Resonating voices: The joy of hearing and being heard

Hearing impaired young adults as vocal trainers

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Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Education, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne

July 2016
DECLARATION

This is to certify that

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Education.
(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,
(iii) the thesis is fewer than 55,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Geraldine Cook-Dafner
ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the creation of public voice workshops for young deaf people by a group of hearing impaired young adults experienced in actor vocal training. The researcher takes on the roles of actor vocal trainer and researcher and engages the hearing impaired adults as participant researchers on a project called *Let It Out*.

At the heart of the thesis, lies the complex relationship between the skill development of the actor vocal training techniques and the group's ability to authorise, embody and transfer these techniques as deaf vocal trainers. The methodology of participatory action research through performative enquiry is used to analyse the pedagogy and the impact of the actor vocal training techniques.

The study documents an approach to applying actor vocal training techniques, which enables a group of hearing impaired young adults to co-construct knowledge about the voice. The research demonstrates that through the embodied and performative pedagogy of actor vocal training, ensemble practice and kinaesthetic learning, a group of hearing impaired young adults becomes a self-empowering community of practice with a shared sense of vocal identity. The thesis proposes that this kind of embodied and performative pedagogy reconfigures the concept of what is legitimate knowledge of the non-hearing voice when it is enacted through the lived body of a hearing impaired person.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis and the surrounding research could not have been achieved without the remarkable presence and inspiration of Jodie Harris and the Let It Out group of young hearing impaired adults. Unfortunately, these young people have to remain anonymous in the thesis, but they know who they are and I would like to thank them and Jodie for teaching me so much about the voice.

I’d also like to express my appreciation to my friends and colleagues, Ivanka Sokol and Naomi Edwards who have been with me from the first research project and believed in what I was doing. Ivy provided beautiful videography and inspiring and insightful observations. Naomi brought invaluable experience working with young people, her wonderful aesthetic, directorial eye and humour.

My supervisors Chris Sinclair and Kate Donelan provided encouragement and great attention to detail. Thank you for the belief that this study was important.

Finally, I would like to thank Alex, Carmen and Leila for your love, faith and support.
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PART ONE - BEING HEARD

Chapter One - Settings and Relationships

Speech is civilization itself. The word, even the most contradictory word, preserves contact – it is silence which isolates. (Thomas Mann 1924)

1.1 Description of the project

This thesis draws upon the experiences of a group of young deaf people who embarked with me upon a research project called Let It Out. The participants in the study were young deaf adults who use cochlear implants and oral language as their preferred mode of communication. Let It Out began as an action research project to develop a ‘train the trainer’ model in which these young deaf adults selected actor vocal training exercises they found beneficial for public speaking situations. The project culminated in a series of public voice workshops for deaf teens and children and professionals in audiology, speech pathology, and teachers of the deaf. The thesis will examine the events from February to July 2010 when I trained the Let It Out group to lead the public voice workshops. I was aware that the first public workshop at the end of July 2010 would be the most challenging for the Let It Out group. They personally invited professionals from the disciplines of audiology, speech pathology, deaf education and creative arts, to watch and learn in a very different paradigm from the one in which the group had been patients or students and for this reason, the July workshop is included in the thesis.

A number of public workshops were also conducted by the Let It Out team from August to November 2010. The workshop participants included speech pathologists, young hearing impaired adults and their parents, and deaf units in two Melbourne schools. Even though I had ethics approval for these particular workshops, I could not always attend. Therefore, the workshops, which followed from August to November 2010, are not within the scope of the thesis but will be referred to in the conclusion.
1.2 What is a cochlear implant?

Since Professor Graeme Clarke’s pioneering development of the cochlear implant over thirty years ago in Melbourne, Australia has been at the forefront of the advance of new technologies to assist people with hearing impairment. Cochlear implantation provides the possibility of access to spoken language through audition (Archbold & Tait 2003) for hearing impaired individuals for whom the use of ordinary hearing aids is not effective. It is an implanted electronic hearing device, which consists of two main components: an externally worn sound processor and transmitter system and an implanted receiver and electrode system. The electrodes receive signals from the external system and send electrical currents to the auditory nerve in the inner ear, allowing the person to hear. As well as improving a person’s hearing, cochlear implants can also significantly improve the overall communication skills and quality of life for recipients (Harris 1995).

1.3 Shifting the paradigm and reviewing the literature in the field

Most studies on cochlear implantation rehabilitation are concerned with the efficacy of cochlear implants and traditionally focus on ‘measuring enhancements in speech perception associated with implantation’ (Hogan 1997, p. 235). Typically, this rehabilitation involves speech pathology and emphasises speech intelligibility and normalising the speaking voice of recipients. Some traditional speech rehabilitation practices focus on a didactic or analytical approach, relying on specific goals and assuming that a skill will be generalised into everyday life. Alternatively, the synthetic approach is more commonly used in some practice whereby children learn to use hearing in a natural everyday life and discover rules of communication, which they are able to generalise for themselves (Archbold & Tait 2003). Adults and particularly parents are seen as vital facilitators in this rehabilitation process.

Using semi-structured questionnaires, Wheeler, Archbold and Gregory (2007), interviewed young cochlear implantees aged between 13-17 years. Their findings assert the need for qualitative data to be recognised in studies concerning speech rehabilitation, as it provides a rich source of understanding about how these young people viewed themselves, their families and education and highlighted significant issues which could have implications on future work with this demographic of cochlear
implantees. Although Wheeler et al assert the need for qualitative studies to be used in assessing speech rehabilitation for cochlear implantees, their research still focussed on the psycho-social effects of the cochlear implant surgery. Similarly, as Hogan suggests (1997) the emphasis on speech intelligibility of the participants in studies on cochlear implantation focus on the efficacy of the technology.

Hallberg, Ringdahl et al (2005) also emphasise the need to move away from purely quantitative studies which look at the outcomes of cochlear implantation in terms of standardised questionnaires or tests of speech and communication towards qualitative research which illuminates quality of life and psychosocial issues. Similarly, Heydebrand, Mauze et al (2005) confirm that group therapy intervention can have beneficial effects on the well-being of adult cochlear recipients, post implantation. I was encouraged to pursue my enquiry by the apparent gap in current literature and research, which advocates for the psychosocial needs of cochlear implantees to be adopted in the field of speech rehabilitation post cochlear implant surgery. I began to see that the Let It Out project could be investigated through the kinaesthetic and ensemble practice of actor vocal training. Moreover, the project might provide an understanding of how the embodied experience derived from the actor vocal training techniques produces new knowledge about the participants’ sense of self. Through embodied research, this thesis seeks to address the gap that Hallberg et al (2005) refer to by providing an analysis of the non-hearing young person’s experiences. The Let It Out study documents an approach to applying actor vocal training techniques, which enabled a co-construction of knowledge about the voice from the perspective of a group of hearing impaired young adults.

1.4. The genesis of Let It Out

Prior to the Let It Out project, I conducted two major research projects on the effect of actor vocal training on cochlear implantees. The first was entitled: Embodying the Voice: working with an actor with a cochlear implant funded by a research seeding grant from the Victorian College of the Arts1 (2004). The second project: Vocal

1The Victorian College of the Arts was an independent college until 2009 when it joined with the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and became a faculty of the University of Melbourne. The School of Drama (now known as
empowerment and effective communication: researching the effects of actor vocal training on young adults with cochlear implants and hearing aids was funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant in collaboration with the Department of Otolaryngology at the University of Melbourne and Cochlear Ltd. as the industry partner (2007-2008). (See Appendix 1 for Summary Report)

The first study, Embodying the Voice, involved my research with Jodie Harris, a deaf graduate actor from the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) where I am a Senior Lecturer in Voice. Jodie suffered profound hearing loss at the age of six. For twenty-nine years she used hearing aids and lip reading to communicate and had succeeded remarkably well. During her first year at the VCA Drama School, she received a cochlear implant and did not undertake any speech pathology rehabilitation after the implant surgery. Her actor vocal training was the first time in her life Jodie had ever received any voice or speech training and she used her voice classes and extra tutorials with me to work on her voice, post implantation. Jodie commented that after the cochlear implant surgery and during the adjustment to the new technology, she wanted to ‘claim her voice’ and commented that:

The cochlear implant gave me the joy of hearing and the actor vocal training gave me the joy of being heard. (Conversation with Jodie in 2002)

I had no previous knowledge of the non-hearing world before teaching Jodie, in particular the challenges, trials and tribulations that face people who experience profound hearing loss. I had never experienced being the only hearing person in a room full of hearing impaired people. I had heard of the term ‘bionic ear’ but had no knowledge of how it was developed or worked in the human brain. I had always been part of the majority culture when training actors at the Victorian College of the Arts, working as a voice coach in the professional theatre or working as an actress. Before I commenced the research for Embodying the Voice, it was essential to familiarise

the Theatre Dept.) provides professional training for actors, directors, dramaturgs and voice specialists as well as graduate research programs.

2 Jodie has given me permission to use her name.
myself with the technology that would be an integral part of my understanding of Jodie’s hearing capabilities. I spent some months talking to surgeons, audiologists, speech pathologists and Jodie herself about the benefits and challenges of the cochlear implantation as well as the personal effects of the technology. Significantly, the months Jodie and I spent on investigating her voice together allowed her the opportunity to reflect upon her struggle with deafness without the pressure of performing in a very demanding and rigorous actor training environment. It also gave me time to listen to her experiences and read and understand more about the cochlear technology.

During our work together at drama school and later on in the Embodying the Voice project, Jodie mentioned to me that she often experienced the sensation of not being listened to when speaking in a group and that this had made her feel disempowered. The actor speaking in performance is analogous to public speaking situations where the voice and context for speaking is heightened. Jodie and I were keen to investigate how we could use this analogy to adapt actor vocal training for hearing impaired young people for effective communication and vocal empowerment. Moreover, Jodie was convinced that the actor vocal training she experienced at drama school helped her emotionally and socially and that these techniques could be adapted and taught to adolescents with hearing loss who were at a vulnerable stage of their lives. Embodying the Voice was essentially an efficacy study, which sought to:

- Identify the cause of problems when speaking text for performance for an actor with a cochlear implant.
- Measure Jodie’s voice objectively and perceptually to discriminate particular acoustic qualities and vocal characteristics of her as a performer.
- Evaluate the kinaesthetic approach of actor vocal training and its affect on the performer with a cochlear implant to see if any significant change could be measured objectively.
- Identify those aspects of actor vocal training which might be beneficial to other cochlear implantees.

From a series of workshops and Jodie’s performance of a monologue and extemporised speech in front of an audience, I developed a framework of actor vocal
Embodying the Voice provided the context for the second study, Vocal empowerment and effective communication (funded by the Australian Research Council and Cochlear Ltd.). It specifically focussed on the effectiveness of the actor vocal training techniques with young cochlear implantees. This research aimed to:

- Adapt techniques from the discipline of actor vocal training to the rehabilitation of young adults with cochlear implants and hearing aids.
- Research and measure the effects of adapted actor vocal training on cochlear implant recipients and hearing aid users through computer-based acoustic analysis of vocal quality.
- Further develop an integrated cross-disciplinary framework of vocal quality.

The Senior Research Assistant from the Department of Otolaryngology and I agreed upon the common parameters for testing vocal quality. These parameters were integrated into the workshop training I conducted over a ten week period for three hours a week at the beginning of 2007. They included pitch variability; modal pitch; precision of articulation – vowels; precision of articulation – consonants; phrasing (speaking rate); resonance and nasality. Psychosocial benefits of the workshops were assessed through a comparative analysis of the initial and final questionnaires using the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale, a self reporting questionnaire designed to measure the three related negative emotional states of depression, anxiety and tension/stress, (Depression, Anxiety Stress Scales, http://www2.psy.unw.edu.au/groups/dass/) conducted for participant evaluation through the Head of Psychology from the University of Melbourne.

The ARC Vocal Empowerment participants comprised seven adolescents aged between 13-17 years (five females and two males). Two subjects had bilateral implants, three used a cochlear implant and a hearing aid in the other ear, and two used a cochlear implant in one ear only with no additional aids. All participants were patients of the Melbourne Cochlear Implant Clinic at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital and used oral language as their main mode of communication. The pre-existing conditions and capabilities of the individual members of the workshop were
unknown to me as pre-testing was conducted by random blind sampling. This is analogous to actor voice training programs where knowledge of student actors’ hearing and speech capabilities are unknown prior to training. The group’s experiences of the efficacy of the implant were varied depending on the level of deafness pre-operation and the effectiveness of the implant post-operation. All agreed that their major motivation for participating in this project was to find a way to ‘be heard’ in their social and public lives. Their sense of disconnection from the aural world around them had prompted an eagerness to investigate complementary models to the speech rehabilitation programs they had already received post-operation.

The workshops were well attended by participants, with only two participants being unable to attend one workshop each throughout the training period of ten weeks. Approximately forty minutes of each workshop was devoted to the rehabilitation of fricative sounds (/f/, /v/, /s/ and /ʃ/) and vowel sounds (æ i: æː aʊ uː). Of this forty minutes, twenty five minutes saw the group work together as a whole, with a further 15 minutes spent in small groups of three or four participants working with either Jodie or myself. In terms of fricative and vowel production, the workshop activities focused on visualisation and physicalisation activities designed to find a kinaesthetic and imaginative response to the sound alongside suggested changes to articulator placement where necessary provided by me.

The creative outcomes of the ARC study which were developed over the ten week period of workshop training made a significant contribution to the research. These outcomes included a performance of the participants’ experiences of deafness and cochlea implantation entitled *Wish 3 More Wishes*. This performance had three viewings: September 2007 at VCA Drama to an audience of colleagues and professionals in the fields of speech pathology, teachers of the deaf, audiology, implant surgery, otolaryngology, creative arts, the Chief Scientist of Cochlear Ltd. Australia, and family and friends; March 2008 at the Seymour Performing Arts Centre, Sydney to an audience of engineers from Cochlear Ltd., followed by a post-show forum with this audience; and on August 15th 2008 at the Annual General Meeting of Cochlear Employees at the Waterside Convention, Sydney where the group performed to over 700 people and had to use lapel microphones for the first time due to the size of the venue. A collaborative seminar with the Department of Otolaryngology was delivered at the VCA School of Drama in September 2007 where
the findings were presented before the viewing of Wish 3 More Wishes and subsequently at the Melbourne Cochlear Implant Clinic. Finally, Jodie developed a one woman show called The Sound of Waves which was also presented at the VCA in September 2007 and a public performance was re-mounted in October 2014 in a professional theatre venue in Melbourne (fortyfivedownstairs).

1.5 Findings

The ARC research team discovered there was a correlation between the findings from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. This was demonstrated through better pitch control and a significant decrease in speaking rate from the quantitative data analysis (Colt & Dowell 2011). Qualitative data analysis (Cook 2008) revealed that the following elements proved to be significant contributing factors towards the achievement of vocal empowerment and confidence:

- vocal embodiment,
- utilising the body and voice as expressive tools of the imagination,
- empathetic learning,
- ensemble practice,
- artistic space,
- autonomy and retrieval.

Interviews with parents, post-training confirmed that the program I had offered was different to previous forms of speech rehabilitation and that another paradigm of learning speech and voice techniques had provided significant benefits to the individuals:

I’ve spent hundreds of dollars in speech pathology to correct his splashy ‘s’ but what I realised today (after observing the open workshop) is that it’s irrelevant unless he feels confident with speaking. (Parent participant, Cook 2008)

1.6 The development of Let It Out

The evaluation of the ARC Vocal Empowerment research revealed that the group believed that the benefits of the actor vocal training techniques had given them an improved sense of self-identity and vocal confidence. Their enthusiasm and my
curiosity provided the catalyst for how we could develop the work further. In the same way Jodie had been keen to pass on her knowledge and skills of actor vocal training to teens with severe hearing impairment, so the *Vocal Empowerment* participants were eager to pass on their skills and knowledge to other deaf teens. The Let It Out project which is the subject of this thesis became the next stage for investigating the young cochlear implantees' transference of skills and knowledge. It was framed around these three major questions:

- Is it possible to replicate and sustain the actor vocal training program developed in the *Vocal Empowerment* study with other groups of young deaf adults?
- Could the *Vocal Empowerment* participants become the experts in creating a model of voice and speech training, which they could teach to other communities of young deaf people?
- Could I train the *Vocal Empowerment* participants as deaf vocal trainers?

As the Let It Out project progressed, questions of community and authorship over their voices appeared to be more significant for the group. Consequently, the last two questions became central to the thesis.

In March 2010, I received a grant from the Cochlear Foundation to support the participants’ involvement with the Let It Out project. This included a small stipend for travel expenses, refreshments, videography and advertising of the workshops during the Let It Out project. I received no payment to conduct the workshops for the research.

### 1.7 Whose voice is it anyway?

At this stage, it is important to outline what could be considered the main difference between the work of a speech pathologist and that of a voice teacher by referring to Katherine Verdolini (1997). Verdolini compares the methods of the voice teacher and speech pathologist by describing the voice teacher’s focus upon the development of the aesthetic and expressive capabilities of the human voice across a very wide range of human emotions and situations whereas characteristically, speech pathologists focus on restoring impaired voice and speech to normal status for a comparatively limited repertoire of tasks. The ‘aesthetic and expressive capabilities of the human
voice’ (Verdolini, p.68) were significant elements in the design and implementation of the adapted actor vocal techniques for the Let It Out public workshops.

During the early stages of working on the Let It Out project, I realised that whilst I was interested to see whether the training would work as well for other deaf children and teens, I was no longer so concerned with the efficacy of what we were doing. I was keenly aware that the training model we developed would be demonstrated to the professionals working in the fields of audiology, speech pathology and deaf education. However, what became important was the group’s ownership of the work, their understanding of its transferability, their ability and confidence to engage others like themselves through the form of actor vocal training as an artistic practice. The embodied knowledge they had transferred from the Vocal Empowerment study became a significant factor in my understanding of how the adapted actor vocal training techniques might be taught by the group to other communities of young deaf people. Moreover, I recognised that the participants’ lived experiences running alongside the development of an effective and replicable training model was the most urgent and interesting aspect of the study. I define ‘lived experiences’ as the stories, anecdotes and personal histories the Let It Out participants integrated into the research, as they struggled to understand how their voices could contribute to their sense of self and group identity. Dwight Conquergood posits (1989, p.83) that ‘cultures and selves are not given, they are made; even, like fictions, they are “made up”...they hold out the promise of reimagining and refashioning the world’ Likewise, the actor vocal training techniques also provided features that held out this very same promise. For the Let It Out group this meant the possibility of positioning themselves between the authoritative voice of speech pathology and their own emancipatory voices. As the Let It Out project progressed, questions of community and authorship over their voices appeared to be more significant for the group.

These questions also prompted me to be more politically aware when describing the Let It Out group’s hearing impairment. In the ARC project, the group had always been referred to as ‘cochlear implantees’. At the time, I remember having an image of them as ‘migratory birds flying between the hearing and non-hearing worlds’ (Cook, 2008). The Let It Out public workshop model was designed for young people with a variety of hearing impairments and the language used to describe these was as varied as the young people themselves. I am aware of how politically weighted these terms are and
therefore, deliberately chose to intersperse the thesis with various terms to reflect the ascribed identities of people with hearing impairment, hearing loss, hard of hearing, cochlear implant etc. This approach also allowed me to echo the variety of terms the Let It Out group used when referring to their community.

1.8 The Research Question

When I first conceived of this study as a research project, I proposed the question: How can a model of speech and voice rehabilitation be developed from the skills, knowledge and expertise of a young group of cochlear implantees involved in actor vocal training? As previously stated, the major focus of the Let It Out project was to train young deaf adults to work with deaf teens and children. Therefore, it was conceived as an investigation of the ways in which transmission of the participants’ skills and knowledge could be adapted from the previous ARC Vocal Empowerment study. In the ARC study, I developed a program of actor vocal training techniques using the framework of train the trainer model through an instrumental pedagogy. This approach enabled the delivery and implementation of specific exercises the group found beneficial in their everyday lives. Early on in the Let It Out training workshops the participants confirmed the findings of the two previous studies: the significance of the kinaesthetic and aesthetic experience of actor vocal training and, working with their peers in a group. These factors had contributed to their sense of empowerment and self-confidence.

As the Let It Out training program evolved, it became apparent that the functional and instrumental pedagogy of the train the trainer model could not exist outside the performative features of actor vocal training. These features demanded embodied, kinaesthetic and co-constructed ways of learning and were critical to this group achieving autonomy within the program. I was grappling with a tension between demonstrating a beneficial program to a range of professionals interested in rehabilitation for young deaf adults and children, and one that highlighted the effectiveness of an artistic framework of actor vocal training techniques as a complementary paradigm to voice and speech training for deaf teens and children. During the evolution of the Let It Out workshops, the research focus shifted from analysing how this study was more than just a functional and transferable set of techniques and exercises. The significance of vocal empowerment, confidence and
identity became major elements of analysis during the workshop training and public workshops. Therefore, the group’s stories of deafness provided an important contribution to the transference of the training, which was kinaesthetically and aesthetically driven. As such, I refined and re-worked my central research question to: *How does a group of hearing impaired adults develop a training model for hearing impaired peers based on actor vocal training and what emerges for them through this experience?*

A set of sub questions underpins the enquiry:

- How do the experiences of the training enable the participants to develop a sense of vocal confidence and empowerment?
- How does a community of practice validate the non-hearing body in a hearing world?
- What is the relationship between the actor vocal training expert and this community of young cochlear implantees?

The title of the thesis also changed from *Let It Out: adapting actor vocal training techniques for young hearing impaired adults* to *Resonating voices: The Joy of Hearing and Being Heard* with the sub-title: *Hearing impaired young adults as vocal trainers*. This new title more aptly described my research focus and incorporated the aesthetic, kinaesthetic and instrumental aspects of the study.

The thesis centres on the relationship between my knowledge of actor vocal training and the Let It Out group’s potential to adapt and transfer this knowledge to develop a sense of self and community through a shared vocal identity. Subsequently, the group developed participatory exercises, role-plays and scenarios into an interactive workshop structure which they shared with other groups of young deaf adults and children, as well as, professionals in speech pathology, audiology and deaf education. The development and application of these exercises, role-plays and scenarios was a significant aspect of the data analysis and enabled me to examine the participants’ authorship over the work. Furthermore, in the thesis, I argue that a group of young deaf adults developed a self-empowering community through the legitimisation of their own vocal identity within the artistic framework of actor vocal training workshops.
1.9 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into two sections. Part One – Being Heard comprises three chapters and Part Two – Knowing In My Bones comprises five chapters.

Chapter One - Settings and Relationships positions and informs the Let It Out study in relation to previous research I have completed in this area.

Chapter Two- Resonance and Dissonance provides a brief overview of actor vocal training pedagogy within the major actor training movements of the twentieth century and positions my training and professional experience within this discipline.

Chapter Three – Methodological Considerations locates this study as participatory action research through performative enquiry. It includes the Design and Implementation of the study which outlines the research design and framework of the actor vocal training workshops.

Part Two – Knowing In My Bones comprises five chapters and is the body of the thesis. In this section, I analyse the group’s emergent understanding of the actor vocal training techniques for the public workshops as they learnt to become deaf vocal trainers.

Chapter Four – Re-igniting the flame is the bridge between Part One and Two and sets the scene for the emerging relationship between the group as participant researchers and my authority on voice training. In this chapter, I identify three themes underpinning this enquiry, which are further developed and analysed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. The discussion in these chapters focuses on the complex relationship between the skill development of the actor vocal training techniques and the group’s ability to authorise, embody and transfer these techniques for a series of public workshops.

Chapter Five - A way of enacting, analyses the shift from my authority and normative voice to the young deaf adults’ voices through ensemble practice.
Chapter Six - A way of imagining explores the nexus between artistic and social space and the impact this had on the group in terms of their ability to develop the rationale for the structure of the public workshops.

Chapter Seven – A way of being examines the features of kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience and analyses these two features of the training as pedagogic tools.

Chapter Eight is the final chapter – Re-locating authority through a performative pedagogy draws the three themes together to provide a series of findings about the significance of actor vocal training as a performative pedagogy in the development of deaf vocal trainers as they re-cast their non-hearing voices in a hearing world.
Chapter Two - Resonance and Dissonance

The voice is the bridge between the inner and outer worlds. (Houseman 2002)

2.1 Actor training in the conservatoire model

My training occurred at a time in the UK when the conservatoire system was being challenged in terms of its authority and relevance to the changing social, cultural and political landscape of the mid seventies. Although this thesis is not concerned with the social, cultural and political implications of arts training, the conservatoire model remains an important legacy in my teaching career. This teaching approach complements and conflicts with the other part of my training in drama and theatre in education. Both types of training influence my pedagogy and therefore need to be explained in order to contextualise the Let It Out study.

The word ‘conservatoire’ in the UK means a college which focuses on training specifically in music and theatre but in Europe a conservatoire can train in the other arts as well. The system of conservatoire training originated in Europe in the 18th Century. As its name suggests, the goal of conservatoire training is to ‘conserve’ the art form through a rigorous skills based training on an instrument (including the body), thus, safeguarding the historical traditions of the ‘masters’ of the specific disciplines. Australian drama schools (National Institute of Dramatic Art, Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts and the Victorian College of the Arts) were based on the conservatoire model of actor training associated with traditions embedded in training systems from America, England and Europe since the 19th Century.

Shepherd (2009) points out that the word ‘training’ became associated with the activity of education in the early to middle sixteenth century and was specifically used to describe bodily activity when the monarch wanted to establish a citizen army. Training was historically associated not only with the transmission of skill but also building communities and coherent identities from the early sixteenth century onwards. Shepherd also suggests that training goes beyond the physical discipline and provides a moral function of developing individual excellence, personal development or group coherence.
The most common form of actor training up until the early twentieth century was through a master/apprentice tradition whereby, knowledge and skills were transmitted either through theatrical families from one generation to the next or, via a rigid transference of knowledge through ‘learning on the job’ in a repertory company. The art of imitation through hierarchical and peer group learning was the foundation of the master actors passing on their skills to the younger generation for at least four hundred years. This outmoded practice did not enable opportunities for the kind of innovation or experimentation that existed in other art forms. It was not until Granville Barker and William Archer submitted their proposal for an English National Theatre in 1904 that this tradition changed. They envisaged a school that would provide actor training as well as maintain theatre as an artistic practice that foregrounded the training of the body and voice as the essential components of actor training.

Two important voices Elsie Fogerty and later, Joan Littlewood, were pivotal in the movement towards formalising theatre training and revitalising theatre. In 1906, Elsie Fogarty (http://www.cssd.ac.uk/content/centrals-history) founded the Central School of Speech and Drama and Dramatic Art, one of the new centres for theatre training which was modelled on the conservatoire training of the Royal Academy of Drama, established in 1904 and the Royal Academy of Music (1861). Fogerty’s principles of supporting the ‘feelings’ of the actor aligned with the modernist movement of artistic practice and training of the major European artists and trainers: Rudolf Laban; Mary Wigman; Vsevolod Meyerhold; Emile-Jacques Dalcroze; Jean Copeau and, Michel St. Denis.

Many private drama schools were established in the UK in the early to mid-twentieth century. Their curriculum focused on elocution and poise, manifested in heightened use of gesture and speech. These schools were attended by a social class who could afford to send their children for such training and thus, reinforced these theatrical forms as a class aesthetic in British theatre. Joan Littlewood (Holdsworth 2006) was critical of the type of training conducted at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and the Central School of Speech and Drama. Although trained at RADA, Littlewood believed these schools reinforced particular aesthetic values rooted in the British class system. Moreover, she argued that the upper class mores of style, speech and gesture were embedded in the dominant style of acting at the time. In 1936, Littlewood established the Theatre Union with Ewan McColl and went on to form the Theatre Workshop at
the Theatre Royal in Stratford, East London in 1953. Her theatrical style was a radical alternative to the conservative class aesthetic she criticised.

The social and cultural revolution that occurred in Britain in the 1960’s changed the face of British drama. Whilst the class system still had a tight reign on British life, British drama of this period started to include new writings on working class and regional narratives. It is widely accepted that John Osborne changed the face of British drama at the Royal Court in 1956 with his play Look Back in Anger (Sierz 2011). Osborne’s play depicted characters from a different class who did not speak the Received Pronunciation accent of the dominant class that was the accepted speech of the English stage. At the same time, ‘happenings’ and political activism spawned an attitude of de-skilling and a cry for ‘no training’ in the theatre. Trainee teachers were being inspired by the ‘de-schooling’ movement and the teacher’s manifesto, De-Schooling Society by Ivan Illich (1971). This radicalised view of education put personal liberation and fulfilment at the centre and arts education, particularly drama, found a place in fulfilling these new criteria. The effect on drama schools was palpable, especially in the area of actor vocal training.

The tradition of actor vocal training has its genesis in the conservatoire training systems mentioned above where elocution, poise and heightened use of gesture and speech dominated the curriculum. Interestingly, apart from Michael McCallion who taught voice at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art from 1968 until 1980, the major pedagogues of voice training in the 20th century have been women: Gwyneth Thurburn; Elsie Fogerty; Cicely Berry; Kristin Linklater and, Patsy Rodenburg. Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg are considered to be the most influential teachers of speech, voice and text of the western tradition in the twentieth century. Their legacies can be traced back to two major drama schools, the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and the London Academy of Dramatic Art. Current actor vocal pedagogy involves elements of both the master/apprentice model and the layering of embodied skills and knowledge through the participant’s understanding of their kinaesthetic responses to the relationship between their body and voice. Modelling the speech teacher’s voice is no longer a requirement of the practice but rather, encouraging the student to find a voice which is ‘free’ and ‘natural’. Most books written on actor vocal training are texts written for the voice teacher and acting student and usually comprise a series of exercises with an underpinning philosophy or approach.
The practices of Berry et al aim to provide actors with processes for reflection in thinking when speaking and, to develop this awareness in relation to their imagination and thoughts with text and non-text performance. The emphasis on the individual to ‘find’ their voice within an actor vocal training structure requires the transmission of skill through learning how to use the voice efficiently and correctly in order to prevent vocal damage as well as developing the individual’s intuitive response to the exercises. The importance of this in the teachings of Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg is emphasised through the individual coming to an awareness of how the voice functions physically. A somatic approach to the responsiveness of the voice in the body through the application of imaginative and visualisation techniques is also an essential principle of the training. All three teachers emphasise the re-conditioning of habits in the body, which affect the speaking voice. In her seminal book *Freeing the Natural Voice* (1976) Linklater coined the term ‘natural voice’. The concept of the ‘natural voice’ is that the voice is impeded by psycho-physical tensions and blocks and ‘once they are removed the voice is able to communicate the full range of human emotion and nuances of thought’ (Linklater 1976, p. 5). The second edition of her book (2006) is subtitled: *Imagery and art in the practice of voice and language*. In this edition her approach is extended to imply that the uniqueness of each individual will reveal the spoken text differently and, therefore, it makes no sense for a voice teacher to ‘say’ how a text should be spoken, nor the actor to ‘decide’ how it should be spoken. Consequently, Linklater’s work challenges any normative way or standardisation of speaking text that includes notions of class and accent. Linklater believes that by ‘freeing’ the voice, any accent will be modified and give full expression to the voice, allowing it to be influenced by the rich variety of sounds it is capable of expressing.

