed.

Most teachers adopted an instructional, transmissive and explicit teaching model (Bernstein in Luke, 2014; Alexander, 2008) to move their students through the requirements of the written curriculum and to link memories to discursive language. “Collective memory” (Halbwachs, 2010) was valued. Students stated it broadened their perspective and added to their repertoire of memories. In some cases students were confident to adopt different meanings and interpretations from others in their class, but the constraints of the examination often distilled multiple meanings into a single line of thinking. In other cases, teachers firmly believed there was a “right” response and they drew on key artefacts such as the script and theatre company education notes for authority. The chapter discussed these artefacts as “boundary objects”, objects that have a certain plasticity, allowing them to be “interpreted differently across communities but with enough immutable content to maintain integrity” (Star & Griesemer, 1989, pp. 388-389). The script and the education resources
presented as important boundary objects in the teaching of performance analysis, particularly in the post-performance context where the live experience no longer existed.

The chapter also explored the impact of teachers having individual interpretations of performances, ones that may sit in contrast to their colleagues. The contrasting views of the two teachers seeing *The Threepenny Opera* in Case Study 3 illuminated this point well. The data presented in Chapter Six suggests that personal aesthetic and individual teacher interpretation may impact on pedagogical approaches and therefore students’ interpretations and meaning-making.

Nicholson (2006) discusses the challenges of capturing “the energy of the oral and embodied practices of performance in the rather more static medium of the written word” (p. 1). However, in VCE performance analysis the written word is generally all that remains of the lived experience and in all four cases the written word proved invaluable. The capturing and recording of memories of a live performance was heavily vested in “good” note taking. Consequently teachers encouraged and, in some cases, expected students to keep a written log for the play “with everything in it”. The value of this strategy became evident when preparing for the written exam. In Case Study 4, the students had apparently not retained their notes and had very little memory of the performance of *Shakespeare’s R&J* when they were required to prepare for the exam. The Chapter also considered the value and importance of teachers and students having a shared experience of the performance. The experiences of Jess in Case Study 3 and Janelle in Case Study 4, highlighted that teachers and students co-experiencing the live performance is a critical part of pedagogies for teaching performance analysis.

Preparing for the written examination tended to privilege strategies and techniques to manage time, rather than writing about more powerful or affective memories. The experience of the performance seemed very distant, one teacher calling it “dead”. Instead, teachers and students drew heavily on a combination of written notes, handouts, scripts and education notes as well as past exams. Some teachers appeared to adopt an almost forensic approach to their exploration of past exams seeking clues and insights as to what the questions would be for that year. Teachers didn’t necessarily adopt that same forensic
strategy with the Study Designs, by re-acquainting themselves with its expectations and language. Recordings of VCE Playlist shows, most notably in Case Study 1, One Hundred, raises questions with regard to equity in studying performance analysis but significantly, goes to the heart of the value of live theatre performance as a text for study. Significantly, and this will be discussed in the final chapter, embodied pedagogies were noticeably absent in the post-performance context, at both the remembering and re-remembering stages.
CHAPTER SEVEN:
Crossing boundaries - The role of theatre companies

7. 1. Introduction:

Theatre education always involves a negotiation of different organizational structures, cultural practices and interpersonal relationships, and place and space have become increasingly important concepts through which to interrogate theatre and performance practices (Nicholson, 2011, p. 11).

In previous chapters I have carefully focused the analysis and discussion on the written, enacted and experienced curriculum and classroom based pedagogies. In Chapters Four, Five and Six the interests and practices of three key stakeholders have been examined and analysed; the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority as the producers and arbiters of the written curriculum and Playlists, and teachers and students within the school setting who enact and experience the written curriculum through distinct pedagogical choices. Side-of-stage the theatre companies have been ever present. In this chapter the focus turns towards the theatre companies who constitute a third key stakeholder in the performance analysis process without whom there would be no Playlists.

The following analysis and discussion explores factors that shape a theatre company’s engagement with and inclusion in the VCE Playlists. In doing so it poses a number of questions: How do the participating companies define their theatre practice and theatre aesthetic? Why do companies choose to submit and what do they choose to submit to the Playlist selection process? Is knowledge of education, specifically the Victorian Certificate of Education, important? What are, as Nicholson (2011) states, the “organizational structures, cultural practices and interpersonal relationships” that create intersections or disjunctions between teachers, students and theatre companies during the process of analysing live theatre performance?

In structuring this chapter, I begin by briefly examining the theatre industry as a broad community of practice. The discussion then addresses how each participating theatre company positions their theatre making and company profile in the public domain. What then follows is an outline of the timelines necessary to select, submit and then present a
Playlist production, a discussion that highlights the initial intersections between theatre companies and the education sector. Once the stage is set, the chapter examines theatre companies’ understanding of their role and function within the systems that generate the performance analysis task. It considers the intersections and disjunctions between the discourses of theatre practice and of the curriculum. Finally the chapter considers what the data suggests with regard to theatre companies’ potential pedagogic role.

7. 2. Theatre companies as communities of practice

As has been previously discussed, a way of considering the theatre industry is as a “community of practice”. Wenger (1998) defines community as “the social configuration in which enterprises are defined as worth pursuing, and our participation is recognized as competent” (p. 5). Such a definition can be applied to the participant theatre companies, their personnel, and their practice. As companies they have related enterprises, belong to the same broader “institution” of the theatre industry, they face similar conditions, have overlapping styles or discourses, or compete for the same resources, but each theatre company interprets that broader discourse and then develops and defines its own practice and style becoming what Wenger (1998) calls a “constellation” within the overall industry. The following discussion draws on this theory to examine what the study revealed about how theatre companies’ engagement with the Playlist process impacts on the written, enacted and experienced curriculum and pedagogies for teaching of performance analysis.

7. 3. Contemporary theatre practice and the curriculum

Considerable analysis and discussion of the Playlist selection process and criteria has occurred already in this thesis. Briefly, key criteria for selection include:

- Plays that demonstrate dramatic merit
- Are excellent examples of their form
- Provide access to contemporary theatre repertoire
- Address community standards.

It is my intention to explore how theatre companies have filtered this terminology through the broader institutional frame of contemporary theatre practice. Chapter Four provided an
example of the artistic process of participating theatre company Machinations Theatre Ensemble. This example spoke to the varying artistic visions and processes of theatre making in the twenty-first century, particularly in a postdramatic context. Lehmann (1999/2006) describes postdramatic theatre as a form whereby the makers register a dissatisfaction with drama’s two fundamental processes: the representation of the external world and the structuring of time. Harvie and Lavender (2013) define “postdramatic” as being theatre that no longer focuses predominantly on the dramatic text or characters as represented by those more “traditional” texts. Postdramatic text “emphasises the visual (for our media age)” and can also sacrifice “a sense of coherent narrative synthesis”, replacing these more familiar structures with “dense and intense theatrical moments” (p. 12).

An examination of each participant theatre company’s mission statement publicly revealed their purposes and intentions for making theatre, and that theatre practice concerns the production and presentation of both dramatic and postdramatic works. The participant companies variously defined their purpose and intention as being concerned with; being human, storytelling, imagination, excellence, possibility and that such theatre aims to be: evolving, collaborative, original, challenging, engaging, new, relevant, dynamic, exciting, entertaining, uniting, passionate, unique, vibrant, inspiring, educational, and informative (Terms are drawn from across all four companies’ published mission statements in 2010).

To draw the reader more deeply into an understanding of contemporary theatre practice for the participant companies, I present the following company descriptions and mission statements. The image that accompanies each description serves as a reminder that theatre is ephemeral. They are but a visual fragment of the work the students saw. As Sontag (1977) comments, “A photograph is both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence” (p. 17). The relevance of presenting images draws on Levy’s (2005) description of what remains of theatre, “A few vivid after-images, perhaps out of sequence, a fragment of a scene, moments in a performance” (p. 25).
Case Study 1

**MACHINATIONS THEATRE ENSEMBLE**

*Machinations Theatre Ensemble* is an evolving company of performers and collaborators working to create visual / physical theatre that is original in form, challenging in content and engaging to our audiences. We are dedicated to the exploration, development and production of new theatrical forms combining physical theatre with contemporary practice, and relevant issues with a focus on ensemble work. Our aim is to create new, dynamic, exciting performances that are not didactic but genuinely engage, entertain and challenge our audience. This belief drives Machinations’ work; impacting upon both the form and content of the work we create.


Image 1: *One Hundred (100)*, Machinations Theatre Ensemble, 2010
Case Study 2

RED STITCH ACTORS’ THEATRE

Established in 2002, Red Stitch Actors Theatre is Australia’s leading ensemble theatre company.

In the intimate enclave of our converted church hall in St Kilda East, the actors of the Red Stitch ensemble develop, curate and present work from Australia and the world…what unites us is our passion for theatre and its possibilities. We ask questions of ourselves, of our audience, and of the works we produce. We’re constantly striving to find stories that challenge us and question what it means to be human. We work with our own core production team as well as actively seeking collaborations with actors, directors, designers, playwrights and organisations to help us continue to enrich the future of Australian theatre.

(Source: http://redstitch.net/meetredstitch/ 2010)

Image 2: Fatboy, Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre, 2010
Case Study 3

VICTORIAN OPERA

Victorian Opera aspires to present distinctive and innovate opera and music theatre which captures the public imagination, develops artists and builds a reputation for excellence. As Victoria’s state opera company and only professional opera company, Victorian Opera is developing a unique role for itself. We annually commission new Australian chamber opera, produce or co-produce our own productions, have a vibrant education program, including community access and regional touring, are committed to less familiar repertoire, as well as known works.


Image 3: The Threepenny Opera, Victorian Opera (in co-production with Malthouse Theatre), 2010
Case Study 4

RIVERSIDE PRODUCTIONS
A bicentennial project, Riverside Theatres Parramatta opened in 1988 offering three venues under the one roof. Riverside aims to open up the world of theatre to young people through live performances as well as practical learning experiences. To inspire and excite educate and inform. Riverside education presents a broad range of primary and secondary programming from children's theatre productions to circus, physical theatre, dance, Shakespeare and contemporary places, dramatized play reading and a range of workshops.

(Source: http://asp-au.secure-zone.net/v2/indexPop.jsp?id=848/934/2903&lng=en, 2013)

Image 4: Shakespeare’s R&J, Riverside Productions, 2010
By positioning the mission, vision and artistic practice in the public domain, each company endeavours to carve out a unique position in the broader institutional frame of the theatre industry. From reading the statements it is clear that each has the intention of creating theatre that engages, entertains, and innovates, and some companies include in their mission statement an intention to engage with the education sector.

In Case Study 3, Victorian Opera state they “have a vibrant education program, including community access and regional touring”. In Case Study 4, and more overtly, Riverside’s mission “aims to open up the world of theatre to young people through live performances as well as practical learning experiences. To inspire and excite, educate and inform”. The inclusion of such language in the mission statements of these two companies clearly suggests the intention to engage with both young people and the education sector. It raises the question, does the absence of such discourse in the other two company’s statements signal potential disconnect?

7. 4. Submitting a play - Who’s our audience? Which play?

Nowadays, the most general and also most important aspect of theatre consumption systems in Europe is theatre education, which means the development of possible audiences with tastes and knowledge (cultural capital) to experience a 'mental profit' from theatre visits (van Manen & Tulloch, 2004, p. 272).

7. 4. 1. A student audience

In choosing to submit a play to the Playlist selection process is to acknowledge that many audience members will be young and/or will be of school age. The students who participated in this study were aged between sixteen and eighteen. The four theatre companies spoke about why they wanted to engage with schools through the Playlist process. Companies saw live theatre as a way of offering valuable points of “reflection” for young people, as an opportunity to “identify” with particular characters, to educate or “re-educate” them, and to “inculcate” a love of live theatre so that “art and culture is not lost”. Some companies believed that schools themselves had “an obligation” to expose young people to theatre. Some company members believed live theatre experiences offered young people alternative entertainment to “electronic media”, it provided a “different emotional experience” and
aligned with young people’s propensity to “live in the present”. Some stated that younger audiences “reacted to different things” and all companies felt that young audiences brought a very different “energy” to a performance (Quoted words are drawn from across the four case studies, theatre company interviews, 2010).

7.5 Why submit?
Theatre companies and theatre producers in Victoria, indeed nationally, have developed a growing awareness and knowledge of the Playlists and their function within the Victorian Certificate of Education over the past fifteen years. Theatre companies also have an awareness of the relationship between curriculum and programming choices. Ewing (in O’Toole et al, 2014) generally found that “a crowded curriculum and limited resources meant that many teachers could only justify student theatre attendance when a production explicitly connected to the syllabus. This therefore influenced the choices that they made” (Ch. 5, p. 87). Goldberg (in Schonmann, 2011) suggests that in today’s educational environment “accountability is a (maybe the) driving force and principals and teachers are often reluctant to spend school time on activities that may not translate into higher test scores” (p. 272). In the context of this study I offer the argument that written curriculum, and the need to enact it through the mechanism of the Playlists, dominates the theatre experiences of senior secondary students in Victoria. The Playlist process has in fact infiltrated the institutional frame of the theatre industry. For theatre companies wishing to engage directly with the education sector, having a production selected to the VCE Playlists is highly desirable and many theatre companies understand this well. For example in Case Study 3 the Artistic Director (AD) of Victorian Opera, recognized that programmed works needed to “fit in” with the curriculum because that is “why [schools] would come” (AD, CS3, April, 2010).

Chapter Four of this thesis examined and problematized concepts of choice and decision making, highlighting the factors that impact selecting a Playlist, and that impact teachers selecting a play to study for performance analysis. Such factors included timing, content and form, school culture, personal aesthetic, discipline knowledge, and assessment. What are the
factors that motivate theatre companies to submit plays to the VCE Playlists selection process?

The analysis of theatre company data revealed a range of differing intentions and motivations. Close analysis of interviews, and examination of application forms revealed five distinct reasons for submitting a play:

A. *The theatrical work is made specifically for VCE Drama students* – Case Study 1, Machinations Theatre Ensemble, *One Hundred*

B. *The theatrical work is submitted in order to broaden the company’s audience base* – Case Study 2, Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre, *Fatboy*

C. *The theatrical is submitted with embedded pedagogical intentions* – Case Study 3, Victorian Opera, *The Threepenny Opera*

D. *The theatrical work is by young people, for young people, with youth specific content* – Case Study 4, Riverside Productions, *Shakespeare’s R&J*

E. *The theatrical work aligns directly with VCE Drama coursework* – Case Study 4, Riverside Productions (presented by Arts Centre Melbourne) *Shakespeare’s R&J.*

7. 5. 1. **Theatrical work made specifically for VCE students**

In **Case Study 1, One Hundred**, the Artistic Director (AD) of Machinations Ensemble Theatre first encountered the VCE Playlist in 2006/2007. She said, “I was making work with the students [at NMIT] who were in a Theatre Arts program and we had to make a show [Fallen Sky]…a teacher saw it and said, ‘That should be on the VCE Drama Play List’…I didn’t really know what that meant” (AD interview, CS1, March, 2010). Machinations Theatre Ensemble emerged as a theatre company from having a production selected for the VCE Drama Playlist. The AD explained that creating non-naturalistic productions for VCE students became a “core mission” for the company. Since 2007 they made work for student audiences, particularly senior secondary drama students “because we’ve developed a relationship with the teachers now as well…and it comes back to what the company’s committed to and it is…in a way wanting to be part of a community…for me my community

33 Northern Metropolitan Institute of Technology/TAFE
is based in education” (AD interview, CS1, March, 2010). As a theatre company, Machinations Theatre Ensemble is unique to the Playlist process, completely embracing it as a paradigm for making theatre. The Company make work that is directly targeted at the VCE Drama performance analysis process and as a company they actively seek to deepen connections with Drama teachers and students. One Hundred began as a scripted play but was adapted and interpreted to the stage using “non-naturalism”, the recognised performance style in VCE Drama. The AD stated, “One Hundred is…a good reminder to students that through the use of a simple inexpensive prop, coupled with imagination and the magic of transformation they can create wonderful, engaging powerful theatre. Machinations Theatre Ensemble wants to make ‘good theatre’ for students” This mean that that includes “a good story, good characters, good production values…something of substance not fairy floss” (AD interview, CS1, March, 2010). As a theatre company, Machinations Theatre Ensemble’s practice situates the VCE performance analysis task within the core of its contemporary theatre practice. Students attending the performance see recognizable theatrical conventions, dramatic elements and aesthetic processes that are drawn directly from the written curriculum.

### 7.5.2 Broadening the company’s audience base

In Case Study 2, Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre was successful in having its production of Fatboy included in the 2010 Drama Unit 3 Playlist. Within the broader institutional frame of the theatre industry, Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre began as a profit share organisation. This means that if there is box office profit, it is shared amongst the creative and production teams. Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre programmes eight plays a year. The Company’s annual season of works is discussed and debated by the Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre ensemble with the final decisions made by the Artistic Director (AD). The AD admitted that he knew nothing about the submission process or the VCE curriculum and that this was the realm of the Schools’ Committee. He did offer in his interview that schools audiences help to “fill the theatre” meaning that actors then have an opportunity to get paid because “they book it out…so you don’t need to market so hard because you’ve got a guaranteed audience” (AD

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34 Since this study began they have received Australia Council organisational and also philanthropic funding, and then more recently that funding has been withdrawn.
Interview, CS2, March, 2010). Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre decided to connect to schools in the first instance because they felt their current subscriber base was too “middle aged”. Secondly, they wanted to engage with schools in order to educate young people more broadly about theatre, what van Maanen and Tulloch (2004) refer to as “the mental profit of theatre visits” (p. 272). Their conversations with teachers led them to believe that teachers wanted to take their students to see something more “outside the square”, by an established company but “something new and exciting and wasn’t the same old thing time and time again” (Louise, Schools’ Committee, CS2, March, 2010).

Part of the Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre application form submitted to the VCAA stated, “Having been introduced to the company via their respective schools, VCE students will have forged a connection to an organisation presenting the highest quality contemporary theatre repertoire” (2010 Playlist Submission, Red Stitch, September 2009). The assumption here is that the Playlists will provide an initial engagement, one that will forge ongoing connections. Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre’s Schools’ Committee was created in 2007 specifically to make links between the theatre company and the education sector. Such a deliberate choice to create a Schools’ Committee again shifts the organisational frame or purpose of the company because it shifts the “circumstances of the meeting” between company and audience (Van Manen, 1991, p. 260).