Rodenburg expresses similar approaches in all her books especially the focus on habits. However, she places her seminal book, *The Right to Speak* (Rodenburg 1992, p.3) within a socio-political framework. The opening paragraph of her first chapter entitled *Declaring Your Vocal Rights* states:

…the right to breathe, the right to be physically unashamed, to fully vocalise, to need, choose and make contact with a word, to release a word into space – the right to speak.
Rodenburg places her voice work at the centre of the argument about the ‘right way to speak’, a problem that has haunted those of us who do not come from privileged backgrounds with the corresponding accepted tones and vowel sounds. Rodenburg is the first to mention notions of class and race within attitudes to the spoken voice in the UK. She is aware of the oppressive nature of this attitude and its inherent constraints on those who do not conform to a standard of ‘Received Pronunciation. The sub-title of her first book is *Working with the Voice* and she espouses that actor vocal training techniques can be applied to anyone who wishes to find their ‘right to speak’ (p.xi).

Berry’s first book *Voice and the Actor* (1973) is based on the premise that our natural instincts have been impeded by socio-cultural factors. Berry places the actor at the centre of her book and urges the actor to exercise precisely and be true to the ‘instinct of the moment’ (p.3). She refers to blockages which prevent the actor from being able to find an instinctive response to text and similar to Linklater is concerned with setting the voice ‘free’ (p.107).

All three women have gone on to write further books, which do not need any additional explanation here. However, it is important to note that their work extends beyond actor training. Each of them has applied their techniques to a wide variety of contexts including, prisons and marginalised communities, as well some of the UK’s most prominent theatre companies; the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal National Theatre and the visionary theatre practitioners and teachers, Peter Brook, Philipe Gaulier and Jacques Le Coq.

### 2.2 Locating My Place

In 1975, I commenced my degree in theatre and education at Middlesex University with a full grant from the Borough of Haringey in north London. Our reading list in first year comprised: Ivan Ilich (1971); AS Neill (1960); Paolo Freire (1970) and, Augusto Boal (1973). Acting classes were loose and built around ‘happenings’, ‘improvisations’ and the works of Antonin Artaud. Movement classes were more highly organised through the teachings of Rudolf Laban and voice was about connecting to ‘self’ using
exploratory, expressive exercises. I was trained by Dorothy Heathcote\(^3\) and Gavin Bolton (Burke 2013) and the word ‘empowerment’ was probably far over-utilised in my vocabulary. The language of learning outcomes and assessment criteria was only alluded to when we faced teaching rounds. My experience as a drama teacher and community theatre worker in London and Melbourne provided me with skills to teach and work across a variety of settings with young people. I worked in multi-racial communities in London and developed a community theatre training program for the Technical and Further Education system in Victoria. I trained community theatre workers and performed community based work.

The training I received from Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton at the Holborn Drama Centre in London has had a profound effect upon my pedagogy in my learning and teaching environments. Both Heathcote and Bolton taught me pedagogical processes to engage the individual’s imagination and to privilege their social and cultural environment. By giving the individual agency over their learning these teachers taught me the importance of ensuring that the child or adult was responsible for creating meaning through dialogic and creative processes of dramatic and theatrical forms. In my early years of teaching and directing, all the performance scripts I worked on with young people were written from improvisation using their own words and reflecting their needs, desires and challenges. Some years later when I worked with Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg, I recognised their ability to integrate a learner-centred approach with the external requirements of a formally scripted production. This was re-assuring and enabled me to integrate my teaching of explicit skills with a focus on personal agency and autonomy over the work.

Twenty years after my initial training, I went back to study speech and voice at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. I had been working with a group of adults with disabilities and was amazed at the power of their voices. However, I did not know how to effectively use what I was observing, nor, how to expand upon their intuitive vocal responses. I felt I lacked technique and so I subjected myself to a more traditional


At the VCA, I integrated two major components of my teaching: the teaching of craft and artistic autonomy. In this environment, the acting curriculum developed by Lindy Davies, who was Head of the School of Drama from 1996-2006, emphasised technique but not at the expense of the individual's expression, nor was there some standardised technique for the group at the expense of the individual. Instead, certain principles such as artistic autonomy and the belief of the transformative potential of the actor through technique were prioritised. Similarly, the tradition of valuing the importance of the group through ensemble practice brought an emphasis on the acting students supporting each other’s learning of technique, alongside the social and interpersonal relationships, which naturally develop. The pedagogy of the acting curriculum supported my voice pedagogy and allowed an integration of the acting and voice curricula.

I taught Jodie in my first year of teaching at the VCA. I discovered that in order to facilitate a way for her to embed actor vocal training techniques into her non-hearing world, I had to call upon the teaching methods I had developed during and since my training in drama in education and community theatre. Later, during the Let It Out study, I was able to integrate the skills and knowledge from these two major sources of my education and training into my actor vocal training pedagogy. This approach provided a focus for analysing the relationship between the artistic framework of actor vocal training and ways of learning for this community of young deaf adults. The next chapter focuses on my search for a research methodology, which would enable me to encapsulate this approach within my enquiry.
Chapter Three - Methodological Considerations

3.1 Rationale for methodology

I previously indicated that a key outcome of the Vocal Empowerment study was the way actor vocal training produced knowledge about the participants’ cultural and social relations. When the group agreed to be involved with another research project, I realised that I had to find a methodology that supported the participants' need to develop a variety and diversity of perspectives about their roles as young hearing impaired vocal trainers. In this chapter, I will discuss the particular methodological strategies I employed during the research to highlight how these multiple perspectives emerged.

There are two epistemological domains for actor vocal training: technical and expressive. Technical training implies a prescriptive approach to achieve vocal production, whereas expressive training implies a creative, intuitive approach to vocal production. In my training and teaching of the spoken voice, I do not distinguish between the two. I teach anatomical knowledge to actors to support expressive processes of vocal production. My approach to actor vocal training pedagogy relies upon intuitive and subjective responses by the actor, supported by thorough technical vocal function. Therefore the individual’s subjectivity is a significant part of the learning experience. In this way, actor vocal training techniques allow for a pedagogy which is purposeful, dialogic, emancipatory and metaphoric (Heathcote & Bolton 1995). The individual’s subjectivity was a critical aspect when considering the methodological framework for this research.

I sought to address the research question: How does a group of hearing impaired adults develop a training model for hearing impaired peers based on actor vocal training and what emerges for them through this experience? I applied methodological strategies that allowed me to enquire into the development of a functional training model. I aimed for an empirical understanding of how the training could be developed alongside an interpretive understanding of the group’s lived experiences.
The diagram on the next page illustrates the relationship between the interconnecting elements of the Let It Out project. The overarching research methodology was participatory action research through performative enquiry. Critical incident analysis was later used as a means of investigating significant moments from the workshop training for a deeper, reflective understanding of what had taken place.
3.2 Methodological Framework

- Participatory Action Research
  - Let It Out ensemble as reflective practitioners and participant researchers

- Development of Adapted Actor Vocal Training Techniques
  - (Train the Trainer)

- Performative Enquiry
  - Lived experiences of participants as embodied data

- Critical Incident Analysis
  - Privileging critical moments for data analysis

- THESIS
  - Resonating voices: The joy of hearing and being heard
  - Hearing impaired young adults as vocal trainers
3.3 Development of Adapted Actor Vocal Training Techniques: the reflexive and transformative loop

Initially, I conceived of the study as an action research project generated through creating a train the trainer model which would be demonstrated at the public workshops. Carr and Kemmis (1983) assert that action research seeks to find the source of the problem and works with the desire to improve it. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), action research involves cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These authors assert that action research cycles are repeated throughout a project and require communities and individual group members to collaborate and critically examine action during these cycles. This was an intuitive process for me as I use the cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting on the rehearsal floor in my actor vocal training. The cycles of action research Kemmis and McTaggart refer to, are emic in nature as they necessitate analysis from the perspective of the participants. Therefore, the action research cycle was a logical and useful mechanism for strategically viewing the development and improvement of the Let It Out training workshops.

In the Let It Out study, vocal technical competence was a major goal in demonstrating the effectiveness of the techniques but equally important was the collaborative and emancipatory experience of the participants. It was their role sharing and eventually leading the decision making of the final public workshops that was critical to the success of the project. Zuber-Skerrit (1996) argues that action research is collaborative and emancipatory when it aims at more than technical improvement and aspires to a better understanding and transformation of boundaries and conditions which already exist, thus action research in this study became participatory action research. By my positioning of the Let It Out workshop training as a participatory action research project, the group was able to observe the improvements to the training model within the context Zuber-Skerrit refers to. This approach not only informed the group of what techniques worked for hearing impaired young adults in terms of the functional and instrumental aspects of actor vocal training but informed me, as the lead researcher, as to how the iterative process of the training enabled the group’s embodied knowledge of the non-hearing voice to emerge.
3.4 Actor vocal training as participatory action research

Participatory action research methodology is applied to solve a problem. The problem posed in the Let It Out project was how to identify, extract and share the group’s knowledge of actor vocal training techniques through a series of public workshops with young hearing impaired adults and children. McIntyre (2008) states that there are certain tenets, which underline all PAR projects: a collective commitment to a problem; a desire to engage in self and collective reflection; and, building alliances between researchers and participants through all stages of planning, implementation and dissemination (McIntyre 2008, p.1). All these principles underpinned the Let It Out project, including McIntyre’s claim that PAR is a dialectical process. This dialectical process lent itself to the iterative process of using actor vocal training pedagogy, as a way to solve emerging problems through the cycles of planning, reflection, implementation and dissemination. The training workshops I conducted from February to July 2010 provided the site of enquiry where the iterative processes of learning and applying the techniques could be ‘solved’ by the group through their embodied knowledge. Initially, the group knew what it felt like to experience the benefits of actor vocal training techniques on their voices but they did not know how to teach these techniques. Our shared goal as co-researchers, was to find how the group’s embodied knowledge could be transformed into a series of exercises to be replicated at each public workshop. They brought their embodied knowledge to this problem and, as such, became active as participant co-researchers in the enquiry.

Furthermore, participatory action research is analogous to actor vocal training because it constructs and develops knowledge not only for people, but also, with people (McIntyre 2008). Actor vocal training relies on participants to work at an individual and group level. It entails the awareness of the body in relation to the technical requirements of the voice and text and the other actor/s. The training requires the participants to enact, embed, dis-embed and re-embed the physicalising of the voice in the body in order to experience a change in the quality of the voice which mirrors for each individual the group’s PAR experience of enacting, embedding, dis-embedding and re-embedding the exercises in preparation for teaching in the public workshops.
MacMahon (1999) maintains that action research is also a transformative experience for participants because it improves practice through reflection on experience and fits well with the learning cycles of actor vocal training. This type of training is a collaborative and transformative process of learning which is developed through iterative cycles of kinaesthetic and phonoaesthetic understanding by the individuals within the group. These processes require repeated, iterative cycles of physical techniques and improve vocal production through reflection on physical activities. Thus, the training echoed the participatory action research cycles of planning, action and reflection where the Let It Out participants helped to prioritise and adapt what was relevant for their particular needs as hearing impaired individuals.

The rehearsal floor for actor vocal training is the site for social and dialogic interaction through artistic endeavour, requiring actors to enact their understanding of the relationship between text, body, space and directorial vision. The world and context of actor vocal training is subjectively structured and has meaning for the participants who engage in it. The cycles of reflection in and upon action by the participants in the Let It Out study allowed for collaborative and critically examined action through the practice of actor vocal training. These cycles permitted the group to develop the instrumental and functional aspects of the model. Consequently, I was able to observe the particularity and collective meanings that this group brought to the understanding of vocal empowerment and enhancement for hearing impaired adolescents.

The participatory action research activities the Let It Out participants undertook combined analysis, action and reflection of the physical forms of the actor vocal training. This prompted a form of self-reflexivity as the participants created their own identities (McNiff 2002) through the training and from their lived experiences. Their analysis of the most problematic and most effective parts of the training enabled them to refine the training model for the public workshops and create conditions for autonomy from their lived experiences. Moreover, the kinaesthetic learning paradigm of the training meant that the participants were reflecting in and upon action and conducting a form of self-reflexive enquiry primarily through the body.

For the purposes of this study, I needed to position myself more clearly within the action research cycles in the multiple roles of artist/teacher/researcher in order to
evidence what I was experiencing. Within the discussion of the methodological framework, the roles played by the young people and myself warrant further interrogation which follows.

### 3.4.i The group as participant researchers and reflective practitioners

Cammorata and Fine (2008, pp. 1-12) assert that participatory action research gives back to the community by creating the possibility of a change in social practices. I was particularly interested in how the Let It Out group developed a sense of agency over the training and to what extent this contributed to the knowledge they were creating through the development of the public workshops. Ashcroft & Foreman-Peck’s (1994, cited in McMahon 1999, p. 3) comments are a useful reminder of the holistic view of learning that I was aiming for:

> The analysis involves not just your own practice, but also the social, moral and political context for that practice.

Hall (1996) argues for a reflexivity in research in order to avoid a 'mechanistic world view' (Hall 1996, in Zuber-Skerritt 1996, p. 31). Hall asserts that reflexivity is integral to emancipatory action research. She argues that knowledge is constituted in two major areas. Firstly, that knowledge is constituted on evidence derived from authentic data (focused on the lived experiences of the researcher and the researched) and secondly, a democratic relationship between researcher and participants. Although Hall’s comment is placed within the context of emancipatory action research, her perspective is useful for the Let It Out study. Similarly, Eisner’s view (1991, p. 55) that the characteristics of a reflective practitioner require a critique of the practice in order not to normalise and naturalise patterns of power was also a helpful perspective. Significantly, a reflexivity by the participants ensured my expert knowledge was not privileged over the participants’ and, therefore, enabled multiple perspectives to be recognised.

In the Let It Out training model, self-reflection and peer-to-peer learning was vital to allow the group to take agency over the voice in the non-hearing body and find pleasure in providing peer support and feedback to each other.
3.4.ii Multiple roles of artist/teacher/researcher

My position in this study, in relation to the group, was different from previous studies where we had worked together because my engagement with the group was both interventionist (leading the training in the early stages and evaluating the efficacy of the exercises they chose) and participatory (engaging in critical collaboration with the group). Although I was looking for the group’s responses to particular exercises and providing feedback about what I heard and experienced to help develop the public workshops, I also wanted them to build their own capacity and knowledge to diagnose what worked for them. Therefore, my position within the group needed to reflect their growing autonomy with the work. Reflection in action is defined by Schon (1987) as a hermeneutic activity of understanding and interpreting social situations with a view to their improvement. In the Let It Out study, a reflection on the work which was also reflexive was important. I had to simultaneously reflect in action on the technical mode of praxis as we adapted it to the needs of young hearing impaired people and be equally responsive to the group’s emerging attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, I had to ensure that I created an environment where my embodied knowledge was available but also open to critique.

My teaching requires the teacher to be able to observe, diagnose and remember the body/voice relationship of each student as they move through physical structures. The relationship of the voice teacher’s experience and that of the student’s embraces irregularities and inconsistencies between what the teacher and the participant may be experiencing. In this sense, the voice teacher will often adopt the stance of what Schutz (1962 cited in Costelloe 1996) argues to be the ‘disinterested observer’. But the term ‘participant/observer’ (Schwandt 2001) is more beneficial to this study as it provides the possibility of attending to the positioning of myself as leader, participant and observer with room for reflection. Thus, my role as researcher required me to use reflective practice (Taylor 2000) as a means of ongoing and continuous self-enquiry into my own practice, together with a reflexivity to analyse the embodied understanding generated by the group.
3.5. Performance Inquiry: the lived experiences of participants as ‘embodied’ data

Earlier in the thesis, I described the integration of the technical and imaginative aspects of actor vocal training. The significance of this with the Let It Out group was twofold; it allowed them to be vocally confident and simultaneously addressed social issues they faced as non-hearing young people. The ARC Vocal Empowerment study included a dramatisation of their social experiences in the performance of Wish 3 More Wishes. This performance was a reflection upon their knowledge of being people with cochlear implants.

The Let It Out study integrated this knowledge and experience into the public training workshops and I was able to draw upon how the group made meaning through what Butler-Kisber (2010) describes as performative enquiry. She argues that ‘performative enquiry describes the use of performance/dramatisation as a mode of inquiry that addresses social issues with goals of change’ (p.136). Fels and McGivern (2002, p. 27) assert that performative enquiry is the exploration of a topic or issue through performance. It allows an entrance into another world by opening up the possibility of individual and communal responses and other worlds ‘embodied in play and reflection’ (p.32). These authors refer to performative enquiry as ‘critical moments that emerge from critical action’ but the significance for me in this description is the potential to collect ‘embodied data’, which through reflection informs the researcher’s practice. The choice of employing performative enquiry within the framework of participatory action research, enabled the ‘embodied data’ of the training workshops to be my form of data collection, ensuring that the data analysis focussed on emergent critical action and that this was noted and incorporated as an embodied response. Consequently, my focus of analysis was on the body as a performative site and/or text.

Pelias (2008) asks us to think about how scholars have called upon ‘performance as a generative vocabulary for understanding human behaviour’ and how this operates from an assumption that ‘performance is a way of knowing’ (pp 185-186). Referring to the work of Burke, Goffman, Turner and Bulter (p.185), Pelias concludes that this ‘knowing’ is achieved through the body and thus performative enquiry is an embodied practice. Moreover, he defines embodiment as the ‘power of giving voice and physicality to words, in the body as a site of knowledge’ (p.186). In actor vocal training
the body as a ‘site of knowledge’ is a helpful way to understand how the actor comprehends the voice as an embodied act. The actor’s voice ‘performs’ during acquisition of vocal skills by providing information about the voice’s function. This ‘performance’ of the voice during the workshop training provided important embodied data. The group was able to experience kinaesthetically and conceptually what they believed could be transferred to the public workshops. Furthermore, the ‘performance’ of their voices in the public workshops enabled hearing impaired participants to experience the possibility of hearing the expressive potential of the group’s deaf voices as a model for being heard.

By situating the performative enquiry within the cycles of participatory action research, I could be mindful of the development of the training model for the workshops and at the same time, witness the group’s embodied knowing of the work and how they transferred this to a public demonstration. The performative enquiry enabled me to collect embodied data during the train the trainer period of the workshops. This embodied data included the lived experiences of the participants as they were reflecting in action through the action research to choose the most significant elements of the training for the public workshops. However, as much as I wanted the young participants to understand the functional application of the exercises, I also wanted to generate understanding of how the group and I negotiated the public workshops with them as the leaders of an aesthetic, performative and communal experience. This was critical for my study because I wanted to have insight into the group’s understanding of how they developed agency over their roles as deaf vocal trainers. Consequently, I realised I needed to employ another methodological strategy so as to provide a lens for viewing significant and critical moments of the group's emergent roles as deaf vocal trainers. I chose critical incident analysis as this lens.

3.6 Critical Incident Analysis

Angelides (2001, p. 429) states that critical incident analysis can be used for collecting data about practice for the purpose of bringing about improvements:

In combination with what Schein (1985) and Schon (1995) have suggested about ‘surprises’, we can assume that a critical incident... is a surprise or a problematic situation, which stimulates a period of reflection (Schon, 1987; 1991a; 1995), or a solution of the problem.
In order to provide me with insights into issues of importance, I used the embodied data from the performative enquiry to inform the critical incident analysis. In addition, I conducted further data analysis over a twelve month period using videography, my journal notes, and the participants’ notes on butcher’s paper that synthesised and summarised their understanding of the training as they created a structure of exercises for the public workshops. Critical incident analysis provided a mechanism for evaluating the dynamic characteristics of the accumulative experiences of the group, allowing me to reflect upon action to identify and isolate emergent and critical moments in the field, which were both significant and commonplace. Thus, the critical incidents, from the embodied data, elicited from a range of sources, became the sites of action, learning and enquiry and provided a further layer of analysis within the methodological framework.

3.7 The Methodological Framework and Research Design

In summary, I had to capture three major elements for analysis within the research design: the development of the training workshop demonstrated by the participant researchers; their embodied knowledge of how this workshop was developed and, the participants’ lived experiences throughout the study. As such, there are three methodological strategies to the research design of this study, through which the data was generated, collected and subsequently analysed. Participatory action research and performative enquiry were used during the period of workshop training from February to July 2010. Critical incident analysis was applied post workshop training for the data analysis.

- **Participatory Action Research** is particularly aligned to actor vocal training as described above and provided a structure for analysing the group’s contribution to the training workshop model. The participants were participant researchers and reflective practitioners in this process. The structure of the workshops was derived from this employment of the cycles of action research.

- **Performative Enquiry**. Alongside the PAR methodology there was a need to understand the group’s behaviour and attitudes to the work. I aligned my approach to the idea that ‘performance is a way of knowing’ (Pelias, 2008). The group was accruing skills and knowledge of the practice in their
bodies. This embodied data also provided me with insight into their understanding of the techniques and simultaneously provided a narrative of their lived experiences. Later, the group’s stories were translated into performance moments in the public workshops.

- **Critical Incident Analysis.** In preliminary analysis of the embodied data after the training, I identified and then grouped emergent and critical moments into three themes for the purpose of deeper and more focused data analysis. These themes were:
  - Shifting the authority from the normative voice to the non-hearing voice through ensemble practice.
  - The nexus between artistic space and social practice.
  - The embodied knowledge of the adapted actor vocal training techniques through kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic practice.

The Let It Out study was structured initially and somewhat simplistically, as a train the trainer program for young deaf adults to develop and implement an actor vocal training workshop for other young deaf adults. However, as the study began it became crucial that the training was challenged and questioned by the young deaf adults. Therefore, it was critical that I created a research design to be able to evaluate the nature of the group’s ownership over the training and their responses. I have included the design of the actor vocal training workshops to illustrate how the instrumental train the trainer model became a structure predicated upon participatory action research undertaken through, and alongside, performative enquiry and later through critical incident analysis.

### 3.8 Implementation of the study

#### 3.8 i  Design of the workshops – laying the foundations for performative enquiry through a participatory action research framework

As this enquiry was processed in the body and the workshop training was the site of enquiry, an examination of the shape and structure of the workshops is relevant to this discussion of research design. I had to ensure that the structure of the workshops provided the possibility of revealing what was at the heart of the research: *What is it like for a group of young hearing impaired people to develop a self-empowered*
community through the artistic practice of actor vocal training techniques? I am a hearing person who speaks and stands outside the Let It Out group’s culture and as we progressed into this next stage of working together on the Let It Out project, I was no longer the sole authority on the voice within this group.

My position as the teacher/artist within this context required an integration of intuitive awareness alongside an analytical understanding. My teaching approach to actor vocal training provides participants with ‘physical forms’, rather like choreographic compositions. These physical forms allow the participants to embody and physically retrieve the experiences of breath, phonation, resonance, articulation and intonation to reach vocal expressivity and empowerment. The pedagogical aspect of the training relies upon a strong autonomy in the individuals and an ability to reflect in, and upon, action in the ‘moment of doing’ the exercises. Accumulation of experience and holding this in the body memory is an important feature of actor vocal training. Kinaesthetic training of the actor allows for embedding and dis-embedding new physical patterns, which are designed to focus on the sensory quality of the voice. This approach relies upon participants experiencing change in the body.

In preparation for the public workshops, I provided a pedagogical context to enable the following circumstances to arise:

- **Ensemble practice.** The group’s knowledge of their collective and individual experiences of the training was privileged through the body.
- **Kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience.** A repeated practice of doing, so that the group embedded the work kinaesthetically and could demonstrate a clear, aesthetic and developmental approach to the training in the public workshops.
- **Performative practice.** The responses and understanding of the way of doing the exercises for a young deaf adult were as important as the exercises themselves.

**Ensemble Practice**

The emergence of the word ‘ensemble’ as an alternative artistic training paradigm to the conservative repertory companies of the 19th and 20th centuries has shifted the definition of the term. In my training of actors and for this study, I define ensemble
practice as a social constructivist paradigm of learning which is both artistic and social and focuses on learning through and with your community.

Neelands' (2009) argument for the pro-social as opposed to the pro-technical aspects of the school drama curriculum affirms a pedagogy that engages with citizenship. The pro-social is predicated upon knowledge that is constructed with and through the ensemble, as opposed to the skills and knowledge derived from a traditional subject based approach (pro-technical). He argues that the ensemble approach gives young people a model for democratic living. The contribution of the ensemble nature of the actor vocal training to vocal empowerment and confidence was one of the major findings in the ARC research which informs this study.

**Kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience**

The concept of embodied learning through kinaesthetic experiences of actor vocal training was the dominant learning modality of the workshops and demonstrations. The participants' meaning-making in the exercises through the kinaesthetic and aesthetic experiences of the discipline of actor vocal training was central to overcoming their perceptions of not being heard. Consequently, their attitudes to their deaf identity became central to the study.

The particular forms of knowing that were generated in this study were those of embodied, tacit and material knowledge where the discovery of the qualities previously described were accrued through reflection in and upon the physical activities within the workshops alongside the group's social and cultural relations. As the discovery was located in the body by experiencing change in the body, it provided an *embodied knowledge*, which was experientially driven. A major question of the research design was how to make this *embodied knowledge* manifest? Rudolf Laban's speculation of the kinaesthetic as a dialectic with one’s own body (cited in Barr & Lewin 1994) was a useful concept for analysing the experiential changes that were taking place in the group’s bodies as they integrated the cognitive and kinaesthetic skills of the actor vocal training. In addition, the construction of the public workshops through aesthetic experiences illustrated the group’s sensory response to voice and speech skills training. This approach enabled me to observe what the group was discovering in the moment of doing rather than imposing a prescribed sense of how the activities should be demonstrated.
**Performative Practice**

John Searle’s development of J.L. Austin’s Speech Act Theory (1969) shifts the focus away from the meaning of language and instead, emphasises how it functions as a social force, in other words how it ‘performs’. Thus, the intention and function of the spoken words are viewed through the socially shared conventions in which they are repeatedly spoken. Experience Bryon (2014) reminds us that it is not only a text that can be determined within a context, but also, the ‘self/performer’ and ‘identity’ which are correspondingly influenced by cultural, social and linguistic contexts. Consequently, a group of young hearing impaired adults ‘performing’ the exercises to a group of professionals and hearing impaired teens engendered a cultural identity in the act of doing. This observation will be pursued in Part Two where I discuss the critical incidents I observed within this performative frame.

The design of the actor vocal training workshops had to allow for a repeated practice of doing, in order to engender reliability for the group when they came to demonstrate the work. A critical aspect of this work was not how the group did the exercises but what they brought to the exercises, in order to integrate their understanding of their non-hearing voices in the hearing world. It had to provide the opportunity for their interaction or ‘performing’ with each other within the framework not only of the actor vocal training, but also their cultural, social and emotional relations.

The building and constructing of the experience of the actor vocal training workshops were, to use Dewey’s terms, ‘both a process and its finished product’ (Dewey 1934, cited in Boydston, Baysinger and Levine 1980, p. 167). In this collective context, the development of a common performance vocabulary of shared meanings and understandings was essential to allow the activities to construct meaning. This dissolution of boundaries between the production (public workshops) and reception by the workshop participants became important when framing the design of the Let It Out workshops.

Finally, the reflexive loop of the participatory action research methodology within a performative enquiry encouraged an intuitive awareness of those aspects of the training that the group found useful, beneficial, and fun as they started to re-engage with the training through their bodies. All these qualities framed the design of each workshop session.
3.9 Structure and implementation of workshops – the framework for the PAR

Structure

In order to embed cycles of action and reflection during and between the workshop training, the workshops included the following structure each week:

1. **Viewing** of vocal exercises (these were drawn from ‘chapters’ generated from the edited DVD of workshops during the ARC study). They included:
   - Ritual
   - Breath
   - Phonation
   - Resonance
   - Articulation
   - Intonation
   - Creative development

2. **Enacting.** I led the participants in remembering the exercises on the floor in their bodies.

3. **Embedding.** The participants tried remembering the exercises in their bodies individually and then in pairs. The aim was to enable them to remember kinaesthetically by themselves and then with each other.

4. **Dis-embedding.** The participants came back as a whole group and put the sequence of exercises together collectively, using their collective body memories and experiences. At this stage a discussion ensued to decide the most valuable exercises for that particular aspect of vocal technique for a deaf teen.

5. **Re-embedding.** One person then volunteered to lead the group through the exercises. The volunteer received feedback from the group and me during and after this process.

6. **Knowledge building.** The volunteer made a written record on butcher’s paper of the most valuable aspects of the exercises from her perspective and the perspective of the group. For example, the volunteer recorded the definition of a term such as resonance and then wrote the exercises that she would demonstrate and those that would be participatory with the
audience. This latter structure evolved and changed over many workshops.

Implementation- Performative enquiry and PAR

Establishing the vocal exercises. Prior to the study, I had edited the videos of the ARC workshop training for Cochlear Ltd. into a series of chapters: Ritual, Breath, Phonation, Articulation, Intonation and Creative Development. During each session of the Let It Out training workshops from February to July, the group watched the exercises in the chapters sequentially and then we carried that visual memory of the work to the rehearsal floor to try out the exercises, initially with me leading. I encouraged the group to select the chapters they wanted to lead in the public workshops and generally they were happy to choose a particular aspect of the vocal training they felt most comfortable with. I asked them to bring their folders from the ARC Vocal Empowerment study where I had outlined all the exercises. Only a few people could find them, so I brought printed sheets of the exercises. The evolution and structure of each section (Ritual, Breath, Phonation, Resonance, Articulation, Intonation and Creative Development) for the workshops was decided through the re-enactment of the techniques on the floor after watching the DVD chapters with the printed sheets as visual cues.