Two of the Schools’ Committee members participated in this study, a member of the Acting Ensemble, Emily, and the Company’s Production Manager, Louise. The Company produced only scripted work, generally Australian premieres, and none of its shows were programmed or developed specifically for schools’ audiences. The Playlist submission process for Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre began with general company programming. “We choose the best season for Red Stitch and then as a Schools’ Committee we go, ‘Okay how are we going to tailor a show, what’s it going to be, what’s appropriate for kids’?” (Emily, Schools’ Committee, CS2, March, 2010). There were several factors that influenced the Schools’ Committee’s choice of Fatboy. These factors included the theatrical form of the

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35 These are pseudonyms.
play, the fact it was based on a “classic” text and that it was “high energy” and “fun”. The first word heard in Fatboy is “Fuck!” shouted from off stage by the main character. The remainder of the play is littered with coarse language, grotesque characters and acts of savagery, all positioned within a highly exaggerated and satirized political world. The AD at the time of this study was surprised that Fatboy was selected to the Playlist because he felt it would be considered “too obscene”. He stated, “In previous years [the VCAA] have rejected things because of language or because of violence” (AD interview, CS2, March, 2010) and Fatboy had both. This comment invites the question why the play was submitted by the Company, but Louise stated the Committee felt, “There is so much in [Fatboy] that you can use as a student, whereas, none of [the other plays in the season] has as much that we thought would be appropriate”. I asked them how they arrived at that conclusion. “That’s a good question”, said Emily. Both considered this, then Linda offered the following; “Well Emily and Isabel (a fellow Committee member) are teachers. I’m married to a teacher” (Louise and Emily, Schools’ Committee, CS2, March, 2010). Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre’s original reason for submitting to the VCE Playlists was to connect with schools and build a younger audience base. The discussion about Fatboy however provides further insight into how the Company makes decisions about what type of theatre will engage students, what may or may not be appropriate for them, and importantly how the Company feels the selected work may address the curriculum.

### 7. 5. 3. Embedded pedagogical intentions

In Case Study 3, Victorian Opera’s rationale for co-submitting The Threepenny Opera to the Playlist with Malthouse Theatre was based on a previously successful submission; Through the Looking Glass in 2008. This too had been a co-production with Malthouse Theatre. Through the Looking Glass was a contemporary opera based on Lewis Carroll’s famous novel and sequel to Alice in Wonderland. The decision to submit Through the Looking Glass and then The Threepenny Opera was based on what the AD refers to as the “multi-purpose layering” that both operatic productions offered. For the AD of Victorian Opera, works such as Through the Looking Glass and The Threepenny Opera offer the

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36 Alfred Jarry’s UbuRoi (1896) a play in which Jarry satirises power, greed, and their evil practices
multi-layering of, “Something that will deal with language, something that will deal with music, something that will deal with drama, something that will deal with design” (AD interview, CS3, April, 2010). In essence what the AD is outlining is Pavis’ definition of mise-en-scene, “The bringing together or confrontation, in a given time and space, of different signifying systems, for an audience” (1984, p. 24). The AD argues that neither Through the Looking Glass nor The Threepenny Opera was created specifically for young people. “I think with students…you have to bring them to your level and say ‘this is not a work for children’. This is a work” (AD interview, CS3, April, 2010 – participant’s emphasis).

The AD was also interested in having The Threepenny Opera selected to the VCE Playlists because of what he called the “intrinsic value” in the work. Goldberg (2011) argues that “children deserve to know and experience great moments of artistry” (in Schonmann, p. 272) and the AD’s attitude accords with this. He explained, “Intrinsic values are what I refer to as the immeasurable, the intangible, and the priceless, that’s what comes out of it. [a student] identifies with a circumstance in the drama and understands that circumstance through his own experience and thereby has his experience either validated or negated by what he/she sees she sees on stage” (AD interview CS3, April, 2010). He was not interested in what he referred to as the “box ticking” that may accompany the specifics of the written curriculum. The AD’s comments indicate deeply held beliefs about pedagogy and the role of theatre and particularly music in education. As an arts educator himself he believed that having a set Playlist of performed works is “great”. He stated, “The thing about having a set work and studying it properly is that it gives you all the tools to study other work. Analysing a major piece of work thoroughly sets you up for analysing everything” (AD interview, CS3, April, 2010). Similarly to Machinations Theatre Ensemble, Victorian Opera is a company that has made a dedicated pedagogical ‘buy in’ to the education sector.

7.5.4 Work by young people, for young people, with youth specific content and aligns directly with VCE Drama coursework

In Case Study 4, Arts Centre Melbourne (ACM) submitted Shakespeare’s R&J, produced by Riverside Productions, to the VCE Playlist selection process. Arts Centre Melbourne had
programmed the play for their Education and Families season 2010. The companies in this case study offer two different perspectives on the same production – the perspective of the producing company and the perspective of the presenting company. Riverside is predominantly a youth theatre company. In an interview with the producer it was revealed she believed there was “a direct link between the production and students coming to see it”. She stated that the cast were all in their early twenties and were themselves not long out of school. For her, these were important factors in engaging young audiences and in providing an appropriate play for study (Producer Interview, April, 2010). These factors also aligned directly with Riverside’s mission statement which was “to inspire, educate and inform young people about theatre - young people performing young people’s issues to young audiences” (from Riverside Productions website, 2010).

The cast confirmed the Company’s beliefs stating that choosing *Shakespeare’s R&J* to submit to the VCE Playlist made sense because it was “dealing with Shakespeare”, even as an adaptation and it was “dealing with emotions and with heightened stakes and with themes that are the largest and purest that they are going to be and I think that is very attractive” (Ben, Cast Interview, CS4, May, 2010).

The presenting venue, Arts Centre Melbourne, submitted *Shakespeare’s R&J* to the Playlists because the organisation believed the production aligned with the Drama curriculum. In an on-line interview, the Producer of Art Centre Melbourne’s Education and Families Program drew attention to the production’s capacity to align with the non-naturalistic performance style of VCE Drama and thus believed it would “benefit the students’ own practice”. At the time this interview was conducted, the Producer also held the role of Chief Examiner of the Solo Performance Examination for the VCE Drama Study and had considerable knowledge of the written curriculum in Drama. His comment about its selection was, “I think that this particular production of *Shakespeare’s Romeo & Juliet* or *R&J* has been selected by the Curriculum Authority [because] it captures the non-naturalistic performance style beautifully with minimal props, no costume change. It is all

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about the power of the actor being able to convey difference through physical and vocal choices” (Producer, Arts Centre Melbourne, April, 2010). Arts Centre Melbourne presented the work from May 4-8 in 2010, after which the production toured to a range of regional venues including the regional performing arts centre where Case Study 4 data was collected.

The production of Shakespeare’s R&J, an adaption and re-imagining of a classic Shakespearean text, and Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre’s Fatboy, a contemporary adaptation and re-imagining of Alfred Jarry’s classic Ubu Roi, generated discussion that suggested there were accepted beliefs amongst theatre companies that classic texts remain highly relevant to young audiences and to education in the twenty-first century.

**7. 6. Crossing / blurring boundaries**

Teachers and students, and members of theatre companies may share some common discourse, but their identities and daily practices are “bound” by their lived experiences and the daily spaces they inhabit. The visit to the theatre therefore becomes, in communities of practice theory, a potential “boundary event” (Wenger, 1998). As this thesis has clearly outlined, teachers and students generally see a performance of the selected play once. That single experience of the performed play is a critical intersection between enacted and experienced curriculum, and contemporary theatre practice. It is the “communicable” aspect of theatre practice and education. Chapter Five explored how teachers approached the preparatory stage by addressing assessment tasks and the discursive language of the written curriculum. Each group of students and their teacher/s arrived at the theatre performance as a consequence of that specific preparation process. The following analysis examines what happens when the ‘curriculum’ enters the theatre through the presence of a VCE audience. This entry point is examined through theatre company perceptions, intentions, knowledge of curriculum, and the critical artefacts or “boundary objects” of education resources and Q&A sessions.
7. 6. 1. High knowledge of VCE curriculum and the analysis task

Two case studies indicated a high knowledge of VCE curriculum and the performance analysis task. In Case Study 1, One Hundred, the Artistic Director (AD) of Machinations Theatre Ensemble drew directly on her knowledge of the VCE curriculum in order to create and direct Company productions. She stated, “I understand the list of criteria that they are examined on which is time frame shifts, transformations…and when I’m making work I kind of keep that in mind…to make sure that there’s stuff in there to give [the students] plenty to write about for their exams” (AD interview, CS1, March, 2010). Further, she shared her knowledge of the analysis task with the cast in the rehearsal room to ensure they were making a performance that was going to be “of value” to the students who attended. “I explain to the actors how the form of non-naturalism works in terms of the things on the [curriculum] list because [the actors] don’t necessarily know anything about non-naturalism…and in terms of what [the students] are examined on” (AD interview, CS1, March, 2010). Her colleague, Penny38, a performer and Company member commented that One Hundred had attracted media attention as being a play “suitable” for VCE Drama students’ ensemble work, their SACs and their exams (Penny, company member, CS1, March, 2010). The students and teachers who arrived at a performance of One Hundred, encountered a company with an understanding of the context in which the performance was being experienced. Such an approach to theatre making aligned with certain expectations the VCAA has of theatre companies that there be “a shared knowledge between director, cast, teachers and students with regard to the frame through which the performance is being experienced by students and teachers” (VCAA, Post Selection Process Information, 2009, p. 1).

In Case Study 4, Shakespeare’s R&J, it has already been well established that the Arts Centre Melbourne Education Program Manager had a thorough knowledge of the requirements of the VCE Drama Study Design and the performance analysis task. He was, in effect, a “broker” for Riverside Production and able to position that company’s work in a Victorian context and within a VCE framework.

38 Penny is a pseudonym
7. 6. 2. High knowledge of arts education but not the analysis task

In Case Study 3, *The Threepenny Opera*, while the Artist Director had no knowledge of the VCE curriculum, he had great knowledge of arts education and he believed that it was necessary to create an intervention for students “before” seeing the work in order to “prepare young people for the experience”. He argued that in general young people “lacked knowledge” of theatre and other arts experiences because they rarely had such experiences, and he felt it was “essential to put [the performance] in a context for them”. He stated, “The feedback we get is they love it. They want to have a context” (AD interview, CS3, May, 2010). For the AD, providing a context meant providing a pre-performance forum for teachers, students or both. The AD’s experiences with *Through the Looking Glass* led him to believe it imperative that students received “guidance” to “know what they were looking at” in order to maximize opportunities for analysis. Tulloch (2000), Gallagher (2008), Schonmann (2009), Prendergast (2004, 2012, and 2015) and O’Toole et al (2014) argue that a student’s ability to respond to, evaluate and analyse a theatre performance is a critical aspect of drama and theatre education. For the AD of Victorian Opera such critical knowledge is predicated on his comprehensive subject matter expertise and he argued, “The ‘good’ teacher will know exactly how much to analyse and why, and to also say analysing this does not mean to say you need to ‘get it’” (AD interview, CS3, May, 2010).

Specific to this case study was Victorian Opera’s intersection with teachers. The new education manager at Victorian Opera, appointed shortly before the season of *The Threepenny Opera*, commented specifically on this aspect of the AD’s approach. She stated, “Educating teachers means teachers can then contextualize the work for students” (Education Manager, interview, CS3, May, 2010). For Victorian Opera, providing “education” for teachers meant providing a pre-performance information session and the opportunity to discuss the opera with members of the creative team. The AD admitted there was a tension between creating a context, and leaving space for an audience’s imagination. He felt this tension could be alleviated by never trying “to explain meaning. [The students] have to find their own meaning…what you want to do is lead them across the street, avoiding the traffic, but *how* they get across is their business” (AD, interview CS3, May,
Conversely, this study suggests that “how” students get across the road is very much the business of teaching performance analysis.

7. 6. 3. Little or no knowledge of VCE curriculum and analysis task

Case Study 2 revealed that Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre’s company knowledge of drama education, VCE curriculum and the performance analysis task was limited. Although there was a Schools’ Committee as part of the Red Stitch’s company’s organizational structure, education was not a core mission of the company. Emily commented that her connection with the VCE curriculum was because she studied Theatre Studies at high school and therefore was aware of “the difference between that and Drama…I understand that Drama is more about the style of the acting” (Emily, Schools Committee, CS2, March, 2010). She also had some teaching experience prior to joining the Company. There was evidence in the application for the Playlist that the Company had drawn on some aspects of the Key Knowledge and Key Skills for the performance analysis task, describing the work as addressing “actor-audience relationship, fourth wall, highly stylized non-naturalistic acting and stagecraft” (VCE Drama and Theatre Studies Playlist Submission 2010, Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre, for 2010 – Appendix 2). While these terms appeared as a list rather than an explanation of how they might be realized on stage, the Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre application was not a poor submission. Rather, it highlights the potential disconnect between the discursive language of the VCE curriculum and the discourses of contemporary theatre practice.

In their interview, the cast of Fatboy stated that they thoroughly enjoyed having students see the work but had “no idea” what the VCE curriculum was or what the performance analysis task entailed. They were aware that the students were required to “write an essay” but expressed how “mystified” they felt about the types of questions they had encountered in Q&As. One cast member commented that a teacher had asked him, “I notice that you were twisting your face this way and that. Is that because you were trying to express emotion?” He felt this were not only strange but also a very obvious question (Dan, cast member, CS2, March, 2010). He thought that the “essay” would be more about the “greater meaning of the play”. The cast was also very surprised that students weren’t required to read the script
before seeing the performance, “What’s the story there?” (Adam, cast member, CS2, March, 2010). It is not incumbent on a cast to be experts in the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curriculum, but there are expectations by the VCAA that within theatre companies there be “a shared knowledge” as to the purpose of students seeing the play (VCAA, Post Selection Process Information, 2009, p. 1).

7. 7. Boundary Objects – encounters, intersections and impacts

Except for children’s theatre, contact with the players, before and after a performance is not very usual in professional theatre. However, some companies organize the possibility, just to strengthen the aesthetic or social outcomes of their performance (van Maanen, 2004, p. 264).

Objects that traverse two distinct communities of practice, and function to coordinate differing perspectives are called “boundary objects” (Star & Greisemer, 1989). They have been discussed elsewhere in this thesis, in Chapter Five, and in more detail in Chapter Six where the discussion focused on teachers’ perspectives with regard to scripts, company education resources, and Q&As. The VCAA states there is no formal requirement for theatre companies to provide such resources, therefore, it is useful to explore the reasons theatre companies create them, to consider what they are responding to, what meaning they may be investing in them and how they may act as effective “boundary objects” for teaching performance analysis.

7. 7. 1. Theatre companies and education resources

Klein (in Schonmann, 2011) states that in order to identify artists’ intentions the audience needs to “speculate by inferring or guessing what each artist was trying to express and communicate before they can judge how well each artist accomplished his or her intentions” (p. 290). In this comment, Klein identifies “analysis” and “evaluation” – what was done, why it was done, and then how well it was done. Analysis and evaluation are key processes VCE Drama and Theatre Studies students undertake during performance analysis. They may also be asked to explain, describe, discuss, compare or contrast.

Arguably, written resources provided by theatre companies intend to assist the analysis process. Wenger (1998) states however, “When a boundary object [education resource]
serves multiple constituencies [in this instance the company, schools, and potentially assessors] each has only partial control over the interpretation of that object” (p. 108). Wenger goes on to explain that while the author has jurisdiction over what is written, readers have jurisdiction over what it means to them (p. 108).

As education resources are not mandated by the VCAA there is no universal template for creating them. Analysis of the four sets of education resource provided by the participant companies clearly demonstrated this (see extracts of these in Appendices 13 – 16). In Case Study 1, the resources for One Hundred provided detailed commentary on the intended meaning of stagecraft, characters, use of symbols in the production and the non-naturalistic performance style, whereas in Case Study 3, The Threepenny Opera focused more on interviews with actors and creative team members who de-constructed their creative process. Case Study 2 resources for Fatboy resources consisted mainly of company information, media releases and photocopied pages from books about performance styles, while those for Case Study 4, Shakespeare’s R&J provided activities and questions for a broader range of students beyond the VCE study and addressing the Victorian Essential Learning Standards39 for students in Years 9 and 10. In Case Study 3, Simone, stated that “who” writes education resources and the writer’s knowledge of the written curriculum is often a key determiner of content, of intended meaning and of received meaning (Simone, Teacher interview, CS3, July, 2010). The data suggests this statement is true.

Significant to this research is the tangible ‘buy in’ that the Artistic Director and Machinations Theatre Ensemble made to the teaching of performance analysis, on every level – making, performing, and resourcing. The written curriculum was embedded in the artistic practice, the education resources and the ongoing existence of the Company. The AD of Machinations Theatre Ensemble stated that since the very first production selected to the Playlists, the Company has provided “written notes” in order to provide “a reference from someone who has made the work” (AD interview, CS1, March, 2010). She admitted spending “an enormous amount of time” thinking through the details and decisions around

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39VELS, then called AusVELS in line with the new Australian Curriculum2013, and now The Victorian Curriculum 2016
choices, particularly the symbolic elements in the production, endeavouring to capture their meaning in the written notes.

In my experience in industry, it is unusual for an artistic director to write education notes and certainly no other artistic directors or producers did so in this study but, as it has been established, Machinations Theatre Ensemble is a small independent company and the AD was familiar with the VCE curriculum for Drama. The extracts from the education resource presented below draw specific attention to the creative team’s intended meaning for the stagecraft areas of lighting and costume design:

**LIGHTING**
*There were two main worlds created in ‘One Hundred’, the void and then the many different worlds based on the characters memories and fantasies.*

*The void was a mysterious, stark and shadowed place, whilst the memories were a mixture of vivid, dream-like, warm, surreal, romantic and brutal recollections, and the lighting was selected to reflect these different realities. As we had a limited lighting rig we had to realize all these different places as best we could within the allowable limits. A special light was used on one of the doors to represent Sophie lying in her hospital bed as visitors arrived.* (Extract from *One Hundred, Teachers’ Notes, 2010, p. 15-16*)

**COSTUME**
*Given the nature of the theme of death the main colours chosen to be used in ‘One Hundred’ were black & white. In Western cultures people wear black to funerals and in Asian cultures they wear white. White also has an association of purity and simplicity and a stripped back quality which seemed appropriate for the costumes of people who have left the world and its possessions behind. Red was also used sparingly in ‘100’, in the office Christmas party scene there was a red Santa hat and nose, a symbol of joy and giving and for Ketu’s death a red light representing blood. Two nurses were used to symbolically depict the atmosphere of Sophie’s illness and her jacket was constructed to be able to be torn apart to dramatize how out of control she felt with her diagnosis.* (Extract from *One Hundred, Teachers’ Notes, 2010, p. 15-16*)

While Wenger (1998) argues that the individual reader has jurisdiction over the meaning of boundary objects such as education resources, Chapter Six indicated that in a high-stakes assessment environment such as the VCE, multiple readings and meanings tended to conflate into an ‘agreed’ interpretation. The education notes presented above may very well reinforce such an agreed interpretation by eliminating multiple meanings. Further, it is possible that the extracts may generate an agreed interpretation that will permeates multiple
school contexts. The examination question in November 2010 set for *One Hundred* asked students to answer the following: Analyse how stagecraft was used symbolically to enhance the theme(s) in the performance of *One Hundred*. When comparing this question to the detailed extracts from the education resource notes presented above, an answer is provided.