This process reinforced the cycles of PAR methodology through the development of the public workshops that took place; improvement and refinement was achieved through the understanding of the effect of the physical activities. I tried to foster autonomy early on by encouraging the group to find their own approach to enacting the techniques. The consensus was to watch the video, then try out the techniques and finally write up from physical memory what was effective, thereby allowing structure to evolve. However, another performative layer of engagement emerged from this process. The viewing of the videos at the beginning of each session became not only a ritual for reflection but also an enjoyable re-bonding activity as the group observed their past collective experiences. Later when we began to practise, the exercises, at times, became secondary to the need for this re-bonding and affirming of their identity that had developed from the previous study.
3.10 Data collection and analysis

Six female participants and one male participant were involved in the project and their identity has been protected. The male participant attended the workshop training intermittently but attended the dress rehearsal and first public workshop in July as a member of the team but not as a vocal trainer. For ethical reasons I use pseudonyms for the Let It Out participants in the thesis. The group members for the Let It Out project eventually comprised six females. Ethics approval was granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Melbourne and consent forms accompanied by a Plain Language Statement were signed by all participants. (See Appendix 2)

Data collection

The following methods provided the data for the critical incident analysis as well as the PAR and performative enquiry.

- Videography of each training session of three hours per week over a period of six months. A total of one hundred and eight hours of raw data. This data served all three forms of enquiry employed in this study: participatory action research, performative enquiry, and critical incident analysis. The process of enquiry took place through the group’s ‘performing’ of the actor vocal training techniques at each workshop training session where they took on the role of reflective practitioners with me. This unedited videography provided rich data in terms of the research methodology of PAR and performative enquiry. It meant I could directly observe the group construct the skills and knowledge of the most beneficial aspects of the training for young deaf people through their bodies and lived experiences. Thus, the primary data collection was the group’s embodied data as they transferred the actor vocal training techniques from my normative hearing body to theirs.

- The group’s notes and responses to the exercises written on butcher’s paper reflected their kinaesthetic responses to the physical work, together with spontaneous remarks often in the form of anecdotes, metaphors or images. At the same time, the young hearing impaired adults were developing their roles as deaf vocal trainers and I was able to witness
reflexivity in the participants alongside my self-reflexivity. Later, during the data analysis, these observations enabled me to highlight critical moments which were intuitive, empathetic and sometimes contradictory, yet provided specificity to particular issues.

- Interviews with the participants and post-training. All six participants were interviewed in August 2010. This data informed the critical incident analysis through the provision of key contextual information and inclusion of participant voices. (See Appendix 3)
- Interviews with some of the attendees after the first public workshop of invited professionals on July 26th 2010. This was voluntary and I chose a cross section of teachers of the deaf and speech pathologists. Eight participants agreed to be interviewed. (See Appendix 4)
- My journal notes which were written from February 2010 until the first public workshop on December 2010. Only those comments from February until the first public workshop on July 26th were used for this research.
- I asked the group to keep journals but as in the previous study they were reluctant and preferred to speak their thoughts and relay their experiences verbally during the workshop sessions. This part of the data collection and the filming of the workshops became crucial.

Data analysis – preparation for critical incident analysis

After the final public workshops in 2010, I spent the following year for one day a week writing my observations from the unedited videography, my journal notes and the group’s notes on butcher’s paper. Finally, I grouped significant issues into three themes drawn from the emergent and critical incidents I had observed:

- **Shifting the authority through ensemble practice** from my normative voice to the non-hearing voice enabled a *way of enacting* their voices in a non-hearing world.
- **The importance of artistic space** enabled a *way of imagining* their voices in a non-hearing world.
- **Kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience** of the embodied knowledge of actor vocal training techniques enabled a *way of being* with their voices in a non-hearing world.
These themes were ideographic and sometimes the boundaries between each theme were blurred. I structured the discussion of the data analysis around a series of narrative vignettes.

**3.12 Writing up the research**

This thesis provides an overview of how vocal actor training was employed through a participatory mode of enquiry to generate the public voice workshops. The embodied data I collected during the development of the workshops through participatory action research is complemented by the critical incident analysis captured in the form of narrative vignettes in **Part Two**.

**Part Two - Knowing in my bones**, provides insights into the dynamic characteristics of the lived experiences of the participants. The selected vignettes and discussion are designed to underpin my theoretical and embodied understanding of the group’s skill development and their personal development as leaders from my perspective as an expert in the discipline of actor vocal training and a researcher. These vignettes are not chronological but organised thematically, in order to elucidate the group’s progression towards ownership of, and identity with the work. Specifically, these narrative vignettes are arranged to highlight particular moments in time over a six month period and sometimes reflect the contradictory nature of what happened during any one session.

Chapter Four in Part Two begins by examining the impact of changes that happened within the group before the project commenced; Chapter Five: *A way of enacting* analyses how the authority shifted from my normative body to theirs through ensemble practice; Chapter Six: *A way of imagining* considers how the artistic space enabled this shift to take place; Chapter Seven: *A way of being* looks at how the kinaesthetic and aesthetic modes of learning allowed a sense of vocal identity and empowerment through embodied learning. Finally, Chapter Eight examines how these three ways of analysing the training were established through a performative pedagogy.
PART TWO - KNOWING IN MY BONES

Chapter Four – Re-igniting the flame

A stage space has two rules: (1) Anything can happen and (2) Something must happen. (Brook 1972)

Chapters Four to Seven in Part Two provide my analysis of the group’s endeavours to tackle the next and most challenging part of their exploration of actor vocal training and its effectiveness for other young deaf adults. The focus of this study was on the evolution of these young deaf adults’ experiences as they emerged as deaf vocal trainers. Their experiences were bound within a particular time and location. I was interested in their development as a group of young deaf adults who located their vocal identity through their embodied knowledge and collective identity. Chapter Four provides a bridge from the early relationships with the group and Jodie to her unexpected departure at the beginning of this study.

An explicit feature of participatory action research (McTaggart 1994) is learning from our own and others’ experiences. Analysing the data from the weekly four hour sessions from February to July 2010 proved to be a daunting task as so much happened in each session. Sometimes the group was actively engaged in the learning while simultaneously experiencing frustration with me, with each other, with the techniques, and the workshop structure or pressure of time. These experiences emerged for different people at different times and the mood and energy shifted constantly from week to week in the early stages of the training. Therefore, as mentioned in Chapter Three, for the purposes of analysis, I chose to isolate pivotal moments identified through critical incident analysis and to highlight these moments with narrative vignettes. The narrative vignettes included in Chapters Four to Seven are designed to illuminate my theoretical and embodied understanding of the group’s skill and their development as leaders from my perspective as a researcher through the discipline of actor vocal training. These vignettes are drawn from the analysis of the embodied data (as outlined on page 40) and provide insights into the dynamic characteristics of the lived experiences of the participants from February to July 2010.
This Chapter, Re-igniting the Flame, outlines the first tentative steps of re-establishing my relationship with the ensemble. It provides the link between the events that occurred before the formal Let It Out workshop training and the analysis explicated in Chapters Five to Seven.

4.1 Jodie’s departure

In Part One Chapter One, I described the two significant stages of my previous research which led to the Let It Out project:

1. *Embodying the Voice*, the initial pilot project with Jodie.
2. *Vocal Empowerment and effective communication: researching the effects of actor vocal training on young adults with cochlear implants and hearing aids* (Australian Research Council Grant 2006-2008) involved eight original participants recruited from the Cochlear Implant Clinics in Melbourne. Seven eventually completed the Vocal Empowerment study and six went onto work on the Let It Out project.

In February 2009, I wrote in my journal that I was particularly interested to see what happened when there was no imperative from parents to continue the project. I kept in touch with the group throughout 2009. A member of the group set up a Facebook account and I hoped this was a sign that they were beginning to sense an ownership of the work.

At the beginning of February 2010, Jodie announced to me that she no longer wanted to be involved in developing the next stage of the Let It Out project. I was disappointed but understood her reasons. It was time for her to find work as an actress and to spend more time with her young children. My journal entry of that time revealed a series of questions:

> Could I do without Jodie? If not, who would replace her? Would I need to replace her? Would the group be able to shed insight in the way she had for this next stage? (*Journal, February 2010*)

I asked Jodie to talk directly to the group about her decision. At our scheduled meeting for a picnic in the Botanical Gardens in early February 2010, Jodie informed them of her decision not to be involved.
The Picnic: February 20th

The group is very quiet and subdued after Jodie's announcement and I notice that Lawrence has a tear in his eye. Jodie later wrote to us.

‘Hope you are well and that last Saturday went well. I must say I was quite heartbroken walking away from you all the Saturday before. I think Lawrence’s tears got to me! I started hyperventilating walking towards the car which has only ever happened to me once before. I don't think the parking inspector in the process of booking me knew quite what to do and I couldn’t speak to tell him that it wasn't him that was causing my bizarre behaviour! I sat in the car for about 15 minutes before I was able to drive again!’

After Jodie’s departure, there is a brief hiatus and I let the group re-gather their thoughts. After she leaves, I am encouraged by their responses and their sense of commitment is overwhelming. I look at Sandra with her smiling face, constantly in accord but as sharp as a tack. What a wonderful listener. I think it advisable to do something practical so I explain the protocol, the ethics consent, plain language forms etc. to do with research. I want to engage them as participant researchers right from the beginning. Immediately Susan starts writing notes in my notebook. What is our aim she asks? We agree to meet on to discuss this. I notice Lawrence has grown so tall with big gelled hair and is now on a performing arts scholarship at his new secondary school which has a deaf unit.

No-one suggests that Jodie should be replaced so I don’t mention it either. This is going to be a test of my ability to assimilate all that I have learnt about the deaf world during the Vocal Empowerment study.

I was keen for the group to understand how they were to lead the project and how different it was going to be from the Vocal Empowerment study. Therefore, I decided
that our first session after the picnic should focus on ‘re-igniting’ their commitment and also framing their roles and responsibilities as participant researchers. I designed a series of questions to elicit what they wanted from the sessions, who they wished to target for the workshops, their ideal outcomes and what they considered to be their roles and responsibilities as researchers. (See Appendix 5)

During our first working session together on March 6th, the butcher’s paper quickly filled up with their responses to my questions. The group wrote succinct, concise responses and numerous conversations ensued expressing their wishes and desires for the project. Many of the responses to my questions were very similar and centred on leadership, professionalism, constructive criticism, team building, vocal improvement, confidence building and helping others. We all agreed that the goal of the training was to deliver a series of public workshops to professionals in audiology, speech pathology, teachers of the deaf and young hearing impaired people.

The Hailstorm: March 6th

This is our first real workshop without Jodie. We are beginning from the beginning but our first meeting does not go as smoothly as I envisaged. Lawrence texts to say he will be late coming from the country. Jenny and Susan are late. This has never happened before. Sandra is late. She says she has been working late the night before on an assignment and overslept. They seem to have a lot of commitment but appear distracted. However, Sally is very punctual and chats about Year 12 whilst we patiently wait for the others to arrive. Finally, most of the group arrives.

I pose the challenge to the group of how important it is for us to remember the techniques in our bodies and then the next challenge is to enable the workshop participants to do the same and see the effects. I express the issues that I have been mulling over all week. Firstly, the process of remembering the techniques in the body and secondly, the challenge of delivering them quickly and effectively to public workshop participants who have never experienced this approach to learning voice and
speech. Sally responds by using examples of the tactile feedback we gave each other during the Vocal Empowerment study as a way of developing this. She intuitively knows the difference between the conceptual and the kinaesthetic understanding that is required of the workshop planning. Susan reminds us of how we used scenarios and anecdotes of personal experience to demonstrate the techniques in the performance of ‘Wish 3 More Wishes’. Similarly, she understands the importance of the imagination and storytelling. Four major components of the training have been remembered: physical engagement; body experiences as a major component of feedback; imagination and personal histories. I have to ensure that these components are kept alive and that the Let It Out group experience sensations in the body when practising the techniques with the overall goal of being heard. I place my prepared questions on butcher’s paper around the room. The butcher’s paper is filled with empowering statements of purpose and desire; how they want to lead and show others the worthiness of the work, its effectiveness and its reliance upon the relationship between self and community. Their responses to my questions reveal that they have embraced their role as participant researchers. But when Jenny asks if I will still be guiding them, I realise how important my role in leading will be in the early stages, probably more important than I have anticipated. I reiterate my position within the research and start to explain the concept of ‘participatory action research’ when... The heavens open, the sky darkens. Melbourne has its worst hailstorm in decades and I have to evacuate the building. Everything becomes messy as I run around helping the group exit the building and worrying about the mix of electricity and water. The security guard becomes extremely anxious with me as I try to salvage all the wonderful comments on the butcher’s paper from the wall. I am determined to gather every scrap of writing into my arms before I run out of the building. Eventually I exit, soaking wet, clutching all the material from the studio including the damp
The hailstorm felt like a metaphor for my own turbulent thoughts and fear of failing to keep the promise to the group and to myself. Jenny’s question kept turning over in my mind. Previously, Jodie worked alongside me as a vocal trainer and was able to mediate the vocal work in the non-hearing body. How could the shift from my normative body to theirs occur without Jodie? The aesthetic of my training was very much in my body, so would anything really change if I had to lead the sessions to remind them and to give them security about what they were doing? To what degree would I be able to stand back? I realised they had retained a great deal and could talk about their experiences eloquently. But, could these cognitive responses be translated into a detailed realisation in the body? However, I felt the flame had definitely been re-ignited and I decided to focus on the group’s role as participant researchers in order to assuage my concerns.

4.2 Emergence of Let It Out

The group’s recognition of their role in the enquiry as participant researchers in the first session implicated them in what Hayles (cited in Wright 2001, p.225) describes as the ‘epistemology of emergence’:

> Emergence implies that properties or programs appear on their own, often developing in ways not anticipated by the person who created the simulation. Structures that lead to emergence typically involve complex feedback loops in which the outputs of the system are repeatedly fed back as input. As the recursive looping continues, small deviations can quickly become magnified, leading to complex interactions and unpredictable evolutions associated with the emergence.

Hayles’ description of the epistemology of emergence as ‘recursive loops’ and ‘small deviations, which are magnified’ proved to be the very essence of what I had to grapple with during the period of the workshop training. This description of ‘emergence’ aptly describes the complex nature of the actor vocal training process. Complex and self-reflexive loops of learning can amount to unpredictable but exciting
developments. Many acting and voice teachers refer to being in the ‘unknown’, by asking the actor not to ‘think’ or go ‘into their heads’. This approach requires the actor to listen to the body’s impulses rather than make rational decisions about how something should be spoken and privilege the body as a source of meaning-making. Subsequently, from these unpredictable moments emerged critical incidents, which I wove into narrative vignettes.

During the Vocal Empowerment study the group learned all the actor vocal training techniques through the experience of sound and movement in their bodies. Their understanding of how their voices sounded was experiential and their bodies created the knowledge and skills development of the techniques. Their capacity to hear did not change but their capacity to be heard was critical and confirmed for them that these techniques were effective when applied in public speaking situations. I was aware of the success they had achieved during the ARC study and their focus on the ‘fun’ aspects of the work. Accordingly, I was reminded of Stephen Brookfield (1998) who critiques the tendency in adult learning to focus on the celebratory aspects of the person’s experiences rather than a critical reflection on experience. I was mindful of this aspect of our work together. Previously, I introduced techniques and Jodie confirmed or critiqued their effectiveness, acting as a conduit from me to the group with her experience of these techniques in a deaf person’s body. Their role as participant researchers in the Let It Out study was to replace this relationship. Therefore, I had to ensure that the workshop training we were about to embark upon engendered a critique of what was effective for them.

4.3 Privileging fun and making mistakes

Another way of learning: 13th March

Jenny expands upon her understanding of the relationship between breath, thought and the word. She wants the workshops to be challenging and for the participants to experience something they can’t do and need to develop. Jenny’s comments are prompted by her memory of how difficult she found one of the exercises and her persistence led to improvement. I notice that she is starting to think empathically about the participants.
from her own experience. I find this discussion fascinating as they are articulating the experience of the mind/body split in learning voice and speech skills and now have a comparison between learning voice and speech skills through technical/functional processes from speech rehabilitation compared to a kinaesthetic and aesthetic learning paradigm. They agree it is important to feel confident in their bodies. My two concerns during the week i.e. their role as participant-researchers and their notions of embodiment are allayed by their responses.

I suggest that after the break, we should get up on the floor. When I return the atmosphere is social and relaxed. Susan is playing the piano and the others are just chatting to each other. I am anxious but decide not to let this interfere with my plans. Instead, I suggest we get to get to know each other again and so tell them about my background.

Although I was palpably aware of the accompanying self-consciousness in the group’s bodies now that they were older, I was also hoping that the ‘fun atmosphere’ they experienced in the previous study would be present (Cook 2008). Early on in the Let It Out training, the group mentioned how self-conscious young people are about physical activity. However, they insisted that it would be easier to teach the deaf teens in the public workshops if they witnessed the deaf vocal trainers physically practising the techniques with a sense of how pleasure impacted upon the voice and that this pleasure could be remembered when speaking in public. Jenny commented that she felt this approach would encourage the idea that speaking can be a joy for deaf teens and not something to be feared. This comment re-affirmed my approach to prioritising their sensory responses. This had to be achieved through an environment that enabled pleasure and making mistakes. I had to ensure that there was consistency of approach because the learning of the voice and speech techniques for the Let It Out participants took place through:

- Attention to sensations arising from the practice of each technique, whereby the individual did not describe verbally but attended to
physiological changes. For example, the changes in the breath after the ritual warm-up at the beginning of each workshop became an instinctual way of ‘preparing to speak’.

- Modelling. This took place initially by me to the group until they embedded the techniques. (Eventually the group using the modelling technique for the public workshops). The group exchanged these roles and provided feedback as the workshop model started to evolve.

- A social constructivist paradigm of learning engendered by working as an ensemble, which allowed a non-hierarchical approach to the learning of the adapted techniques. The techniques were accompanied by social interaction and expressing intention of the technique through a story told from the lived experiences of members of the group. Consequently, we included this narrative in each public workshop.

- Imagination. Each technique was framed imaginatively to avoid a mechanistic approach.

I had to ensure that the techniques did not become copying exercises for the Let It Out group and subsequently, the public workshop participants. As such, each member of the group had to develop an unconscious interior (what was happening to their body) and exterior (what was happening to another’s) in the moment of demonstrating and teaching. However, learning through the body is never straightforward. I had the challenging task of turning them into vocal trainers for young deaf people in weekly four hour workshops over six months. They, in turn, had the challenging task of re-learning the techniques, embodying the skills and knowledge and then demonstrating the value by teaching others in one ninety minute workshop. The nature of a participatory action research project is the focus on a collective endeavour towards transformative processes and outcomes. I repeatedly reminded myself that the trust we had built as a group and the commitment and willingness to pursue this next stage would engender the motivation needed to achieve a positive outcome. The group was older and I noticed when we met in the first workshop on March 6th how keen they were to talk about the experience of the prior training. It made me wonder how keen they would also be to physicalise it. It had to be engaging for them again. I wondered where that responsibility ultimately lay now that there was no goal of testing the voice or a performance as in the ARC Vocal Empowerment
I sensed they were eager to work but also was concerned how I could sustain their interest without Jodie as a role model.

How long does it take?: March 20th

Towards the end of this session, I remind the group that we have been talking about experiential activity and suggest we get up on the floor and proceed to ask them which exercise they would like to do? They mention that the ritual warm up is important as it provides preparation for all aspects of the training. We agree but when they rise to their feet to practise they stand stock still, saying they can't remember anything. I put on the music which accompanies this section and remind them about the connection to the body and breathing muscles. I lead the group and they follow. It is tentative and slow. The ritual has always been led by Jodie. I am remembering in my body and they too are trying to remember through their bodies. I can see that they are trying to recall through their bodies why we are doing this. ‘What is the point?’ I call above the music. They respond that this physical activity is for the community to come together. We move into another physical action, a swaying and stamping, as the chorus of sounds accompanying these actions starts to trigger the memory. Susan shouts above the music that she remembers how weird this activity felt when Jodie and I first did this with them. They are beginning to draw upon their own experiences of the expectations they had of the Vocal Empowerment workshops and remind me of the first time I said to them: ‘You just need to be receptive and let anything happen. Try not to judge your movement and sounds’.

Their embodied experiences are now guiding their development as future leaders of the training. The whole sequence is raw and rough, loosely held together by half-
formed movements and half-hearted responses. I realise they are older now and probably feel more awkward. After a few minutes, I suggest we try a breath exercise. (I am beginning to feel the flame that had ignited with such vigour, slowly fade). They look at me blankly and Jenny says that if it has taken thirty hours to teach the techniques to them, how will we cover everything in a ninety minute workshop for strangers. I can sense diffidence and fear creeping in so decide to demonstrate a breath exercise with one of the group. I need to reiterate the importance of remembering the work in the body. Then I ask them to practise with each other, one teaching the other and vice versa. They are quiet, and a little diffident but I notice that once Sandra starts teaching the exercise to Mary, the others follow. I leave them alone for quite some time and whilst they have remembered a lot of the physical form of the exercises, I can see that the effectiveness of the exercises on their voices has diminished. In other words, the embodied understanding they previously developed has receded. They are talking about what should happen rather than demonstrating what does happen.

Finally, I repeat the exercise with Susan. After a while, I ask her what she is experiencing rather than what she is feeling and her body memory comes flooding back to her. She mentions not thinking about her voice as she moves her body and lets sounds spill out. The relief in my body when this happens is palpable because they laugh and joke as if the penny has finally dropped and now they understand. Their focus is extraordinary for the rest of the session. I am reminded about their focus the first time we worked together when I realised they had learnt very skillful strategies for listening with hearing loss.

I return to the question of how we demonstrate what we have experienced. My intention is to see whether they are able to translate their kinaesthetic understanding into a structure for teaching an exercise and as soon as I utter this I realise I am asking a very complex pedagogical question. So, I pose it another way: ‘Do we demonstrate..."
first and then explain to the participants or do we just let it happen and see what their responses are?’ They agree that we should just ‘let it happen’ and Jenny suggests that ‘there should be more practical demonstration than theory’. The session ends on a positive note but I am a little concerned about what just ‘letting it happen’ really means for them.

Experiencing, sensing, emerging, retrieving. After this session, I made a note of these four words to remind myself that each of these actions was significant to the two components of participant researcher and embodiment that needed to underpin all the workshop training with the group. In the same way that I had moved from the teaching role to collaborator with Jodie on our first research project, Embodying the Voice, these initial sessions with the group reminded me that I must take time to understand how they wished to work with me. Jenny’s last comment alerted me to one of the questions underpinning this study. How do I remove myself, in order for the young people to develop autonomously as deaf vocal trainers?

The analysis in the following chapters focuses on the complex relationship between the skill development of the actor vocal training techniques and the group’s ability to authorise, embody, transform and transfer these techniques to a public workshop.
Chapter Five - A way of enacting: shifting the authority through ensemble practice

You’re in a group with other deaf people and it is not so confronting as being alone…it is more supportive and we are able to participate without being shy or awkward. (Cook 2008)

This quote introduces the focus of this chapter and examines two major factors in terms of my relationship to the ensemble: how the young deaf vocal trainers struggled to enact their identity through the ensemble practice of actor vocal training techniques adapted for their needs; and how my authority over these techniques shifted.

5.1 Definition of Ensemble

In *Encountering Ensemble* John Britton (2013) reminds us that the definition of ‘ensemble’ will have as many contradictions and paradoxes as it does agreement. In his book, Britton provides a brief historical account of the concept of the ensemble with its roots in the theatre studio practices of Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Chekhov, Copeau, St. Denis and the Berliner Ensemble. The word itself is from the French meaning ‘together’. It can describe the organisational structure of a group including all its members, not just the performers. Ensemble can imply a methodology of training, which underpins the aesthetic quality of the performances. I use the word in all these senses but also ‘ensemble’ as a pedagogical tool, a way of learning together.

Many actor training methodologies use the concept of ensemble to train the actor within the group so that there is a psychological, physical and emotional interdependency amongst its members. The ensemble can also provide another experience through enacting problems and challenges of the real world. The naming of the ensemble can be vital to this sense of connectedness. This is the reason I chose the name Let It Out before we commenced the training. I felt this name captured our identity as a ‘community of practice’ (Lave & Wenger 1991) and also enabled us to frame our thinking around what Let It Out meant metaphorically. From this chapter onwards, I will refer to the ‘group’ as the ‘ensemble’ in order to reflect the definitions above and the group’s evolution into an ensemble as the project progressed.
My approach to actor vocal training is predicated upon the learning and teaching conventions of drama in education and actor training. Both provide a sense of connection to the work through the group and to the group through the work, provoking challenge, risk, unease and confusion. The strength of an ensemble lies in its ability to provide support to the individual’s skill, knowledge and artistry by other members of the ensemble without the expense of losing the whole connection to the work, or in this case, the training.

5.2 Emergence of the Let It Out ensemble

*We are the same but different*

For the first time she had a sense of ownership...didn’t want to tell or share training and what happened there was really special. The social side was very important, there was a sense of belonging and the group knew where she was coming from. She didn’t have to fight to be heard. The others wanted to hear her and be heard. (Parent Interview, Cook 2008)

I was reminded of this parent’s comments as we embarked on the development of the Let It Out workshops. The sense of belonging engendered through the *Vocal Empowerment* study had a profound effect on the group.

Early in April, the ensemble articulated their need for the public workshop participants to gain an understanding of the significance of actor vocal training techniques as a group activity, as opposed to the one-on-one scenario with a speech therapist. They were very vocal about how group training had developed a strong sense of their identity and empowerment through coming together every week to use their voices as a community.

March 20th was a challenging session. I observed that the ensemble was motivated and engaged when talking to each other about their lives outside of the studio. Usually they talked about their frustrations with deafness and cochlear implants but sometimes threw in humorous anecdotes. They showed little interest in working on the techniques in this March session and I was reluctant to lead. At one point in this session, Jenny left the group and went to the other side of the studio where she started writing her thoughts on butcher’s paper whilst the group slowly gathered around her. She re-wrote the goals we had spoken of on March 6th and made an attempt to write a structure for what she called a ‘crash course’ of the training. This
moment suggested she not only had her own desires, knowledge and skills to display in front of the group but that she could do so without causing any discomfort. She prioritised her needs within the goal of the whole project. Jenny intuitively had a sense of what Neelands (2009) calls the ‘ensemble as a democratic process’ (p.175).

Neelands asserts that the ensemble process in drama education both supports and heals. In this moment, Jenny supported and re-directed the group back to working on the problem at hand. Neelands (Friere 1998, p.72 cited in Neelands 2009, p.175) also states that the ensemble enables what Paolo Freire calls ‘vital knowledge’ defined as:

The kind of knowledge that becomes solidarity, becomes a ‘being with’. In that context, the future is seen, not as inexorable, but as something that is constructed by people engaged together in life, in history. It’s the knowledge that sees history as possibility and not as already determined. The world is not finished. It is always in the process of becoming.

The Let It Out project gave this group of young people their first experience of constructing skills and knowledge for a young deaf person who chooses to use oral language. It was important that I focussed on Freire’s notion of ‘becoming’ where the process of the group’s understanding was as important as the outcome.

**A question of leadership**

During the March 20th session, we grappled with the physical, emotional and social aspects of what we were trying to achieve in the public workshops. The ensemble had engaged with the work conceptually yet were reluctant to commit to physical work. Consequently, I led the sections on Ritual, Breath, Phonation, Resonance and Articulation. Towards the end of the session, I felt that the layering and embedding of the work was accompanied by a stronger sense of ownership by the ensemble. The ensemble displayed signs of confidence with each other in terms of the embodiment of the techniques and seemed to be enjoying the challenge. Unfortunately, due to the Easter break, there was a substantial period of time before we met again and I decided to email the group to consolidate our stage of development. I mentioned that I was aware of how I had been sitting back over the last few weeks, observing and asking questions. I confessed that at the time I thought this was appropriate but later realised that I was trying to make them leaders before they were ready. They had started to embody the work quite quickly and I had taken that as a sign of leadership. I explained that I interpreted their ability to remember in their bodies as a sign not only
of ownership but leadership of the techniques. I confirmed that I would be more pro-active in leading the next sessions.

**Starting again: April 10th**

*This session starts on a low note. At one point I thought that sending the email might have been a mistake. Nevertheless, we discuss my email and Susan mentions that she feels they know whether something works or not but don't know how to articulate it. I sense that she speaks for the group. I acknowledge that I have been making huge assumptions because they are so articulate about the training. I assume that they can remember an exercise because it is ‘in me’. Susan smiles and shakes her head.*

As April progressed, the situation worsened. Some participants were repeatedly turning up late and overall there was a feeling of tiredness and politeness as opposed to the commitment and passion of a month before. I sensed that the group was anxious and realised that I needed to be firm but also guide them towards making a decision about how to structure the activities. I brought in the butcher’s paper and reminded them of our aims. The intuitive teacher in me told me that I should work towards their strengths at this stage. So I focused on looking at their role as participant researchers and we read the statements around the room again. These included:

- Learn different ways of empowering whether it is voice/self-esteem.
- Learn to be a leader, researcher, critic, follower.
- Feedback on our progress e.g. how do we relate to each other in terms of participants, experts, companions.
- Confidence in the group for it to work; empowering each other, support within the group.

The words ‘support’ and ‘confidence’ were repeated many times. I could certainly see how they were supporting each other but confidence was lacking. I decided my task
was to use the concept of ensemble to try and bring that sense of confidence back. The social sense of ensemble was evident as they were obviously in touch with each other outside of the workshops. But this social aspect was not creatively being transferred to the studio space. Paradoxically, this was a space where they had always felt liberated. This felt such a significant moment that after watching the videography of this session, I transcribed Susan’s words into my journal:

_We are all participants when it comes to the vocal exercises. We are all researchers of our own voice. And we are companions in helping others find theirs. We facebook each other to keep up to date with news of each other. I think this is a very important part of our research project – as to be able to get along with each other outside of the studio means that we will be able to work to the best of our abilities. We cannot make it work if we do not support each other and believe in ourselves. The confidence in ourselves and in each other helps what makes this program work._ (Journal, April 2010)

However, this session was confusing. On the one hand, some were articulating their goals succinctly and passionately, on the other, the mood was low and passive.

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**Starting again cont. : (April 10th)**

_I have to find another way of processing the work and creating a structure, which enables them to reflect not only through their bodies but visually as well. Perhaps writing their feedback would be a more appropriate way to articulate their responses. Prior to their arrival I spread their feedback from the first session on March 6th around the walls of the studio as a reminder of our goals but I observe that no-one really takes any notice. I request that once I demonstrate a technique, they should repeat, run to the butcher’s paper and write down the most immediate feedback. It doesn’t matter what it is. We are going to work off a gut reaction response, the comfort, the ease of something. We try this process; we are on a roll and it works._
My insistence that we worked intensively on the physical exercises of the techniques\(^4\) seemed to motivate the ensemble and everyone took responsibility to write down their responses, return to the group and offer to lead a technique. After a while, there was a palpable shift of mood in the room with an underlying urgency, willingness and frustration. I interpreted frustration as a positive sign, as it meant some challenges were being confronted. I was also able to step back once I lead the demonstration and watch them repeat and embed the exercises on their own and then together with a volunteer leader. They agreed that this process worked and was engaging and freeing. I agreed to write out a plan for each session from 17\(^{th}\) April onwards and email it to them.