In Case Study 1, the Artistic Director’s decision to offer such detailed interpretations and explanations of *One Hundred* is based on her understanding that theatre is ephemeral. She comments that “[the notes] give you more information than you can glean just from watching it all and from what you can assume” (AD interview, CS1, March, 2010). For the AD the purpose of the written notes as well as providing a DVD recording of the production is to “fill the gap” that remains when the performance is finished. The AD supported the idea of students having to write a formal analysis of the theatre they see. She believed in “reflective practice” and that the performance analysis task was a way for students to be “accountable” for their thinking. “Students learn from being put in a position where you have to articulate what you think about it and be able to identify certain practices especially in terms of form…exams mean that you learn it as opposed to just having an experience of it” (AD interview, CS1, March, 2010). Ironically, what students actually do think about the play is somewhat negated by providing all the intended meaning of the work in an education resource.

Contrastingly, the education resource notes provided in Case Study 2 by Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre for *Fatboy* contained very little interpretative material. In a final interview with the Schools’ Committee, Emily commented specifically on the resource. “We did do a resource pack last year but we didn’t get very good feedback on that to be honest…I did get several comments that it wasn’t really worth the money [$50]” (Final interview, CS2, January, 2011). She commented that she was exploring what a “standard” resource pack for schools may look like and what teachers might be “expecting”.

In other disciplines such as VCE English and VCE Literature, education resources for novels, films, and poetry are commonly created. Research indicates this to be true across

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other senior secondary education systems, nationally and internationally. With what I presume will be certain exceptions, such resources are not generated by those who write the novels and poetry, or make the films. For this reason I contend they do not necessarily operate as boundary objects across communities. Rather they remain in the domain of education having been created by educators. What is unique to the education resources being discussed in this thesis is the ephemeral nature of the text they represent — live theatre. The ephemeral nature of theatre suggests that resources need to be created by or in collaboration of those who create the “text”. This ensures a certain currency and relevance. Arguably, the resources created by theatre companies aim to be authentic boundary objects. Teachers state that a “quality” resource will flow into the practice of Drama and Theatre Studies teaching, and will also assist in addressing the assessment task. In Case Study 2, Emily’s statement above about what is “expected” by teachers is important. How can a theatre company create the very best education resources, what might they look like and how can they be constructed or indeed co-constructed in order to allow for multiple meanings? This question will be addressed in the final chapter of this thesis.

7. 7. 2. The Q&A – a space for negotiating meaning

It is valid to wonder what happens after the performance has ended. The audience empties out of the darkness of the theatre into the busyness of everyday life and all too often, the process of thinking, feeling and responding to the performance ends abruptly...perhaps we should ask for...a rich post-performance afterlife where the experience reverberates in each spectator’s engaged and enduring imagination (Reason in Radbourne et al, 2013, p. 97).

Chapter Six of this thesis discussed the idea that for teachers and students, question and answer sessions (Q&A) offer the potential to provide the “rich post-performance afterlife” that Reason describes above. Taking place in the theatre either prior to or more commonly immediately after the performance, they are a physical nexus point between the communities of drama education and theatre industry. While the Q&A sessions do not necessarily merge these two communities (they remain distinct, with distinct enterprises and distinct practices), by both communities engaging at once “there is rich potential for overlap” (Wenger, 1998, p. 117).
The following discussion examines what the data suggests about these sessions from the perspective of the participating theatre companies and considers how differing company practices construct and/or co-construct the event that is known as the Q&A. The discussion also highlights what the study revealed about the discursive languages that arise in the Q&A, what those languages are, if they are shared between the panel and the students and teachers who attend, and how these languages may contribute to co-constructing the session.

7. 7. 3. The Q&A – where and when?

The stage itself is, of course, the heart of the practitioner space, and, although this is seen by the public, and indeed seen intensively, it is nevertheless still utterly separate from the audience space (McAuley, 2008, p. 64).

In three of the four case studies in this research, Q&A sessions were offered immediately after the performance. They occurred in the theatre, commonly with the performers and invited creative team members such as designers and directors, and ran for between twenty and thirty minutes. Data revealed that where a Q&A occurred was significant. Fain (2004) states that when we think of the spaces in which students and teachers meet and learn “we think of school” (p. 11). While the theatre is both a venue and place for the production of live performance, in this study it is also a space of learning. The quote from McAuley above highlights the traditional boundaries that exist in theatre venues: the audience space and the performance space. This study suggests that the Q&A as an event has the potential to effectively blur the boundaries of these spaces and generate a new and rich pedagogic space.

In Case Study 2, Emily from Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre described the Q&A as a “divide between the real world and education… education being not always a lived experience, whereas when you are here [in the theatre] it is a lived experience and something is actually happening as opposed to just reading about it” (Emily, final interview, CS2, January, 2011 – my emphasis). Further, Emily spoke about the “real world” having an impact on both the audience’s and the cast’s capacity to “articulate stuff in the moment” in a Q&A. She expanded upon this by recalling a concept she called “car crash theory”, stating that when actors have just finished a show they are “vulnerable”, like people who have just experienced a car crash, there is no real opportunity to detach from the lived experience. “It
would be a totally different thing to have a Q&A with actors after a film you’ve just seen them do. They’re detached from it now, sometimes years afterwards” (Emily, final interview, CS2, January, 2011). In a space where performers are returning to the real world, and audience members are returning to the real world, what is the optimal moment and how might it be garnered for maximum effect? Such concepts and questions were very present in this case study. When the lights came up, the willingness of the students behind me to animatedly talk and be curious about aspects of the performance – the alcoholic judge, the absurd slow motion fight - was apparent. They were passionate and energised and they were as Reason (in Radbourne et al, 2013) argues “enacting a rich post-performance afterlife where the experience reverberates in each spectator’s engaged and enduring imagination” (p. 97). Critically, none of the “afterlife” they enacted behind me made its way into the Q&A. A cast member of Fatboy commented that the silences and pauses in the Q&A sessions at Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre were probably because students were “scared to ask questions” something he felt was quite possible. He stated, “I would hope that therefore there are people in the audience, like teachers, who are brave enough and understanding of their kids enough to…facilitate that a bit more” (Cast interview, CS2, March, 2010). Production Manager and Schools’ Committee member, Louise, also observed that in Q&A sessions immediately after the performance students remained “relatively quiet” but often had questions once they had returned to school and they then emailed the company. “Once they have that class discussion so much more comes out…with something like Fatboy I reckon it will need to be digested” (Schools’ Committee interview, CS2, March, 2010). This discussion and these observations offer rich insight into what the best timing for a Q&A may be.

In Case Study 1, One Hundred, performer, Penny, noted that across the show’s season, those students who returned to see the production a second time and stayed for the Q&A generated a more complex series of questions “in terms of existential ideas, the philosophical base, the themes, the narrative of the script and the meaning and depth of some of the issues, whereas some of the initial questions were based only on some of the visual things they had just seen” (Penny, artist interview, CS1, March, 2010). This correlates with the school data particularly in the case of, Georgia, who in the class discussion became fascinated by the presence of a white feather. Her teacher Melissa stated, “She’s going again
on Saturday (for a third time) and that’s the question she’s going to ask, ‘What’s the symbolism of the feather?’” (Melissa, Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010).

In Case Study 4, an interview with the cast of Shakespeare’s R&J elicited a different understanding of the purpose and function of a Q&A. The cast believed it was to “break down the barriers” between the audience and the actors and to allow the audience to encounter them as people rather than just as characters. For the cast, a post-performance Q&A tended to remove the “disappearing act” that actors do after a show whereby they walk into their dressing rooms “get dressed and go out the back door” and that it potentially removed any feeling that theatre is “elite”. Performer, Tom, felt that by appearing on stage in their “bummy clothes” students may learn that actors are just “trying to tell a story and we’re not that different”. Performer, Garth, commented that in the Q&A students have to engage with them as people. “[The students] had a big reaction during the show [to the kiss] and then with us coming out on stage they have to kind of go, ‘We’ve had that big reaction and now we’re looking at them up there!’” His colleague Tom said, “I think that during the show [students] forget that they’re not watching a film” and that the Q&A allowed the audience to remember they’ve had “a live experience”. The cast pointed out that in a film, the audience doesn’t have an encounter with the characters. In the theatre, encountering the actors after a show may be confronting because there is no “distance” (Full cast interview, CS4, May, 2010).

7. 7. 4. The Q&A – constructed or co-constructed?

What determines the structure, purpose, content and meaning of a Q&A? What is it dependent on? This study raises questions with regard to student reticence in Q&As and what is impacting; lack of confidence, who plays what roles, if the physical space is intimidating; if teachers and students want a Q&A to be structured or co-constructed. The discussion above provides some insights and ideas, and these are developed further in the following section of this chapter.

In Case Study 1, the AD of Machinations Theatre Ensemble believed that Q&As made a rich contribution to the performance analysis task because they gave students “the opportunity to clarify what they have seen and also to understand maybe how it all
works…to understand how to think about things in a different way [which] will perhaps open up their own work” (AD interview, CS1, March, 2010). The observed Q&A after One Hundred included the entire cast and was facilitated by the AD who was also the play’s director. The Q&A was highly constructed and structured. The AD stated that even with guidance by her and the cast, many of the questions asked by students seemed “fairly basic”. Cast member, Penny, stated that the purpose of the Q&As was to enable both the creative team and the students to clarify choices, styles, and structures within the performed work. She commented that the “director’s perspective” or the “actors’ perspective” are quite different processes. Penny also commented on the “public nature” of a Q&A. She felt it offered learning opportunities beyond performance analysis including enabling students to “feel confident enough to ask a question in front of a group of people in a professional forum because they may not be used to that” (Penny, Artist interview, CS1, March, 2010). She also believed, however, that the public nature of the Q&A affected student confidence.

In Case Study 2, Fatboy, the Q&A sessions tended to be co-constructed by performers and audience for two observable reasons: the performers and artists were not familiar with the VCE performance analysis writing task, and the sessions were not facilitated. Cast member Adam from Fatboy stated that when a student called out, ‘Why are you all so damn cool?’ at this point he felt the audience “was attracted to our presence on stage in some way. Maybe they even wanted to join in. [It was like] we had created some sort of ritual of being together and having fun” (Cast interview, CS2, March, 2010). Emily from the Schools’ Committee felt that when she walked in on the Q&A sessions they seemed very “relaxed”. She believed that the Q&A was a “dialogue” or “conversation” and that this was of value (Emily, Schools Committee, final interview, January, 2011). The designer of Fatboy discussed the structure of the Q&As as being one of “‘breaking down conventions’, rather like the performance of Fatboy itself. He said, “Dan will often ask questions of the audience, trying to break down that one-way of the Q&A where we only answer and they only question. The notion is one of…we are remembering the play as well and we’re trying to engage with it by also asking them” (Cast Interview, CS2, March, 2010 – author’s italics). This is rich critique by the theatre company members. It highlights several factors that could actively shape the Q&A, but it also poses questions around intentions and expectations and whether they are shared.
Case Study 3, The Threepenny Opera, focused on pre-performance forums as opposed to post-performance Q&As. As stated earlier in this chapter, the Artistic Director of Victorian Opera believed that pre-performance forums provided the most effective conversation about the performed work because they set a context for seeing the work. In collaboration with Malthouse Theatre three pre-performance forums were scheduled for VCE Theatre Studies students with the intention of providing context prior to the performance. The AD stated that this was important for contemporary audiences, particularly students, because he believed young people have no experience with opera as a performance form. The pre-performance forum I attended included the AD of Victorian Opera who was also the Musical Director, the director from Malthouse Theatre and was facilitated by the Education Manager of the Malthouse Theatre. It took place in the Merlyn Theatre on set on the day of the performance. The forum focussed on setting a context for the work but because the students had not yet seen the production of The Threepenny Opera this structure leant itself more to an active listening rather than to a co-constructed, dialogic event because the theatrical performance remained an abstract concept. In this structure, the data suggests the pre-performance forum paralleled the preparatory and predictive pedagogies used in the classroom, the difference being that it was held in the theatre venue.

In this study there are tensions between the differing expectations of teachers, students and theatre companies with regard to the purpose and function of the Q&A. One performer from the cast of Fatboy articulated this tension in the cast interview. He said, “I don’t know how much it is beneficial for the kids…You can take a whole bunch of kids to this stuff and what they get from it is what they are going to get from it” (Cast interview, CS2, March, 2010). In Neelands’ (2009) research on drama and theatre pedagogy he proposes that in both the drama classroom and the theatre performance students must have a “willingness bred of interest and engagement” in order to join in (p. 17). Extrapolating from this, it seems appropriate to attribute engagement in the Q&A with similar qualities. Cast, students and teachers need to be “willing to join in” and sometimes they may need to make themselves “vulnerable and visible” in order to participate in or actively co-construct the Q&A. The heavily constructed Q&As for One Hundred offered students many answers but arguably they felt less empowered to contribute because the answers were being supplied. The “constructed” nature of the Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre Q&A offered opportunities for rich
co-construction but the offer to do so was not made explicit by anyone. Perhaps the answer lies somewhere in between.

Earlier discussion in this chapter data revealed some teachers and students tendency to attribute an authoritative voice to the education resources. In observing some Q&A sessions some panel members presented as having an authority over meaning while those in the audience tended to seek meaning. The cast of Fatboy noted this. In other Q&As those on the panel actively encouraged the audience to construct the process and thus co-construct meaning. However, teachers’ expectations were that the Q&A needs to address the assessment task. For teachers the most infuriating remark a Q&A panel member can make is, “Well what you do you think it means?” (Observational field notes, CS2, March, 2010).

In this study, the Q&A in the theatre suggests there is meaning to be made, but as an event its purpose and function is not always made explicit.

7. 7. 5. The Q&A – translating the language of curriculum

From my experience of the questions and answer times I am getting the impression that they’re very much interested in what they call the dramatic elements of things like non-naturalism. They are particularly into our use of props...how we use a piece of red fabric to represent many different things (Tom, cast interview, CS4, May, 2010).

Many questions that were asked by students and teachers in Q&A sessions were expressed through the language of the written curriculum and the required assessment task. In Case Study 4, cast member of Shakespeare’s R&J, Garth, noted that there was a “big difference, especially in Melbourne” from other states with regard to questions asked. He said, “I noticed that [students were] wanting to segregate everything into very clear elements”. The cast seemed to understand that it was students’ “own vocabulary” and therefore their way of being able to understand the performance. As a result, the cast felt the need to find “someone who would then have to rephrase the question for us to answer because the actors don’t work in the same way...There seemed to be a lot of needing to clarify why everything was what it was” (Cast interview, CS4, May, 2010). The cast commented that students’ and teachers’ questions focused on a “deconstruction” of the form whereas, as actors, they worked more “intuitively” and concentrated on their character’s overall “journey”. While the
cast was aware that students were expected to write an essay or complete a written task, they were conscious of not doing the students’ “homework for them”, instead in their responses to questions the cast wanted to “inspire them to try and seek the answers themselves” (Ben, cast member, CS4, May, 2010).

In Case Study 2, at Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre, the cast of Fatboy had a similar experience with regard to disentangling language. Cast member, Dion, commented specifically on a Q&A session where a teacher asked what he believed were very “mundane” and “predictable” questions but that she “framed them in the context of ‘This is the stuff I have to present in the class so I have to ask these questions” (Dion, cast interview, CS2, March 2010). The cast were more concerned with addressing the “greater meaning” of the play and how it may affect an audience (Cast interview, CS2, March, 2010). What emerged was a disjunct between the cast’s views and expectations, and those of teachers. This was further made evident during a moment in a Q&A session after one performance of Fatboy. In this Q&A, when a question was directed to the designer about what theatrical styles he felt were evident in the play. As the audience was leaving the theatre a teacher was overheard to say that the question was at least “useful and sensible”. The assumption here about the “usefulness” of questions in the Q&A echoes Case Study 1 and Melissa’s comment in Chapter Six where she stated that when a production is on the VCE Playlist questions need to be “relevant” (Teacher interview, CS1, March, 2010). The language of the curriculum and the purposes of attending the production appear to have a disruptive effect in some Q&A sessions because there is no shared understanding.

CONCLUDING REMARKS
Chapter Seven focused on theatre companies as key stakeholders in this research, their practice as makers of contemporary theatre, examined their reasons for submitting plays to the VCE Playlist process, and their engagement with the processes of the written, enacted and experienced curriculum in VCE Drama and Theatre Studies.

Within the broader theatre industry community, and in seeking to uniquely position their company and promote its relevance, each theatre company presented mission and vision statements using a range of dynamic, emotive, persuasive and engaging terms. Three
companies – Machinations Theatre Ensemble, Victorian Opera and Riverside Productions – spoke specifically about the role of education in their company’s vision and mission and how that was addressed in its practice and programming. The fourth company, Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre had only recently begun to engage with the education sector with the need to broaden their audience base.

The chapter discussed how an education focus in a company’s practice may or may not enhance the teaching of performance analysis. A broad education program within a company is not necessarily the same as understanding the specific role of the Playlists and the assessment that accompanies the experience of the performance. This was most evident in cast interviews where the questions asked and language used in Q&As sometimes confused the performers or focused on aspects they themselves did not consider relevant. While Machinations Theatre Ensemble’s performance in Case Study 1, One Hundred, was created to respond to the written curriculum and the show emerged from its requirements, in Case Studies 2-4 companies submitted works that were part of their usual company program and the written curriculum was overlaid. Both scenarios generate significantly different stakeholder relationships and engagement with teachers and students.

All companies stressed that engaging young people in live theatre was deeply important but more for its instrumental value, than its aesthetic and artistic value. Companies also believed that exposing young people to theatre while studying drama would most likely create a life-long love of theatre. Significantly, all companies acknowledged the energy that younger audiences brought to a performance and appreciated that energy, most especially the performers whose own response to an audience’s response is rarely researched and something this study actively sought.

The content of particular theatre productions was seen as being highly important. Classic texts such as Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet being re-imagined as Shakespeare’s R&J, the reworking of Jarry’s Ubu Roi as Fatboy, and Brecht’s The Threepenny Opera were considered valuable and relevant. Theatre companies commented on the quality of the script and the theatrical or historic significance of the work they chose to submit, echoing the desire by teachers expressed in Chapter Four to have “quality” texts. Understanding of VCE
Drama and Theatre Studies curriculum was very much dependent on personnel within theatre companies, despite the VCAA’s call to “brief” the creative teams.

In **Case study 1**, Machinations Theatre Ensemble’s work had the VCE Drama written curriculum deeply embedded in its making process whereas in **Case Study 2** Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre had little knowledge of either the education sector or the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula. Victorian Opera had a comprehensive education program but the AD championed a broad understanding of arts education and deferred the VCE specific knowledge to others. The discussion illuminates the impact that differing knowledge of the written curriculum has on the creation of education resources and on the effectiveness of Q&As; two important artefacts and potential boundary objects between the stakeholders. The chapter re-examined boundary objects and discussed them with regard to “meaning making” and how they potentially *shape* particular meanings for teachers and students, particularly for the purposes of writing an assessment task.

Chapter Seven gave considerable focus to the Q&A, an entity this research argues is important to the enacted and experienced curriculum, and performance analysis process. In addressing its importance, the chapter interrogated its timing, location, purpose, form, participation and content and “languages”, and considered mutual understanding of both discursive languages by all stakeholders.

The final chapter in this thesis brings the timeline of performance analysis to an end. In so doing it re-examines the research questions in the light of what was explored, and what emerged. As Nicholson (2011) states; How might the organizational structures, cultural practices and interpersonal relationships that impact the enacted and experienced curriculum be re-imagined in order to generate a new pedagogy, one of rich and meaningful transactions generated by a purposeful and clearly defined community of practice?
CHAPTER EIGHT:  
Conclusion - findings and recommendations

*The final interpretation and evaluation of the theatrical stimulus can only take place at the end – when all the elements are known and disappeared*  
(Schoenmaker & Tulloch, 2004, p. 342).

8.1. Introduction

At the beginning of this thesis and at critical points throughout, I have articulated the qualities and ephemerality of theatre. I re-present the above quotation in order to remind the reader and to emphasise that this quality of theatre performance is significant to the findings and recommendations. The ephemerality of theatre, along with its aesthetic qualities are acknowledged and clearly articulated in the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula, as they are in other Australian senior drama courses and in international drama syllabi, as has been identified in this thesis. The live theatre event disappears as soon as it is performed yet, for the purposes of VCE Drama and Theatre Studies performance analysis, certain resonances must remain and memories must be captured.

In this final chapter I draw together my research findings by revisiting the research questions in the light of relevant literature and the deep data analysis that occurred. In so doing, I outline possible contributions made by this thesis — with acknowledged limitations — to current understandings and practices in drama curriculum, drama pedagogy and theatre practice. I outline how this study may contribute to the form, purpose and investiture of pedagogies for teaching performance analysis. I reconsider the role of live theatre performance within the written, enacted and experienced curriculum for all stakeholders who contribute to that experience in the Victorian VCE Drama and Theatre Studies context and beyond. Further, I offer recommendations in order to consider what this study offers to curriculum authorities, theatre companies, educators and students in all contexts where live theatre is studied as part of a formal drama curriculum.

8.2. Limitations of research

The following discussion with regard to findings and possibilities is offered with the acknowledged understanding that curriculum is concerned with systems. From a systemic
and political perspective, curriculum is designed and enacted within contexts such as state and federal government policy, government education departments, school leadership, school management, school teachers, communities, parents, the scrutiny of the media and, of course the learners. This research project has only dealt with a selection of these players. Stake (1995) reminds the researcher that case study research has limitations. Therefore I exercise some caution in my discussion and in possible extrapolations.

8.3. Revisiting the research questions

Drawing upon literature that examined theories of curriculum, pedagogy, aesthetic experience, theatre, and communities of practice, and the analysis of extensive data, this thesis has formulated possible answers to the following research questions:

1. What pedagogies are employed in teaching the analysis of live theatre performance in the context of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Drama and Theatre Studies curricula?
2. When does this pedagogical process begin? When does it end?
3. What impacts and influences these pedagogies?
4. What constitutes an effective pedagogy for teaching performance analysis?

The following discussion of findings is structured to respond to the research questions with the benefit of new knowledge.

8.4. When does the pedagogical process begin?

The study found that the pedagogical process begins with selecting or choosing plays. Selection begins with theatre companies who choose which plays to submit. This is followed by the selection of the Playlists by the Advisory Panel, and then selection is passed to individual teachers who choose a play to attend and analyse with their students. The study found that choosing plays is complex. It is reliant on many competing factors, stakeholder choices are interdependent, and choice “involves the underlying tension of consequence”, which is particularly expressed by teachers and students in this study as “getting it right” (March, 1978). The study also indicates that Advisory Panel members, by virtue of their varied membership and representation of differing sectors, are not necessarily immune to
personal preferences and the epistemological paradigms in which they reside. In this study, all stakeholder choices impact other stakeholders’ choices.

A key finding of this study is that the Playlists, as a mechanism for structuring VCE students’ experiences and studying live theatre performance, significantly shapes stakeholder relationships. The Playlist Advisory Panel can only select from the theatre companies’ offered productions and then apply the selection criteria, and they are therefore wholly reliant on the works that theatre companies choose to program and to submit. Theatre companies are reliant on the Panel to select their play to attract student audiences, and teachers are reliant on the Panel to create Playlists that enable moving the written curriculum towards enacted and experienced curriculum by including “quality” texts and quality theatrical experiences. Once on the Playlist, theatre companies are reliant on teachers to bring students to their shows. The VCE Playlists, as a mechanism, construct a mutually dependent stakeholder engagement. It is this mutually dependent stakeholder engagement that generates a complex pedagogic process, one that means there must be a pedagogical ‘buy in’ by theatre companies to the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies learning process.

The study also found that the Playlists are a reflection of “cultural construction”. Jackson (2007) argues that reading and interpreting texts and one’s ability to understand and talk about them is “culturally constructed”. Knowles (2004) believes that one of theatre’s purposes is to be a site for “the negotiation, transmission, and transformation of cultural values” (p. 10). Both scholars suggest that how theatre is constructed — in time, place and form — and how it is read and understood is cultural. The Playlists are a product of this construction and, as such, this study poses questions with regard to what is selected. Whose culture and whose meaning making is considered when making selections, particularly with regard to theatre companies and the Playlist Advisory Panel?

This study recommends that the composition of the Advisory Panel is broadened to represent cultural and other diversities in order to consider how such diversities may have a productive impact on the theatre experiences of students studying live theatre performance.
8. 5. Pedagogies for teaching performance analysis – impacts & influences

Chapter Four of this study identifies that teacher identity, school culture, practicality and timing and financial limitations are key factors impacting the enactment of the curriculum, and the pedagogies for teaching performance analysis. A key finding is that pedagogy itself is powerfully impacted by formal timelines and systems structured around VCAA curriculum and assessment processes. This is particularly relevant to the circumstances that emerged for teachers and students in Case Study 4 where a highly disrupted process was apparent and this particularly impacted re-remembering for the examination.

8. 5. 1. Stages of pedagogy

The study found that pedagogies for teaching performance analysis involve four distinct stages: the pre-performance stage that includes predictive and preparatory strategies; the in-theatre stage that includes ways to capture the theatre experience; the post-performance stage including ways to remember, re-construct, de-construct and analyse the performance for assessment; and the re-remembering stage which focuses on preparing for the exam.

All teachers in this study adopted the same staged process whether they taught Drama or Theatre Studies. No distinction between the two subjects is evident. This indicates that the written curriculum that outlines the performance analysis task in both Studies encourages, and possibly, requires enactment in the same way. The four pedagogic stages, while they reflected a linear process, one dictated by administrative timelines and systemic structures, also reflect what seems to be a logical way to structure the stages of teaching.

A key finding in the study is that the four stages of pedagogy are dominated by explicit instruction (Bernstein in Luke, 2014), transmisssional talk (Alexander, 2008) and, on occasion, dialogic teaching (Alexander, 2008). Talk had a vital role in mediating across space, place and time, between the classroom, the theatre, and what may be, was and then had been experienced. In this study the presence of such talk and instruction is almost to the exclusion of embodied pedagogy, and of what Bailin (1993) calls “a direct identification with characters and a direct involvement with their thoughts and emotions of the kind that can enhance the possibility for empathetic understanding” (p. 65). The reason why
embodied pedagogies are not considered in the teaching of performance analysis can be traced to high-stakes assessment processes that accompany the written curriculum.

While drama teachers are agents for enacting the written curriculum and agents for enabling the experienced curriculum, they must juggle and find a balance between the tensions offered by these dual roles. The teachers in this study sought to create rich educational experiences for their students but found they needed to employ strategies reinforcing capacities relevant to the exam, not necessarily to lived arts experiences. Teachers in this study universally acknowledge that assessment, particularly the requirements of the exam, dictates their teaching from the very beginning and indicates that the learning of and use of appropriate ‘terminology’ is the main focus. Teachers and students expressed frustration that the structures they worked within impacted their capacity to fully explore the aesthetic capacities of theatre experiences. This was particularly evident in Case Studies 1 and 3 where students expressed frustration that the limitations of assessment provided little opportunity to demonstrate their deep understanding of the performed work. Some believed the examination was merely a test of remembered examples and not anything to do with the experienced performance. The study suggests that the constraints around response treat the aesthetic and affective qualities of live theatre in a reductive manner.

The study suggests that the opportunity to “construct” knowledge is diminished and more positivist paradigms are evident, particularly through the impact of assessment. The study finds that the desire for teachers and for students to “get it right” means teachers and students are fearful of ambiguity when interpreting productions. They consider multiple meanings to be potentially risky, and believe there must be a correct answer. While this may not be the intention of the curriculum, there are clearly disjunctions between the written, enacted and experienced stages. The VCE states that “students develop an appreciation of drama as an art form through participation, criticism and aesthetic understanding” (VCAA, 2007-2013, p. 7 – author’s emphasis). However, the reality of the written curriculum, and the processes through which these three skills can be taught and experienced in the classroom and in the theatre is quite different. While there are embodied pedagogies and aesthetic experiences that are part of VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula, this study suggests that the structure of the performance analysis task does not
enable a rich and responsive continuation of such pedagogies across the Units of Study. Instead, this finding suggests that approaches to Units of Study are silo-ed.

As a recommendation, this study suggests that embodied pedagogies could well heighten students’ remembering and re-remembering through re-enacting key moments in the production, physically exploring dramatic elements and theatre conventions, and draw on expressive skills, space, symbol and metaphor as identified in the performance. Key drama practitioners argue that the embodied learning that drama employs, provides students with the capacity to be both makers and critical analysts. Significantly, in Case Study 1, One Hundred, one student clearly stated she found herself remembering things from the performance she believed could be used later in her own making. The study recommends pedagogies be developed that consider how remembering for making theatre could become making for remembering theatre, particularly for the purposes of assessment. Lovesy (2002) and Prendergast (2015) offer models of practice that could be adapted for that purpose.

8.5.2. The most significant stage of pedagogy

A key finding is that the post-performance stage, enacted in the classroom, is the most significant pedagogic stage in teaching performance analysis. This is indicated in a number of ways.

a) The pre-performance stage, while similar in structure across the case studies, does not necessarily mean that students arrived at the theatre enabled to adopt a critical and analytical focus. This was particularly indicated in Case Studies 3 and 4.

b) Note-taking in the theatre potentially limits the lived experience.

c) If note taking takes place, effective note-taking is dependent on students’ understanding of what they feel they need to write.

d) Teachers and students indicated that the post-performance analysis process was closely connected to “collective memory”, including both accord and dissonance with regard to meaning.

d) The post-performance stage may well determine an agreed interpretation of the production for the purposes of assessment, indicated in Case Studies 2 and 3.
d) What was effectively (or ineffectively) captured in the post-performance stage directly impacted preparation for the exam, indicated specifically in **Case Study 4**.

### 8. 5. 3. Timing

The study found that timing in analysing a performance is significant, particularly the gap between seeing a performance (the in-theatre stage) and the examination (the re-remembering stage). In the post-performance process, teaching and learning focused on ways to remember and ways to record, both individually and collectively. This process was pursued in order to translate memories into “examples” in order to provide evidence for the exam. Memories were categorised to fit into theatrical conventions, dramatic elements, stagecraft areas, production areas, acting, directing and expressive skills. More affective memories of particular moments such as “the boob”, “the kiss”, and the “gross swearing”, while rigorously discussed, were set aside unless they could be firmly positioned within the requirements of the analysis task or students felt comfortable including them. This suggests there are disjunctions between students’ desire to aesthetically engage with theatre, and the requirements of analysis and assessment processes.

### 8. 5. 4. Affective and effective theatre

The study found that the affective qualities of theatre were potentially rendered ineffective when the work was selected as a “best resource”. This was particularly evident in **Case Studies 2, 3 and 4**. The affective potential of theatre as a medium has received some attention recently. As this thesis is being completed, the Minister for Education in Victoria has announced a review into the text selection processes for the VCE Studies of English, Literature, Drama and Theatre Studies. This review is in response to concerns from some community members about the content and potential impact of a 2016 Playlist production.

Scholars such as Simons (1994), Nicholson (2009), Thompson (2009) Reason (2010, 2011, 2013), Prendergast (2004, 2012) and O’Toole et al (2014) critique and theorize young people engagement with live theatre and its affective qualities. This study recommends that such research studies could significantly inform both the Advisory Panel practice and
VCAA decisions re selecting plays for the performance analysis component of the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula.

8. 5. 5. Capturing experience

The study found that pedagogies for capturing the live theatre experience focus on note taking and the spoken word. Nicholson (2009) comments on the “rather static medium of the written word” as a representation of the lived theatre experience, and has been argued in this thesis, in order to register and interpret the signifiers of live theatre and their meanings, audiences need to fully experience the performance. This study indicates that aiming to capture the live theatre experience in writing while watching is not resolved as an effective practice. Some teachers encourage the practice and others do not. Rather, the study suggests multiple viewings of a production indicate a more effective way to remember and to enhance students’ capacity to analyse, as was clearly indicated in Case Study 1. Such opportunities, however, are not available to all students. It is a recommendation of this study that this information be offered as important feedback to VCAA and to assessment processes.

The study found that the position and status of a recording of a theatre performance within the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula is unresolved. It has not invited formal comment from VCAA. Theatre companies can freely offer a recording despite it not being a universal practice. Case Study 1 indicates that having a recording strongly supports examination preparation but this study questions the validity of recordings when the task is concerned with “live” theatre performance as it is embedded in the written curriculum. It is recommended that the VCAA be requested to take a position on the availability and of recorded performances in relation to teaching performance analysis.

8. 6. Experience and pedagogy

A relevant finding of this study is that teaching experience impacts pedagogies for teaching performance analysis. In Case Study 2, Fatboy, Kate’s feeling of being “inexperienced” at teaching VCE generated anxiety, a need to closely adhere to the study design and to not deviate. The discussion about “pastiche” and her sense that it was possible to “get it right” is
a case in point. As **Case Study 4** also clearly highlighted Andrew’s position as an exchange teacher and the composition of his class resulted a highly complex teaching context, whereas in **Case Studies 1 and 3**, Melissa and Simone’s extensive VCE teaching experience and assessment experience was evident.

This study recommends professional development opportunities that are more accessible and readily available, possibly using online delivery platforms as a model for learning. Unfamiliarity is not presented as a deficit model but, rather, the study suggests that familiarity with written curricula and its enactment is an advantage.

**8. 7. Demystifying the assessment process**

Reason (2011) discusses the difference between testing children “on the accuracy or extent of their memory… versus a desire to know what they remembered” (p. 115). High-stakes assessment is not concerned with desire, however, but rather systems and measurement. As Barnes et al (2000) argue, “Where forms of school-based assessment are themselves mandated, these assessments exercise a significant leverage on teaching and forms of assessment” (p. 645).

The study found that teachers have anxieties around assessment processes. These concerns raise questions around equity. The Introduction, Literature Review and Chapter Four examined how seeing live theatre performance was embedded in the written Drama and Theatre Studies curricula, and a key part of its inclusion is to enhance students’ own theatre making. Teacher anxiety around teaching “the live” and the absence of embodied pedagogies as indicated in this study, suggest that much would be gained by performance analysis not being examined externally, instead being assessed only through the School Assessed Coursework (SAC) process. In the current model of assessment this study examined, however, the research suggests that the existing external assessment processes - the written exam - could be made more transparent, and move beyond the annual published Examiners’ Reports. The study recommends that more transparent processes and shared understandings could well enhance teachers’ pedagogy and student learning
8.8. The Playlist Advisory Panel process

This study found that Playlist Advisory Panel members, those who choose the Playlists, are not required to see the plays they select for the VCE Playlists. The data specifically notes that the de-brief session conducted around the 2009 Playlists had input only from those Panel members who happened to have seen particular productions. There was no formal review process. I contend this is problematic.

The study also identified that within the Playlist selection process there exist tensions between applying the selection criteria, balancing the aesthetic and affective qualities of theatre as an artform, and determining whether a production is an effective teaching resource. Hurley (2010) argues that affect arises through emotion, commitment, pleasure and passion. The literature with regard to embodied drama practices and theatre as an artform supports this argument. The Advisory Panel has been charged with selecting the “best resources” for students studying VCE Drama and Theatre Studies but the same Panel is not required to see those resources in action — enacted and experienced and potentially able to gauge affect.

This study recommends that a process be determined that enables Panel members to attend plays, and also recommends that a formal review process of each year’s Playlists be structured. Both these recommendations are made in order to consider how the very “best resources” can be created for students.

8.9. The need for discursive entanglement

The study determined there is disconnect between the language of the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curriculum and the language of contemporary theatre making. The first language is constructed for the purposes of enacting the curriculum, for assessment and is one that frames teachers’ pedagogical approaches and students’ experiences of theatre performance. The second develops in parallel to contemporary theatre practices.

Chapter Seven highlighted inconsistencies across theatre companies with regard to understanding why drama students attended productions and what they were analysing. The
study indicates that the tensions between the two languages are at their most heightened in the submission documents, in boundary objects such as education resources and in Q&A sessions. The data indicates there is value in a theatre company actively learning and understanding the language of the curriculum when a production has been selected to the Playlists, as Case Study 1 indicates. There is, however, equal value in the education sector actively seeking knowledge of and understanding the language of contemporary theatre practice, and to consider; how do these two languages differ and what is the same?

The study recommends there is a need for what the author suggests is ‘discursive entanglement’, a concept whereby the theatre industry and drama education sector consciously share and seek to learn the languages of their practice through deeper cross-sector engagement and cross-sector professional development. An active and interactive glossary may well provide a powerful point of engagement.

8. 10. Re-imagining theatre company engagement
The study found that within the enacted and experienced curriculum that is determined by the Playlists process, there are opportunities for a rich and meaningful dialogic encounter (Alexander, 2008). As has been established, dialogic encounters are those in which tutors and learners are both engaged equally in a context where listening and two-way communication happen in a collaborative spirit, and in the interests of “naming the world”. Freire (in Jackson, 2007) states that true dialogue is “the process of identifying those aspects of the world that need to be known and understood if teachers and taught alike are productively to act in and, where necessary, on the world…They are encounters in which the educator has as much to learn from the learner as the learner does from the tutor (p. 186). Further, Freire’s description of meaningful dialogue goes to the heart of drama education where the aesthetic and the embodied enable students to directly connect with characters, narrative and emotion and meaning making. The theatre event is the physical point at which the key stakeholders encounter each other. They meet as performers and audience. Within the context of the curriculum these roles blur as the live theatre event occurs and as the theatre venue becomes a transactional space. One cast member of Fatboy encapsulated the possibilities of theatre company and school encounters when he stated, “[It was like] we had
created some sort of ritual of being together and having fun” (Cast interview, CS2, March, 2010). The study suggests, however, that in many cases the potential for such rituals are lost and dialogic encounters with stakeholders remain ineffective.