**A question of vision**

During the session on 17th April, the ensemble started to express concerns about how long it had taken them to learn the actor vocal training techniques in the Vocal Empowerment study and therefore, the impossibility of participants learning them in ninety minutes. I agreed that was our biggest challenge and perhaps it was an impossible task. At this point, I realised that my focus on the kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience of the work meant that I had overlooked another undeniable element - the ensemble’s identity and relationship to the work. So, in an attempt to foreshadow this, I offered my vision of the structure of the public workshops. I described my intention to demonstrate the sense of community, identity and empowerment in the workshops through the kinaesthetic and aesthetic frame of actor vocal training.

Their lack of response to my suggestion surprised me but I understood from this exchange that peer group learning and identity needed to be exposed more explicitly. I believed that the structure I envisioned would bring the ensemble’s role as deaf vocal trainers to centre stage and the focus would be on their performative, speaking bodies. I recognised that my vision assumed that their relationship to the techniques would be demonstrated through a kinaesthetic and aesthetic frame, thus implicitly

\(^{4}\) ‘Technique’ refers to the overall approach and structure of actor vocal training. ‘Exercise’ refers to a particular physical activity. Section refers to a whole technique with its accompanying exercises.
expressing their ‘community of practice’ (Lave & Wenger 1998) and identity with the work. However, my understanding of the performative nature of their bodies in the space with the public workshop participants was challenged when Susan asked whether the performance was to do with an actual performance of the exercises of the voice. This interaction with the ensemble crystallised for me that this performative act I was describing had to have a dual purpose – a narrative of them as a community which also demonstrated the work in process. Despite the excitement around the techniques, and a clearer understanding of purpose the ensemble’s anxiety about the structure of the work was still palpable.

**A liminal space: 17th April**

I do not mention my idea of the structure again and they do not offer any further comments or ideas around my suggestion; nor do they propose any new ideas for the structure. We are in a liminal state and I am hesitant to direct or lead the frame of the public workshops, so proceed with the plan of leading the techniques. They are responding to the physical work and I hope we can return to where we left off on the 10th April. I also observe how polite they are with me and wonder if they have been talking about my suggestion and do not know how to approach me. I realise that by taking up the expert’s role again means a shift in our relationship and this feels regressive. But I am aware of making assumptions about the group’s progress as leaders and am also frustrated in my inability to return to the principles of PAR and the recursive loops of action. Perhaps, I ask myself, I am falling into the trap of ‘getting things right’ at this stage, secretly fearing a shambolic public demonstration.

Ivy asks them what they think of the idea of ‘leading’, what does it mean to them? I am grateful to her for stepping in at this point. They do not respond and I find their show of reluctance interesting now that we are talking about practicalities. Their embodiment of the work is better but their sense of ownership through leadership is difficult for them to express. Finally, Jenny
comments that if she were to lead a group at this point in time, she would be nervous. But she adds that after ‘research and practice’ she would feel more confident. Jenny uses the words of a research assistant and I feel more hopeful that her comments might inspire the group.

I ask if they need more time with me leading the sessions. They affirm they do but Jenny adds that she wants the group to assign the particular section they want to lead whilst having an understanding of every section. In this way, she explains, if someone is absent their section could be quickly re-assigned with extra practice. (This became an excellent approach as during the public workshops from August to November, some members of the ensemble could not attend and no workshop was compromised). Jenny deftly solves the problem democratically and takes the pressure off me. She assigns each member the role of ‘expert’ and ensures that everyone will learn all the sections. I smile inwardly at this as I am reminded of the actors in Shakespearian England.

However, the conceptual framework Jenny provides remains theoretical for most of this session. The group want to wait until the end of the session before they nominate which section they want to lead but this too is problematic because not everyone is turning up to each session. Some are late and the group does not feel cohesive. Only four people are present on April 17th. Jenny constantly tries to pull the group together and even writes our notes up on butcher’s paper whilst others are just chatting and laughing. It is wonderful to see the group so social and happy.

Towards the end of the session, I decide to return to the question of structure and whether anyone has anything further to add to my suggestion. No response. Penny looks at her watch. I sense a struggle of both resistance and deference to my suggestions about structure but there are no other ideas forthcoming. Jenny adds that she believes people are forgetting the work in between. I
comment that once people decide the section they want to lead, they should come earlier and I will work with them separately. Everyone loves this idea as it means some time to work without the pressure of being ready to lead straight away.

We all acknowledge that the work is tiring and repetitive.

Upon reflection, I recognised that the session on April 17th marked a significant turning point for the ensemble and the development of the work. The transactions and negotiations about the structure were frustrating and people’s lack of attendance added to the overall sense of low morale. However, some salient points about the purpose of the public workshops started to emerge. We agreed that we did not want workshop participants to merely copy the techniques. Their participation had to be immersive. Again, Jenny summarised it all: ‘We want people to experience what we experienced’. This comment reminded me that the kinaesthetic processes of the techniques were also building a community of learning, which enabled us to define what kind of ensemble we were creating.

The last hour of the April 17th session was probably our most productive yet. I noticed how consolidated this part of the session felt as after each technique, they ran to the butcher’s paper and wrote some notes. Everyone took the responsibility to do this. Those members of the ensemble who were present foregrounded the kinaesthetic experiences, in order to discuss the efficacy of each technique as they started to reflect in and upon action. I noticed I was speaking less.

What is pertinent to this study is the aspect of community, which builds an alternative construction of identity of young deaf people using language that is normally held by experts. Jurgen Habermas (1987, p.58) posits that our sense of self is tied to our relationship with others:

‘Individuals owe their identities as persons exclusively to their identification with, or internalization of, features of collective identity; personal identity is a mirror image of collective identity.'
In his concept of communicative action, Habermas further asserts that communication is a form of social action which is based on language. The arts educator, Gerard Delanty (2007, p.28) suggests that by viewing society in Habermas’ terms as a ‘linguistically created and sustained entity’ the communicative process is open-ended and thus resists ‘closure and domination’. Jenny’s comment on wanting the workshop participants to experience what it was like when the Let It Out ensemble initially learned voice and speech through actor vocal training, affirmed the performative nature of the demonstration of the techniques. A performative style of demonstration meant that communication between the deaf vocal trainers and the workshop participants would be open-ended and discursive. In this way, our approach would demonstrate an alternative paradigm to previous experiences of voice and speech training for young deaf adults.

5.3 A critical friend

Despite the satisfaction of the decisions made on April 17th and my observation of the ensemble’s ability to grasp a more embodied understanding of the work, I still felt that we needed to tackle the pragmatics of creating a structure. We had two months left and I was feeling despondent. I knew it was my responsibility to change the dynamic and decided to create a context where I could participate but not lead.

Naomi Edwards had worked as a creative facilitator on the ARC study. At the beginning of the Let It Out project I had asked Naomi to join us for a feedback session in early May but now requested she led a creative development session on April 24th. Fortunately, she could attend at such short notice. Subsequently, I dismissed my vision for the demonstration of the workshop and hoped that through the creative development process, we could find something to suit everyone. I also believed that a fresh eye and a critical friend were valuable at this stage of my research. There was another reason why I made this decision. I needed to be able to observe the ensemble from outside the demands and responsibility of the training. The group needed the freedom to create a loose structure in which to place the techniques without my concerns being paramount. In terms of the methodological approach of participant/observer, I had taken the role of participant more than observer and desired time for the latter.
At the session on April 24th, Naomi gently guided the ensemble through a series of questions about what they wanted their audience to experience. She approached this from the perspective of a director, thus enabling them to think about the impact and affect they wanted to create on their audiences. As such, she enabled the ensemble to slowly create their aesthetic vision from the ideas they had articulated in previous sessions with me. They realised that they had to create an opportunity for the participants to experience the transformative power of performance. This was a pivotal moment for the ensemble as they began to understand how they could achieve their desired outcomes for the workshop participants.

The rise of the ensemble: April 24th

The excitement in the room is palpable at this session. I tentatively offer my previous idea and this time it is discussed with the conclusion that the workshop participants’ experience should be more interactive for the whole length of the workshop. Jenny reminds me that if we want the participants to experience what the group experienced in the first training then it is important for everyone to be practically involved. I accept this and again we come back to the over-riding question: What do we want the audience to experience? (We use the word audience not participants). Jenny is adamant that she wants the audience to go on a journey, that there should be a clear beginning, middle and end and just not a series of exercises. Naomi opens up questions we have already asked but the perspective is more within a performative context of ensemble and her role as a director. She asks one question that triggers the whole session and there is an important shift in the ensemble’s response: ‘What do you want your audience to experience?’ The ensemble starts to articulate that they want to make the audience understand their personal experiences by having them fully participate in all the activities. They confirm that they want the audience to ‘experience what they had experienced when they first started the training’. Moreover, they express their desire for the participants
The structure of the workshop slowly began to take shape. The Let It Out ensemble identified the salient elements they wanted to build into the workshop structure:

- A formal presentation where the participants would assume that they were attending a conference on actor vocal training techniques for the hearing impaired.
- A ‘coup’. It became evident they were keen to shatter expectations and create an immersive experience for their participants so they could experience the world of the non-hearing through their bodies.
- The Let It Out ensemble to be viewed as ambassadors for this kind of approach to speech re-habilitation for hearing impaired people.
- The workshops as a ‘taster’ so the participants would want to come back for more.
- Participants should be excited and challenged by the workshops. Techniques should be challenging but achievable and nobody should be made to feel left out.

The Let It Out ensemble began to define their needs as a community of young deaf people who needed to express their experiences through a transaction with their audience. At this moment, the element of a transformative experience for the audience became the most significant and motivating force of the whole session as they began to understand the potential of the transformative power of performance.

Their confidence grew in this session and the distancing from me was a crucial aspect of this. Their intentions for the public workshops were provocative and exciting. They had a desire for a sense of formality; they wanted to build trust as hosts; they wanted to be ‘ambassadors’ for this training; they wanted to keep the workshop numbers small so that there could be more participation; they wanted to work as a whole group and with smaller groups, demonstrating and then working alongside and diagnosing with the participants. Finally, I summed up the following points verbally to the group:

Let It Out will demonstrate the group as a community; as experts in actor vocal training for young deaf people where they are in the ‘majority’ and
Finally the workshops will demonstrate some of the techniques so they are a taste to come back for more. We express our desire for people to become excited by the demo workshops. There is a strong cycle of communication and reflection in the structure we have built together. (Journal, April 2010)

Later, I wrote in my journal that I had always imagined the workshops as a performance but the group wanted it to be more interactive and that fortunately, we met half way.

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**The imaginative self: April 24**

Naomi asks them to draw the ‘river of their lives’ and this becomes the metaphor to start the dialogue with the audience at the beginning of the first public workshop. Naomi keeps returning to her question of what they want the audience to experience, what they want the audience to take away from the workshop. The responses are very clear: different, a deep impression, visceral feeling. ‘Different’ is the kernel of the workshop. Susan articulates the need for the workshops to show that actor vocal training not only improves your voice but also creates a sense of belonging to a community, a sense of empowerment. Immediately, Naomi asks what empowerment means and through various comments, we agree that it in the context of the actor vocal training, it is the relationship between your voice and who you are. Therefore, how the group feels about their voices is the key. On butcher’s paper, Naomi writes the words ‘self’ and ‘voice’ and wants to know how the voice relates to sense of self. Conversations about identity and self emerge and someone comments that when the voice changes, it changes a sense of yourself. At this point, Naomi urges them to express this symbolically. Is it an ocean? A marriage? The earth and the moon?

Later when I looked at this section on video, I witnessed the group grasping at the importance of the relationship between voice and identity. They had mentioned it many times during the previous study. However, this time I noticed a keener attention
to the relationship between the self and voice as a result of our discussion on the imperative for the audience to have a more immersive experience. Conversations about identity and self as a deaf person in a hearing world started to emerge. We discussed how the voice changes, and thus how it changes a sense of self. This prompted them to reflect deeply but in some cases, sadly. A comment from my journal after April 24th emphasises the significance of these conversations:

Susan says that she always had to prove herself but sometimes just wanted to give it all up. A personal discussion follows on how when you have to be the strongest, you are probably the weakest. I say that the voice signifies this and that is why actor vocal training helps prepare for this. Jenny mentions that if you have already prepared for it (i.e with actor vocal training), then it is instinctive.

Jenny commented that if there has been preparation for these challenging times, it helps you instinctively, adding: A powerful instinct will result in a powerful voice – with training! (Journal, April 2010)

I am reminded of Conquergood’s (1991) pertinent comment that performances are public events. He argues that they function as ‘a site of struggle where competing interests intersect, and different viewpoints and voices get articulated’ (p. 184). This creative development session formed the basis of the structure of the workshops and the ‘performance’ of these workshops allowed not so much a site of struggle for ‘competing voices’ but a ‘site of difference’ for a hearing-impaired community to demonstrate voice and speech skills. This re-configuration of power structures enabled a different lens to be focussed on voice and speech training in the non-hearing body. The democratic and participatory nature of ensemble actor vocal training and the lived experiences of the deaf vocal trainers became a performative discourse, which they transferred to the public workshops.

Sally’s comment was underlined in red in my journal from the same period in April:

Until you speak, no-one really knows who you are and when you speak they find out more about you.

Personal anecdotes and memories flooded this quiet, intimate and reflective session. Another member of the ensemble remembered how her hearing mother did not want her to be part of the deaf community, nor did she want her to use sign language. She
wanted her to speak and wear hearing aids or implants. For her mother, the two elements that unlocked her daughter’s identity were the implant and her voice.

Ideas around the kinds of experiences the ensemble wanted the workshop participants to have started to frame the structure of the public workshops. The ensemble became more confident, worked more quickly, and scribbled feverishly away on the butcher’s paper. Everyone agreed that the first public workshop should be a heightened experience for the audience of invited professionals. So we decided to concentrate on building the structure for the first public demonstration and subsequent workshops would be shaped around it. Everyone would choose their technique to teach to the participants. However, it was decided that all members of the ensemble would learn every technique because they wanted to work in small groups with the participants. In these small groups they would be able to witness the audience trying out the techniques and help them. Furthermore, these small groups would provide the opportunity for the Let It Out ensemble to present their own narrative of the benefits they had experienced from the training as young deaf adults. Audiences would witness an established community of young deaf adults and observe how this community evolved through the ensemble practice of actor vocal training.

This session with Naomi acting as a ‘critical friend’ felt like a turning point and everyone seemed delighted with the outcome. We established a strong intention for the first public workshop. Moreover, the sense of fun, commitment and energy was back. I was feeling more confident about the shape and purpose of the training workshops. From this moment on, the group poured out ideas with the focus on a high level of immersive participation throughout. They were also very keen to have the workshop include their experiences through story-telling. I was relieved to find a performative structure that demonstrated the techniques through the lived experiences of the Let It Out ensemble. I relinquished some of my aesthetic vision and realised that the event might be a lot messier and more interactive than I had envisaged. Nevertheless, I was also mindful that we still needed to embody the techniques, otherwise the whole demonstration could become a loose set of exercises or a ‘talk-fest’.

We kept returning to the same question. How do we build all this understanding into a ninety minute session? Someone mentioned it was like throwing a party. How do you
make people feel welcome? How do you build atmosphere? How do you build trust when people feel uncomfortable? It was important for Jenny that the audience felt comfortable for then she believed they would let their guard down. We decided the welcome part should be personal and intimate as we felt this would be the opposite of what professionals and school children usually expect. These decisions indicated that the group was moving very quickly towards a sense of authorship over the work as they wanted to subvert and change expectations about learning speech and voice techniques.

**Shattering of expectations: April 24th contd.**

Our ideas pour out on April 24th. There is excitement, challenge and frustration as we keep coming back to the same point. How do we start? Every actor in every ensemble without an apparent leader always finds this moment confronting. Any drama teacher who believes in process drama and democracy in the classroom probably loves and dreads this moment equally. I know I did. Then, quite spontaneously Susan pipes up: ‘Make it a joke’.

We discuss how we could start with a powerpoint presentation that breaks down. At this point the ensemble decide almost unanimously to stage a ‘coup’. They want to take over the workshop, shattering, subverting, dissolving the expected conference presentation that always starts with the predictable powerpoint presentation. Ideas spill out. Sandra likes the idea of being in the audience and the coup happening from within as they pretend they are part of the audience. Jenny wants to start with an intimate session in small groups asking questions and telling stories about voice as if you were a guest at a wedding table. ‘Make it formal and then break the boundaries’ was written on the butcher’s paper. I have the idea of me not actually speaking once I am introduced but just mouthing. The Let It Out ensemble can hear me because they can lip read. So my speech becomes a ‘silent lecture’
for the workshop participants except the deaf vocal trainers. Everyone else is marginalised. ‘Yes, put them on the spot, so they can feel what it is like to be us,’ pipes up Sally. We all agree we should invert the audience’s position as if they don’t ‘get it’ and make everyone clear the tables, take off their shoes and form a circle ready to learn in their bodies. In this way, we will subvert the position of the authoritative lecturer and performatively give the deaf vocal trainers this role. Jenny encapsulates our approach by commenting that the conceit lies in the fact that my lecture is not effective, so the group has to demonstrate in their bodies. This is an embodied experience, she summarises. Still, a question remains: How do we get them to trust us? We agree that each deaf vocal trainer should be assigned a group who they meet and take to a table for an intimate chat at the beginning. In that way, we will establish communion with a specific group who remain with their leaders throughout the ninety minutes.

I do a quick verbal summary: the purpose is for the participants to feel what it is like to be the deaf vocal trainers; the purpose of stopping me is so that they can show the participants the only way to understand the work is to experience it. We will do this by creating a shattering of expectations.

For the first time, I really begin to feel a ‘shift in authority’.

5.4 Building a shared community through practice

Critically, the Let It Out workshops dismantled the conventions of voice and speech skills for the hearing impaired whereby, through performance, the focus was on kinaesthetic and participatory learning. The performatively twofold as it provided an immersive, embodied experience and built a community of learning in a very short time for the workshop participants. We were only able to enact the ‘silent lecture’ and ‘coup’ part for the public workshop of professionals from speech
pathology, audiology and deaf education on July 26th but this seemed the most significant audience to experience this immersive subversion.

In subsequent workshops, the Let It Out ensemble shattered the space in different ways with the workshop participants either through moving chairs and tables or disrupting small groups chatting or telling jokes. They often improvised these parts depending on the atmosphere of the environment where the workshops took place.

5.5 Let It Out as a community of practice

During April, Jenny submitted an application to Deaf Children Australia (DCA) to support their workshops in schools from August to November. This application was not under my auspices and carried out independently by the ensemble. On May 1st Jenny read the application to the ensemble. In the DCA application, she explained the history of the training and how the group still met every Saturday, had ‘bonded as a group’ and subsequently created a community through actor vocal training. Furthermore, Jenny added that this aspect of the training was particularly important as some people in the group felt quite isolated in the various settings. As she read the application at the beginning of the session, the group beamed with delight. Jenny had so succinctly written their context and when she read: ‘This training means you are in the majority’, someone added, ‘Which is very rare!’ There was a lot of positive energy at the beginning of this session with relaxed bodies and big smiles as they remembered the past and planned for the future. The application was successful and the group administered the funding themselves.

I realised how important it was for the group to reflect not only on the training they had undergone in the previous iteration of this work but also the community they had built whilst experiencing it. Again, my assumptions about their friendships and connections needed to be challenged as I observed the desire to re-enforce their community and not take it for granted. It was essential that certain phrases and stories should be repeated for the community to keep moving forwards. Even though some members of the ensemble were late and some were not even turning up, those who were beginning to take ownership and leadership did not judge their absent or tardy peers. Jenny’s application provided motivation for the rest of the session.
I learnt so much from the Let It Out ensemble about deafness by listening to their stories of pre and post implantation. The stories were funny, frustrating, revealing and inspiring. Above all, these stories brought a new dimension to the training and had to be included. At the next session on May 1st, much time was spent on sharing their stories and reminding themselves of what they were like when they first came together. It led to a discussion about who should be invited to the workshops, the age groups, and what kinds of professionals.

**Remembering the past and planning for the future: May 1st**

Susan reminds us that we should not keep the participants too broad. She feels teenagers would benefit from experiencing another way to receive rehabilitation and young children would have fun using their voices, something she adds, she never experienced when she was younger. She recalls how she spent days not speaking when she was a child. Lawrence pipes up that the great thing for him was meeting other people like him through the training. (He lived in rural Victoria).

The discussions lead to other sorts of processes to be included for example, a feedback questionnaire, a database. The ensemble is very excited about the future possibility of building a team who might work with us to plan the next stage after these public workshops. Jenny adds, ‘Let’s think big!’ Susan is still worried that the young people in the workshops might see it as another speech therapy session. I explain that Jodie and I also wanted to ensure this didn’t happen in the Vocal Empowerment study so we established a different kind of setting by conducting the workshops at the VCA. This meant we created an artistic setting rather than a therapeutic one. We will need to find a way to do this when the workshops are outside of the VCA.

In this session, I noticed that the ensemble was eager to pursue questions of identity in relation to the efficacy of actor vocal training. During this session, I introduced the
phrase, ‘deaf vocal trainer as the expert’. They liked this term and were clear about the potential of the experts from speech pathology, audiology and deaf education in the first public workshop to feel a sense of disempowerment but in an empathetic environment. The ensemble’s care and sensitivity with each other and their potential workshop participants was very apparent. Nevertheless, they also demonstrated their willingness to take risks through the performative structure of the workshops. The ensemble started to articulate concepts of empathetic learning by insisting that they wanted the participants to learn in an environment that was not judgemental. They spoke about the feeling of always being behind in a conversation when you are deaf.

Similarly, the workshop participants (particularly in the first workshop of mostly hearing professionals and experts) would be slightly behind in the kinaesthetic training as they try to follow and learn through their bodies. Sandra commented ironically that for the hearing impaired participants in the workshops in schools, this feeling would be ‘normal’. Instinctively, the ensemble was creating a learning environment which was culturally, socially and historically constructed through their lived experiences.

**Mutuality of recognition**

Each time the ensemble performed the training they created what Turner (2011) describes as ‘communitas’. ‘Communitas’ defines a community as existing in relation to others, existing in a specific time and place and also existing without a specific time and place. The ‘bonding’ Jenny referred to earlier is a definition of Turner’s ‘communitas’ for the Let It Out ensemble. Not only did their community exist at a particular time and place through the training, it also existed beyond the VCA studio and public workshops, in the minds and bodies of the ensemble. A specific example of this was when Lawrence who had stopped attending the workshop training due to his football commitments on a Saturday, wanted to participate in the dress rehearsal and the first public workshop. The ensemble allowed him to do this without judgement or reservation and, although he was behind in the development of the work, found him a place, not as a leader but as someone who was referred to as a ‘member of our community’. Lawrence was accepted, to use Turner’s words, into a ‘communion of equal individuals’ (p.69), implying a mutual understanding which crosses other social and cultural boundaries. In the instance of Lawrence, I term this a ‘mutuality of recognition’ from the ensemble to him, despite his physical absence. This ‘mutuality of recognition’ was existential and intuitive within the Let It Out ensemble. Consequently, the ensemble demonstrated the effectiveness of the training does not lie in just the
techniques themselves whose efficacy varies for each participant but lies in the building of a community through the training. This context of training and learning through and with the ensemble created a meta-effect and was particularly noticeable when Lawrence returned to the Let It Out ensemble when he needed to be part of the community once more.

Wenger (1998) proposes a model of situated learning, which places learning in a social context. He defines this type of learning as a ‘community of practice’. Wenger asserts that through collective learning, practices arise which reflect the pursuit of the exercise and attendant social relations. These practices then become the property of the group. Actor vocal training pedagogy relies upon ensemble practice and provides what Wenger describes as the ‘possibility of negotiation’, whereby there is continuous interaction, a sense of gradual achievement of give and take. This participatory practice suggests action and connection. It is both social and personal and involves thinking, doing, feeling and belonging with the whole person, including body, mind, emotion and social relations. The ensemble practice of the Let It Out training also promoted the concept of social learning. Social learning formalised by me, in the first instance, during the Vocal Empowerment study and in the early stages of the Let It Out training and then by the ensemble. This social learning was deepened by the group’s performance of their chosen technique, for example Breath, accompanied by a personal narrative within the particular physical activity of the exercise. In May, Sally told the group a story about speaking in school assembly and how she remembered the breathing technique:

_ I was really like - kept it at a good pace and I was slow and everyone could hear me and the interpreter (sign language) who was next to me didn’t have to rush to keep up. She was signing at the exact time and it was really good. (Journal, 2010)_

The basic premise of Wenger’s concept is that ‘communities of practice’ exist everywhere – at home, school, and community organisations. The Let It Out ensemble was a ‘community of practice’, which shared its knowledge with peers and professionals through the situated learning of the rehearsals and public workshops. Wenger (1998, p.45) proceeds to assert that a community of practice is different from a community of interest because the common factor is that it involves a shared practice:
Over time, (this) collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise. It makes sense, therefore to call these kinds of communities, communities of practice.

Sally’s story affirms she was able to carry the ensemble’s practice beyond the community of practice of the Let It Out ensemble into her school community.

Wenger further differentiates a community of practice by stating three common features: its joint enterprise; mutual engagement that binds the community together, and the shared repertoire of communal resources (artefacts, routines etc.) that the group build together. The common element for a community of practice is the desire for all members to work towards a common goal through shared experience and, through this shared experience carry the common knowledge of a community. Acting ensembles are communities of practice as the knowledge and meaning making is created through collaborative activity. The Let It Out ensemble shared goals, resources and knowledge. In their case, this shared practice was a kinaesthetic practice. The learning was transferred through an embodied experience and consequently framed how the knowledge was delivered, learned and transferred.

Each time the ensemble enacted their shared practice in the public workshops to experts and deaf teens and children, they shared their skills and knowledge about voice and speech training, thus socially re-constructing and re-applying skills and knowledge from the non-hearing person’s perspective. This shared practice reflects theatre processes where rehearsal strategies are applied and re-applied before an audience. The ensemble nature of the Let It Out workshop training and subsequent public workshops also became a form of social practice, whereby the group gave structure and meaning to the experience of learning voice and speech skills in a new way. For example, Sally’s learning was transformed through the situated and collective learning of the kinaesthetic, aesthetic and ensemble practice of the Let It Out community. This type of learning also allowed the possibility of letting the individual’s tacit and explicit knowledge and understanding of their hearing impairment be heard and validated by those who were undergoing similar experiences.
5.6 Ensemble and empathetic learning

By 12th June we began to define the structure of the public workshops. The major sections were:

- Ritual
- Breath
- Phonation
- Resonance
- Articulation
- Intonation
- Scenarios

The willingness to struggle: May 8th

We start with Ritual again. This is the first exercise after ‘shattering expectations’ and is critical to lead the workshop participants into our way of learning. Sally struggles with this. She is either with the ensemble and the rhythm of the movement or half a beat behind. I can see the frustration in her face but everyone waits patiently. I suggest she tries it out herself first whilst we watch and then when she is ready and feels more at ease, invite us to join in. Sally tries this and I can hear her voice recede as she attempts to get it right. I offer another way of looking at it. I suggest she thinks of what she wants rather than what the rest of us want and to ask herself what is the purpose of doing Ritual. She starts to explain and I stop her and say – show us. Sally tries again, we sit and wait and she laughs. ‘Is it pleasurable?’ I ask. ‘No’, she responds. ‘I really want to do it but I can’t.’ ‘Yes, you can’, we reply and laugh with her. ‘Let it go’, I suggest. ‘No’, she cries and stamps her feet in frustration. We all get up and imitate her stamping and laugh again. The rhythm starts as Jenny holds Sally’s hand and they move together. We all hold hands and move together. Sally takes over.
The ensemble had agreed they wanted Ritual to be all participation and no demonstration. It was to be their way of bringing everyone together in the circle and establishing their group identity for the duration of the workshop. Ritual also marked their desire not to be judged about what they did or what was going to happen. I reminded the ensemble that the way each of them sounded and moved was their unique contribution to the group. I was aware of the amount of pressure on Sally as she was to be the first of the Let It Out ensemble to lead us into the kinaesthetic experiences of the workshop. She was having difficulty listening to her interior rhythm and the exterior visual and sensory feedback from the group as they tried to adapt to her rhythm. I gently asked her if she would like to swap with someone but she and the group were insistent that she should continue. Ultimately, the empathetic support she received from the group enabled her to persevere and proceed with confidence throughout all the public workshops.

This observation of the Let It Out ensemble solving Sally’s challenges made me realise how much I had to trust these moments. It was moments such as these which demonstrated the empowerment the deaf vocal trainers felt by their ownership of the work and support of each other through the kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience as an ensemble. These elements provided the foundations of the work even when there was diffidence.

5.7 Ensemble practice and peer group learning

A company member from Cochlear Ltd. attended our dress rehearsal on July 19th and during lunch had an informal chat with the group. He was keen to know what had changed for them by doing this training. Most remarked that they were sceptical when they had commenced in 2007 but the peer support learning with a group had been a powerful influence on them improving their speaking voices. Penny said that until she had started the training she had never realised that people had difficulty understanding her. Feedback from her peers in Let It Out was critical in making her aware of this. She admitted that sometimes she had been told this by her teachers and speech pathologist but had not really understood this feedback until she started the training with her peers. Lack of confidence speaking in public and mumbling were common factors they all mentioned. The major comment was that the exercises made
more sense and became more relevant when they were with their peers. All agreed that they did not fear making mistakes in front of each other.

5.8 Modelling the non-hearing voice through ensemble practice

Social cohesion, sense of leadership and the ability to transfer their knowledge about voice and speech through the embodied and aesthetic experience of actor vocal training, revealed characteristics of empowerment, resilience and integrity by the ensemble. Consequently, the peer to peer relationships the deaf vocal trainers demonstrated in schools after the first public workshop on July 26th, provided a possible model for an alternative way of voicing and being heard for other deaf teens. Thus, building trust with each other and strangers in the workshops confirmed the strength of the group's ensemble practice. The ensemble established the public workshop as a site of learning, where the mastery of skills and knowledge the group acquired was demonstrated through the socio-cultural practices of the Let It Out community. Moreover, these socio-cultural practices validated the effectiveness of the training through an embodied and aesthetic practice which was alive, immediate and transferable from moment to moment of each activity. In turn, this promoted:

...learning as increasing participation in communities of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world. (Lave & Wenger 1991, p.49)

Every time the group demonstrated the actor vocal training techniques through ensemble practice, they were performing what Wenger (1998) describes as ‘constructed identities’ and by doing so, provided another way to imagine how to be in the world for the deaf participants and the professionals who witnessed other identities of young deaf people.