8.11. Further recommendations

8.11.1. Rethinking pedagogies of performance analysis – a model of transaction

 Alexander (2008) states that pedagogy is the overarching framework that shapes teaching. In this study teachers engaged with processes within an overarching framework that prepared students for seeing a performance, prepared them to be in the theatre and then activated their memories in order to remember, de-construct and re-construct the performance. As a process and as classroom practice it was seemingly effective. This study, however, reveals gaps. As a recommendation I propose a pedagogy that is aimed at closing, reducing or indeed activating these gaps. I call it ‘transactional pedagogy’.

Transactional pedagogy is a pedagogy constructed around a necessary and mutually dependent partnership between the curriculum authority, teachers, students and theatre companies. From the outset I acknowledge there are certain practices already occurring that constitute transactions but these approaches have embedded assumptions, are inconsistent, and dependent on personnel in each sector. They are often co-incidental and don’t fully acknowledge the pre-performance and post-performance pedagogies that teachers and students must engage in.

Transactional pedagogy begins with an initial ‘act’. In the case of VCE Drama and Theatre Studies this act is the submission of a play script by a theatre company to the Playlist selection process. The underlying assumptions in submitting are that the company wishes to engage with the education sector, wishes to engage students in live theatre experiences, and assumes that selected play will be relevant to student learning. These assumptions need to be challenged in order to generate authentic and consistent practice.
Transactional pedagogies draw on two theories already examined in this thesis; Rosenblatt’s (1986) theories of literary transaction and Wenger’s (1998) theories of communities of practice. Transactional theory replaces the term “interaction” with “transaction” because of its conjuring of “separate objects encountering one another but remaining essentially unchanged”. Such theory proposes that the relationship between the stakeholders is one whereby “each works its effects upon the other, each contributes to the shaping of interpretation of the live theatre experience (Rosenblatt, 1986, p. 18). Communities of practice have three key dimensions: mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire (Wenger, 2998). All are necessary in the proposed transactional pedagogy model.

8.11.2. Transactional pedagogy – the significance of space

Traditionally, pedagogy has been defined and located within the context of classroom teaching and learning, but this is limiting. Traditionally, pedagogy has been the domain and practice of the teacher but I believe this too is limiting. Pedagogical practices extend beyond the classroom boundaries and the institution of school to other environs. School excursions, educational programs developed in a range of cultural and public institutions and field trips are testimony to ‘external’ classrooms or learning in other places. In this research the learning environment is sometimes the classroom, but it is also the theatre spaces and institution of the company that presents and performs the live production.

In this study, the role of the theatre venue was only given minimal attention by teachers and students. Reception theorists and audience researchers, however, acknowledge the importance of the venue with regard to the theatre event. Ross (2007, in Bresler) comments on cultural spaces such as a theatre potentially being “contexts for exchange” and, I contend, are rich contexts for meaningful transaction. They are spaces whereby an audience experiences simultaneously “the intensely personal and the publicly shared” (pp. 756-757). McCauley (2010) asserts “the theatre building or designated place of performance provides a context of interpretation for spectators and performers alike” (p. 41). In pedagogies of transaction, the theatre venue, as a site for the theatrical event and as a site for learning is a significant point of transaction for experiential learning, critical analysis, discursive entanglement and dialogue. The performance space – stage and auditorium — enables a
physical, aesthetic and intellectual transaction between theatre companies and education and, as I have argued, “Through the establishing of a mutual trust between the theatre company, the teachers and the students, the theatre is transformed from aesthetic space to pedagogical space” (Upton, 2015, p. 270).

Case Study 2, *Fatboy*, offered rich insight into the notion that at the conclusion of a performance, both performers and audience are emerging from the performance experience into a place that may not necessarily be comfortable for either. Transactional pedagogy generates more than interaction, it demands mutual endeavour and “discursive entanglement” in order to navigate that space.

**8. 11.3. Transactional pedagogy – a purposeful community of practice**

Wenger (1998) states that communities of practice can be unintentional or intentional. I argue that the VCAA, theatre companies, and teachers need to formalize a purposeful community of practice in order for mutual reciprocity to be realised.

I return to what this study has identified as the initial act of pedagogy undertaken by theatre companies, the submission of plays and scripts. The underlying assumptions that the performed product *will be relevant* to student learning needs to be challenged, and the desire by theatre companies to directly engage with education needs to be re-negotiated within a newly established, formal community of practice. Such a community of practice would closely and critically share what this study has identified as the most effective pedagogical transactions that support the pre-performance, in-theatre and post-performance pedagogies that teachers and students engage in when theatre productions are their text for study. In practice this means that curriculum authorities, theatre industry and the education sector create an ongoing series of meetings that critically share practice - including its embodied forms - languages, and theories of education and theatre making, in order to generate a series of strategies that identify potential barriers between them and actively seek to break them down. In practice, by acknowledging the ephemerality of theatre, its aesthetic qualities and opportunities for multiple meaning making, the community will “transact” and propose models for constructing effective “boundary objects” that honour theatre’s purpose and
qualities. Further, that such a community of practice and its transactional practice becomes embedded in institutional and organisational structures and not subject to changes in personnel or “beholden to the individuals who occupy particular positions at given times” (Upton & Edwards, 2014, p. 49).

I argue that transactional pedagogy enacted through an intentional cross-sector community of practice is a model that can be applied across all contexts where live theatre is included as part of drama curriculum, and is one that can greatly enhance pedagogies for teaching performance analysis, theatre review, play writing, script critique and performance making.

**Scope for further research**

The scope for further research in this field is compelling. If external assessment of performance analysis remains a key component in VCE Drama and Theatre Studies, there is a compelling case for mapping and evaluating assessor roles and assessment training — beyond the statistical information that is generated by the VCAA — in order to evaluate how these processes align with the pedagogies of teaching performance analysis, and the concerns of “getting it right” that teachers and students spoke to repeatedly in this study. Beyond the Victorian context of this study, there is further research to be conducted that addresses the processes and principles of selecting play styles, scripts or live performances for study and how that selection process impacts teaching, learning and assessment.

English and Literature students also study plays as scripts and on occasion attend performances. There are rich opportunities to investigate the role that live theatre performances have in the teaching of English and Literature. The data from the fifth case study originally included in this research raises powerful questions.

Part 8.7 of this chapter questioned the efficacy of examining the performance analysis of live theatre. Should it no longer be examinable, there are potentially significant implications for the current VCE system. It raises questions as to whether Playlists would still be required, and suggests a reconfiguring of stakeholder relationships between theatre
companies and senior drama education in Victoria. The findings in this thesis offer scope for exploring this further as part of VCAA VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula reviews.

Finally, theatre’s significance as an art form in the 21st century, as one traditionally to be experienced live is embedded in the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curricula and, indeed, in other state-based, national and international senior drama curriculum. In recent times the relevance of encountering a theatre performance live is being challenged. In London the National Theatre and The Globe programs of streaming theatre performances to schools, and to communities nationally and internationally, and the recent streaming events by Sydney Opera House of Bell Shakespeare productions to regional areas, reconfigures concepts of “liveness” (Jackson 1997, Cremona et al 2004, Govan et al 2007, Auslander 2008). Such representations of live theatre events pose questions for what may, in the future, constitute a “live theatre” experience for teaching performance analysis.
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<td>4</td>
<td>Shakespeare’s R&amp;J</td>
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APPENDIX 1 – Submission to the VCAA Playlist, Case Study 1

VCE Drama and Theatre Studies
Nominations for 2010 VCE Play Lists

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority VCE Play List Selection Panel is responsible for the selection of plays for analysis and evaluation by students of VCE Drama and Theatre Studies. VCE students are required to attend theatre performances in order to complete coursework and an end-of-year written examination.

Please submit details of your forthcoming production(s) if you wish them to be considered for the 2009 VCE Play Lists. It is understood that aspects of a production may change during the pre-production period.

Submissions must be lodged by Friday, September 4 2009 with:

Curriculum Manager, Performing Arts
Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
41 St Andrews Place
EAST MELBOURNE 3002

The application must be accompanied by either

**ONE** copy of the script/scenario and authorisation to photocopy the script/scenario should accompany this application.

Or

**THREE** copies of the script/scenario where authorisation to photocopy cannot be given
Contact details

Name:  

Telephone:  

E-mail:  

Title of play:  “ONE HUNDRED”  

By Christopher Heimann, Diene Petterle & Neil Monaghan  

Proposed dates and times of performances: Note, Drama and Theatre Studies Unit 3 Playlists requires performances between February and May and the Unit 4 Theatre Studies Playlist requires performances between July and September. Refer to attachment 4, Term dates.

Dates:  4 March to 14 March 2010  

Times:  1pm and 7pm (2 performances daily)  

Duration of performance:  60 minutes
Victorian or interstate production (where it is an interstate production please identify the production company): VICTORIAN

Ticket prices/Group concessions:  
Students  $20  
Teachers $24

Performance style(s) that will be used in the production:

‘100’ takes place in a void, a no-man’s land somewhere between life and death. The set consists of 5 white paper screens, 4 small white wooden blocks and 5 bamboo poles. The actors are dressed in white costumes. The beauty and power of this non-naturalistic, physical, visual ensemble piece is its simplicity. The actors are able to move seamlessly between memory and reality using only their bodies and the sticks to magically transport the audience to a dramatic French motorbike race, a South American rainforest, an office, a lovers’ bed, a hospital and a Melbourne tube train station as each character in turn tries to capture their memory for eternity. Time becomes duration in this landscape of reflection and we travel forwards and backwards with the characters as they seek the answer to the plays’ central question. Through the use of shadow screen, physical symbolism and an original sound score we construct powerful visual theatre that is both touching and challenging. ‘100’ is a reminder that a single gesture can speak volumes and that an uncluttered verbal and visual text can connect us to the deepest part of our humanity most powerfully.

Personnel involved in the production, for example, guest director:

DIRECTOR: #

Is the script or scenario published?  (Please circle)

Yes  No

Is the script currently being distributed in Australia? (Please circle)

Yes  No

If no, please indicate how and when a copy of the script can be obtained for study purposes. See information in Attachment 5 re distribution of scripts for Australian plays.
If the play is not currently published, please indicate whether it is likely to be published and outline publication details:

Brief outline of how the production will meet selection criteria:

Criteria for play selection

Drama students are offered a new way of seeing and realising performance work on the floor through the wide range of techniques and forms we layer into our work which can be inspiring for their own ensemble creations. Because our own performance language works primarily out of images, cultural and language barriers are easily crossed. Through the use of Suzuki, Viewpoints, symbolic gesture and chorus ensemble, we create a visual and physical style of storytelling that is easily accessible to all students. ‘100’ is a good reminder to students that through the use of a simple inexpensive prop, coupled with imagination and the magic of transformation they can create wonderful, engaging, powerful theatre. ‘100’ asks us to question what is really important to us, and in a world of growing materialism offers a perspective that could raise interesting debate. Themes of love, self worth, honour, nobility, sacrifice and dreams are all examined. It is a play whose central question stays with you a long time after it finishes.

Imagine that you must choose one single memory from your life - everything else will be erased forever.

That choosing this memory is your only way of passing through to eternity. That you have one hour to choose.

Choose now from your whole life, from all you've ever done, felt or thought… what is the one thing you treasure most?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Company:</th>
<th>Red Stitch Actors Theatre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact Details:</td>
<td>#........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Play:</td>
<td><em>Fatboy</em> by John Clancy for Drama Studies Unit 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates:</td>
<td>March 17 – April 17, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times:</td>
<td>Matinees at 11am with post show forums after each show for 30 minutes and performances <em>Wednesday to Saturday at 8pm and Sunday at 6.30pm</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Duration:</td>
<td>70 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Red Stitch Actors Theatre, Rear 2 Chapel Street, East St Kilda VIC 3183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating Capacity:</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian/ Interstate Company:</td>
<td>Victorian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket Prices:</td>
<td>$20 Student Concession/ Accompanying teacher free $34 Adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Styles that will be used in the production</td>
<td>Non naturalistic; “A live action, life-sized puppet or Punch and Judy show” Absurdist, comedy, stylised and expressionistic puppet style theatre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel involved in the production.</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the script published?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the script currently being distributed in Australia?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Criteria for Play Selection:

1. Contain performances of dramatic merit and be worthy of close study

*Fatboy* is a new millennium adaptation of Alfred Jarry’s 19th Century original, *Ubu Roi*. It remains true to his exposure of the very grotesque “eternal … imbecility, eternal gluttony…” of humanity. John Clancy has captured the same expressionistic storybook-like quality; a caricatured world much like Roald Dahl’s *The Twits*. Two major points of interest for Drama students are the inherent thematic of the text - the ways in which humanity remains preoccupied with the same concerns over time – and the expression of this idea through non-naturalistic performance style and stagecraft. There will be some interesting exploration of the actor-audience relationship and the extent to which our fourth wall is negated. The production will be a fully realised exploration of the dramatic elements of the play.

2. Consist of plays that cover a range of styles and are excellent examples of their form.

The Red Stitch production of *Fatboy* will compliment Unit 3 Drama Studies due to its highly stylised non-naturalistic acting and stagecraft elements.

3. Consist of plays that will sustain intensive study, raising interesting issues and providing challenging ideas.

*Fatboy* explores epic themes: namely, the cycle of oppression, power and greed. Its setting is ahistorical and therefore the drama class room can discuss and contextualise the play within a variety of conceptual frameworks - from Australia’s colonial past, to Nazi or Communist totalitarianism, modern day terrorism or more locally, crime-wave cycles. Humanity’s propensity for grotesqueness is all pervading.

4. Be suitable for and accessible to a wide range of students

The sheer physicality of the performance will appeal to a wide range of both Drama and Theatre Studies students – and even students of Dance. English, Art and History students will also enjoy the abstract escapism inherent in the production.

5. Contain a range of both new and established works

*Fatboy* is a very contemporary script, having first premiered at The Assembly Rooms Edinburgh on 6 August, 2004 as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Red Stitch will produce the Australian premiere of this exciting new work.

6. Provide access to contemporary theatre repertoire

Red Stitch is widely recognised as one of Melbourne’s leading independent theatre companies and has earned a reputation for presenting local audiences with the latest work from around the world. Having been introduced to the company via their respective schools, VCE students
will have forged a connection to an organisation presenting the highest quality contemporary theatre repertoire.

7. Consist of texts that are appropriate for the age and development of students and in that context reflect current standards and expectations.

*Fatboy* will challenge a VCE audience and is perfectly aligned with the Drama Studies curriculum.

*There will need to be a strong language warning made visible on the VCAA website and a strict booking deadline of Friday, March 5th 2010. Matinees will be scheduled subject to minimum attendance.*

*Enquiries/ Bookings - #*
APPENDIX 3: Teacher Participant Individual Interview Questions

RESEARCH PROJECT:
Teaching the Live: The pedagogies of performance analysis

Teacher Participant - Individual interview questions

Interviewer:
This interview is being recorded. At any time you can ask to have the recording device switched off and you can choose to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Interviewer:
These questions focus on the experience of seeing the production and the process of teaching analysis of the performance of the play:

- Generally, what was your experience of seeing the performance like? What did you enjoy? What didn’t you enjoy? Was it a good thing to do?
- Thinking about the play script / performance that you are teaching, was the performance of the play what you expected or imagined? What differences / similarities were there? (Prompts – language, movement, space, setting, characterisation/acting, casting, props, sound, lighting, costume, make-up)
- Have you realised anything new about the play that you hadn’t before? What? Could this impact or affect your teaching?
- Has anything changed about the way you understand the story? Why?
- Do you think there are other ways that this play could be staged or presented? Expand on these ideas.

Interviewer:
This next set of questions focus on the process of teaching performance analysis.

- What did you observe about your students’ experiences of the production – space, audience, anticipation, engagement, reaction, actor/audience relationship, comments
- Did you or the students take any notes or write anything down? Did you or the students read the program?
- Was there education or teachers’ notes provided?
- Did you read these prior to or after seeing the performance? For example did you use them in your teaching?
- Did you and the students attend a pre or post show seminar or forum? Which members of the creative team or company were present? Is this important?
- If so what happened at the forum? Did your students ask questions?
- What would you say about it as a resource or experience?
- What types of activities or discussion happened in the classroom after seeing the performance?
- How did you teach the students in regard to remembering the live performance of the play? What strategies did you use to discuss, write, describe, remember, recall, analyse etc?
- **How much did you refer to or rely on the curriculum or study design to guide your teaching?**
- Would you offer this experience to your students again?
- In what ways do you think seeing the production enhanced the student’s understanding of theatre?
- What value would you place on students seeing a performance?
- What do you see as being the role of live theatre performance in curriculum and education?
- Does a recommended play list assist or detract from this?

Thank you for participating in this interview.
APPENDIX 4: Teacher interview questions – preparing for the exam

RESEARCH PROJECT

TEACHING THE LIVE – THE PEDOGOGIES OF PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

TEACHER PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – REVISION FOR EXAM

The following questions are a guide only. They have been formulated to investigate how teachers prepare their students to write a performance analysis under exam conditions to a live theatre performance they saw during the academic year.

- What is the name of the performance your students have chosen to write on?
- What types of activities and lessons have you devised in order for the students to revise this performance/script for the exam?
- What aspects of the script / performance have you focused on in particular?
- Why these activities or lessons? What resources do you use?
- Do you do the same thing every year or for every performance / script? For example is every performance or script the same? Can you revise for it in the same way?
- How difficult or easy is it to revise or revisit a live performance that was seen several months ago?
- What may make it easier or less difficult?
- Do you think you chose the right or best performance / script for your students? Why?
- How do you recall or revisit a live performance or script? What strategies do you use?
- What is it about live performance being examinable that offers particular challenges or opportunities?
- How might an exam that includes writing about live performance contribute to the role of live theatre in education?

[October, 2010]
APPENDIX 5: Post Show student focus group questions

Research Project:
Teaching the live: The pedagogies of performance analysis.

Small group/ Focus Group discussion Questions – post performance

Interviewer:

This discussion is being recorded. At any time you can ask to have the recording device switched off and you can choose to withdraw from the discussion at any time. You will not be identified and have the option of selecting your own pseudonym.

Interviewer:

These questions are about the experience of seeing the production of the play and then what you did in class.

Introductory questions:

- Are you all studying VCE Drama/Theatre Studies?
- Why did you choose Drama/Theatre Studies?
- What live theatre performances have you most recently seen?
- Why did you go to this particular performance? Did you choose this performance?
- How did you find out about this theatre performance?
- Where was it? Who with? How did you get there?
- What were your expectations before you went?
- How much did you know about the play before you saw it? How did you know it?
- What types of activities / work did you do in class?
- Did you read / act out the script? What part did you play?

The production

- Generally, what was the experience of seeing the performance like? What did you enjoy? What didn’t you enjoy? What was challenging?
- What was your favourite part of the experience? (prompts – venue, being out of school, travelling, social stuff)
- What was it like seeing the play script presented live before you?
- Did you take any notes or write anything down? Did you read the program?
- Did you attend a pre or post show seminar or forum? Tell me about that, what was it like? What happened at that event? Did you ask questions?
- Thinking about the play script / production that you are studying, was the performance of the play what you expected or imagined? What differences / similarities were there?
  (Prompts – language, movement, space, setting, characterisation/acting, casting, props, sound, lighting, costume, make-up)
Performance analysis:
- Have you realised anything new about the play that you hadn’t before? What?
- What types of activities did you do in the classroom after seeing the performance? Did you do any performance based activities?
- What types of handouts did you receive or what research did you do?
- Do you have to do written work in relation to the play? Tell me about that – what types, when, why? For example is there or was there a SAC?
- How did your teacher “teach” you to complete a performance analysis? What did they do or say?
- What do you think you about having to write about the play for assessment?
- Did or do you have to talk about theatre productions in a special way? Use a certain type of language? What sort of language?
- How did everyone remember the performance? What did they remember?
- How did you remember and record the experience?
- Do you think there is a difference between studying theatre performance and studying a book or a film? What might this be?
- What do you think you learn from seeing live theatre performance?
- Do you think there are other ways that this play could be staged or presented? Expand on these ideas – do you think it was effectively staged?
- What do you think you about having to write about the play in an exam?
- Has seeing the performance made a difference to your drama work?
- Has seeing a performance made a difference to your drama work?

Thank you for participating in this discussion.
APPENDIX 6: Interview Schedule – Theatre Company Member

RESEARCH PROJECT:
Teaching the live: the pedagogies of performance analysis

Key Informant Interview – Theatre company member (non performer)

Interviewer:
This interview is being recorded. At any time you can ask to have the recording device switched off and you can choose to withdraw from the interview at any time

Interviewer:
This first set of questions focus on your role in the company
- What role do you have in the company?
- How would you describe that role?
- How are you involved in this particular production?
- Why was this particular production programmed? Were you involved in that process?
- Is this production part of the main stage season or program of your company?

Interviewer:
This next set of questions focuses on the production and the curriculum
- Does your company regularly submit work for inclusion on curriculum or play lists? Is this the first time?
- Has the company had previous productions on the curriculum or play lists?
- Why does the company go through this process? What is the rationale? Why might it be seen to be worthwhile to have a production on a curriculum list?
- Why was this particular production submitted for selection?
- What do you know about the curriculum/subject that this production has been selected to be studied for – study areas, assessment requirements, exams?
- Has the company organised any material additional to the performance – education or teachers’ notes, discussion seminars, workshops etc?
- Why have they scheduled or created these? What purpose might they serve – are they linked to particular learning outcomes?
- Who is involved in developing and presenting these?
- From past productions how would you describe the responses to these resources and seminars from teachers? From students?
- Is this production or some of the performances just for students or are members of the general public part of the audience? Is this important?
- Would you discuss the casting of this production? Was the casting process done with a student audience in mind?
- Is the rehearsal and production process for a production that is on the curriculum different to other productions? In what ways?
**Interviewer:**
This next set of questions focuses on what you have observed about students and live theatre performance

- Have you observed or been part of any student audiences for this or other productions where students have largely been members of the audience?
- How would you describe the way the students have responded to the productions? (Prompts – entry, in the theatre, watching the show, taking notes, discussing)
- What do you think a young audience member might learn from attending this production?
- What do you think students learn from going to the theatre in general?
- What do you see as being the role of live theatre performance in curriculum or education?

Thank you for participating in this interview.
APPENDIX 7: Interview Schedule – theatre company performer/cast

RESEARCH PROJECT

Teaching the live: The pedagogies of performance analysis

Sample Key Informant Interview – Theatre Company - Performer

Interviewer:
This interview is being recorded. At any time you can ask to have the recording device switched off and you can choose to withdraw from the interview at any time.

For the purposes of this interview, please state your first name and the role you play in the production.

Interviewer:

These questions focus on your role as a performer or creative team member in the production of [insert name of production]

- Why were you interested in taking a role in this production?
- Are you aware that the production is on or has been selected to be part of a curriculum text/play list? (Explain if required)
- What do you know about the subject area that this play/production has been selected for?
- What are your thoughts about studying drama or theatre when in secondary school?
- Why do you think this particular play might appeal to students and teachers?
- What are your thoughts and observations about performing to student audiences or audiences comprising large groups of students? Is it noticeable?
- Has the process of rehearsing this production been the same as other productions given that it is on the VCE Playlist for [drama/theatre studies]?
- When you are performing, do you have a sense of how the students in particular are responding to the production?
- Have you been part of an education forum or seminar?
- OR would you talk about the Q&A sessions you have been part of – what observations have you made?
- What do you think the purpose and intention of these forums and seminars might be? What do you think they could be?
- How might they help students understanding the performance they’ve just seen?
- Have you contributed to the creation of any education resources for this production?
- What purpose do you think they might serve?
- What do you see as being the role of live theatre performance in curriculum or education? What do you see your role as a performer as being in this regard?

Thank you for participating in this interview.
APPENDIX 8: Interview Schedule - VCAA Manager KLA, The Arts

RESEARCH PROJECT
Teaching the Live: The Pedagogies of Performance Analysis

Key Informant Interview – Text Selection Panel Chair

Interviewer:
This interview is being recorded. At any time you can ask to have the recording device switched off and you can choose to withdraw from the interview at any time. You will not be identified in the research report.

Interviewer:
These questions focus on your role as a chair/manager of the Playlist Advisory Panel and the process and role of play scripts or performance texts

- Would you briefly describe your role as a member of this curriculum setting panel?
- Would you talk about why play scripts / theatre performances are set as texts for study? What is the educational framework that underpins their inclusion?
- What is the role of the written curriculum and assessment in the process?
- What is the process for selecting scripts / theatre performances to text lists?
- What is your understanding of how a play script / performance text is taught in the classroom (the enacted curriculum) What are your experiences in regard to this?
- Are there any expectations that companies will create performance work specifically addressing aspects of the curriculum?
- What observations has the panel made in the past in regard to the effectiveness of the performances selected to the text lists or play lists (drama and theatre studies?)
- What do you believe is the role of live theatre performance in curriculum as a teaching or educational tool?

Thank you for participating in this interview.
APPENDIX 9: Case Study 1: Teacher post-show handout for *One Hundred*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non Naturalistic Set</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual Poetry – Artaud.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Symbolic – Artaud.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stylized Movement.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Artaud.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grotowski – The Empty Space.</strong></td>
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</table>

- **4 screens** – one large and three much smaller. Used to create shadow effects. For example at commencement of play the shadows of people falling symbolised death and the *spirit falling* / moving / floating away from the body into the void. The shadowy world after death. The stylised movement scene that commenced the play depicting the journey to the afterlife was an excellent example of **Visual Poetry – Artaud.** Artaud believed visual images could depict situations and emotions much more evocatively than naturalistic language or the imitation of realistic movement and gestures which is Naturalistic Theatre.

- **Symbolic – Artaud.**

- **Grotowski – The Empty Space.**

- **Sets in Naturalistic Theatre conform to photographic realism where the aim is to depict a life like realistic set in every detail.** Non naturalism favours minimalistic use of sets. The performance space in *100* was empty apart from 3 standing doors and one lying down against the centre screen. This evokes **The Empty Space – Grotowski’s Theatre.** The focus is on the actor and the skill of the actor to create imaginary worlds.
- **Grotowski – Poor Theatre**
  - 4 doors – three upright on casters with door steps and one lying down against the centre screen (static). **Poor Theatre – Grotowski.** Sets pared down to the absolute limit. Sets transformed by the actors into many other locations and time periods. Doors chosen by the Director because they symbolise thresholds – we step through them into other worlds/realities. They become portals into the void. Constantly transformed by the actors. **Theatre of Transformation – Grotowski.** For example, the static door placed on a wedge in the playground scene became a slide. The actors through their expressive skills transformed into little children and played with imaginary objects or used transformation of object to create different things in the playground. The actors’ relationship to the space transformed the space. Two doors placed next to each other became Nia’s bedroom window and the static door on the wedge became her bed.

- **Grotowski – Theatre of Transformation**
  - Minimalist Props
    - I wedge shape block used to prop under static door to transform it into different objects. For example, a slide in the playground or a stage to receive on award. **Theatre of Transformation – Grotowski**
  - Symbolic props – visual poetry
    - 5 white bamboo poles transformed into many objects. For example, a swing, a forest. **Minimalistic Theatre – Poor Theatre – Grotowski**
    - Feather and dust – Guide - Welcome to death claps hands together – heightened sound, feather floats down to ground and dust – Symbolism - Dust = death from dust to dust. Feather = symbol of ascension and spiritual evolution to a higher plane.

- **Multimedia images**
  - **Internal desires**
    - Projection of symbolic images or memories. Not realism. For example after the shadow effects at the start of the play, small lines like static were projected onto the big screen which symbolised that we are out of the real world and travelling into another space – have not yet reached our destination. Like changing channels on the TV. No reception. When Sophie was in the office, numbers were projected onto the screen and names like at the stock market – depicted her preoccupation with advancement.

- **Sound Effect/Music**
  - **Non Naturalistic – Used to strengthen the emotional impact of the production rather than depicting life like sounds found in naturalism. Commencement of play Sound effects of whispers sounded strange/aerie/ghostly. Music then started to build and sound sinister. Start of play choreographed to the music – performed as a Dance Drama. Heightened Movement depicted the deaths of the characters/spiralling through space and finally falling into the waiting room/void where the play starts. Music was composed for the production. An example was Sophie’s quite violent lurching/twisting out of control movement which gave the impression a struggling with death.**

- **Artaud – music to**
  - The sad music playing at Sophie’s death added to the pathos of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assault the senses of the audience</th>
<th>The scene. No words were spoken just the music and the heightened movement told the story.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lighting</strong></td>
<td><strong>Symbolic</strong> Pools of light used on stage rather than naturalistic lighting coming from a light source. Created the impression of an unreal space in which the characters did not belong. Main lighting source came from floor lights which threw shadows up onto the screens and gave a ghost like impression to the space. Shadows larger than the characters so they seemed lost and out of control in the space – created the impression of a much larger space – the void. Shadowy world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Symbolic Costume</strong></td>
<td><strong>Symbolic use of costumes.</strong> For example Sophie’s jacket pulls apart to symbolise the shattering impact her illness had on her. Her mother is dressed in black to symbolise her evil nature (Wicked step mother in Snow White). Nurses hats Mr Greys glasses Santa hat and nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual/Physical Theatre</strong></td>
<td><strong>Use of freeze frames</strong> Machination Theatre Ensemble is a company that works predominately with visual and physical theatre to create a fusion of naturalistic text with non-naturalistic performance style. <strong>Guide</strong> – Shadow screen freeze huge shadow cast across the screen. He has more power/ menacing. When he comes out he strikes a heightened pose like a matador with smoke billowing all around him. <strong>Guide</strong> – freeze The Thinker – Sophie “Why are you looking at me?” <strong>Sophie’s memory</strong> – Child Sophie (Aurora Kurth) freeze when her self esteem is shattered by her mother. P vacant freeze with the poles all pointed at her as if piercing her body. Reinforced by Sound and Multi Media – sound of shattering and glass shattering projected onto the screen. <strong>Ketu’s Memory</strong> – Ensemble freeze as trees, bamboo ploes transform to become vines to create the setting of Ketu’s village. <strong>Mayor freezes in threatening pose</strong> – hand up to Ketu’s throat Ketu “I will not be silenced”. Freeze reinforces the danger Ketu’s finds herself in. <strong>Alex and Nia’s memory of the day they met</strong> – Ensemble freeze mid motion as children playing on floor rolling in the grass, one in sand pit one on swing. They freeze as Nia and Alex go back to the present and then come back to life again as they go back to the memory. Freeze denoted disjointed time sequence. <strong>Sophie’s office memory</strong> – Office workers freeze stepping through door. They are grotesque caricatures of the ugly, competitive and shallow office professionals. Freeze reinforces the absurd caricature and heightens the comedy. Boss freezes playing golf. Stereotypes exposed. The Christmas party freeze with debauched sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heightened Movement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Camera Flash</strong> – Huge Heightened movement slow motion falling backwards and straightening up again.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Draws attention/strengthen the comment being made.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sophie's office</strong> – Interchange between Jerry and Sophie becomes a dance that reinforces Jerry's predatory nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual poetry.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sophie</strong> – <em>It wasn’t my fault. My illness.</em> Her jacket is symbolically ripped off she is thrown from character to character. Heightened movement established that she was no longer in control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symbolic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sophie climbing onto the static door and being thrown off, she is under it and it moves like a wave above her – she is drowning.</strong> Beautiful visual poetry symbolising her struggle with her illness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mother holding out the book and snapping it shut evoked that she had closed the book on Sophie.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mime</strong></th>
<th><strong>Sophie's office</strong> – mime typing – synchronised between Jerry and Sophie. Heightens the competition between the two.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Placing finger on buzzer mimed and exaggerated for comedic effect to convey the ghoulish nature of the other office workers – abusing their power.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mime drinking at the bar at office Christmas party.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sophie mimes writing on the white board.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Synchronised movement</strong></th>
<th><strong>The three jealous office workers synchronise typing to reinforce they are all the same and cannot be trusted. All envious of Sophie.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reinforces impact</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alex and Gomez use synchronised movement to mime the race.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Nurses moving slowly upstage together during Sophie’s memory of her illness. Reinforces that her time was running out. Death was advancing.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Repetition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Repetition of Alex (Jerry) hitting Aurora on the bottom and she hits him back on the chest. Reinforcing the immoral behaviour at Christmas party for comedic effect.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Slow Motion</strong></th>
<th><strong>Sex at the office Christmas Party – caricature and comedy.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heightens the impact of statement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dancing at the Office Christmas Party – comedy and ridicule – heightens the caricatures.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sophie’s illness and death</strong> – She is gently carried and passed slowly from each male character and slowly placed on her death bed – enormous pathos established. Heightened by the sad music and beautifully female vocalist singing in another language. (Heightened language.)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Ketu’s memory</strong> – Nia and Alex (transform character) and move slowly towards Ketu led by the hands/ fingers. Menacing. They also slowly move Ketu ,standing against the door, upstage. Again the impact is menacing.**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Alex and Nia beat Ketu in slow motion and pull her hair and throw her behind the door. The slow motion increases the pathos of the</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Multiple Time frames</td>
<td>Time frame not linear in structure but goes from the present moment in the void (death) to flashbacks of memories or desires (life).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Disjointed time sequences  | **Alex’s Fantasy** – Commenced with sound effect of huge crowd cheering.  
| Created through sound      | **Sophie’s transition to memory** – Music Crescendo – Bang.  
| Created through lighting.  | Alex walks into a small **spotlight** (non naturalistic) and **mimes** stepping onto a motor bike.                                                                                           |
| Transformation of Object   | **Doors become portals to the void**  
|                            | Nia (Aurora Kurth) and Ketu (Lucy Morris) pick up the static door and transform door into a barricade – **Alex’s fantasy** - while they wave in slow motion – **Heightened Movement**  
|                            | They move the barricade across the stage and it is placed onto the wedge to transform it into the commentators' podium.  
|                            | Static door becomes ocean/ waves (symbolic of grief) that clashed against Sophie.  
|                            | Bedroom windows – Nia’s  
|                            | A slide in the playground  
|                            | A hospital bed  
|                            | A set of steps in a public square  
|                            | A gallows  
|                            | Lover’s bed.  
|                            | Bamboo poles become hand rail in train. Transforming the space into a train.  
|                            | Bamboo poles become turn style at train station.  
|                            | Bamboo poles become tree branches in Ketu’s memory.  
|                            | Static door with wedge placed under it becomes a stage Sophie steps onto to receive her award.  
|                            | 3 bamboo poles become the tripod for a mimed camera in the same scene.  
|                            | A mirror  
|                            | An image of Sophie’s inner shattering  
|                            | A swing  
|                            | A golf club  
|                            | A weapon |
| Transformation of Character | Nia and Ketu transform character to become the crowd -**Alex’s fantasy**.  
|                            | Nia and Ketu become nurses in Sophie’s memory of her illness.  
<p>|                            | Ketu, Sophie and Guide become children in Alex and Nia’s |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Heightened Language</strong></th>
<th>Sophie and Ketu become Nia and Alex as they suffocate to death.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors as props or set pieces:</strong></td>
<td>Jonathon transforms from the Guide to the commentator speaking in French. (Heightened Language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chorus</strong></td>
<td>Chorus (Alex, Guide, Nia) become the little Sophie sneaking in to her mother’s room. Synchronised movement as the three move as one. Nia becomes the little Sophie as Sophie relates the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silhouettes - Shadow effects</strong></td>
<td>Lucy Morris goes behind the screen to become another rider (Alex’s fantasy) who is nameless and only seen as a shadow. She uses transformation of objects as the bamboo stick becomes the handle bars of the motor bike. She is on the centre screen. Nia is seen as a shadow on the smaller screen symbolising that she is in the background and not important or central to this memory. Or maybe not in his life generally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformation of Space</strong></td>
<td>When Nia enters through the doors she re-enters the void (Alex’s fantasy) and leaves the fantasy world and her expressive skills become naturalistic. The other characters follow suit and re-enter the space or transform into their characters in the void.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symbolic Sound</strong></td>
<td>Gentle piano music plays in the background while Nia speaks which symbolises her role as the embodiment of romantic love in the play. Sophie’s mother shutting book – Music 'Bang' – reflect that she has severed herself from Sophie. Glass shattering – Evokes Sophie shattered self. Gentle piano music – Sophie’s transition to happy memory. Nurturing music - self esteem rises. She is beautiful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multi media Projections – reflect internal state. Reinforce themes.</strong></td>
<td>A projection of a still image of a race is on the large screen. This still preoccupies Alex's mind but the fantasy is interrupted. Children’s faces projected onto the big screen as Ketu is being beaten. Child’s eyes also projected onto the little hanging screen reinforcing the importance of her children to Ketu. She sacrificed herself so that her children would have a cleaner world. Stars exploding on Ketu’s death Divine light dropping in Nia’s bedroom Rain falling into hand after carnival Nia and Alex go to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ensemble Theatre</strong></td>
<td>The cast support each character's story/memories by becoming all the other characters/props to help tell that story. Once they have transformed back into their original characters they give all their attention to the character trying to find their memory. It is clear which character is the centre of attention and they also become the centre of the audience's attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Magic Realism</strong></td>
<td>Combination of Realism and Non Naturalism.</td>
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APPENDIX 10: Teacher pre-show handout – Case Study 2, *Fatboy*

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**VCE Drama Unit 3**

“FAT BOY” – Red Stitch Theatre

*Fat Boy* explores ways in which humanity remains preoccupied with the same concerns over time. This idea is developed through non-naturalistic **performance styles** and **stagecraft** including manipulation of the actor-audience relationship and the extent to which our fourth wall is negated.