After the first public workshop, we delivered the workshops in schools for deaf children. This comment from one of the Let It Out ensemble reiterates her readiness and desire to share the Let It Out ensemble’s community of practice with others:

I think maybe now it could focus on how we can umm implement what we’ve learnt on to the people that are like us... (Journal, July 2010)
The structure of the public workshops was an example of how the social mode of thinking was driven by the ensemble. The dominant features of these workshops were the social and cultural experiences the ensemble referred to as they were leading the exercises. In a post-workshop interview with me in August 2010, Sally commented:

*I also learnt that having a hearing impairment can also be positive, um because of the funny stories we shared aah, and also I learned ...there are other ways of dealing with your hearing impairment...like typical situations, yeah, yeah, so it was really positive.* (Journal, August 2010)

A member of the Let It Out ensemble affirmed the importance of the ensemble for her when she later commented in a post-workshop interview with me:

*I see the training now as like...I guess I could say like a ...step by step building blocks of um empowering yourself, your self esteem and also learning to form the kind of commitment with others, um, involving in team work and um yeah, so what I think of the training (it’s) not just about yourself to use your voice but also ...learning more about yourself and through others and um about team work.* (Journal, August 2010)

The use of the phrase ‘learning...through others’ is particularly appropriate to the kind of ensemble work that has become such an integral part of actor vocal training in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and is evidenced by the Let It Out ensemble. This idea was confirmed by a speech pathologist in a post-interview when she commented:

*What was really impressive was how they worked together as a group and really enjoyed using their voices. This is unusual for deaf teenagers.* (Journal, August 2010)

### 5.9 Ensemble as a pedagogical tool

In my introduction I referred to the ensemble as a ‘pedagogical tool’, a way of learning. The narrative vignettes in this chapter reveal the Let It Out ensemble’s progression of learning voice and speech skills from an ‘objective’ to ‘constructive’ learning paradigm. Jonassen (1991) asserts that the constructivist paradigm of learning requires certain features, which determine how knowledge is formed. Significant to the Let It Out study are the features Jonassen describes: ‘embodied reality, determined by the knower, imaginative and, grows out of physical and social experience’ (p.9). The ensemble practice of Let It Out was a site for socially constructed knowledge and enabled the community to negotiate the group’s desire for
the workshop participants to have a more immersive experience. This negotiation with me enabled the group to position themselves as leaders, and thus start to authorise the training through endowing themselves with the ‘mantle of the expert’ (Heathcote & Bolton 1995). The nature of ensemble provided a framework for learning about the techniques and leadership through peer group support. As Jenny commented:

...there is no one leader, I mean even the participants themselves are leaders in such a way that we can learn from them. So I mean I don’t think that it could ever work with just one singular leader. (Journal, May 2010)

In the sessions that followed April 24th the structure of leader for a particular technique became more transparent. Once a member of the group decided to lead a technique they were encouraged to develop their own way of understanding what effects it had on the other deaf participants. The witnessing of each other’s work was crucial to this confidence and empowerment in leading the techniques.

As we neared the first public workshop in July, I started to use the term ‘rehearsals’ and I stood further back from the leadership of the sections. Towards the end of June, I took notes and provided verbal feedback on each reiteration of an exercise. Importantly, the ensemble also provided specific feedback at the end of each section and sometimes during an exercise if someone felt unsure. As the structure became more embedded and the training more embodied, I noticed that the feedback was often physical as well as verbal. The ensemble started to develop kinaesthetic feedback which involved the reflexive and transformative loop I describe in Part One (Chapter Three). The training exercises were ones I adapted for the ensemble but the exercises they developed for the public workshops really belonged to the Let It Out ensemble, as well as to each individual. The result of this type of social constructivist learning through the ensemble was crucial to subsequent workshops. If one vocal deaf trainer was not available, another could step in and perform that person’s ‘part’. They learnt the techniques as an ensemble and were attuned to the specifics of each section as well as the harmonious presentation of the whole.

5.10 Resilience and agency

The ensemble nature of the practice ultimately allowed the structure to develop and my authority to be challenged. The group’s ability to work through this tension with me
in creative ways meant that we could negotiate our understanding through dialogic and emancipatory processes (Heathcote, Bolton 1995) within the safety and support of the ensemble. The critical incidents reflected in the narrative vignettes not only provide insight into how the authority of the training shifted to the group, but also reaffirm that the Let It Out training underpinned the ethical as well as the social, pedagogic and aesthetic dimensions of the ensemble. Finally, a quote from Delanty (2007, p.29) summarises the enactment of shifting the authority through ensemble practice:

All social action is mediated by language and the essence of language is the social act of shared worlds.

The act of the public workshops was a form of social action and resistance as the deaf vocal trainers demonstrated their expertise through linguistic and physical experience of the non-hearing body. Therefore, the shared language of the Let It Out community of deaf vocal trainers facilitated an alternative language of speech and voice training for the experts and deaf teens in the public workshops.

The next chapter discusses how an artistic space aided this sense of authority and agency over the development of the public workshops.
Chapter Six - A way of imagining: importance of an artistic space

Imagination above all makes empathy possible. (Greene 1995, p.3)

6.1 A space of their own

In this chapter, I argue for the importance of artistic space as critical to the development of the vocal training and public workshops. A space that was not bound by traditional pedagogies of learning voice and speech skills for the hearing impaired; a space that did not carry the resonance of previous experiences of voice and speech habilitation in hospitals, clinics and schools. I discuss the relationship of the ensemble to the VCA Voice Studio and its importance in allowing a particular kind of learning to emerge.

On the periphery: March 20th

As usual, I arrive early and start to prepare the room. The group saunter in at various times from 1pm onwards. I am disturbed and frustrated by their tardiness but decide not to say anything. I am cautious about being the ‘authoritative voice’. They set up their bags in one corner of the room and chatter away. I cannot hear all the conversations because there is much laughter, mumbling and some signing happening. I feel excluded but know it is not intentional on their part. I also feel in the way. So I leave the room and return ten minutes later. Nothing has changed. They have remembered the delineation between social and artistic space we established in the Vocal Empowerment study and stay in their safe, social space in the corner. I smile and wait and slowly they move towards the centre of the room and we form a circle.

The same thing happens again on April 6th. This time, I decide not to be the initiator of the activities but instead
listen to their chatter at the beginning of the session. I notice that they always move to the same corner of the room where they set down their bags and finish their drinks and nibbles. They enter the room very enthusiastically and always veer towards this corner, leaving me in the middle of the room. I begin to understand that these first few moments of preparedness for them are a ‘catching up’ when they relate their stories of deafness: serious anecdotes about the technical aspects of cochlear implants, funny anecdotes about being misunderstood at school, work or university.

Subsequently, at the beginning of each session, I wander around the periphery of the group, laying out the butcher’s paper, preparing the DVD of previous training sessions for the group to watch and analyse until they are ready to enter the artistic space at the centre of the room.

My observation of the ensemble’s behaviour affirms the comments that were previously made about the importance of the ‘artistic space’ of the VCA Voice Studio during the Vocal Empowerment study. They sustained visceral memories of claiming their vocal empowerment and confidence in the VCA Voice Studio, as this space provided no strong, emotional, social or psychological resonances of hearing impairment in a school, clinic or hospital. The VCA Voice Studio, as the creative space, was an important site to explore and investigate not only the technical aspects of their voices, but also to find a way to develop the psycho-social benefits they experienced in the Vocal Empowerment study. This environment provided a safe space in which the Let It Out ensemble formed ideas and relationships again and again each time they told and shared their stories. They were reconceiving this social corner of the VCA Voice Studio as a space where their experiences were dominant as opposed to being marginalised as they so often were in the hearing world. When they moved from their social space of catching up, to the artistic space of the circle, a generative not a prescriptive space was formed, one that removed any restriction on how their deaf voices should sound or how to arrive at the spoken word. Unlike previous rehabilitation relationships, the time and space they created at the beginning
of the session and the subsequent blurring of the boundaries between social and artistic space was crucial in terms of de-centring my role as the expert authority on the voice.

6.2 Defining artistic space - stepping over the threshold

\begin{quote}
\textit{The need to be heard 1st May}

During the gathering at the beginning of this session, the ensemble talk about their experiences of having a cochlear implant. They mention that Robert (who was in the Vocal Empowerment study but has not returned) has had a second implant but it keeps cutting in and out. They believe that is why he hasn't been attending the sessions. They are still in contact with him on Facebook. I hear them discuss their thoughts on a second implant. Susan had a second implant at the age of three and both work well but the others are afraid that if they have one and it is not effective, then there is no going back. It is not possible to take it out and start again. They share their fears and I decide to transfer this discussion to the ‘artistic space of the circle’ when we start to work. I offer up the rationale of Resonance work, the section that we are going to start with today. I propose that once you have heard the vibrations of the voice in the space, you have to acknowledge them. They can’t be ignored. Susan adds that sometimes it is the sound of their voices that make hearing people dismiss them but if you make it sound important then they will hear it in the tone of your voice and be obliged to listen to you. Great, I add, this means that once we have done the resonance work, we must demonstrate the pitch of the voice through our intent with the phrases we use. For example, we all love the low sexy voice and the excited high voice. So let’s demonstrate the changes we can make with our voices in order to be heard.
\end{quote}
The construction of their knowledge whilst creating the structure of the workshops relied not only upon the acquisition of skills and knowledge, but the space and time to be able to weave in their own narratives and an awareness of how to manipulate sound and body aesthetically.

The VCA Drama studios have the imprints of many theatrical and dramatic performances. Everything which happens in these studios privileges the aesthetic qualities of making an artwork during the last forty years of the VCA’s existence. This artistic space is a place for imagination and vicarious feelings. Essentially, the theatre artist is always asking the question: How can we use artistic elements to craft our own stories and share them? In terms of the Let It Out training and public workshops, the space performed three major functions: artistic, social and pedagogic.

This facilitation of the space was dependent upon the notion of open-ended learning and openness (Monk et al 2011). Concepts such as mindfulness, playfulness and learning take place through an open-ended interaction. An artistic space encourages these interactions which are fundamental to preventing hierarchical structures dominating the learning. Therefore, the democratic nature of the physical space of the Voice Studio enabled me to position myself outside of the deaf vocal trainers’ social interactions without any noticeable absence. I was able withdraw from the main activity of their conversations at the beginning of each workshop training (and later in the first public workshop and subsequent school workshops) because this physical environment did not have delineated places of hierarchy. Consequently, the deaf vocal trainers’ agency and authorship of their knowledge was privileged.

Metaphorically and literally, the VCA Voice Studio provided a nexus between the social and artistic space. The lived experiences the ensemble shared became the stories in between the spaces of the techniques they taught the workshop participants. Fundamentally, learning together means also sharing the moments of frustration, disappointment, fear and exhilaration. These feelings are common to actors working in an ensemble. The members of this ensemble provided the support mechanisms for each other’s challenges. Sometimes just by observing one can learn a way of negotiating and managing one’s own fears. The Let It Out ensemble needed this social time and a space together at the beginning of each session to be fully present. Similarly, I needed to let this time and space be available in order for them to
step over the threshold and let the lived experiences transfer from the social to the artistic space. This transition from their conversations in the corner became an important liminal time and space as they stepped over the threshold from social time to artistic practice. It also gave them the opportunity to re-affirm how they had built (and were still building) their community.

According to Mason (1996), performance in both social and artistic terms can be defined as ‘interactive communication’. Mason adds that ‘interactive communication’ can inform ‘one’s behaviour in response to and awareness of the other’ (p.303). This is an interesting way to view the Let It Out public workshops. The performative nature of these workshops was both social and artistic and space played a critical part in integrating both these elements. It was a social performance because, from the greeting with soup in the VCA foyer at the first public workshop or the re-arrangement of chairs in a school, everything that occurred was transactional. There was an exchange of knowledge and skills from the ensemble to experts in deaf education, speech pathology, creative arts and audiology and from the ensemble to their peers in the non-hearing culture. In artistic terms, the public workshop participants viewed a performance of the training techniques led by the ensemble and this was work that had purpose and craft and, in the first public workshop, another aesthetic intention through the use of lighting.

The performative structure of the public workshops had specific artistic qualities embedded into the actor vocal training techniques. Each technique was crafted in a precise choreographic form and these forms enabled aesthetic experiences which were emotive, confused and affective. The voice and speech training in the public Let It Out workshops required subverting the spaces where the workshops were held in order to accommodate these experiences. Spatially, the artistic spaces the ensemble created were devoid of rows of chairs and desks and offered the potential to open boundaries both to the mind and the body in the discovery and creation of knowledge about the voice. The re-organised spaces then provided the public workshop participants with an alternative way to view learning voice and speech skills. By turning classrooms and speech pathology rooms into artistic spaces, alternative qualities of experience were provided. For example, the conscious use of lighting and sound, the physicalised forms of the actor vocal training techniques, all provided explicit detail on the elements of vocal production and importantly, the crucial physical
relationship between the deaf vocal trainers and the workshop participants. By subverting these spaces, we created artistic spaces where interactions were open-ended, imaginative, intuitive and subjective. Consequently, the aesthetic experiences created in the artistic spaces enabled an alternative learning paradigm for the public workshop participants.

6.3 Artistic space and community engagement

During the creative development session on April 24th, we decided that the structure of the workshop was to be an expression of the Let It Out ensemble as a community because this was just as important as the demonstration of the techniques.

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**The shattering: May 1st**

We discuss at great length how we should ‘rehearse’ the idea of the shattering which was an exciting revelation at our workshop on April 24th. I assume that we have all remembered its purpose and want to rehearse it. I mention that it is important to rehearse this so that we collectively agree how it should happen. We will need cues and blocking as we are establishing a dramatic structure and an unexpected relationship with our attendees putting them in the role of audience and participants. The experience will be immersive and so it is important to ensure that we all know our roles. Moreover, I add, I need to rehearse my part! I am surprised when Susan reverts to wanting to request the participants to move rather than have this shattering effect. I respond that the shattering is important because it sets up the relationship between the form (performative and immersive) and the content (the training). The ensemble respects her opinions, and there is a slight hiatus whilst she and I discuss the form. I urge that we should not be passive nor allow the participants to be passive. I am keen for us to be thinking dramatically about how we will stage the shattering and then lead into the Ritual section so that the participants are performatively engaged. I emphasise the importance
of the interaction that needs to take place and for us to bring the participants into the ‘unknown’. We are stuck, so move onto how we will greet the participants when they first arrive. (We are caught here between calling them the audience and participants and never really resolve this). Jenny suggests organising it as a wedding plan so the participants know who they are with but Sandra disagrees. She believes this idea would reinforce a professional rather than a dramatic setting and wants the participants not to know each other at the beginning and as such, build a community through participation in the workshop. How then do we shatter their expectations if we do not start with the professional setting at the beginning?

The ensemble arrived at a challenging decision on how to start the workshops during this April session. They showed how keen they were to shatter the normative expectations of what usually happened in a speech and voice session during rehabilitation for young cochlear implant users.

The concept of something ‘theatrical’ grabbed their imaginations. Eventually, the ensemble decided to establish the studio in the style of a conference and then shatter the conference setting. They all agreed that this was particularly significant for the first public workshop on July 26th where we would be working with professionals from speech pathology, audiology and deaf education. Whilst we were not able to replicate this for every workshop, the ensemble was determined to create the ‘same but different approach’ that Jenny had outlined earlier in April. Her intention was to highlight the similarities and differences between the group’s previous experiences of voice and speech training and rehabilitation and actor vocal training.

The May 1st session was messy and unformed but this messiness revealed the ensemble’s ability to reflect in and upon action. When we came to improvise the greeting, the shattering and the Ritual, I noticed how effectively they were beginning to apply their conceptual understanding of the structure to a kinaesthetic and embodied understanding. For the first time, I noticed their focus as participant
researchers. Improvisation is a form of reflexive methodology and the recursive loops of embedding, dis-embedding and re-embedding their knowledge through improvisation were instinctive for the ensemble. Their roles as participant researchers enabled them to place themselves in and out of the present improvisations both physically and cognitively, in order to reflect on their experience and their intentions and furthermore, plan their engagement with the future community of workshop participants.

Lefebvre (1991) reconsiders space not to be a fixed, or an empty field but one, which is fluid and organic. He urges us to consider how space is constructed and produced within our social settings and practices. In Lefebvre’s context, the social and artistic space of the Let It Out workshops provided a physical setting; an imaginative setting; a performative setting, and the boundaries of all three became fluid and sometimes interchangeable.

6.4 The nexus between the social and the artistic

There was a very salient moment when the group performed Wish 3 More Wishes at the Seymour Centre in Sydney for Cochlear engineers who research and construct the cochlear implants. Prior to a post-performance discussion, one of the engineers commented that it was the first time he had seen the ‘human face’ of what he does. He mentioned that often the engineers are so involved in the scientific aspect of the design and development of the cochlear implant that they forget the emotional impact the technology has upon the recipient post implantation. We reminded ourselves of this story again in our session on May 1st. As we created the script for the workshop structure, the ensemble re-told these experiences of cochlear implantation as a way of establishing themselves as a community and validating their lived experiences. Stories of disappointment, fear, frustration and joy of their lives post-implantation were scattered through the conversations that afternoon in May. Sandra mentioned how only fourteen of her twenty-four electrodes work but there is no guarantee that each one will work after a cochlear implant operation. Penny mentioned the fear of hearing with the implant for the first time when it was switched on. She described the sensation of a hair falling onto her face as like the noise of a jumbo-jet. It was so frightening that she threw the transmitter across the room and refused to wear it for two weeks until her parents demanded that she tried again.
Taking everything for granted: May 1st

Susan believes that the participants in the first public workshop will arrive and ‘take everything for granted’. I ask her what she means by this and she explains that if we invite them to a workshop demonstration, then they will come with the expectation of seeing something that they already know. She is adamant that role reversal is crucial to the whole exercise. Susan adds that she wants the participants of professionals to be in the minority as normally deaf people are in the minority. Therefore, the shattering and confusion it engenders is important because as deaf people if they do not understand everything in a conversation, the tendency is for hearing people to say ‘don’t worry’. As she says this, she takes a deep in-breath and raises her fist crying, ‘This is so annoying! As if what was said doesn’t matter.’ Everyone nods in agreement. Susan goes on to say that it does matter because they need to hear what was said in order to continue with the conversation. Sally adds that she finds this attitude from hearing people patronising and now she feels more vocally confident asks them to repeat by saying, ‘I need to know what you said’. My silent lecture where the role reversal of the workshop participants will first occur is enacted and we build in the cues towards the shattering. It is implicit that this moment will also demonstrate them as a community and that the performative structure of the workshop will create another community for the next ninety minutes. I realise that this example brings a social and historical dimension to their knowledge and skills.

On July 26th the foyer of the VCA theatre building was set up as a welcome area with name badges, soup and rolls. The group personally welcomed participants to the ‘conference’. This arrangement enabled the group to effectively establish themselves as the leaders of a ‘conference on actor vocal training for hearing impaired adults’ from the very beginning. The fluorescent lights lit the studio and, to all intents and purposes, the atmosphere was styled like a conference. The tables in the studio were
covered with white butcher’s paper, pens and coloured textas. Each member of the Let It Out group led their workshop participants to their designated table and a conversation was initiated by the group about voice. Participants were encouraged to ask questions of the ensemble about their history with the actor vocal training in order to provide context. They were also required to ‘draw’ their voices and describe how they ‘saw’ their voices along the ‘river of your life’. These drawings symbolised a participant’s vocal journey from childhood to adulthood. Towards the end of this activity, I entered the space and welcomed everyone. As agreed, I mouthed my welcome but did not voice it. This meant that the hearing impaired Let It Out leaders could lip-read and understand everything I said, whilst many of the professionals in the room were excluded. I even included a few in-jokes so only the Let It Out leaders laughed. We had begun our ‘shattering of expectations’. Finally, Sally stood up and shouted, ‘Geraldine, this isn’t working, let’s show them what we mean. Clear the tables! Take off your shoes and form a circle!’ A frantic activity of people clearing tables and chairs, taking off their shoes and forming a big circle ensued. The theatre lights were turned on, and the ‘conference’ space transformed. The workshop participants were led into an unexpected turn of events, which focused on a kinaesthetic and aesthetic experience of learning actor vocal training techniques through the non-hearing body as the model of authority and leadership.

The ensemble’s desire for the audiences to ‘feel different’ was achieved through the performative act of subverting expectations of a conference type lecture and workshop. The performative moment of the shattering consolidated their ability to frame the enactment of their lived experiences alongside the demonstration of the technical training. Significantly, the artistic space had created permission for this community of young deaf people to feel confident to enact and authorise their fictions and allow them to be experts on voice and speech skills for the non-hearing voice. As a result, it felt imperative that these fictions accompanied the technical training throughout. The narrative form of the workshop started to take shape during this session on May 1st.

Egan (1988) describes the narrative form as one which, ‘most precisely reflects the predisposition to make sense of the world in affect-tively engaging ways’ (p.64). The narrative of the ensemble’s lived experiences accompanied each technique. Thus, the narrative of the public workshops became a text based on the ensemble’s lived
experiences and, through this text, the form of the training was revealed sequentially from Breath to Intonation. Once we rehearsed our 'performative act' of the shattering, there was no doubt in anybody’s minds that their narratives had to be included, in order to highlight the significance of a particular technique. Originally, in her section on Breath, Jenny was undecided about whether she should compare her experience with actor vocal training to previous speech rehabilitation. I encouraged her to veer away from a comparison but instead to frame a description or instruction about a technique in terms of ‘her experience’ and the group’s. I proposed that this would encourage an openness about the work rather than dichotomising the two different approaches.

In learning to demonstrate the Breath exercises, Jenny found a way to use the relationship between breath, thought and the word as she was blowing out imaginary candles. Each time there were more candles, she needed more breath but a breath that was deep and easy, not held and constricted. She demonstrated the blowing breath and then spoke a phrase on the breath. Jenny started to structure her section on Breath with the ensemble, rehearsing the physical and verbal script. She organised the ensemble into small groups and asked them one by one to say what they wished for using the breath in the way they had been taught. Jenny finished by claiming: ‘Breath is important for deaf people so you can hear us’. Penny then added her story of working in a very noisy fast food shop. Someone asked her for something and she immediately replied. ‘I thought you were deaf’, they shouted. ‘I am’, said Penny ‘but I can speak and lip-read’. ‘I used my breath to help me!’ she exclaimed. Jenny and Penny’s communications are a significant example of ‘artistic and social' types of interactive communication (Mason 1996) and how these narratives make sense of the world. These spontaneous interactions amongst the deaf vocal trainers with the public workshop participants formed the shape of each voice section. Consequently, a technique was always accompanied by a story. An artistic space gave prominence to these improvised and shared narratives. It took on those elements of non-hierarchical relationships and ‘embrace(d) the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations’ (Lefebvre cited in Popen 2006, p.128).
6.5 Artistic space and community engagement and as a site for advocacy

The concept of space has many more characteristics than literally physical. We also have metaphoric notions of space as time, space as a gap, and space as our thoughts and imaginations. After I observed the ensemble’s need to relive their experiences to each other in the early stages of the training, I slowly learnt to stand back from the connection between the goals and intent of the work, so that I could see their relationship to the work. I understood one very vital element and learned a valuable lesson - the lived experiences they brought to the work were as important as the work itself. I realised that I had conceptually understood the necessity of the lived experiences as part of the research methodology and design but had not viscerally comprehended the need for this to happen. Even though I had made decisions about prioritising their sensory experiences and community identity, I was letting my anxiety about time and structure affect my inability to experience the community’s needs during this early stage of development. I had to remind myself that this ‘artistic space’ provided the deaf vocal trainers with what Pelias (2008) calls a ‘site for advocacy’, where they could tell their stories which later became integrated into the public workshops.

Eventually, as the workshop training progressed, the physical, imaginative and performative setting the group created, resonated with the ensemble’s explicit stated goals in the first session on March 6th.

6.6 Artistic space as a pedagogical space

Transformative experiences: May 18th

Every session seems to begin with the messy business of rehearsing the beginning the public workshops. It is confusing for all of us and someone has to start. We wait and slowly theatrical ideas emerge. We should dim the lights at the moment of the shattering. We should not care if tables are upturned and chairs fall over. The ensemble agrees – it should be dramatic! We start to improvise and I find myself part of the ensemble. I
believe this is the beginning of a transformative learning relationship with them. The space gives us permission to invert roles. We improvise for some time and this activity brings forth some very strong responses about their experiences of not being able to follow conversations, how tiring it is, how confusing. Great, I say, we are on the right track if we can create this mood in our workshop participants.

The artistic space of the VCA Voice Studio provided opportunities for physicalisation, improvisation, role-reversal, compositional structures of the vocal techniques, and dramatic play. The role reversal of pretending to be the workshop participants gave the ensemble the opportunity to talk about their experiences of speech pathology and draw some useful and respectful comparisons. These dramatic elements encapsulated the ensemble’s history with the training, their lived experiences of being deaf, their role in the Let It Out study. More importantly, the ensemble was able to enact the very things that they felt excluded them from hearing people in conversations especially the phrase, ‘Yes, I will tell you later’. A phrase they often received and loathed. The improvisation we conducted at the beginning of the session highlighted some interesting points in terms of the relationship to the work. As I mouthed my speech for the silent lecture presentation, the ensemble became the experts in my moment of speaking because they were the only ones who could lip-read. Thus, we established they could take on the role of interpreters for their first public workshop participants rather than them depending upon an interpreter. This was the beginning of the pedagogical leadership of the ensemble of deaf vocal trainers. In the first public workshop, the participants of ‘experts’ had to depend on the hearing impaired to interpret for them. Scott (1990) defines social exchanges between dominant and subordinate groups as public performances. He argues that subordinates engage in offstage, hidden discourses that cannot be spoken in the presence of dominant groups. The ensemble practised these discourses together through role-reversal and improvisation in order to take on the role as expert with the workshop participants and voice their ‘unspoken discourses’ in the public workshops.

A sociocultural perspective of learning highlights the relationship between the individual and society as an interdependent relationship between physical
environment, historical and social surrounds and the individual’s beliefs and knowledge (Roth cited in Ivinson and Murphy, 2003). This approach emphasises participation and transformation as opposed to a traditional hegemonic pedagogy which perpetuates knowledge as a transmissive act from the teacher to the learner thus, preserving an inequitable power relationship. The Let It Out ensemble’s desire to invert and subvert the normative learning relationship through the ‘performative’ act of shattering the established ‘conference’, established an environment where the style of learning created a different pedagogical encounter. This emphasised the transformative aspect of the actor vocal training techniques for the hearing impaired.

**Transformative pedagogical encounters**

Mezirow (1991) posits that transformative learning requires rational and critical reflection as the primary means for change. According to Mezirow, transformative learning requires a person to examine their personal and political beliefs, social norms and the underlying assumptions embedded in them. This narrow focus leaves out the body as playing a major role in transformative learning. Schlattner (1994, p.325) argues that ‘each learner is constituted with a body which itself participates in all learning experiences and reacts in learned ways to situations’. She critiques the lack of attention to the body as an active learning element in transformative learning. I would add that the perception of how the non-hearing person experiences the voice has been transmitted through inculturation to the hearing world. This means that making meaning from the perspective of the non-hearing body is in relation to the experiences of hearing people. The Let It Out pedagogy framed the experience of the non-hearing body as the centre of meaning making. Schlattner makes the point that transformative learning is also emancipatory learning as it requires a critical examination and recognition of the learner’s ‘assumptions, life circumstances and roles’ which contribute to one’s circumstances. Similarly, the assumptions and attitudes about the Let It Out ensemble’s ‘deaf voices’ gleaned from childhood impact upon their self-esteem and confidence. Brookfield (1987 p.7) emphasises the role that emotions play in critical thinking and learning, but as Schlattner argues, neither Mezirow, Brookfield or indeed Friere include the role of the body in emancipatory learning. If the body is an integral part of human experience, Schlattner (p.326) asserts then the body too is involved in meaning making.’
The body participates in ‘critically’ assessing a situation and learning to respond differently because it participates in making new meaning of a situation.

The environment of the artistic space of the VCA Voice Studio provided the environment where instinctive, intuitive responses by the body were privileged. Making meaning through artistic endeavour affords mistakes and challenges assumptions. It was critical for the ensemble and myself to demonstrate our workshops in a space where this could happen without judgement or failure.

Leahy and Gilly (2009) state that most of the research on transformative learning focuses on the behavioural and cognitive changes that take place within an individual but they suggest that there is also another significant area which they term ‘the space between us’ – where ‘particular individuals, the group as a whole, and the space between are all transformed’ (p.24). These authors call this space an ‘interhuman domain’ and hold the view that this fosters collaborative transformative learning. Actor training is a form of collaborative transformative learning and the ‘space between’ the ensemble, the individual and the space between particular members of the ensemble are interconnecting elements in a very complex web of personal and interpersonal relationships. The space between all these elements relies upon a physical space, which is empty of the resonances of other forms of learning. Thus, the artistic space of the VCA Voice Studio was a crucial aspect of the transformative learning which took place for the deaf vocal trainers. They were in an environment where they were in the majority and this was foreign territory for them.

The communicative acts, which transpired were not predicated upon the hearing world’s assumptions of communication. In the example of Sally in the vignette of 1st May, her struggle was supported by people just like her in a space that was open-ended and where learning was collaborative, generative and non-prescriptive.

Conceiving of actor vocal training as transformative learning is apt as it also encourages learning which develops a change in perspective, thinking and feeling through the individual’s body. An emergent and transformative process suggests that the voice can change over time and within the moment of speaking, whereas, something which is prescribed is unlikely to change. Actor vocal training techniques
are a transformative process as they offer immersive and emergent experiences providing physical and sensory stimuli for the imagination through the body in space.

Fundamentally, the actor trainer has to start from a willingness to transform. In the sense of the craft, this means a desire to ‘become another’ through language, body, voice and imagination. The training of the actor’s voice allows the imaginative world to provide physical and emotional experiences which are reflective and can be expressed through dramatic action. These experiences are represented and enacted in ways which, to use Nicholson’s (1999) terminology, are ‘interactive, enactive and energetic’ (p.4). The collaborative experience of actor training also provides: a collective recognition of ideas; time for the participants to refine and re-define the ideas for themselves; empathetic understanding; sensory experiences for others to witness and, the use of symbolism, space, and compositional elements integrated into the moment of speaking. Sally’s struggle with the Ritual section on May 1st (the first vignette in this chapter) was enacted by providing an open-ended and discursive possibility of learning Ritual through an embodied understanding. Her willingness to struggle reflected her desire to make meaning of the relationship between her sensory experiences, inherent physical challenges and peer relationships. However, the success of her transformative learning required a space (artistic) where the whole experience could be open-ended and non-hierarchical.