“A brutal comedy by John Clancy: a live-action Punch and Judy show, a fast-moving, shocking, profane, dead-on funhouse mirror reflection of the world today. The characters are over-sized, the plot line fantastic and the language swoops from melodramatic grandeur to brute obscenity and back within the turning of a phrase.”

“Fatboy is a brutal comedy inspired by Alfred Jarry’s *Ubu Roi*. This satire on modern America’s insatiable appetites—from gobbling up 72oz. steaks to small nations—is presented as a live-action Punch and Judy show. In this fast-moving, shocking, profane, dead-on, funhouse mirror reflection of the world today, the brutish allegory known as Fatboy, along with his monstrous wife, Queen Fudgie the First, stands trial for war crimes. Despite overwhelming evidence the court refuses to convict and succumbs to Fatboy’s “persuasive” tactics.”

The play also explores the epic cycle of oppression, power and greed in an ahistorical setting that highlights the theme that “humanity’s propensity for grotesqueness is all pervading.”

**Aspects to keep in mind as you are watching the play:**

1. What is it about the performance that makes it clearly non-naturalistic?
2. How is the portrayal of the characters by the actors related to the non-naturalistic style of the performance?
3. What noteworthy **expressive skills** do the actors use to portray the characters?
4. How do the **dramatic elements** enhance the production?
5. How does the use of **stagecraft** enhance the non-naturalistic style of the production?
6. How do the **theatrical conventions** enhance the non-naturalistic style of the production?

MAKE AS MANY NOTES AFTER THE SHOW (tonight and tomorrow during class) ON YOUR A3 DOUBLE SIDED SHEET...this will form the basis for our class discussion next week on Tuesday 23rd March.

**A SHORT PERFORMANCE TASK:** Create a short scene that explores the themes of OPPRESSION, GREED and POWER – this could be anything from sexual harassment in the workplace, to sweat shops, to migrant families arriving in Australia... Ensure you have a main character who is greedy, grotesque and cruel. Use exaggerated movement, no fourth wall and satire to enhance your piece.
APPENDIX 11: Teacher post-show handout, Case Study 2, Fatboy

PREPARING FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

Language of drama
- When discussing this performance you will need to show that you are developing your skills in using the language of drama. Make a list of key drama terms that you think you will use when discussing this particular performance (such as ‘non-naturalistic’, ‘performance styles’, ‘character’, ‘symbol’, ‘facial expression’, ‘vignette’, ‘montage’ and so on).

Theatrical conventions
- List any of the following theatrical conventions that were used in the performance: transformation (character, place, object) and disjointed time sequences. Provide an example of how each one was used effectively. Go to the ‘Key Concepts’ section of our book and look at the extended list of theatrical conventions. List any of these that were also present in the performance.

Stagecraft
- Go to the ‘Key Concepts’ section of our book and look at the list of stagecraft. Decide which three areas of stagecraft were most evident in the performance and provide two examples of each one.

Expressive skills
- For each of the following expressive skills write down a few examples of how one or more of the actors used them non-naturalistically in the performance: voice, movement, facial expression, gesture.

Performance style
- What is the style of the performance? It is likely to be non-naturalistic, but was it a particular style of non-naturalism (such as Theatre of Cruelty)? Write down three examples which provide evidence of the style.

Character(s)
- Make a list of the character(s). Write down a couple of examples of how the portrayal of the character(s) was linked to the performance style.

Dramatic elements
- Go to the ‘Key Concepts’ section of our book and look at the list of dramatic elements. Decide which four dramatic elements were most evident in the performance. Provide a couple of examples of how each element was present in the performance.
APPENDIX 12: Case Study 4 - Writing a Review for *Shakespeare’s R&J*

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~Writing a Theatre Review~

Writing a review is much like writing an essay. Your review should be informative, critical and easy to understand. If you’re writing for a newspaper, your review should also be entertaining and fun to read. It may include plot elements, memorable moments, a summary of why the audience would enjoy or dislike it and other observations. Here are some tips on how to write a theatre review.

**Basic Elements:** include basic information about the play - the title, author, leading actors, theatre location and other relevant details. Answer the five "W" questions - who, what, where, when and why. You may also wish to summarize the play, without giving away all of the plot. Keep the program to confirm correct spellings.

**Be Objective:** As a writer, you must try to be as objective as possible. Write your review without using the first person (I).

**The Big Picture:** Comment on the different aspects of the production - the acting, the sound, the lighting, the direction, the set, the themes of the play, the audience’s reaction. Read the entire program, especially the director’s notes for further ideas and clues about the production.

**Explain:** Back up your ideas and comments with examples. If you make a positive or negative statement about the production, explain yourself.

**The Good with the Bad:** In every performance there is something of value that you can take away. Don’t miss it. If there was a memorable moment, comment on it.

**Other:** You may choose to read the play before or after seeing the show. This can give you more insight about the playwright’s ideas.

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Some Guidelines for Reviewing a Dramatic Performance

- Keep an Open Mind – Don’t decide ahead of time what you like and dislike
- Stay Focused on the Performance
- Bring a small notebook to take discrete notes during the performance.
- During the performance ask yourself:
  - Is the central conflict powerful?
  - Are the character well developed and acted?
  - Does the dialogue feel natural – is it well delivered?
  - Does the set the set and costumes accurately reflect the themes or mood presented in the play?
  - Is the performance well-paced? Is it too slow or hard to follow?
  - Does the sound or music add to the play in any significant way?
  - Support your opinions with specific from the performance. Review your notes!
Goethe’s Principles of Criticism

Critics in many fields tend to agree that the principles of Goethe (1749-1832), a German philosopher, critic, and playwright, provide a sound basis for criticism. Goethe’s critical methodology always used three questions:

1. What was the artist (actor, director, designer) trying to do?
   - What world was the director trying to illuminate? Was the actor showing his/her own personality or attempting to embody a character? What was the aim of the designer?

2. How well did the artist accomplish it?
   - Was the artist successful? Was the actor’s technique and the director’s methods effective?

3. Was it worth doing?
   - Here you must form your own opinion as to whether or not the time and effort worthwhile for both artist and audience. Even if the artist succeeds in achieving his/her aim, the efforts may not be of value to everyone. After considering the entire production, you must decide its worth.

These three questions provide a valuable foundation for criticism because they allow you to judge the work of an artist only after you have considered the purpose, use of technique, and intrinsic value of the individual efforts.
APPENDIX 13: Case Study 1 - Sample section of education resources
NON NATURALISTIC CONVENTIONS

To achieve all these transformations the ensemble used:

✦ PROPS: the poles, a feather, dust, a book
✦ SET: the doors
✦ COSTUME: Nurses hats, Mr Gray’s glasses, Santa hat and nose, Sophie’s jacket, Mother’s dress

The poles were used to create:

✦ A motor cycle handle
✦ A mirror
✦ An image of Sophie’s inner shattering
✦ A forest
✦ A tree branch
✦ A town square
✦ A swing and sandpit in a playground
✦ A golf club
✦ A camera tripod
✦ A train handrail and turnstile
✦ A weapon

Doors were used to create:

✦ Portals in the void
✦ A barricade at the race track
✦ A commentator’s platform
✦ Bedroom windows
✦ A roundabout and slide in the playground
✦ Offices
✦ A stage to receive an award
✦ A hospital bed
✦ A set of steps in a public square
✦ A gallows
✦ Bedroom windows
✦ Lovers bed

THE USE OF AV IN ‘100’

AV was used in ‘100’ to create:

✦ Memory fragments of Nia, Ketu’s child, Sophie’s mother
✦ Places – the void, the office
✦ Events – Sophie’s inner shattering
  - Alex’s bike race
  - Rain after carnival Alex and Nia go to.
- Stars exploding at Ketu's death
- Divine light dropping in Nia's bedroom.
- Alex's inability to see
- Death

The different size screens were used to highlight the characters relationship with the people in the memories, eg: Sophie's mother was such a dominant figure in her life she took up the whole screen.

THE USE OF COSTUMES AND SET IN '100'

COSTUME

Given the nature of the theme of death the main colours chosen to be used in '100' were black & white. In Western cultures people wear black to funerals and in Asian cultures they wear white. White also has an association of purity and simplicity and a stripped back quality which seemed appropriate for the costumes of people who have left the world and its possessions behind. Red was also used sparingly in '100', in the office Christmas party scene there was a red Santa hat and nose, a symbol of joy and giving and for Ketu's death a red light representing blood. Two nurses were used to symbolically depict the atmosphere of Sophie's illness and her jacket was constructed to be able to be torn apart to dramatize how out of control she felt with her diagnosis.

SET

The set consisted of four white doors, three moving and one static on a wedge, five white bamboo poles three white paper screens and one white fabric screen which operated as both a projection screen and a shadow screen.

LIGHTING

There were two main worlds created in '100', the void and then the many different worlds based on the characters memories and fantasies.

The void was a mysterious, stark and shadowed place, whilst the memories were a mixture of vivid, dream-like, warm, surreal, romantic and brutal recollections, and the lighting was selected to reflect these different realities. As we had a limited lighting rig we had to realize all these different places as best we could within the allowable limits. A special light was used on one of the doors to represent Sophie lying in her hospital bed as visitors arrived.
APPENDIX 14: Case Study 2 - Sample of education resources for Fatboy

FATBOY by John Clancy
Directed by Marcelle Schmitz

“Supersized, supercruel and absurdly powerful”

- The New York Times

“John Clancy's satire on America’s insatiable appetites, where the population gobbles pork chops, sex and consumer durables while the government gobbles up small nations is big, broad and brash...a zany Punch and Judy show”

- The Guardian (UK)

Red Stitch Actors Theatre presents the Australian premiere of Fatboy, the award-winning play by writer, director and co-founder of the New York International Fringe Festival, John Clancy. In this satire on the insatiable appetites of first world countries, the characters are over-sized, the plot line surreal, and the language swoops between melodramatic grandeur and brute obscenity.

Fatboy is on trial for crimes against humanity. The court has difficulty making a case, and the drunken judge and hapless prosecutor are reduced to calling Fatboy’s hateful and selfish wife Fudgie to give evidence against him. An allegory about responsibility versus willful ignorance, this timely send up of contemporary global politics takes us on Fatboy’s journey to conquer the world, or at least eat most of it. Including the furniture.

Winner of the Edinburgh Fringe First Award in 2004, followed by the inaugural Edinburgh International Festival Award for its 2007 revival, Fatboy is a modern reworking of Alfred Jarry’s 1896 satire on power and greed, Ubu Roi. Interlacing Absurdism, Surrealism, vaudeville, clowning, and the grotesque, this work is a shocking, funny and profane pantomime that epitomises 21st Century greed and indifference to the suffering of others.

Director Marcelle Schmitz says, “It is a rare privilege to work for a company that keeps the actors central to its vision. Fatboy excites me greatly and presents a view of the world that I share: we are greeding ourselves into oblivion. I like the manic energy of this piece, its angry wit, and its Pythonesque humour.”
Starring Red Stitch ensemble members Daniel Frederiksen (AFI and Logie nominee) as the brutish allegory Fatboy and Olga Makeeva as his wife Fudgie, with Andrea Swift, Dion Mills and special guest Adam Pierzchalski playing an assortment of supporting characters.

Previews: Wednesday 17 and Thursday 18 March
Season: Wednesday 17 March – Saturday 17 April
Times: Wed-Sat 8.00pm, Sun 6.30pm, 11.00am matinee subject to bookings
Bookings: (03) 9533 8083 or www.redstitch.net
Venue: Red Stitch Actors Theatre
Rear 2 Chapel St, St Kilda, 3183

Thinking about the world of Fatboy

*Fatboy* is set in an alternate world, appearing to be in a heightened experience of the past where the main characters rule as King and Queen. However, the themes of this play are certainly relevant to a contemporary audience. In the modern world how do social class, wealth and poverty impact on society on a community level? A national level? A global level?

What arguments are there for and against a monarchy as opposed to a republic in today’s society? How has this changed over time?

How does the notion of a conglomerate corporation or powerful organisation affect a nation and the social impact on those within it?

*Fatboy* is a brawny commentary on society using political satire as its vehicle to communicate this viewpoint. How successful is art as a mode of social commentary and how affective is it?

Can you think of other forms of political satire in:
- TV (eg. *Family Guy, The Simpsons, The Chasers War on Everything*)
John Clancy’s, *Fatboy*, seems to trivialise the injustice of those unfortunate members of society, while laughing at the actions of political figures. By drawing our attention to these concepts, how can this be used to provoke thought and action in society? Do you think it is authors’ and playwrights’ intentions to do so when they write in this way?

Can you think of other ways we can satirise global themes, such as international relations?

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APPENDIX 15: Case Study 3 - Sample of education resources for The Threepenny Opera

In conversation with Paul Capsis – actor – JENNY

May 2010

Paul, could you talk about what attracts you to THE THREEPENNY OPERA and what does it mean to you?
What attracts me to it is the grittiness. The fact that it is opera but its theatre opera; it’s not like musical theatre and it’s not opera strictly, but, it is sort of in the middle of that. I like that middle place because I’ve worked a lot in that kind of area; theatre with music, rather than musical theatre or opera. So what I like about it, particularly this piece, is that it is about the underdog, I guess, it’s about those people who are on the fringes, on the outside, struggling or however their finding their way to survive. It is this other world that exists out there in the real world. These worlds exist of people who are in crime to live. It is an interesting thing to look at particularly in this way with songs and characters. So, I guess that’s what I like about it – it is gritty and rough.

How significant do you think Kurt Weill’s music is in shaping THE THREEPENNY OPERA?
It is extremely important, in that it elevates the story and what Brecht has written but it just takes it somewhere else. I think it is very clever, it’s incredibly smart, in the way it shifts to really up tempo, to grand, to simple and soft – it just goes through the gamut. You know, until this production, I haven’t really looked at it closely; I have seen other productions of it but I now realise that those productions have left out the biggest element which is the music. They were trying to be clever; it was more about the production, or it was more about the acting, or it was more about the production side of it being stripped back and the music suffered, because I am now hearing this music and I’m going “Wow, there’s more!” There’s much more in it. ‘Mac The Knife’ has always been the thing I remember, and it sort of grate on you, but I’m not finding that with this at all because there’s so many other strong bits of music that exist within it.

So I’m loving it, I’m loving it. I love being in the room and hearing the voices and the different kinds of singers we’ve got. We have got opera singers, musical theatre singers, cabaret singers; we have got the gamut, and that is very, very unusual in a piece. I think it is wonderful and don’t know why it doesn’t happen more often. You would never find all of these singers together anywhere else, I can guarantee you that. Someone like Dimity Shepherd who is an incredible opera singer and she is doing that kind of singing but with acting and it is a very powerful combination.

How would you describe the role/s you are playing in THE THREEPENNY OPERA?
I have three roles:
1) I play Jenny Diver
2) I narrate as Jenny Diver – so I’m a narrator (I am a worker of the theatre – so as a group we are workers of the theatre who come together to tell the story.)
3) I am also playing Arch Bishop Kimball.

So, I am Jenny Diver but then I tell the story. I inform the audience about what’s going on at particular points. For example when Macheath is married, Mac the Knife marries Polly Peachum. I’m telling the story but I’m telling the story as Jenny as a worker in the theatre. Then I am Arch Bishop Kimball in the piece. So, I see myself having three role and at the moment that is doing my head in a little bit. It’s not so much Arch Bishop Kimbel and Jenny Diver. It’s more about Jenny Diver in the role of the narrator. At this stage I’m not really sure where that sits and how Jenny talks yet I’m not sure, I’m discovering that. I haven’t found her voice exactly yet or how she narrates the story; but Michael is guiding me which is wonderful.

Malthouse Theatre Education & Youth Access Program

Fiona James, May 2010
Will the narration be coloured by the character of Jenny Diver?
In my mind, yes it would be, but it is the way Michael wants me to narrate the story, which to me is another character form Jenny Diver because of the way I have to speak those things it is like a caller in a boxing ring. It’s someone who calls the boxing, but that not Jenny Diver. I thought that perhaps initially that Jenny and the narrator were one and the same and that maybe she’s a bit rough and loud; but no, Michael thinks that she is not – that is really interesting and I’m looking forward to discovering how this aspect evolves.

Has the style of Brecht influenced your interpretation and/or informed your characterisations in the piece? If so, how?
Interestingly enough it probably lives/exists more in the songs. I think when we are in the songs we are stepping out of “the reality”; however, even the presentation of the scenes is odd/outward, it is in keeping but it is out and presented. It is definitely there in the narration and the overall shape of the play and also in how Sukey at the moment is the character who will present the signs which are separate from the narration.

The last time I did Brecht was in 1999 and before that was with Michael at Belvoir Street, THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE. I did that one year and then the year after that I did THE RESISTABLE RISE OF ARTURO UI. The Brechtian techniques were used in very different ways in both those productions; they were extremely different. In the MTC production it was much more with the signs and I played the character of narrator, but I did that as a character, I did that as Marlene Dietrich, which was going against the ideals of Brecht. In the other production I wasn’t narrating so much, but I was directly speaking to the audience through song.

So this time, I’m playing three characters, I’m narrating, singing, it’s everything... its mind boggling... its pretty full on.

Ultimately what do you think Jenny wants?
I think she is a survivor. I think she wants to help people but she sees reality as it is and I think that is why she betrays Macheath. At the end of the day they have this history together and she is mournful of him, she has a deep connection to him but at the same time she is a survivor – and she has to live, she’s lured by money to betray him. Also she sees him and he’s moved on from her quite a few times, marries someone else and is in a different relationship.

I think that she just wants to help in an indirect way. She doesn’t directly speak to Macheath about his life, she does it in the songs, but it is more of an observation. It is like she is outside in a way. She has a history with this character and with all of the other prostitutes. She has a history and knows all of these other corrupt people; she is just as corrupt as they are. She is really about surviving but at the same time she wants to help people. She has got a big heart and also she has come to terms with a few things; her relationship with Macheath; her role now as not being young and being able to make money as a prostitute as she did when she was young and she still has an addiction.

What is your character Jenny’s status in this production, does it change?
It is kind of ambiguous in a way because where it sits is in the interrelationships between Macheath, Lucy, Polly, Polly with her parents, Macheath with Brown... etc... Always, at the centre, is Macheath.
So where her status is, I’m not sure where she sits within that – perhaps the middle or the lower end. Her status fluctuates - it is the history of the characters and between the characters coming into play.
If you went back in time, she had a high status, when she talks about her time with Macheath in the whore house in North Bulleen. (It is very Melbourne. It has been set in Melbourne and rightly so. In terms of what is going on in the world and what is happening in our society in Australia its very finger on the pulse, scarly so – it is unfortunate but that is the way it is - the contemporary context.) So, if you were to go back in time it would have been a different situation but she is still important to Macheath. It is bizarre that even though he knows she has betrayed him, he still gives her the time; he is extremely loyal for what ever that relationship was.