**Embodied responses through haptic experiences**

By its very openness and re-arrangement of the physical environment, the artistic space is by definition a haptic space. ‘Haptic’ can be defined as a synthesis of tactile, visual and auditory sensations and can be further extended to include embodied responses to emotional and affective experiences (Karanika 2009). Merleau-Ponty (2004) uses the idea of ‘haptic’ as embodying emotional experience. The affective response of tactile feedback is an important aspect of actor vocal training. The vocal trainer has to deftly judge the moment when touch is appropriate and the ensemble learnt this through my guidance and modelling. There were only certain areas of the body that were touched in the workshops and every tactile encounter was preceded by a request. Fisher in *Tangible acts: Touch performances* (2007) argues that as well as an aesthetic act, touch is also a communicative act in that it ‘dissolves the boundaries between subject and object’ (p.167). There are also social conventions around touch that prescribe how and who we should touch, what Fisher describes as
‘tactile hegemony’. In the first public workshop, the artistic space of the VCA studio dissolved these social conventions through kinaesthetic exchanges. The ensemble touched their participants sometimes with encouraging gestures such as a touch on the arm, or sometimes in a more purposeful way to demonstrate for example, the movement of the ribs. These gestures were always preceded by a request to touch the participant and, in the more sensitive areas of the torso, a suggestion that the trainer puts her hand on top of the participant’s. Similarly, the deaf vocal trainers asked the participants to touch their bodies to experience for example, the movement of the intercostal muscles as they responded to the movement of the breath. These haptic encounters were purposeful, pedagogical and acceptable in a space (artistic) where learning is privileged through the body.

6.7 Dissolving boundaries in the artistic space

When the Let It Out ensemble entered the Voice Studio, they crossed the threshold into a space which was liminal as well as empty. They were betwixt and between a world which has identified them as young people with terms such as ‘deaf’, ‘hearing impaired’, ‘hearing loss’. As one participant said very early on in the first study, ‘We are the majority here’. As such, the artistic space in the Let It Out study provided the opportunity for them to challenge the labels attached to their identity. In the artistic space of the VCA Voice Studio, there was no place for ‘dis-ability’ only ‘ability’. Artistic space is the optimum condition for Open Space Learning (Monk et al, 2011). Open Space Learning can be described as a space, which is physically open with no demarcation of chairs and tables, and thus allows for enactive and embodied learning. Monk et al (2011, p.24) define the conditions for Open Space Learning as: transgressive, transitional, transcendent, trans-rational and transactional. These conditions appear to fit with the Let It Out ensemble’s artistic and social interactions through performance as Open Space Learning (OSL) enables enactive and kinaesthetic learning. OSL and Let It Out pedagogies both resemble the theatrical processes of the rehearsal room. OSL and Let It Out reference phenomenological enquiry which promotes the mind working with the body. Both encourage collective action and individual responsibility. I have applied the conditions of OSL to the Let It Out project in bolded text.
• Transgressive - traditional barriers between experts in voice and speech rehabilitation and the hearing impaired are suspended through the embodiment of kinaesthetic learning;
• Transitional - work is always forming and re-forming, provisional and never closed through the performative structure of the workshops;
• Transcendent - work moves beyond the normative learning context of speech rehabilitation for the hearing impaired;
• Trans-rational - space relies on intuitive and physical response in processing information through by-passing rational explanations of the techniques;
• Transactional - interdependent and collective exchange of knowledge, skills and understanding through the ensemble’s individual and collective stories.

Sally eventually felt very confident with Ritual when she started moving in rhythm without any verbal instructions, encouraging the participants to follow her into the circle as she moved and sounded, stretched her arms to the sky like the branches of a tree and stamped her feet into the ground to connect to its roots. Sally was the first to lead the kinaesthetic training in the public workshops. She demonstrated that the artistic space of the VCA Voice Studio can also be described as a transgressive space, where the performative nature of the work was fostered through a sense of community. Thus, traditional barriers between experts in voice and speech rehabilitation and the hearing impaired were suspended through the embodiment of kinaesthetic learning. The Voice Studio and subsequent external spaces in schools and the Cochlear Implant Clinic became places of shifting social and pedagogical boundaries through the subversion of the normative form of teaching voice and speech skills. Any space where the workshops were held prioritised learning these skills through the senses and the audience was required to engage directly in this sensory experience.

Once we shattered the expectation of a conference type presentation at the first public workshop on July 26th through the performative act of the silent lecture, the circle was formed and everyone had to be involved. We provided no choice to opt out or sit at the side. Tables and chairs were scattered and in fact there was nowhere for
anyone to hide from the physical and sensory activities that were to take place within the next ninety minutes. Normative communicative interactions between young deaf people and the professionals were subverted.⁵ We demanded that the time spent with the deaf vocal trainers would be an immersion in kinaesthetic and sensory learning of the techniques and the group’s experiences enacted through role play and improvisations. The circle we established was shattered again and again to suit the needs of each technique. The audience members were moved around the space, calling out in the tongue tango, moving their bodies to the rhythm of the music and swirling around as they imagined water rising up over their bodies to feel the length of vowel sounds. This was a trans-rational experience for the participants as the artistic space relies on intuitive and physical responses in processing information through bypassing rational explanations of the techniques. The workshop became transcendent as the learning experience moved beyond the normative learning context of speech rehabilitation for the hearing impaired. The actor vocal training techniques were interspersed with the ensemble’s individual and collective stories, thereby creating a transactional change to take place with the workshop participants.

The artistic space provided the possibility of the Let It Out ensemble’s knowledge being privileged and the hegemonic practices of conventional speech and voice rehabilitation for young deaf adults were re-framed. To use Peter Brook’s (1972) term of ‘empty space’ metaphorically, the Voice Studio was an ‘empty space’ where the voices of these young deaf people filled the void. The artistic space of the Voice Studio provided a pedagogic environment which in Open Space Learning terms was ‘inclusive, creative and co-constructivist’ (Monk et al 2011, p.2). All spaces we inhabited from the VCA to primary schools and clinics continued to be ‘site(s) for advocacy’ (Pelias 2008). The conventions were turned upside down.

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⁵ In subsequent workshops with young deaf teens at the VCA we were able to use the space in the same way as the first public workshops. In primary schools and the Cochlear Implant Clinics we asked for an open space with no tables and chairs so that we could transfer artistic and aesthetic qualities from the VCA Voice Studio.
6.8 The world turned upside down

Integration through the imagination: May 22\textsuperscript{nd}

It is just over one month before the first public workshop and the ensemble is very aware that they have to integrate their knowledge and skills into what I call ‘the moment of speaking’. I notice Penny is taking on a leadership role this week in Phonation. Sally is keen to revise the section on Articulation as she mentions this was always challenging. They decide to read the Grip Top Sock tongue twister as a chorus after the Articulation section. Sally reminds us that the technical work of the Grip Top Sock tongue twister is performed through a story, and therefore, integrates all aspects of the training: Breath, Phonation, Resonance, Articulation and Intonation with the Imagination. I observe that they are feeling more confident in using the language of voice and speech training and are reminding each other to accompany each section with a reason why it is important to experience through the body for hearing impaired people. I ask them to give me an example and Jenny immediately responds with: ‘Breath capacity is important for a rich and strong voice and particularly important for deaf people as breath powers the voice, allowing us to be heard’.

I add that we need to be very specific with the language we use to introduce and describe concepts. We practise Articulation again and repeat the movements and gestures that accompany each sound e.g. plosives in beautiful bird are accompanied by a stroking gesture. The voiced bi-labial plosive /b/ is important for articulation but the gesture accompanying it is antithetical to a plosive sound. Two types of movement are required of the lips and hands, the technical precision of a bi-labial plosive which can be heard in a large space together with the gesture of the hands. This gesture immediately slows down the rhythm giving more expressivity to the voice. Sally mentions that this
The artistic space provided the opportunity for imagining, imagining not only with the body but also imagining the ‘other’ in the space that is, the workshop participants. The ensemble was being mindful and playful with the training and at the same time, remembering their ‘pursuit of fun’.

Artistic space requires the facilitator, teacher or director to construct alternate ways of making meaning. The functional and technical aspects of the actor vocal training techniques were not separated out from the socio-cultural and historical influences of the deaf vocal trainers’ previous experiences. Indeed, the social narrative I refer to was as important as the techniques themselves. The various kinds of artistic and social interactions engendered a space where transformative learning took place affectively, emotionally, physically and cognitively. In this space the subjectivity of the personal experience was as valid as the learning itself. The embodied subjectivity of the actor vocal training techniques was validated through the stories accompanying these techniques, so that, questions of purpose and intent of the public workshop training were foregrounded through the ensemble’s personal experiences.

The aims the group articulated so clearly at the beginning of March relied upon three commitments: a space where they felt free of judgement and negative feelings about the non-hearing voice; a willingness to challenge each other, themselves and the struggle and frustration this would engender; doing everything together as a commitment to their learning, and sharing their knowledge about their voices. The public workshops were imagined, conceived and constructed in the artistic space of the VCA Voice Studio, which carries the resonance of performance aesthetics. This space enabled imaginative, physical and intuitive responses as an alternative to the normative approach to voice and speech training for young deaf adults.
The opportunity to work consistently in an artistic space during the workshop development provided an environment where the planned pedagogical encounters were imagined and conceived rather than prescribed and predicted. The artistic space of the VCA provided the opportunity for a different kind of discourse to dominate the learning environment. This discourse privileged embodied knowledge, community engagement, individual and group narratives and legitimised the ensemble’s learning experience.

The journey of stepping over the threshold into a learning environment which is secure and safe, but not necessarily a ‘comfort zone’, was a critical part of building the Let It Out workshops. The artistic space was a place for imagining how the ensemble could transfer these skills beyond the Voice Studio through cognitive and embodied experiences – the mind with the body. The social interaction they created at the beginning of each session became a significant element in this transference of skills, ultimately, they were able to incorporate each technique into a wider social context of speaking through their stories and anecdotes during the public workshops. Each deaf vocal trainer could imagine how their voices could be. Thus, an artistic space created other ways of viewing the body of the non-hearing person and enabled the deaf vocal trainers to reflect critically upon what would be effective for deaf teens and children.
Chapter Seven - A way of being: kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience

…since what frightens people most of all today is speaking, one must begin with neither words, nor ideas, but with the body. (Brook 1972)

The previous chapter emphasised the importance of the relationship between artistic space, body and mind for the development of the Let It Out training and public workshops. This chapter will focus on the relationship between kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience as intrinsic components of embodied learning for the deaf vocal trainers over the period of training.

One week before the first public workshop on July 26th, I invited a group of acting students and voice lecturers to attend a public dress rehearsal of the Let It Out workshop. A lively discussion ensued as the Let It Out ensemble talked about their process and how and why they chose particular activities to demonstrate the techniques. I only spoke to provide some context regarding previous training and the history of our relationship. After this feedback session, I decided to focus on one of the acting student’s comments that the ensemble should slow down the activities because the workshops’ participants would find them unfamiliar. I used a metaphor I call ‘memory in the landscape of the body’ to try and bring attention to the underlying intention of embodying the work by saying:

Rather like going on a walk that you have taken time and time again, your body remembers where to go and sometimes unconsciously you do not know how you arrived at a particular point but see that place again through fresh eyes. Actor vocal training is very similar.

I spoke a quatrain from T.S. Eliot’s Four Quartets (2009), which I recite to first year actor vocal training students:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
I decided not to give too many notes and instead provided words of encouragement and reminded the ensemble of our purpose. I felt that they knew as much as they needed to know at this stage and was confident that whatever happened at the first public workshop, they would respond through *their bodies with their minds.*

### 7.1 Memory in the landscape of the body

**Process versus outcome: April 10th**

Remembering in the body is the crucial thing for me at our session on April 10th. I put it to the ensemble that our task in the forthcoming sessions is to separate out what techniques they want to demonstrate and then restructure this for the public workshops. However, the ensemble feels really low and unmotivated and I too feel rather dispirited and flat by the atmosphere this creates. Before they arrive, I put their comments from the March 6th workshop around the wall as a reminder of our aims but no-one really notices. Jenny is particularly unmotivated, which is unlike her. I admit to the ensemble that I had underestimated how long the process of developing the training model would take. My inner monologue reminds me that I am still struggling with the balance between process and outcome. It is critical they should remember without any prompt from me if the overall goal is to train them as ‘deaf vocal trainers’. I am finding it hard to let go and move with the flow of the session. I begin to sense our struggle to stay engaged with each other.

The viewing of the Vocal Empowerment DVD brings focus to the session and Jenny mentions how she still puts her hands on her chest to feel the vibrations before she speaks. She remembers this from the previous training and this is encouraging. However, it still doesn’t change the ensemble dynamic and I decide to lead the Breath section in a very structured way as if I were teaching them all over again rather than gently guiding experientially. I realise that I need to create a more
delicate balance between the purpose, the process and the outcome of the training sessions. I am finding it hard to ‘read’ the ensemble and desperately wish Jodie was present as an intermediary.

Nevertheless, once I start physicalising the exercises, they respond actively and the body memory slowly starts to emerge. I lead each section of Breath, Phonation, Resonance and Articulation. I try to cover as much as I can rather than prompt for reflection or focus on structure for the public workshops.

At the end of the session, we discuss the need to meet more regularly because the fortnightly arrangement is not effective. Jenny suggests that I lead the training as a crash course for the next few weeks until they feel confident. I admit to them that I recognise their need to feel engaged and this means feeling more confident in their bodies. So I promise to take the lead more until they are ready. That night I go home and write out the plan of each session from April 17th until July 26th.

Embodied learning means literally, learning with the body. In Chapter Three, I referred to how the process of enacting, embedding, dis-embedding, re-embedding and knowledge building, provided the structure of the actor vocal training. Whilst one can provide a physical form of the vocal exercises, one can never predict the individual’s bodily response to the impulses that arise from the activity. I was working towards an open-ended process, as I believed this would lead to a better outcome in terms of ownership and identity with the work. Consequently, there was a reliance on the physical responses of each individual to learn the techniques. Eisner (1985) reminds us of Dewey’s ‘flexible purposing’ where the goals and outcomes of a pursuit are not constant and one has to trust that the work in process leads to the outcomes. This process is open-ended so better outcomes may emerge. However, I had forgotten that open-endedness could also result in a lack of confidence and motivation.

At our session on April 10th, we also discussed the central element of the imagination in actor vocal training. Actor vocal training avoids a mechanistic awareness of voice
and speech production. It relies upon a learning modality, which is perceptual. In my work with acting students or professional actors, I usually begin with a perception of what is happening in the body before any sound is made. Whilst the person is experiencing this, I may ask her to be mindful of what is happening physiologically followed by an instruction to focus on a particular aspect for example, the movement of the lower ribs as the breath moves in and out of the body. This may be accompanied by another instruction connected to the imagination; suggesting the person imagines the breath moving through the spine or, imagining the ebb and flow of the breath as a wave falling on to the shore. Image based activities developed for the ensemble, such as blowing out candles to increase breath capacity, blowing through straws in different physical positions and imagining they were blowing a didgeridoo, marching and placing the hands on the lower ribs to sense how this movement provides an active breath for speaking were structured activities that developed a kinaesthetic as opposed to a mechanistic response to their voices. To this extent, the imagination and the sensory experience were integrated. This approach to breathing requires the person to experience their breathing patterns and to become conscious of the sensory connection between the body and breath with their mind. It is a good example of ‘process’ as the focus rather than ‘outcome’. Unless the process is attended to, the outcome will never be achieved with ease. This approach also provides time to ‘get things wrong’.

Getting things wrong: April 10th

I remind them of the importance of the emergence of sound and ask them what ‘phonation’ means. They remember it means the connection between the breath, vibration and sound. When we move on from the section on Breath into Phonation, Penny volunteers to lead this section. She tries a few physical forms to engage with her breath but becomes very frustrated. She says she is concerned about having to talk and provide an explanation of the Phonation exercise. Penny eventually admits that she would prefer to explain as she physicalises the exercise and I confirm this is an excellent idea. Susan tells her to imagine she is blowing through a didgeridoo. (An image I gave them in 2007!).
This is effective for Penny and a pivotal moment for the ensemble’s journey to embodiment because they have started to apply reflection in action. Consequently, I begin to feel more confident about their ability to embody the work.

Penny tries a few physical forms to engage the breath. I then remind her to put her hands on the side of her ribs and imagine her ‘lips are on her belly’ whilst she waits for the breath to move in and out of these two physical points. She follows my instructions calmly, waits and takes a breath and cups her hands around her mouth and calls ‘hey’ across the room. I encourage the ensemble to spread around her and instruct her to imagine she is calling to them from a mountain-top. She moves around the ensemble calling out sounds and they react in a call and response formation. I suggest she retrieves what she has just done and repeat it. Without any hesitation she confidently repeats the whole sequence. Although she does not manage to produce much change in pitch range, her ability to retrieve the complete sequence physically in space clarifies her role as a leader.

After Penny’s demonstration, Jenny comments on how she feels that this section will really help speech pathologists understand how we approach phonation as they tend to focus on exercises for the mouth but not through the body. I am struck by how she is beginning to differentiate between the two approaches from her experiences without being judgemental. Susan adds that if the breath is not attended to then the voice is not ‘captured’. Jenny responds, ‘All these things are coming to me, how much is the same but different’. The ensemble agrees that it is important for each individual to have the opportunity of ‘getting things wrong’.

During the training I moved quickly from sensing to perceiving. For example, when I wanted them to find focal resonance, I asked them first to perceive the sensation of the breath supporting vocal release and then asked them to hum. From there I
suggested the image of calling across a mountain, and we placed our hands around our mouths like a megaphone. This implied that the sound needed a specific spatial direction and the image was used to help retrieve this sensation of focal resonance when we moved into different spaces. It also reminded them that in order to re-create this sensation of focal resonance they needed to sense their breath support to release the voice.

At the end of this session on April 10th, Penny decided she wanted to lead the Phonation section in the public workshops. She had learnt a fundamental principle of kinaesthetic learning, which was to integrate her body’s sensory perception with her imagination in the space in the moment of voicing. The vignette above emphasises Chris Cooper’s (2010, 2013) idea that the imagination has to be at the centre of dramatic activity. Cooper asserts ‘(it is) imagination which makes us human, not reason’. The engagement of the imagination is a critical element in my actor vocal training pedagogy so that the voice’s expressivity is linked to a well supported vocal technique. In this way, the speaker can rehearse a situation before the pressure of speaking publicly is experienced.

The integration of breath into words by suggesting the image of the ‘lips being on the belly’ (Houseman 2002) provided a way of engaging in active speaking with the imagination rather than just focusing on how they were speaking. Penny’s frustration also prompted peer-led learning and modelling in a more relaxed atmosphere and later they were able to use Houseman’s image in feedback if they noticed their breath was ‘switched on or off’. It also took the pressure off Penny as the kinaesthetic experiences of the whole ensemble were integrated through a common embodied understanding.

Penny’s frustration came from her struggle to explain her conceptual understanding of the technique through a physical demonstration. She thought she had to explain the exercise first, then do it, and yet she was more successful at verbalising the rationale whilst she was physically demonstrating. There was no difference in her

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understanding, the mind and the body were one. She understood it as she was doing it. Penny also demonstrated her ability to reflect in and upon action and incorporate the sensory and emotional aspects of her cognition to arrive at a more detailed understanding without compromising herself, the ensemble or the training.

Penny’s experience highlighted the significance of emphasising exploration and discovery of the techniques so that the embodied realisation of the voice during the physical exercise was as important as the functional and technical explanation of the exercise. Moreover, her challenges in this session affirmed for her that learning through the body with the imagination provided a way to embody the techniques. From this session, Penny strove to improve her understanding of Phonation. By the first public workshop, she was able to clearly articulate through her body the importance of the connection between breath, thought, imagination and the word, in front of fifty people. She was also able to provide words of encouragement to the public workshop participants who struggled with self-consciousness and provided feedback to help improve their sounds.

7.2 The lived body of the non-hearing voice

In the 1960’s Merleau-Ponty critiqued the notion that the static and objective body was representative of experience. Merleau-Ponty (2004) rejected the dominant thinking of the natural sciences as viewing the body as an object under control of the mind. His philosophy made a paradigm shift by focussing on the centrality of the ‘lived body’ as the way in which we come to understand the world. The contribution of Merleau-Ponty to a phenomenological understanding of learning is particularly apt for my study. The concept of the body’s experience is central to Merleau-Pontian theory and asserts that we cannot experience the world outside of our bodies because we inhabit the world through our bodies. Embodiment for Merleau-Ponty means experiencing the world through the lived body. Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the role of the body in foregrounding human behaviour aptly provides a theoretical framework for interpreting the Let It Out ensemble’s experience of the training.

Stolz (2015) elaborates upon this perspective by adding that Merleau-Ponty does not position the body over the mind, and in fact, advocates that we think about our relationship to the world as the mind with a body, not just the mind and a body.
Merleau-Ponty’s central argument is that we come to know and understand our world first through concrete experiences before we can understand abstract or intellectual concepts. We can only ‘think’ the world because we have already experienced it. The implication of this perspective in the workshop training meant there was no longer a division between the Let It Out deaf vocal trainers as subjects and the voice as an object whose functions they had to understand and apply. Consequently, the experience of the actor vocal training in their bodies was the experience of learning to be heard. For instance, Penny layered and embedded the section on Phonation each week with more nuanced understanding. We did not always have time to repeat her section and sometimes she was not able to attend because of work commitments. Nevertheless, when it was her turn to lead this section, I noticed that Penny’s experience from the 10th April stayed with her. She was able to demonstrate the technique of phonation and by the beginning of May developed her understanding further by commenting: ‘You still need the breath when you want to speak intimately as when you want to make the sound bigger and fill the space’. Penny demonstrated this by imagining she was calling over a mountain but this time she added another physical activity by encouraging the ensemble to form a more intimate circle as she spoke softly to them. She then challenged herself and the participants by moving between a closer, intimate space to a wider, less intimate space so participants had to adjust their vocal range to respond kinaesthetically to this spatial dynamic. In doing so, Penny fostered a kinaesthetic understanding of the voice through spatial arrangements, imagination and physical actions. She was able to think through her body with her mind and was developing her own methodology of working and sharing the techniques through this embodiment.

According to Stolz (2015), the educational implications of Merleau-Ponty’s concept of ‘embodiment’ lie in the need to provide a learning context which ‘involves the exploration of the world from where one is and a clear understanding of how things relate to each other and to ourselves in the world’ (p.485). Penny was not the most confident member of the ensemble. She was sociable but at times could be very distracted. In spite of this, her struggle confirmed the ability to re-learn the vocal training through kinaesthetic learning of the techniques. Her persistence had a positive effect on the ensemble as they witnessed the possibility of someone less confident re-framing experiences through a kinaesthetic relationship to the training. Penny’s struggle with Phonation demonstrated that making meaning is derived from
many bodily encounters and it is through these encounters that personal experience is realised and validated. Her struggle made a significant contribution to my understanding of kinaesthetic learning through embodiment for the Let It Out ensemble training.

### 7.3 Implications of the lived body for Let It Out workshops

During the workshop training, I noticed the ensemble’s willingness to talk about their perception of themselves, their experiences outside the training and also the training in relation to the physical aspects of their bodies in a hearing world. By the beginning of May their ability to provide non-judgemental feedback on the physical aspects of voicing was often accompanied by an anecdote from their own lives. This confirmed the desire to structure the workshops so that their embodied knowledge of being in the world as young deaf adults was foregrounded. This ‘first person perspective’ (to use Stolz’s description of Merleau-Ponty’s concept) is not just cognitive but involves our emotions, our aesthetic and our imaginations (Stolz 2015). The deaf vocal trainers confirmed their lived experiences as the source of the way in which, through their bodies, they came to understand the major focus of the Let It Out training workshops – that of being heard.

**Making meaning through embodied cognition**

Gibbs (2005) argues that our sense of our ‘whole body action is central to understanding the concept of perception’ (p.243). He asserts that perception not only occurs through our senses but through our whole body and that it is an intensely kinaesthetic activity. Therefore, kinaesthetic activity involves a very subjective experience in terms of developing human cognition. The interactions that took place between the individual members of the ensemble and ultimately the public workshop participants privileged this subjective approach to learning about speech and voice for the young deaf adult. Sensing change in their bodies (kinaesthetic perception) and being aware of the workshop participants’ responses (visual perception) were critical elements of the ensemble’s development as deaf vocal trainers. They needed to operate these two elements simultaneously and repeat if they felt a technique had not been understood through the body. Importantly, their understanding of their use of these techniques to produce certain vocal qualities and their role as deaf vocal
trainers was achieved by knowing the technique in their bodies, that is through an embodied cognition.

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**April tongue tango: 17th April**

At our April 17th session I show them the DVD section on articulation. They laugh at the ‘tongue tango’ and I wonder if they are game to do this with a group of strangers. Tongue tango is an exercise I developed for experiencing the sensory quality and agility of the tongue.

A tango tune with a fast and slow tempo, is beneficial and you quite simply imagine that your tongue is dancing a tango. Thus, the tongue pokes, flicks, swirls, in, out and around the mouth encouraging saucy, tantalising, sensuous movements with the tongue as you dance around and have tango conversations through your tongue with the rest of the group.

The ensemble mention that the playfulness of the tongue tango is important not only for creating sensations in the tongue or ‘feeling that the tongue is running away with you’ as Jenny comments but significantly, they remember WHY this is important. The relationship between a ‘playful, agile’ tongue (like your fingers on the piano, pipes up Susan) and articulation is apparent to them during this energetic activity.

I immediately put on the music and they move around the room to the wonderful strains of Piazzolla. I remind them that the ‘Tongue is in the whole body! The whole body is the tongue!’ as I call over the music. After we finish they agree that the tongue feels bigger, flatter and wider. I explain why flatness and bunching of the tongue impedes resonance, and thus clarity. I demonstrate the difference between a flat, wide tongue and a tongue, which bunches and is held at the back of the mouth. Susan observes that the latter makes the voice sound more nasal. I demonstrate the action of the tongue with
my hand to confirm her observation. I explain that a flatter tongue gives you more space in the mouth for the air to come through. If you imagine your mouth is a cave, then there is more room for the sound to bounce around and make articulation easier. They nod in agreement.

Susan is always thinking ahead and wonders why deaf people are so nasal. As she moves her tongue around her mouth and reflexively moves her hand up and down in imitation of my demonstration, she realises how this happens. We decide to keep tongue tango in but at this stage no-one offers to lead it!

This vignette illustrates one of the many times that the ensemble demonstrated their perception through a kinaesthetic activity. In this example, Susan applied her embodied cognition of a particular exercise to address a fundamental challenge she had observed in hearing impaired people.

The session on April 17th exposed the ensemble’s capacity to slowly and tentatively retrieve what they had embodied in the previous study, as well as, critically analyse through an embodied cognition whether these exercises would be appropriate for the young deaf teens in the Let It Out workshops. This embodied data informed the critical incident analysis through the provision of key contextual information and inclusion of participant voices. I wrote up our discussion in my journal:

We discuss the length of voiced and unvoiced consonants. I demonstrate by saying the words, ‘fail’ and ‘veil’ and ask whether they remember the difference. They keep repeating until they realise that it is the ‘v’ in veil so that it is voiced, which makes the word longer. I say a lot of people don’t know this but by knowing this, you don’t have to worry whether you are speaking properly, you can just feel you are being ‘heard’. We repeat with fingers on vocal cords to experience vibration. Then we are able to repeat the consonant with an image, and thus create more purpose and more clarity with the consonant e.g. a beautiful bird (in this case, focusing on the voiced bi-labial plosive). I admit that I make up all these images in the moment. They describe the ones they like. They really want the audience to have these sensations of energy, warmth and calmness in their voices. But they are unsure at this stage how they can create the experiences, which worked for them. There is no time for trial and error in the public workshops. (April, 2010)
**Prioritising the kinaesthetic intelligence**

During our first workshop in May, the ensemble expressed again their concerns about the workshop participants’ reactions and involvement. In the creative development session on April 24th, the ensemble had devised a structure that endowed them with the role of team leaders of small groups to each demonstrate a technique (see Chapter Five). They had appeared to be very confident in April and even articulated their desire to demonstrate leadership through the body rather than talking about the work first and then expecting people to follow. By this stage, everyone knew the sections they were to lead. However, I realised yet again that verbalising something does not necessarily guarantee a physical confidence. I acknowledged to the ensemble their concern that the work might be intimidating for some, even those professionals who work in the area of voice and speech but, I reminded them that at all times the participants would be physically safe.

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**One step forward, two steps back: May 8th**

At this session, I ask them to watch the first chapter on ritual warm up and to write down the exercises. Ritual always proves problematic when they start to practise. I have left it alone for a few weeks because I cannot fathom why they physicalise this section so half-heartedly. Whilst she is watching the Ritual section, Susan comments that if she didn’t know the work she would think it was some kind of cult ritual. She then says that we have to be careful about asking people to do this. Ivy asks the question whether it is important to take people out of their ‘comfort zone’ with this work and I remind them how they were taken out of their comfort zone when Jodie started the Ritual in our first session together. Sandra asks whether people should observe and not participate. Sally responds that she believes people would be more likely to commit if we didn’t give them time to think about it. I confidently refer to our decision to keep in the tongue tango when I am met with complete silence. I say that I thought we agreed to include it but grimaces and shoulder shrugs are the only responses.
So we re-visit the inclusion of the tongue tango. Sandra comments that she knows why it is useful but needs to articulate in her own way what is useful about it. A discussion ensues and Susan refers to what she said before. The importance of tongue work is for them not to sound ‘too nasal’. ‘This is important for us because we are deaf’, she asserts. Enough said! They all recognise that it helps but are afraid that it is too ‘out there’ as an exercise for strangers.

I am pleased with the way we are progressing in terms of the ensemble’s ability to quickly move from their head to their bodies when we need to work something out. So I encourage everyone to get up on the floor and I take them through another tongue exercise where we imagine we are licking ice-creams (for tongue stretches) and ask them to compare this exercise with the tongue tango. Jenny pipes up that the silliness of the tongue tango makes the tongue more relaxed. We reach a stalemate. Everyone agrees but no-one wants to lead the tongue tango. We put a question mark against it even though our bodies know it is very useful.