There is another layer for me because I’m playing her as a man. (Michael sees me playing Jenny as a man.) I have this fantasy that I’ve had a baby with him or the baby could be a metaphor. It’s been played by women – women have babies, but, I’m playing it as a man - men don’t have babies. So how does that work and what is the baby? The baby is perhaps a metaphor. “We had the baby but it didn’t last long” the baby could be anything or anyone, it could be a child they found on the street but who knows – it operates on many levels.

**How have you combated creating these characters as an actor? (How are you finding the character of Jenny and the Narrator physically and vocally?)**

For me it starts with the writing; how its read and how it comes across. I hear them as two different voices.

The narration has to be crystal clear. (I’m one of these people that when I go to the theatre I can not bear not understanding things – it is my biggest thing that drives me up the wall when I can not understand.) It has to be clear – the narration has to be clear and I don’t know if Jenny speaks in that way.

I saw her, Jenny, as very Australian not had so much education, but yes, she has read a few books. She knows about Daedalus and Icarus, and she knows about Socrates. It is interesting that she knows about those things, whether she’s heard them from other people, adults, whether she’s read them, so she is not a dummy. She has perhaps had a past where she had an education and now she has found herself in this terrible situation where she is living in a slum with all these criminals. I’m still finding that. I haven’t arrived there yet. My instinct was to do Jenny rough (not the narrator) but that is not where the character is developing.

I also want to find out where she fits with Lucy and Polly; Mrs Peachum is so strong it’s so particular. But Lucy and Polly are females who are younger than Jenny and I want a counterpoint where they are coming from. I need to hear them more to find out where Jenny is and where she can sit within the relationships between the women. It is always going to be different because I sound different, I sing differently, I speak differently, my tone is different – it’s always going to be different. I want to find her and create her. I have tried a few things and I think Michael is happy with where I am going but I want to explore that more.

It is such a large scale piece that I would love more time in discovery – another four weeks would be lovely. When we sat down and read it on the first day it really hit me just how much is in the piece and how many levels it operates on. The music is difficult; it is very, very clever on all levels, that combination of Weill and Brecht is so incredible. The wonderful thing about it is that its not restricted in terms that you can place it in Melbourne and I’m thrilled that we are not doing London accents we are not doing accents we’re doing Aussie because we are here.
APPENDIX 16: Case Study 4 - Sample of education resources for Shakespeare’s R&J

Shakespeare’s R&J - Teachers’ Notes

Post show discussion

- How did the boys feel about school? How was this communicated?
- There was a contrast in mood when they first started to act out the play Romeo and Juliet?
- How was this contrast created?
- What was the boys hook into the book?
- How does Shakespeare define status in relation to the characters of Romeo and Juliet?
- What is the boy’s social hierarchy/status and how can you tell?
- How did this hierarchy impact upon the characters they chose to play?
- The boys in ‘R&J’ start off playing different character but 2 boys end up exclusively playing Romeo and Juliet why do you think this is?
- How does Joe Calandro introduce rhythm to the opening of the play? How did the director interpret this?
- Which moments engaged you the most in the performance? Why do you think this is?
- Do you think this is a difficult play to perform? What challenges do you think the actor would have to face in this production and how do you think they addressed them?

Below are some focus areas for discussion taking into account the criteria covered in VCE Drama.
A VCE SAC for Unit 3 Outcome 3 is also included on the back page of this pack.

Themes and Issues

- Why is the story of Romeo and Juliet so engaging to the teenage boys?
- What are the central themes of the play?
- How are they explored?
- How do the lives of the boys in the Catholic school parallel the lives of the characters in the play?
- How is timing a theme?
- How do their lives revolve around the circumstances of their action?
- What do you think the term ‘Star crossed lovers means’ and how does this impact upon the story?
Dramatic Elements and Stagecraft

➢ Make notes and give examples of how the Dramatic Elements were used to enhance moments within the performance.
  o climax
  o conflict
  o contrast
  o mood
  o rhythm
  o sound
  o space
  o symbol
  o timing
  o tension
  o focus
  o language

➢ Make notes and give example of how Stagecraft was used in the performance.
  o direction
  o costume
  o lighting
  o sound
  o set-design

➢ How did the lighting enhance the mood and tension within the play?
➢ Identify some specific moment’s when lighting enhanced the mood and tension.
➢ How did lighting enhance our understanding of time and place within the performance?
➢ How were the props used and to what dramatic affect?
➢ How did the music and sound enhance the performance?
➢ Identify significant moments when the lighting and music was used to enhance dramatic affect.
Shakespeare's R&J - Teachers' Notes

Year 12 Drama - Unit 3, sample SAC

This task will contribute to 15 marks out of 90 marks allocated for unit 3 (or 5%)

1. Briefly describe the main performance style of the play and how this performance style was explored in the production. (2 marks)

2. Describe two scenes or moments from the plot as presented in the production of the play, which are examples of how Theatrical Conventions were used and evaluate how they were used to enhance the non-naturalistic performance style (4 marks)

3. Referring to two actors from the play, evaluate how effectively they used expressive skills (voice, movement, gesture and facial expressions) (2 marks)

4. Referring to two actors from the play, evaluate how effectively they used their performance skills (presence and energy) to realise their character/s. (2 marks)

5. Evaluate, in a paragraph for each, how three dramatic elements enhanced the realisation of this performance of the play. (Dramatic elements include climax, conflict, contrast, mood, rhythm, sound, space, symbol, timing, tension, focus and language.) (3 marks)

6. Analyse in a paragraph for each how two stagecraft elements enhanced the realisation of this performance of the play. (Stagecraft elements include direction, costume, sound, set-design, properties, lighting.) (2 marks)

Image Credits: Branco Gaica and Nicholas Higgins.
### Outcome 3

Analyse and evaluate a non-naturalistic performance selected from the prescribed playlist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARK RANGE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTOR: typical performance in each range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13–15 marks</td>
<td>Insightful and comprehensively substantiated analysis of ways in which theatrical conventions are used to enhance non-naturalistic performance styles. Highly observant and perceptive analysis of actors’ use of expressive skills, which demonstrates a thorough knowledge of ways the expressive skills of voice, movement, facial expression and gesture are used in representing characters. Highly perceptive and comprehensive analysis and evaluation of ways in which dramatic elements, theatrical conventions and stagecraft are manipulated to enhance the chosen performance styles. Knowledgeable and effective use of appropriate language of drama intrinsic to the performance styles, to analyse and evaluate the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–12 marks</td>
<td>A thoroughly substantiated analysis of the ways in which theatrical conventions are used to enhance non-naturalistic performance styles. Thorough analysis of actors’ use of expressive skills, which demonstrates a sound knowledge of the expressive skills of voice, movement, facial expression and gesture. Perceptive analysis and evaluation of ways in which dramatic elements, theatrical conventions and stagecraft are manipulated to enhance the chosen performance styles. Knowledgeable use of appropriate language of drama intrinsic to the performance styles within the play to analyse and evaluate the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–9 marks</td>
<td>A clear analysis of ways theatrical conventions are used to enhance non-naturalistic performance styles. Some analysis of actors’ use of expressive skills demonstrating knowledge of the expressive skills of voice, movement, facial expression and gesture. Some analysis of ways in which dramatic elements, theatrical conventions and stagecraft are manipulated to enhance the chosen performance styles. Some use of the appropriate language of drama intrinsic to the performance styles to analyse and evaluate the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–6 marks</td>
<td>Some analysis of ways theatrical conventions are used to enhance non-naturalistic the performance styles. Limited analysis of ways actors’ use expressive skills demonstrating incomplete knowledge of the basic expressive skills of voice, movement, facial expression and/or gesture. Some attempt is made to explain how dramatic elements, theatrical conventions and/or stagecraft analyses or evaluation are manipulated to enhance the chosen performance styles. Some use of appropriate language of drama intrinsic to the performance styles to describe the performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–3 marks</td>
<td>Little or no analysis of ways theatrical conventions are used to enhance non-naturalistic performance styles. Reference may be made to the actors’ use of expressive skills but little knowledge of the expressive skills of voice, movement, facial expression and/or gesture is demonstrated. Limited description of ways dramatic elements, theatrical conventions and/or stagecraft are manipulated to enhance the chosen performance style within a professional performance. Limited use of appropriate language of drama to describe the performance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 18: VCAA Assessment rubric Theatre Studies Unit 4 Outcome 3 – production analysis school assessed coursework

### Outcome 3

Analyse and evaluate acting in a production from the prescribed playlist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARK RANGE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTOR: typical performance in each range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21–25 marks</td>
<td>Detailed and insightful analysis of the character/s in the production including their status, motivation and characteristics. A highly detailed analytical commentary and evaluation of the contribution of the actor/s to the interpretation of a playscript in performance, including specific and relevant references to the actor’s or actors’ use of expressive skills, focus, the acting space and verbal and non-verbal language to realise character/s. A fluent and well informed description of how acting and other stagecraft are utilised by the actor/s to communicate the intended meaning/s of the playscript. A highly sophisticated discussion which analyses the interrelationships between the acting and the theatrical style/s utilised in the production, together with perceptive analysis and evaluation of the establishment and maintenance of actor–audience relationship/s. Accurate and sophisticated use of appropriate theatre language, terminology and expressions to support the analysis and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–20 marks</td>
<td>Detailed analysis of the character/s in the production including relevant status, motivation and characteristics of the character/s. A detailed analytical commentary and evaluation of the contribution of the actor/s to the interpretation of a playscript in performance, including relevant references to the actor’s or actors’ use of expressive skills, focus, the acting space and verbal and non-verbal language to realise character/s. A well composed and informed description of how acting and other stagecraft are utilised by the actor/s to communicate the intended meaning/s of the playscript. A considered discussion which analyses the interrelationships between the acting and the theatrical style/s utilised in the production, together with sound analysis and evaluation of the establishment and maintenance of actor–audience relationship/s. Accurate and competent use of appropriate theatre language, terminology and expressions to support the analysis and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–15 marks</td>
<td>A satisfactory analysis of the character/s in the production including status, motivation and characteristics of the character/s. A clear analytical commentary and evaluation of the contribution of the actor/s to the interpretation of a playscript in performance, including some references to the actor’s or actors’ use of expressive skills, focus, the acting space, verbal and non-verbal language to realise character/s. A clear description of how acting and other stagecraft are utilised by the actor/s to communicate the intended meaning/s of the playscript. A satisfactory discussion which analyses the interrelationships between the acting and the theatrical style/s utilised in the production together with some analysis and evaluation of the establishment and maintenance of actor–audience relationship/s. Generally accurate use of appropriate theatre language, terminology and expressions to support the analysis and evaluation of acting in a production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10 marks</td>
<td>An incomplete discussion of the character/s in the production with some references to status, motivation and/or characteristics of the character/s. A less than comprehensive analytical commentary and/or evaluation of the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
contribution of the actor/s to the interpretation of a playscript in performance with limited references to the actor’s or actors’ use of expressive skills, focus, the acting space and/or verbal and non-verbal language to realise character/s. A simplistic description of how acting and other stagecraft are applied by the actor/s to communicate the intended meaning/s of the playscript. A discussion which superficially comments on interrelationships between the acting and the theatrical style/s utilised in the production with limited discussion of the establishment and maintenance of actor-audience relationship/s. Limited and not always appropriate use of theatre language, terminology and/or expressions to support the analysis and evaluation.

| 1–5 marks | A limited discussion of the character/s in the production, with little or no reference to their status, motivation and characteristics. A limited commentary and/or discussion of the contribution of the actor/s to the interpretation of a playscript in performance, with very few and/or irrelevant references to the actor’s or actors’ use of expressive skills, focus, the acting space and verbal and/or non-verbal language to realise character/s. A superficial description of how acting and other stagecraft are utilised by the actor/s to communicate the intended meaning/s of the playscript. Little or no attempt is made to analyse the interrelationships between the acting and the theatrical style/s utilised in the production. The analysis shows little or no attempt to evaluate the establishment and maintenance of actor–audience relationship/s. Very limited and/or inappropriate use of theatre language, terminology and/or expressions. |
APPENDIX 19: VCAA 2010 written examination questions for performance analysis Drama Unit 3 and Theatre Studies Unit 4

2010 Drama Exam – Section B

Question 1 – Fatboy (Case Study 2)
i. Explain how the non-naturalistic performance style gave meaning to the theme(s) in the performance of Fatboy 9 marks

ii. Evaluate how one actor used their expressive skills to create one character and how they manipulated the actor–audience relationship in the performance of Fatboy 9 marks

Question 2 - Shakespeare’s R & J (Case Study 4)
i. Analyse how transformation of object enhanced the non-naturalistic performance style of Shakespeare’s R & J 9 marks

ii. Discuss how rhythm and tension were manipulated to communicate the theme(s) in the performance of Shakespeare’s R & J 9 marks

Question 3 – One Hundred (Case Study 1)
i. Analyse how stagecraft was used symbolically to enhance the theme(s) in the performance of One Hundred 9 marks

ii. Evaluate how the use of space and ensemble movement were applied to create the non-naturalistic performance style of One Hundred 9 marks = 18


Theatre Studies – Question 3
(Case Study 3, Three Penny Opera)

This question relates to the 2010 Unit 4 prescribed playlist

a. Analyse how one actor used expressive skills in the performance 3 marks

b. Briefly evaluate how one actor established and maintained an actor-audience relationship 3 marks

c. Describe how one of the following areas of stagecraft enhanced the acting in the play: costume, direction, dramaturgy, make-up, multimedia, properties, set, sound 3 marks = 9 marks

APPENDIX 20: Case Study 1

100/ One Hundred by Christopher Heimann, Diene Petterle, and Neil Monaghan

SYNOPSIS

Imagine that you must choose one single memory from your life and capture it with a magical camera—everything else will be erased. Imagine that choosing this memory is your only way of passing through to eternity. Imagine that you have just one hour to choose. Five people in are brought together in a limbo awaiting their final acceptance by death. It soon transpires that one of them, is a Charon who will conduct the others to their final resting place. He explains that eternity is spent reliving one moment from life and that it is essential to pick this both swiftly and carefully. In this way, the workaholic Sophie is forced to reconsider her frantic existence and discovers how hollow her great achievements really were.

Alex and Nia have been lovers. It is a real revelation for both to find out their true feelings about each other. This makes their choice of a joint Nirvana impossible. Finally, there is Ketu, an African villager. He was a kind of Galileo, regarded by his peers as a dangerous heretic for believing that the world is not flat. His search for an eternal truth is not something he could ever have achieved until his death. Like the others who move on, he has reconsidered his life and found a deeply personal peace.

Script: https://www.amazon.com/100-Christopher-Heimann/dp/185459737X
APPENDIX 21: Case Study 2

*Fatboy* by John Clancy

![Red Stitch Actors’ Theatre production, 2010](image)

**SYNOPSIS**

*Fatboy* is a brutal comedy inspired by Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*. This satire on modern America's insatiable appetites—from gobbling up 72oz. steaks to small nations—is presented as a live-action Punch and Judy show. In this fast-moving, shocking, profane, dead-on, funhouse mirror reflection of the world today, the brutish allegory known as Fatboy, along with his monstrous wife, Queen Fudgie the First, stands trial for war crimes. Despite overwhelming evidence the court refuses to convict and succumbs to Fatboy's "persuasive" tactics.

*Ubu Roi* (King Ubu) is a play by Alfred Jarry (1873-1907) premiered in 1896. It is one of the precursors to the Theatre of the Absurd and the greater surrealist art movement of the early twentieth century. It is the first of three stylised burlesques in which Jarry satirises power, greed and their evil practices—in particular the propensity of the complacent bourgeois to abuse the authority engendered by success. It was followed by *Ubu Cocu* (Ubu Cuckolded) and *Ubu Enchaîné* (Ubu Enchained), neither of which was performed during Jarry's 34-year life.


Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Jarry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Jarry)
APPENDIX 22: Case Study 3

The Threepenny Opera by Bertolt Brecht & Kurt Weill

Victorian Opera/Malthouse Theatre production 2010

Synopsis

The Threepenny Opera (Die Dreigroschenoper) is a "play with music" by Bertolt Brecht, adapted from German dramatist Elisabeth Hauptmann's translation of John Gay's 18th-century English ballad opera, The Beggar's Opera, with music by Kurt Weill and insertion ballads by François Villon and Rudyard Kipling. The work offers a Socialist critique of the capitalist world. It opened on 31 August 1928 at Berlin's Theater am Schiffbauerdamm.

Set in Victorian London (although this production was recontextualised to Melbourne), the play focuses on Macheath, an amoral, antiheroic criminal.

Macheath ("Mackie," or "Mack the Knife") marries Polly Peachum. This displeases her father, who controls the beggars of London, and he endeavours to have Macheath hanged. His attempts are hindered by the fact that the Chief of Police, Tiger Brown, is Macheath's old army comrade. Still, Peachum exerts his influence and eventually gets Macheath arrested and sentenced to hang. Macheath escapes this fate via a deus ex machina moments before the execution when, in an unrestrained parody of a happy ending, a messenger from the Queen arrives to pardon Macheath and grant him the title of Baron.

The Threepenny Opera is a work of epic theatre. It challenges conventional notions of property as well as those of theatre. The Threepenny Opera is also an early example of the modern musical comedy genre. Its score, by Kurt Weill, is deeply influenced by jazz. The orchestration involves a small ensemble with a good deal of doubling-up on instruments (in the original performances, for example, some 7 players covered a total of 23 instrumental parts, though modern performances typically use a few more players).

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Threepenny_Opera
APPENDIX 23: Case Study 4 – Shakespeare’s R&J by Joe Calarco

SYNOPSIS

A refreshing contemporary adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy set in an exclusive boys' boarding school, where students are forbidden to read *Romeo & Juliet*, four students put on a secret production.

Tired of going through the usual drill of conjugating Latin and other tedious school routines, four boys decide to vary their highly governed lives. After school, one breaks out a copy of William Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* and they all take turns reading the play aloud. The Bard's words and the story itself are thrilling to the boys and they become swept away, enmeshed in the emotion so much so that they break school rules in order to continue their readings. The rigidity of their lives begins to parallel the lives of the characters in the play: roles in the family, roles in society and the roles played by men and women soon seem to make all the sense in the world, and then, suddenly, they seem to make no sense at all.

Although initially taking turns playing all the parts, two eventually emerge to play Romeo and Juliet exclusively, bringing a whole new dimension to the text and its exploration of love and passion. Perceptions and understanding are subverted, as the fun of play acting turns serious. The words and meanings begin to hit home and universal truths emerge.

Four actors with no set, no costume changes and no props bring the essence of this classic play vividly alive through sheer theatricality.