After teaching actor training for twenty years, I am aware that learning vocal techniques is not linear. In Chapter Three, I referred to Zuber-Skerrit and Kemmis and Carr’s comments on the need for participatory action research cycles to be self-reflexive and critically examined by the individual ensemble members. These cycles are better described as spirals because one has the sense of moving forward and also coming back to the same place. We had reached an interesting point in the workshop training, whereby I knew what would be effective for the deaf vocal trainers and the workshop participants from my perspective as both an expert in the techniques of actor vocal training and my role as researcher. Nevertheless, I was caught in a tension between the ensemble’s growing confidence with the techniques and their concerns about the workshop participants’ responses. Consequently, I experienced a lack of attention to the workshop structure. We had reached a stage
that I have experienced in numerous rehearsals when the ‘cast’ becomes more at ease with the process but is still unsure of the product.

7.4 The body as a site of knowledge

Going back in time – personal memories from kinaesthetic learning: 25th May

Everyone is a little hesitant when I make the decision at our workshop on May 25th that we should deal with the next critical step of structuring the workshop. I admit to the ensemble that shaping the material is a daunting task. By this stage we have made decisions about the beginning which will include ‘the shattering of expectations’ and about the ensemble working as a whole and in smaller groups with the workshop participants. Most of the ensemble has decided the section of the training they want to lead.

We watch the DVD section on resonance. The viewing reminds them of the feedback they gave in the Vocal Empowerment training and how they responded to the kinaesthetic effectiveness of the work through personal anecdotes as well as tactile feedback. The Resonance section recalls some salient kinaesthetic feedback. Smiles creep across their faces as they watch the section on resonance and how they described their voices during those sessions. The viewing of this section provides insights into the kind of feedback they gave each other during this period with comments such as: ‘I am embracing my new voice, you know, low and sexy’.

During the Vocal Empowerment study the group often felt self-conscious talking about their vocal experiences in front of each other, so I encouraged them to write their experiences down anonymously. They immediately started to use images and exercises to develop resonance and provided descriptions such as ‘a voice like honey’. On one occasion, a female participant described a male participant’s voice as ‘sexy’ when he located a richer chest resonance. The ensemble definitely wanted to
keep this description in the Let It Out workshops and always made sure they included it, particularly with deaf teens. Using the DVD as a prompt reminded them of the specific and imaginative feedback they gave each other in the initial training. For example:

I like humming. Sometimes after humming for a while your voice kinda starts to mellow and stay nice and soft.

Less focus on the voice means more flow. (ARC participants, Cook 2008)

It was interesting to note that they had remembered these phrases.

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**Going back in time – kinaesthetic reflection: 25th May**

Whilst watching the DVD section on Resonance, the ensemble remembers how the ARC training made them feel more confident when answering the phone. On the DVD, Penny mentions she often let the phone ring rather than answer it but now she always answers the phone after the Vocal Empowerment training. Susan comments that she had not thought about any of this since the Vocal Empowerment training but believes it still to be true. She had forgotten that before the Vocal Empowerment study people could not hear her on the phone. We also see Jenny recall her father noticing that her voice sounded fuller and how delighted she was to receive this feedback from a hearing person. We see Lawrence mention the effect of humming and how it gave him more release with his voice to the point where a teacher had to tell him to stop humming in class.

Jenny mentions that recently she has been thinking about their tendency to speak too fast and thinks we should take out some of the exercises but also understands that we can’t do this at the expense of leaving out others of equal importance. I suggest that perhaps it is not so much about leaving sections out but instead shaping the work more finely through the body. Susan adds the metaphor of the dance. We could have one big dance and
lots of individual dances, she exclaims. I love the way she is thinking kinaesthetically and aesthetically. I respond that when everything is integrated and working holistically in performance, the voice is ‘heard’ in the same way that the dance is ‘seen’ and the audience do not necessarily recognise all the little parts that make up the whole. I mention that I believe we need to focus on both aspects – we have to demonstrate how each little section becomes the whole voice.

We did a lot of talking during this session, conceptualising and reflecting on how much they knew. Unfortunately, Penny, Sandra and Lawrence were not present and I was torn as to whether to move on with structure or repeat what we had done so far. Instead, I let the discussion take its own course because instinctively I was aware that the rest of the ensemble needed to be reminded of their lived experiences and their embodied knowledge and memories. Also I was keen to see whether these memories could help them shape the structure of the public workshops.

A revelation through metaphor: 25th May

The talking session on May 25th proves to be just what we need to help us find the structure. Jenny manages to crystallise it all. She uses the metaphor of a meal and explains how she sees the work as a recipe with all the ingredients of a meal. Therefore, we should approach the work as if we were preparing a meal. She elaborates that we have to get the workshop participants to see that what we are giving them is not the meal as an end in itself but show them how all the ingredients go into making the meal. Jenny believes this will help the ensemble find an approach to the structure and help them remember how and why they are doing it. Susan immediately picks up on this point and suggests that they also mention in the workshops how long it takes to find and make all these ingredients in your body! For example, she adds, not everyone understands why you
need eggs in a cake. I add that I am keen for the participants (particularly in the first public workshop of professionals) to understand the difference between the actor vocal training approach to the development of voice and speech skills to other sorts of voice and speech training. We all use the same language or the same ingredients (e.g. breath, resonance, articulation etc.) but the actor vocal training techniques employ an artistic and ensemble approach and so the way we mix the ingredients is different. The rest of this session is spent on the floor practising the Resonance section. Susan decides to lead this for the public workshops and remembers a great deal through the physical forms of each exercise that I had taught them in the Vocal Empowerment training. They laugh at me when I can’t remember all of the work I previously demonstrated!!

Even though we had half the ensemble missing during this May session, I witnessed a number of significant developments:

- A clearer integration of the vocal techniques through kinaesthetic learning; they remembered conceptually via the DVD and then re-embedded these techniques physically on the floor.
- A stronger sense of identity as an ensemble as a result of retrieving their personal anecdotes from the previous training.
- A less deferential approach to me as they recalled their past lived experiences.
- An emergent understanding of the relationship between form and content as they began to talk metaphorically about the public workshops.

**Workshop tongue tango: July 26th**

Finally, after some strong encouragement from me, the ensemble agrees to include the tongue tango in the public workshops. To my surprise, Sandra leads this section
Sandra’s offer to lead the tongue tango established her as one of the leaders in the ensemble. Her embodied cognition of this section enabled her to lead the following section on Articulation, which included the relationship between breath, image and placement of sound.

There was no doubt that tongue tango received some self-conscious responses from some workshop participants but under Sandra’s leadership, the ensemble’s confident, physical enactment of this exercise enabled their tacit knowledge to be displayed (Michael Polanyi 1967, cited in Eisner 2004). This tacit knowledge was displayed in this way more than once during the demonstration of the techniques. At the first public workshop on July 26th, one workshop participant asked Susan to explain why she was getting on her hands and knees to hum into the face. Susan replied that she and the rest of the ensemble always experienced stronger sensation of vibrations in the mask of the face in this position than when they were standing up. She went on to explain that once they rolled up through the spine to standing, they were able to retrieve this strong sensation of vibration before speaking. This explanation from Susan demonstrated the experience of embodied cognition and enabled the deaf vocal trainers’ bodies to be what Pelias (2008) calls ‘site(s) of knowledge’.

7.5 Aesthetic Perspectives

**Sensuous knowing**

Peter Abbs (cited in Alexander & Simpson 1991, p.245) suggests ‘aesthetics is knowledge in a sensuous form’. 
Aesthetics denotes a mode of sensuous knowing essential for the life and development of consciousness; aesthetic response is inevitably, through its sensory and physical operations, cognitive in nature.

Furthermore, he specifies that an ‘aesthetic experience’ is accompanied by a sense of satisfaction and a desire to share the new knowledge with others. Abbs remarks that the ‘aesthetic experience’ is framed by a particular place in time with a particular set of people and their ‘inherent characteristics’ (Abbs 1994, p.52). This is very significant to the Let It Out training workshops as they were linked to a specific form of knowing and a particular type of experience, in the body. These descriptions and definitions highlight the key qualities of the aesthetic as it might pertain to the Let It Out study.

In the context of this enquiry, I define the aesthetic experience as the sensory response to what is taking shape in the physical environment of bodies, lights, movement and speech. Fenner’s (2003) definition of aesthetic experience as one which provides the participants with a ‘sensuous aspect’ (p.41) is a typical aesthetic experience of actor vocal training. In the activity of the tongue tango, the tongue and the body move in space to the captivating and romantic sounds of the Argentinian tango. This promotes a ‘sensuous knowing’ of technical knowledge with sensory perception through an aesthetic experience. In this exercise we are not focussing on what the tongue is doing but what we are experiencing with our tongue – how much flexibility, aliveness, sensation and vibration it creates in and out of our mouths.

Fenner argues that aesthetic experiences as ‘raw data must be explored without pre-conception, prejudice, or limitation’ (p.41). He refers to two important aestheticians who defined the aesthetic experience: Archibald Alison, an eighteenth century aesthetician who emphasised the importance of imagination in construction of the aesthetic experience and George Santayana who argued that ‘the theory of beauty, is concerned with the perception of values that are dependent upon emotional consciousness: appreciations, appetites and preferences’ (cited in Fenner, 2003 p.42). Moreover, Fenner claims that pleasure is at the heart of aesthetic perception. The pursuit of pleasure both as a fun activity and a sensory feeling was one that guided the choice of adapted actor vocal training exercises for the Let It Out public workshops. The experiences of sensuous knowing through pleasure were a key to choosing particular exercises to demonstrate the techniques.
Making the personal public — first public workshop: July 26th

Sandra agrees to accompany Susan in a demonstration of resonance and pitch range. We call this exercise the ‘geiger counter’ but decide not to ask the participants to do this because it takes a long time to experience the sound in the body.

Description of the geiger counter exercise: this requires two people, one hums (A) as the other (B) moves her hand up and over the periphery of her partner’s body. A also hums up and down her vocal range as B’s hand moves — lower towards the feet and higher towards the head. B can stop at any point on A’s body at which time A speaks the phrase: ‘Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?’ from that point in her body).

When Susan stops at Sandra’s feet, Sandra releases a clear, rich, resonant and deeply embodied speaking voice. The Let It Out ensemble has never heard this voice before this moment and the workshop participants, who have never heard Sandra’s voice before, spontaneously clap and Sandra instinctively takes a bow!

Sandra’s pleasure in the range of her voice was achieved through integrating a kinaesthetic memory into an aesthetic experience. As such, the aesthetic experience in this exercise was the performative relationship between two deaf vocal trainers and an audience witnessing the speaking of a Shakespearian phrase. It demonstrated the integration of cognitive understanding and sensuous knowing. Sinclair et al (2009, p.46) describe this integration as a fusion.

(When) the sensuous internalisation of meaning is….externalised and made cognitively explicit, knowledge is generated. The knowledge that emerges as dramatic meaning is neither just propositional comprehension nor sensuous apprehension, it is a fusion of both.

In the ‘Geiger counter’ exercise described in the previous vignette, the ability to imagine the voice moving through the body increases pitch range, so that, when
Sandra spoke the words of Juliet, she responded to where she experienced her voice in her body. Here was an example of how the cognitive and associative connections to the physical movement and release of sound were integrated through an aesthetic experience. The importance of this for the ensemble was the ability to step back from previous associative experiences with their voices in public speaking situations that had usually been negative. By approaching the voice as an aesthetic experience, the voice became not an abstract idea that sits outside of oneself but a part of the individual’s sensory experience of making meaning through imaginative, associative and cognitive processes with the voice. Thus, to use Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) notion in describing the aesthetic experience as a heightened activity, the ‘Geiger counter’ exercise provided a state of mind where the experience of the vibrations in the body, was ‘more clear and focused than everyday life’ (p.9).

**Shared knowledge**

The analysis of the Let It Out workshop processes provides a useful reminder of the integral and unique knowledge these deaf vocal trainers held in their bodies. Thus, by the very act of creating knowledge through the experiences of their bodies within a kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience, new knowledge about voice and speech was produced and shared with the public workshop participants.

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**The first public workshop – shared knowledge: 26th July**

The first activity in small groups is breathing. Jenny demonstrates the whole sequence of the breath techniques and then asks each deaf vocal trainer to take their group through the sequence. The breath is probably the most challenging aspect of any vocal work. We all knew this section would take time and participants could become agitated at not sensing any achievement so early on. It is important that time is given to the experience of the breath because breathing will be referred to throughout the workshop and this could also cause frustration or disinterest if a kinaesthetic experience is not sensed at this stage.

I quickly scan the room and my eye catches Sally working
with a participant. I observe her gently place her hand over the person’s hand, which is on his abdomen so he can experience the movement of the diaphragm. When this participant becomes slightly agitated at not being ‘able to get it’, Sally calmly replies: ‘Don’t worry if you can’t experience it the first time, it takes time, you just need to practise’.

Sally’s ability to diagnose this person’s needs in that moment is a testament to how she transferred her kinaesthetic mode of learning to a sensory response. Sally’s ability to share her knowledge, together with the sensuous aspect of her experience (Fenner) foregrounded her acuity, awareness and perception as she taught the exercise. The aesthetic experience of the actor vocal training gave rise to a structure, which was purposeful, sensory and heightened and emphasised the personal and cultural narratives of the ensemble by positioning their embodied knowledge at the centre of the enquiry.

**The aesthetic body**

Philip Zarilli (2009, p.58) posits that for an actor, alongside the sensorimotor and visceral experience of the body in everyday experiences, there also exists an ‘aesthetic outer body’ constituted by actions, gestures; the ‘character’ of the drama which is offered up to the spectator’s gaze:

> The actor’s body is a site through which representation as well as experience is generated for both self and the other.

Thus, the actor constitutes a world which is her own as well as constituting one for the other. In the aesthetic experience of the public workshops, Sally’s physical gestures and verbal responses were the site through which she reversed roles with her participant. She became the expert and took the authority of transferring this knowledge to another ‘expert’ through her body.

During the Vocal Empowerment study, I adopted the notion that actor training is analogous to preparation for public speaking. During those ten weeks of that study, I encouraged the group to reflect on whether their vocal practice transferred to everyday life. However, I was also aware of not forcing them to think they had to
prove to me that the training was working. Initially the ensemble found talking about
their voices difficult but eventually they found the confidence to talk about their
experiences and shared anecdotes of confronting or embarrassing situations. During
one of these sessions, Jenny excitedly recounted an experience of her ‘empowered
voice’ with an anecdote she remembered from the ARC training.

I was in the queue at the station, ordering my hot chocolate (like I always do
after voice training on Saturdays) and last Saturday, for the first time I didn’t
have to repeat my order. The guy heard me! It was awesome! It must be
working! (Participant comments, Cook 2008)

There were many similar phrases, anecdotes and examples scattered throughout the
Let It Out public workshops. I particularly remember the response by Sally when
asked by a workshop participant on July 26th how to find time to practise the
techniques. Her reply was succinct.

Do the exercises when you’re watching TV during the ads, or running up the
stairs, then you just do it automatically and don’t have to think about it!
(Journal notes, 2010)

In the theatre, Zarilli’s concept of the aesthetic outer body is experienced as
character. The ‘hot chocolate’ story became a legendary tale for the ensemble and
symbolised their journey towards vocal empowerment through Jenny’s ‘character’.
The enactment of the ‘hot chocolate’ story by the whole ensemble, which was
witnessed by all workshop participants, generated shared knowledge about the
problems of ‘being heard’. This story clearly demonstrated the integration of the
kinaesthetic and aesthetic paradigms of the adapted actor vocal training techniques
for young deaf adults. The Let It Out ensemble enacted the ‘hot chocolate’ story in
front of the workshop participants at the end of the first public workshop on July 26th
and every subsequent public workshop. It showed the embodiment and transference
of actor vocal training techniques for young deaf adults to every day life. The story
included a ‘before and after’ scenario. In the ‘before’ scene Jenny demonstrated not
being heard at the counter. We then saw her being reminded by the ensemble to
consciously apply the actor vocal training techniques in her body. The ‘after’ scene
validated her embodied approach to speaking when she was then ‘heard’ and
received her hot chocolate without repeating her order.
Eisner (1985) maintains that the aesthetic relationship between form and content is a way for things to be known. Form and content are inextricably linked in actor vocal training techniques through physical and vocal gesture, tempo and spatial relationships. The above scenario exemplifies the way each technique created its own purpose through an aesthetic experience which engaged the imagination and the senses. Subsequently, this allowed the Let It Out ensemble to perceive the efficacy (or its limitations) of the training from their lived experiences.

7.6 Integrated kinaesthetic learning through an aesthetic experience

In developing her Aesthetic Framework, Judith McLean (1996, p.14) posits three central principles that she identifies for the drama classroom. Their application is particularly useful to the Let It Out context.

The importance of dialogue which demands the ensemble’s active participation in creating the public workshops from their experiences.

The importance of experiential learning and teacher/students working as co-artists. In this project, kinaesthetic learning of the techniques and establishing the ensemble as co-artists with the teacher in the enquiry are privileged.

The importance of critical reflection whereby the role of the young deaf adults as participant-researchers enables a reflection in and upon action through participatory action research.

Habermas (2005) asserts that the aesthetic experience can offer more than the critics’ judgements on taste. It can intervene in ‘cognitive procedures and normative expectations’ (p.171) when it is related to lived experiences. By disrupting the normative expectations of expertise on voice and speech skills, the aesthetic experience of the Let It Out workshops provided a new way of learning voice and speech skills for deaf teens and professionals in the field of deaf education, audiology and speech pathology. Indeed, the placement of an aesthetic experience from the very beginning of the workshop with the ‘shattering of expectations’ (p.70) was the way in which the learning was transferred. Similarly, the Let It Out ensemble were ‘making' and ‘presenting’ (Dewey cited in Boydston et al, 1980) the techniques during the workshops by requiring their participants to engage in an aesthetic experience in
order to understand how the knowledge and skills in the body were created and transferred.

According to Dewey (1934, cited in McLean 1996) aesthetic experiences can only be called 'aesthetic if there has been new knowledge generated'. The placing of the workshop in a theatrical context with light defining the artistic space (or in the case of workshops external to the VCA, an empty classroom or meeting room devoid of tables and chairs) realigned the normative expectations of all workshop participants. These spaces enabled the integration of kinaesthetic learning to be prioritised through an aesthetic experience. By foregrounding kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience, the ensemble demonstrated that learning about the voice through sensorimotor perception could not be separated from the aesthetic experience in which it is located. The relationship between these two elements generated new knowledge about ways of enhancing the experience of using the voice for non-hearing young adults in a hearing world.

In addition, Hanan (2003, p.2) describes an aesthetic pedagogy as both 'a form of cognitive enquiry' and 'affective expression'. Aesthetic experience therefore can challenge the way we know something by constructing, interpreting and creating knowledge from what Hanan describes as the 'inside'. The transference of skills and knowledge about the voice from the deaf vocal trainers to the public workshop participants was grounded in the exposure to an aesthetic experience through kinaesthetic learning. Therefore, the deaf vocal trainers were constructing their knowledge of the hearing impaired voice through the outer experience of the form of the techniques and their inner subjective understanding as they re-created the techniques. This kind of investigation is not concerned with rational discourse about the voice but provides time and space to integrate the cognitive and affective responses to the voice. Thus, the transference of the adapted actor vocal training skills was through the engagement with the 'artistic form' through the 'senses' (Abbs 1987).

The critical incidents I have shaped into narrative vignettes in this chapter provided me with acute insights into how the deaf vocal trainers' bodies had become performative texts, signifying through the kinaesthetic and aesthetic elements of the training the ensemble’s myriad interpretations of an embodied presence of breath,
phonation, resonance, articulation and intonation. The Let It Out ensemble wished the workshop participants to have an immersive experience through kinaesthetic learning of adapted actor vocal training techniques by demonstrating the non-hearing body as a ‘site of knowledge’ (Pelias 2008). There were moments when they thought this might not work but ultimately, the ensemble’s desire to practise and demonstrate their embodied knowledge to an audience of professionals and deaf teens became the driving force behind developing an immersive kinaesthetic and aesthetic experience. Moreover, their role as participant-researchers was crucial because their embodied cognition enabled them to critically reflect and act upon what would be effective for deaf teens and children.
Chapter Eight - Re-locating authority through a performative pedagogy

If the structure does not permit dialogue the structure must be changed. (Freire 1990, p.54)

This thesis began with an account of two previous studies which provided the catalyst for the Let It Out project: *Embodying the Voice: working with an actor with a cochlear implant* (Cook 2004) and *Vocal empowerment and effective communication: researching the effects of actor vocal training on young adults with cochlear implants and hearing aids*. (ARC 2007-8). The Let It Out project encompasses the period between February and July 2010 when I trained the hearing impaired adults from the Vocal Empowerment study to be deaf vocal trainers with the aim of applying the actor vocal training techniques to a series of public voice workshops from July to October 2010.

In Chapter Three I stated that the initial purpose of the Let It Out study was to promote vocal confidence and empowerment for deaf teens and adults through a series of public workshops using adapted actor vocal training techniques. It was envisaged that these techniques would complement a young hearing impaired person’s conventional speech rehabilitation. However, the development of the public workshops became more than a means to test the effectiveness of the actor vocal training techniques and they enabled me to arrive at a series of findings. These findings, which emerged during my training of the Let It Out ensemble, provided an understanding of the young people’s personal and collective identities as young hearing impaired adults through the embodied pedagogy of actor vocal training.

In Chapters Six to Eight, I analysed a number of critical incidents; these were synthesised into narrative vignettes and were structured around three emerging themes: *A way of enacting, A way of imagining* and *A way of being*. These themes provided a conceptual lens and a mechanism for reflective analysis of the embodied data. Furthermore, this structure offered a way to view the transference of the actor vocal training techniques from my body to the ensemble’s bodies alongside the social and cultural relations they provided through their lived experiences of deafness.
Specifically, these critical incidents woven through the narrative vignettes served to interrogate the nexus between the social and the artistic domains of the ensemble’s experiences within a pedagogical framework. This nexus was also crucial in the public workshops.

This final chapter draws together these three emerging themes to demonstrate how the Let It Out ensemble evolved as deaf vocal trainers. It is structured as a series of self-reflexive spirals of understanding that emerged during my training with the ensemble and were clarified through the process of critical incident analysis I undertook after the training had concluded. These self-reflexive spirals reveal how the authority of actor vocal training for this group of young deaf adults was re-located in their bodies through a performative pedagogy. The chapter examines how the performative nature of the Let It Out training enabled a pedagogy that was free from judgement of the non-hearing voice. A major finding of this study is that the ensemble’s embodied demonstration and teaching of the adapted techniques from actor vocal training was as important as the techniques themselves. The proposition that there is more than one authority on the voice of the young deaf adult is particularly significant to this enquiry. This study demonstrates the possibility of learning voice and speech skills for the young deaf adult through and with one’s peers and community.

8.1 The making and performing of knowledge

The voice is like the key to the gate of yourself. (Jenny, April 2010)

The first public workshop – July 26th

During the first public workshop to an invited audience of speech pathologists, educators in deaf education, audiologists, and creative arts professionals, we pinned the following statements the ensemble had written as a set of manifestos on the wall of the Voice Studio. They summarise the deaf vocal trainers’ goals for the future.

The reasons for our passion are numerous, from the love of discovering and using our voices to the understanding that comes from being a part of the majority, which is a rare occurrence for most of us. After experiencing the benefits first hand, we desire to ‘pay forward’ [a film they like] what we’ve learnt, experienced, practised and shared.
In the future we desire to work with speech pathologists, teachers of the deaf and in particular the amazing individuals with hearing impairments. We eventually hope to take this work directly to young people with cochlear implants based on actor vocal training, that we have learned, which has been modified for workshops that we have worked to establish and mould.

From prior research, this project has been known to benefit young hearing impaired people in so many ways and this current project is an extension of this research...the joy in the hearing impaired individuals in discovering their voice is priceless.

The project has the potential to become a program for post speech therapy lessons. Not only it improves voices, but it also builds up self confidence of the person within the group being able to trust each other to help themselves. I benefited so much from this, that I want others to also have this benefit. It is invaluable.

This project has a long term vision as well. Each grant, each additional support network, each added awareness of the project is a stepping stone towards our vision to integrate actor vocal training into mainstream speech training to offer more options for the young hearing impaired individuals, offering added benefits.

A major challenge throughout this participatory action research enquiry was how to demonstrate the ways through which embodied knowledge is acquired. My task as both researcher and facilitator of the workshops was to integrate the functional, social and performative aspects of actor vocal training so that the kinaesthetic and aesthetic experiences of voicing could be considered as inseparable from daily experiences. As we prepared the performing of this embodied knowledge, I was reminded again of Pelias’s (2008) reference to performance as a ‘way of knowing’ and that it is through embodiment that this ‘knowing’ is achieved. In April, the ensemble was adamant that the experience for the public workshop participants should be immersive. Thus, the demonstration of actor vocal training techniques in these public workshops became a participatory performance and integrated the functional, artistic and social, as essential elements in forging vocal empowerment and confidence for their community.

As the first public workshop of professionals drew near, the ensemble and I were faced with ensuring that the artistic paradigm of actor vocal training was viewed as more than a series of exercises and that the purpose behind each exercise was clearly demonstrated. By the end of June, I began to notice the ensemble’s
confidence develop with the workshop structure and the purpose and demonstration of the techniques was clearer with each rehearsal. Towards the end of the rehearsal period, I found myself in a position of facilitator, whereby my role was to guide and prompt. I knew that the major challenge was to consolidate two significant components: the social and cultural construction of meanings through their work as an ensemble and the kinaesthetic and aesthetic experience of the techniques as a way of developing embodied knowledge which could be transferred to social and public speaking contexts.

Many revelations about the perception of their voices developed following the creative development session in April. This session made talking metaphorically about the voice more possible. Up until this point we were experiencing the voice physically but in this session we moved onto a symbolic representation of the voice, which later became a significant part of the beginning of the first public workshop. The significance of this session is described in my journal entry below:

**Voice and metaphor**

*We are drawing a metaphor for our voices. Each person speaks to their drawing. Lawrence mentions that the voice controls your emotions and it is like a circle broken up into parts. Sally mentions that her voice is connected to her heart and it is filled with emotions and is linked to how you feel. Mary talks about the voice as soul and I mention that it reminds me of how we say we have a ‘lump in our throat’ when we are feeling emotional. Passions come through the voice, Mary contributes. Susan sees her voice as a secret garden – like a box it has secrets. Voice is one of the quickest ways to establish who you are, so the relationship between voice and identity is very important, she continues. But if you don’t use your voice, then others don’t know you. You open your mouth and ask for help, she adds, but as a deaf person she always has difficulty saying something if she doesn’t understand someone. My voice is a garden that I can change, she says. I am going along and then I want to plant some lilies. Jenny sums it up: ‘The voice is like the key to the gate of yourself’.*

*Naomi mentions that when she watches the video from the Vocal Empowerment study, she is struck by the use of metaphor to describe the voice and she posits that this is perhaps different from the approach in rehabilitation with speech therapy. We agree that this work is not so much about getting the sound ‘right’ as also exercising the imagination. Jenny comments that this is one way of getting hearing people to understand how it is to hear in the way they do. She says that the way she talks about her deafness to this group is very different from the way she describes it to a hearing person so metaphor is useful. Naomi adds that if they are going to*
be trainers then metaphor is what artists use as a way of understanding what they do. (April, 2010)

These responses indicate that the ensemble understood the artistic paradigm at the core of the training. The construction of the Let It Out ensemble’s narratives developed alongside their embedding of the technical and aesthetic skills of the workshop. Their stories of deafness started to unfold as they endeavoured to frame their experiences of the technical (actor vocal training), the artistic (the aesthetic experience of the workshop) and the social (the social relations of the group and the workshop participants). A significant finding of the study is that the group became agents of their narrative and simultaneously agents of their own learning. This narrative was foregrounded at the very beginning of the first public workshop when the professionals sat down at designated tables and drew their voices, which opened up a discussion on the voice led by the deaf vocal trainers.

Similarly, the ‘hot chocolate’ (p.130) story became emblematic of the training and provided a performative metaphor. As characters and actors in the scene, the story became generalised to a common experience. The significance of this scene demonstrated the lived experiences of the group and became a site for exposure. The ‘hot chocolate scene’ is an example of how the ensemble learned to transfer the embodied practice and knowledge of actor vocal training from their community to other communities of hearing impaired peers through a performative pedagogy.

8.2 Actor vocal training as a performative pedagogy

8.2 i  A way of enacting - Shifting the authority through ensemble practice

Pineau (1994, p.15) holds the view that the challenge of the performative is for ‘educators and students to engage not in the pursuit of truths but in collaborative fictions – perpetually making and re-making world views and their tenuous positions within them’. The performative context of the ensemble practice as an aesthetic and social performance had an educative purpose for the ensemble and the workshop participants, as it gave them the opportunity to make and re-make their world views of deafness. Therefore, the performative nature of the ensemble practice was counter-hegemonic because it allowed the deaf vocal trainers to privilege their embodied knowledge of actor vocal training. By observing the enactment of the techniques in
the body, the public workshop participants were exposed to an alternative discourse on voice and speech skill acquisition for the hearing impaired. I reflected upon this in my journal at the beginning of May:

_There is a clear understanding of the transactions that have taken place the week before. A keen understanding of the relationship between voice and identity which is at the core of what we are doing right now. I summarise by saying what it is we want our audience to understand: a sense of identity that is being built through the training that brings with it self esteem and self confidence. (Journal, May 2010)_

In _Pedagogy of the Oppressed_ (1970) Paolo Freire argues that there is an ethical imperative in pedagogy, which is about becoming more fully human. This implies that the lines between student and teacher must blur and that their defining relationships are emergent and not fixed. In Chapter Five, I described how the authority for the actor vocal training techniques shifted from myself to the deaf vocal trainers. This shift in the social relations and interrelations between my authority and the ensemble’s changed the nature of the public workshops. The group intuitively provided strategies for intervention and enhancement. Again, I am reminded as I conclude this thesis of one of the major goals of Let It Out, which I noted in my journal in April:

_We want them to experience what we experienced in the training. Otherwise, how will they understand? (Journal, April 2010)_

McLaren (1988, p.70) states that a ‘pedagogical practice always stands in relation to a dominant ideology and…construct(s) social relations around specific interests which uphold(s) a specific structure of inequality and asymmetrical relations of power and privilege’. He asserts that this dominant ideology defines what is accepted and legitimate knowledge. A performative pedagogy disrupts these relations of power and privilege. The workshop structure that emerged from the creative development session on April 24th challenged the legitimate forms of knowledge held by professionals of voice and speech rehabilitation for the hearing impaired. Consequently, the Let It Out workshops reconfigured the concept of what is legitimate knowledge when it is enacted through the lived body of a hearing impaired person.

Ensemble practice played a critical role in allowing every Let It Out participant to perform their knowledge of the adapted actor vocal training techniques. Whilst initially led by me and grounded in my embodied practice, the ensemble gradually took
ownership of the work in their bodies and began to lead each other and subsequently, their workshop participants through their own pedagogical approach. The workshop training and public workshops provided sites where existing epistemologies of speech and voice rehabilitation were implicitly deconstructed through a performance pedagogy. At the first public workshop, invited professionals were exposed to alternative approaches to voice and speech rehabilitation, which involved a shift from the hegemonic practices of professional participants to the embodied knowledge of speech and skills in the deaf vocal trainers. The performative pedagogy of ensemble practice permitted this blurring between received authority and embodied knowledge.

8.2 ii A way of imagining – Importance of artistic space

The artistic space: empty space (Brook 1996); open learning space (Monk 2011); sacred space (Schechner 2003 and Turner 2011), is space which defines itself. The content of what happens in these spaces is determined by a socio-constructivist learning environment, which is creative and collaborative. An important theme in this enquiry is that the artistic space is both a transitive space and a transformative space. In's definition (Popen, cited in Schutzman 2006), the transitive space enables active problem solving with the imagination as opposed to an intransitive space, where knowledge is prescribed. A transitive space, according to Boal, is a space where the imagination is allowed to create alternative realities. In the transitive space of the VCA Voice Studio, the skills and knowledge created by the deaf vocal trainers afforded them the opportunity to transform their embodied knowledge to the wider context of social speaking. The Voice Studio did not carry any resonance of previous rehabilitation practices but instead, memories of the effectiveness of the ensemble’s encounter with actor vocal training. The ensemble remembered the VCA Voice Studio as an artistic space where problem solving, discovery, joy, frustration, fun and disappointment with their voices occurred. Consequently, the ensemble was aware of their responsibility to solve the problems of delivery for the Let It Out workshop training model.

Initially, the artistic space of the VCA Voice Studio allowed room for the ensemble to create imaginative responses and to learn the techniques kinaesthetically. They developed physical forms which demonstrated the benefits of each exercise. The artistic space of the VCA Voice Studio enabled the group to imagine, retrieve, embody and then teach these physical forms. The forms did not change throughout the
delivery of the workshops despite the physical surroundings. These included a meeting room in a hospital, gymnasium at a school, or the conventional layout of a classroom. However, when the deaf vocal trainers re-organised the spaces and defined them as artistic spaces, the transference of skills was open-ended and subjective. These spaces became transitive and transformative and re-interpreted who held the authority over the participants’ deaf voices.

Significantly, in the hearing world, the ensemble’s non-hearing bodies are marginalised, but through a performative pedagogy, they were able to foreground and embrace their identity as young deaf vocal trainers. Every public workshop included the deaf vocal trainers’ lived experiences. Subsequently, the personal and the biographical became as important as the development and embodiment of the vocal techniques. This also engendered an embodied identity in the deaf vocal trainers, which was visible to all workshop participants. Furthermore, the artistic space as a transformative space for performance of the techniques and the participants’ stories meant that my role as expert (alongside the speech pathologist, audiologist and teacher of the deaf) was de-centred and de-privileged.

The transitive and transformative space of the public workshops also became a place to stimulate the imagination and provoke curiosity and reflection by subjugating the usual rehabilitation practices. The deaf vocal trainers and the public workshop participants both became ‘actors’. During the ‘silent lecture’ (p.70) of the first public workshop on July 26th, those with hearing loss established a performative pedagogical practice, which allowed the invited professionals to engage in adaptation and change. The ensemble insisted that the public workshops were an immersive experience for the participants. As such, they succeeded in creating a less static and more of an embodied, spatial event. The ensemble succeeded in demonstrating their desire for an immersive experience with the workshops participants through the integrated kinaesthetic and aesthetic practice of the actor vocal training techniques. This in turn subverted the dominant, normative processes that the Let It Out deaf vocal trainers and the participants had previously experienced with voice and speech rehabilitation.

The ‘silent lecture’ in the first public workshop with voice and speech professionals encapsulated the importance of the performative pedagogy. It provided the moment when the elements of ensemble practice, artistic space, and kinaesthetic learning
could unfold aesthetically. In the discussion surrounding the ‘silent lecture’, the ensemble was keen to make the professionals feel comfortable but equally, they wanted them to feel that there was something different about to happen. They were clear that they wanted to subvert the expected workshop/conference experience. During the ‘silent lecture’ the deaf vocal trainers became the audience who ‘hears’ and the hearing audience was lost in silence. The intention was to replace the authority over voice and speech through role reversal. The ensemble had claimed their way of teaching and knowing by establishing their performative pedagogy. The meta-narrative of the ‘silent lecture’ at the first workshop took place through a performative reflexivity. Whilst the Let It Out ensemble were enacting the training, they were at the same time looking at themselves.

**8.2 iii A way of being - Kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience**

The deaf vocal trainers often asked what would happen if they forgot a sequence, or did not do the exercises in the correct order, or forgot the script they had written and learned which allowed them to remember the details of their particular sequence, or if participants asked them questions they could not answer. Rather than answering these questions directly, I urged them to rely on what they intuitively and instinctively knew and reminded them that more often than not the body knows before the mind. I was aware that my role was to help them relate their embodied knowledge to their sense of self and vocal identity when they led the workshops.

In Chapter Seven, I referred to Penny’s frustration and ultimate success in trying to integrate the functional and the aesthetic. Fuchs (1996, p.89) provides a useful reminder of what happens with a text of any performance: ‘Text becomes an actor…and as it acts, its presence is characterised by interruptions, lapses, memories, tellings and re-tellings: it is a presence devoid of absolutes’ The workshops and rehearsals were like a ‘text’ through which the telling and re-telling of memories were full of contradictions and frustrations woven into every workshop. Therefore, in Fuchs’ terms the ensemble’s bodies were performative texts signifying through the collective kinaesthetic terrain of the training the group’s myriad interpretations of breath, phonation, resonance, articulation and intonation.

The notion of knowledge being received and perceived through the body before it reaches our conscious awareness was significant for the deaf vocal trainers learning
how to teach. Group knowledge and embodiment of the practice started to emerge through what Crowdes (2000, p.27) terms a ‘conscious embodiment’, which ‘implies an integrity of mind, body and action accompanied by some awareness of the nature of these connections in the broader social context’. Moreover, the integration of the cognitive knowledge, technical acquisition of the actor vocal training techniques, and the embodied knowledge through ensemble practice allowed for an awareness of what was happening to their voices rather than a standard to which they had to aspire. This embodied knowledge created a performance text in their bodies. This performance text integrated the kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience of the techniques and simultaneously expressed their feelings of deafness. Thus, the Let It Out performance text presented a challenge to conventional ways of understanding speech rehabilitation for every participant they worked with in the workshops.

**Actor vocal training as a critical pedagogy**

The Let It Out deaf vocal trainers transferred the actor vocal training pedagogy to the public workshops with young deaf teenagers, providing them with the opportunity to hear their voices subjectively rather than normatively. Thus, in the context of the Let It Out study, a performative pedagogy can also be viewed as a critical pedagogy as it subjects structures of power, knowledge and practice to critical scrutiny. By providing a socially performative space as well as a ‘performance’ which manifested the embodied identity through the enactment of the actor vocal training techniques, the Let It Out workshop rehearsals and public workshops allowed the deaf vocal trainers to be heard. To summarise, the performative pedagogy enabled:

- a site for examination of the socially performative where the group brought to each training workshop and public demonstration their stories of resistance to the normative world of hearing;
- a site for utterances of resistance within the group once I, as facilitator, started to pull away and they began to own the training;
- the group to ‘re-cast’ (Hamera 2006) the conventional practices they were used to in other settings of rehabilitation.

The Let It Out ensemble subverted the normative voice by shifting authority and in doing so revealed the resilience and agency of the young deaf vocal trainers over the work. The performative nature of the public workshops showed that a different kind of
dialogic process of the voice in the non-hearing body could take place. The actor vocal training techniques, and the subsequent teaching of these techniques in public workshops, demonstrated other ways to learn, understand, communicate and practise voice and speech skills for the hearing impaired young adult through the body as a site of knowledge. The ensemble’s bodies became a locus of meaning where the hearing and non-hearing worlds and learning of voice and speech skills converged.

8.3 A performative pedagogy and Let It Out agency

In her analysis of resilience literature, Cahill (2002, p.25), suggests that:

…caring relationships, high expectation messages for meaningful participation and contribution are identified as the critical elements for a supportive community.

The outcomes of the Depression and Anxiety Stress Scales undertaken during the ARC Vocal Empowerment study (p.10) provided evidence of the value the young deaf adults had placed on working as part of a group and the benefits this had for them in terms of overall self-esteem and confidence. Similarly, post-project interviews from the Vocal Empowerment study had demonstrated the importance of being part of a group. One parent commented:

Group training was good for him, he enjoyed it more than speech pathology. They could learn off each other, support each other and when it comes from a peer, it’s different. Can be said more bluntly and it sits better because it’s given by someone who has the same problem so it’s accepted as a piece of knowledge and not criticism. (Parent interview, Cook 2008)

As I conclude this thesis, I am reminded of Sandra, who was very reluctant to attend the Vocal Empowerment study. Her parents urged her to participate believing it would ‘be good for her’. However, during the Let It Out project, she was always the first to arrive and often interrogated decisions about structure and communication. Her kinaesthetic learning was more detailed and nuanced despite her hearing loss being greater than some of the others. Sandra eventually led the ‘tongue tango’ and Articulation section which was one of the most challenging sections of the workshops in terms of the display of the body. Similarly, Sally’s ability to transfer the knowledge from the workshop training to the public workshops was impressive. Initially, she struggled with the section on Ritual but her ability to retrieve the physical actions of the exercises and talk about them with expressivity and clarity vastly improved and
she developed a sensitive and supportive manner of providing feedback. In the end, she proved to be a strong leader in the group. The ensemble’s support for Sally during her initial and tentative approach to the Ritual section enabled her to confirm what she knew in her body. I reflected on how the performative aspect of the workshop training had given her the confidence to take risks and be a strong facilitator firstly with her peers and then with the workshop participants.

By building a community of learning through the performative pedagogy of actor vocal training, the deaf vocal trainers also established more than just an alternative way of learning voice and speech skills. They created a more democratic transaction, whereby the lived experiences of the group sat alongside the dominant therapeutic and pedagogic practices in speech therapy and actor vocal training. There was a call for another narrative where other cultural and social transactions could be imagined. Moreover, a dialectical logic (Giroux 1983) occurred where transformation and critique became central to the pedagogic process. It challenged the mind/body dualism that is prevalent in speech therapy as well as some actor training methods. Schwandt (2000, p. 292) aptly describes this process of mind/body integration as:

> We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices and language.

A sense of control over the deaf vocal trainers' environment whether through the ensemble work during the rehearsal period or the transferability of this work to their social environments was critical to the understanding of the peer to peer training which took place over the rehearsal and workshop demonstrations. Their ability to take risks in this environment was crucial to developing the public workshops and to feel secure within the artistic space and eventually the public spaces where the activities took place.

The Let It Out model of actor vocal training sits on the margins of actor training and speech and voice rehabilitation. Nevertheless, the aesthetic experience of the rehearsals and public workshop demonstrations challenged the normative hearing body’s hegemonic power over a young deaf person’s learning experiences which were performative, public and democratic. Thus, in the Let It Out workshop training, the effectiveness was not exclusively in the actor vocal training techniques whose usefulness varied for each participant. The significance of the creation and agency of
the ensemble’s community through the training was equally important. The first public workshop of professionals demonstrated the deaf vocal trainers not only teaching the exercises and, in doing so, becoming teachers but also artists who used performative elements and understood the psycho-social and cultural significance of embodying actor vocal training techniques. The artistry of teaching the exercises required the professional workshop participants to become immersed in the work right from the beginning. The ensemble’s performative pedagogy challenged these participants to embody the experience of speaking, not as a ‘given’ act but as a demonstration that the acceptance of one’s voice is created through working as a community. The Let It Out deaf vocal trainers proved to all public workshop participants that being heard can be a joyous event when your vocal identity is strong.

During the workshop training the ensemble engaged in a critical reflection on how their voices were perceived in the hearing world. They told me that these experiences often left them with a negative feeling. However, the transformative learning that took place with the ensemble during this study gave these young deaf adults the opportunity to investigate their perceptions about their voices which were shared through engaging in dialogue with each other and, subsequently their peers in the public workshops. Their embodied, lived experiences of being heard held the authority in every space they delivered the public workshops.

In the context of the public workshops the deaf vocal trainers were able to examine, own and re-cast the authority of their voices. Subsequently, this empowered them to teach their embodied knowledge so that each public workshop they taught re-framed the learning of voice and speech skills through a performative pedagogy. The Let It Out study shows that this pedagogical re-framing provided far more than just transference of skills and knowledge. It created a transformative experience for the public workshop participants through different ways of ‘enacting, imagining and being’ in relation to the voice for a young deaf person. In this context the ensemble’s performative pedagogy provided a shift in power relations.

8.4 Deaf people can’t sing

Perhaps one of the most moving and significant moments for me in the previous study which transferred to the Let It Out public workshops, was singing an African song –
‘Oh Yeh Narimbo’ (taught to me by Frankie Armstrong). Commonly referred to as a ‘welcome song’, this song is joyous and includes a series of vowel sounds. Each phrase is accompanied by physical gesture. In the Vocal Empowerment study, I challenged the ensemble to learn this song and sing it with me. Within a week, I had one participant standing with me calling the song whilst the rest of the ensemble responded. By the next week, all had learnt it and one girl offered to lead the ensemble at the end of the session. This song became our theme tune or anthem. We sang it when someone left to go overseas at the end of the training and the ensemble sang it boldly in front of 700 people at the Cochlear Annual General Meeting, two performances in Melbourne and Sydney and the open workshop held during the training in 2007 and 2008 respectively. As it is a call and response song these young deaf adults were urging their audiences to join them in the celebration of their voices. Initially, I established this song as a challenge to the ensemble who all told me categorically that ‘deaf people can’t sing, no way, I never sing at school’ and yet when asked in an interview which parts of the actor vocal training they found helped them the most, one participant commented:

Singing African welcome song and ritual dance helped my voice speak more clearly. (Cook 2008)

For the 2010 Let It Out public workshops, the ensemble insisted that ‘Oh Yeh Narimbo’ should be included and that they should perform it in the way I describe above. The sense of vocal empowerment was evident each time they performed this song. They sang confidently and un-self-consciously and were determined that everyone who attended the public workshops should know that ‘deaf people can sing’. Oh Yeh Narimbo was the workshop finale. It featured as the last ensemble voicing session at the end of each public workshop. The performative act of singing encapsulated the kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience of voicing. Furthermore, it demonstrated the body as a site of knowledge for a hearing impaired person, that voice and speech were more than just cognitive acts but involved sensory communication and that a way of being, imagining and enacting with the body enabled a way to be heard.
8.5 Interrelated research findings

The question posed at the beginning of this thesis was: *How does a group of hearing impaired adults develop a training model for hearing impaired peers based on actor vocal training and what emerges for them through this experience?* This question together with a set of sub questions underpinning the enquiry concerned with their relationship to me as the actor vocal training expert, community practice and the deaf vocal trainers’ sense of vocal confidence and empowerment have been analysed through three major interrelated themes.

- **A way of enacting**: the shift from my authority and normative voice to the young deaf adults’ voices through ensemble practice.
- **A way of imagining**: the nexus between artistic and social space and the impact this had on the group in terms of their ability to develop the rationale for the structure of the public workshops.
- **A way of being**: kinaesthetic learning and aesthetic experience as the two major pedagogic tools of the training provides a complementary model of voice and speech training for those deaf young people who choose oral language as a mode of communication.

The findings from this research cannot be separated out into a series of neat components. They emerged from the Let It Out ensemble’s endeavours and struggles, which were at times, frustrating and, like the reflexive spirals of participatory action research were weaved through and around the group’s accumulative lived experiences. My role as the participatory action researcher during the development of the public workshops provided the potential to collect and analyse embodied data as I trained them to be vocal trainers. By situating the performative enquiry within the cycles of participatory action research, I could be mindful of the group’s lived experiences as they ‘performed’ their knowledge of the acquisition of the training in the non-hearing body. As we elicited those aspects of the training that the group found to be the most beneficial to demonstrate and teach in the public workshops, a significant finding emerged: the ensemble’s embodied demonstration and teaching of adapted techniques from actor vocal training was as important as the techniques themselves. This major finding brought into focus three other interrelated findings regarding the significance of this project. These emerged retrospectively when I used
critical incident analysis to identify the dynamic characteristics and accumulative experiences of the group.

1. The artistic paradigm of adapting, learning and teaching the actor vocal training techniques through ensemble practice re-organised pedagogical hierarchies of voice and speech skills acquisition in the hearing impaired body. The Let It Out group’s determination for the workshop participants to have an immersive experience shifted my authority on the workshop structure. Moreover, it shifted the authority on the hearing impaired voice at the first public workshop of invited professionals thus, re-casting more conventional practices.

2. The value of actor vocal training as a performative pedagogy enabled the group to share their stories of resistance and privileged a transformative experience for learning voice and speech skills for all workshop participants. A performative pedagogy offered a complementary model to the traditional models of speech and voice training for the hearing impaired. The group’s role as co-researchers privileged their lived experiences. Consequently, the workshop structure was transformed from a series of exercises, to an integrated performative workshop experience demonstrating the group’s sense of vocal confidence and empowerment.

3. The research methodology of participatory action research through a performative enquiry. This approach provides insights into the lived experiences of a group of young hearing impaired adults and makes a significant contribution to the scholarship of disability and arts education.
Intersections and further developments

The scope of this study went beyond the public workshops from July to November 2010. The workshops created particular interest amongst teachers of the deaf and parents. It also led to another relationship with a national deaf community organisation, Hear For You. They were interested in trialling the Let It Out workshops on a virtual platform with their industry partner, Australian Communication Exchange, to reach young deaf adults and children in remote areas.

Towards the end of 2010, I received two requests from schools with deaf units to develop the training further. Two deaf vocal trainers of the ensemble had attended these schools and we agreed that it would be an excellent idea to use these schools for research in order to develop and refine the training model. In 2011 we conducted an evening workshop for parents and staff at one school and as a result, Jodie (who had returned for this particular development) conducted a series of workshops for the school's deaf students in 2012. However, towards the end of the year, we realised that it would be impossible to sustain this kind of intensive delivery.

In 2013, the Australian Communication Exchange, (the industry partner for Hear For You) provided technical support for virtual delivery of the public workshops. The Let It Out deaf vocal trainers together with me, Ivanka, and Naomi developed a series of on-line modules entitled: *Hear Me Out! Developing an on-line Peer Support Program for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Teens.* The *Hear Me Out!* project was funded by the Institute for a Broadband Enabled Society at the University of Melbourne. Associate Professor Robyn Woodward-Kron from the University of Melbourne provided discourse analysis on the project. The online modules were trialled over four weeks to thirty hearing impaired participants. The *Hear Me Out!* teaching modules were completely written and performed by the deaf vocal trainers. Jodie returned to the *Hear Me Out!* project and contributed to one of the modules. The *Hear Me Out!* participants who participated online once a week over four weeks, welcomed the opportunity to be taught by their peers and commented in the post project survey that they found it a less stressful way to improve their voices. Two teachers of the deaf also participated in the trial and commented that they would use these modules as support materials when teaching young deaf adults presentation skills.
In collaboration with Dr. Woodward-Kron, I wrote a paper published by IBES entitled: *Hear Me Out! Enhancing social and inclusion and wellbeing for deaf and hearing impaired teens through an online peer support program* (Cook and Woodward-Kron 2013) (See Appendix 6). This paper outlined the challenges and success of using broadband technology for the delivery of highly interactive training. It identified a number of strategies that could be developed to build upon and enhance the content and context of the online delivery of the Hear Me Out! modules. Significantly, the paper advocated the need for further research into broadband technologies continue to be explored by educators of the deaf and hearing impaired as a means for delivering self empowerment programs to hearing impaired young people in remote settings.

Since the *Hear Me Out!* paper was published, all those involved in the Let It Out and Hear Me Out! studies have pursued their own paths. Most have completed their tertiary studies; two have had babies but we are still in touch.

**Final thoughts**

As I reflect upon the immersive and intense years I spent with this marvellous group of young people, I am aware that any attempt to translate this long project into written form will never fully capture the experiences we shared. I am in a different time and place right now as I write this thesis. My words cannot really convey the enthusiasm, the touch, the delight, the puzzled and joyous looks in the ensemble’s eyes that my emotional memory evokes. I believe this is truly what performative and transformative learning and teaching processes are – a way of knowing in your bones that bypasses any attempt at rational discourse and eloquence of speech or writing. It brings about lasting change.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

ARC SUMMARY REPORT 2007

Vocal empowerment and effective communication: researching the effects of actor vocal training on young adults with cochlear implants and hearing aids

This project is a unique collaboration between voice professionals from the related fields of audiology, speech pathology and actor voice training. An inter-disciplinary team will investigate the effect of voice training techniques for actors on young adults with cochlear implants and hearing aids, making an important contribution to existing practices of habilitation. This research aims to assist young adults to integrate new hearing technologies into social, educational and employment contexts. Through the innovative mix of voice research methods from the sciences and performing arts, this project will enable young people not only to hear, but also to be heard.

B2

Summary of original objectives of project

The primary aims of the project are: - to adapt techniques from the discipline of actor voice training to the habilitation of young adults with cochlear implants and hearing aids. - to research and measure the effects of adapted voice training on cochlear implant recipients and hearing aid users, in terms of speech production and psychosocial factors; - to further develop an integrated cross-disciplinary framework
for the evaluation of vocal quality.

PART A  PART B

Describe briefly the significance, results and outcomes of the project.

Significance: This project has successfully integrated professional expertise from the fields of medicine, creative arts and industry and applied that expertise to solving an outstanding challenge: how to improve the speech, expressivity and confidence of adolescent cochlear implant users. This project is of national significance in providing a successful new rehabilitation scheme for young adults with cochlear implants.

Results: The results of the project can be split into 2 main areas: psychosocial benefits and; physical benefits to speech production. Psychosocial benefits of participating in the vocal training programme included a significant reduction in stress (as measured using the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale), a strengthening of identity for the research participants (fostered by working as part of a group with other adolescents with cochlear implants) and increased confidence in using their voices in public spaces. Benefits to speech production included significantly better voice pitch control, better expressivity (through use of wider pitch span), and a significant decrease in speaking rate. Changes to vowel and consonant production moved towards greater intelligibility but failed to reach significance.

Outcomes: A DVD of this training programme has been made and is available to educators through Cochlear Ltd.

D3

Did the project lead to exciting new research directions, innovations and/or collaborations, and/or lay the foundations for new research and/or new partnerships?

Yes

If yes, please briefly describe how.

This project was the first collaboration between the Dept. Otolaryngology (UniMelb), Cochlear Ltd and the Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts (Unimelb) and was considered highly successful by all parties involved. The collaborators are keen to
continue exploring the benefits alternative rehabilitation strategies may offer and are looking to continue research in this area in the future. Benefits to pitch control observed after the training programme have led to Research Assistant Colleen Holt beginning a PhD in the Depts of Otolaryngology and Linguistics, investigating the perception and production of pitch in cochlear implant users. This PhD is due for completion mid-2011. Due to the success of the vocal training programme among the research participants, the Melbourne Cochlear Implant Clinic of the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital is now investigating ways in which the programme may be introduced as a rehabilitation option for its adolescent patient cohort.

Are there identifiable national benefits--including economic, social, cultural and/or environmental contributions--resulting from this project? Yes

If yes, please describe briefly the national benefits.

This project has introduced to the national community a training scheme, which offers significant psychosocial benefit to hearing-impaired adolescents. Barriers to social inclusion for hearing-impaired teenagers include not only the obvious hearing disability, but also the related issues of poor self-esteem, speech impediments related to hearing loss and reduced school-leaving options due to language and literacy difficulties. This innovative rehabilitation programme has directly addressed and made improvements to confidence and speaking ability in this group and as such makes a significant contribution to social inclusion in the Australian community.

Summarise briefly the nature and extent of the collaborative arrangements.

Include comments on the extent of the involvement of the collaborating partner(s) and how beneficial the involvement was to the outcomes of the project.

Each partner played a crucial role in delivering the training and assessing the outcomes. A close partnership was forged between the Dept. Otolaryngology and the Faculty of the Victorian College of the Arts (both The University of Melbourne) who worked closely to deliver the training (VCA) and assess the outcomes of the programme (Otolaryngology). The research could not have been conducted without each of these parties bringing their expertise in vocal training and speech analysis to
the project. Industry partner Cochlear Ltd's involvement was beneficial in providing much-needed funds for the programme and, particularly towards the end of the project, expertise was provided in the form of an evaluation of the scheme by both Assoc. Prof. Jim Patrick and the Head of Research and Development. Cochlear Ltd also provided monetary support to fly the research participant group to Sydney to perform for the Cochlear Staff and investors.

E3

Summarise briefly the ways the project fostered a greater understanding and appreciation of industry needs and expectations, including research training needs.

Research staff from the Dept Otolarynoglogy and the Faculty of the VCA gained an understanding of the ongoing need for research input on speech production needed by Cochlear Ltd. Investigating benefits to speech production afforded by device use is a new research area for Cochlear Ltd, and so this project offered research staff a first glimpse of the type of data required by Cochlear in order to inform its staff of the limitations and benefits offered by its products. Further collaboration on speech production in cochlear implant users is warranted, in order for Cochlear Ltd to be able to make use of the research findings to inform future improvement of devices.

E4

Publications and other academic outputs

Enter the number of outputs in each category. For programs other than LIEF, enter full details; for publications, include 'published' and 'in press' publications, but exclude 'forthcoming' and 'submitted' work.

A1  Book—authored research

A2  Book—authored other

A3  Book—edited

Geraldine Cook presented "Can an actor vocal training program centred on aesthetic and kinaesthetic experiences lead to an improvement in vocal quality and increased confidence for young adults with cochlear implants and hearing aids?" at the 2nd Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Australian Society for Performing Arts Healthcare (ASPAH) on October 25th 2008.

"Vocal Empowerment" Geraldine Cook - Vocal Trainer and Researcher; Ivanka Sokol - Videography, Editing and DVD
Documentation; Jodie Harris - Actress and Facilitator Naomi Edwards - Performance Director

G  Computer software

H  Designs


J2  Creative work included in group exhibition, performance, recording or anthology

J3  Exhibition curatorship

K  Other academic outputs (in categories other than those listed above)  3  
1) Creative Presentation Seminar conducted by Colleen Holt and Geraldine Cook held at VCA School of Drama Southbank Campus UoM Nov 28 2008 to audience of invited scientists, artists and creative arts educators/practitioners. Presentation of results and creative work presentation. 2) Seminar for Dept Otolaryngology UoM Sept 12 2008 by Colleen Holt "Vocal Empowerment: Researching the effect of actor vocal training in young adults with cochlear implants and hearing aids." 3) Seminar for Cochlear Ltd. and Dept Otolaryngology UoM by Colleen Holt and Geraldine Cook "Alternative rehabilitation strategies for cochlear implant users: Actor vocal training".
APPENDIX 2

“Let It Out! Adapting actor vocal training pedagogies using a train the trainer model and action research!”

You are invited to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted by Geraldine Cook in the Theatre Dept. of the School of Performing Arts, Faculty of the VCA and Music at the University of Melbourne. You have been chosen because you recently participated in an Australian Council Linkage Grant..

Previous research that you participated in through an ARC Linkage Grant with Cochlear Ltd, our industry partner, demonstrated that adapted actor vocal training techniques had significant psycho/social and physical benefits for the participants involved in the project. The aim of this research is to take this work one step further by building upon the skills and knowledge of the participants who underwent the training and develop a model of training that could be integrated into a voice and speech program for the hearing impaired. This research is conceived as a pilot project to determine the viability of creating a training model adapted from actor vocal training techniques. This model will then be demonstrated to interested professionals from the disciplines of deaf education and speech and language pathology for the hearing impaired, and young hearing impaired children and teens with a view to establishing a team and applying for another ARC Linkage Grant to develop an integrated program to be used in schools, hearing units and clinics.
The pilot study will consist of a series of vocal workshops conducted by Geraldine Cook with assistance from Jodie Harris, Naomi Edwards and Ivanka Sokol, all of whom were involved in the previous ARC study and who are known to you.

Some of the data collected in this pilot project will form part of Ms. Cook’s doctoral thesis, and has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

It is estimated the workshops will take place on Saturday afternoons from March to July 2010 from 1-4pm. This will enable those who live outside of Melbourne to attend.

With your permission, the workshops would be video-recorded. As we will be requiring your expertise to build the training program, you will be able to view these sessions and make comments and give feedback.

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity. Once the model has been developed from the workshops, we will be asking you to present this at a forum for interested professionals from the disciplines of deaf education, speech pathology and language and hearing specialists.
You will not be paid for your participation in this project. However, you will be reimbursed for any of the following costs that you incur as a result of participating in these workshops e.g. transport and refreshments.

Please be advised that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice.

If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and returning it in the envelope provided.

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Geraldine Cook on 9685 9238. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, on ph: 8344 2073, or fax: 9347 6739.
PROJECT TITLE:  *Let It Out! Adapting actor vocal training pedagogies using a train the trainer model and action research.*

Name of participants:

Name of investigator(s): Geraldine Cook

1. I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me, and I have been provided with a written plain language statement to keep.

2. I understand that after I sign and return this consent form it will be retained by the researcher.

3. I understand that my participation will involve vocal training workshops and I agree that the researcher may use the results as described in the plain language statement.

4. I acknowledge that:
   
   (a) the possible effects of participating in the vocal training workshops have been explained to my satisfaction;
   
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided;
   
   (c) the project is for the purpose of research;
   
   (d) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;
   
   (e) I have been informed that with my consent the **workshops will be video-taped and I understand that these video-tapes will be stored at University of Melbourne and will be destroyed after five years**;
   
   (f) my name will be referred to by a pseudonym in any publications arising from the research;
   
   (g) I have been informed that a copy of the research findings will be forwarded to me, should I agree to this.

I consent to this **workshops being video-taped** □ yes □ no (please tick)

I wish to receive a copy of the summary project report on research findings □ yes □ no (please tick)

Participant signature:  Date:
APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONS FOR THE LET IT OUT DEAF VOCAL TRAINERS POST TRAINING, AUGUST 2010

- Can you describe how you felt when we first started this project in 2007 and then again in 2010?
- How do you feel now?
- Significantly, what has changed for you in relation to:
  - The training
  - Your voice
  - The group
- If you had to describe the actor vocal training to an outsider who knows nothing, what would you say?
- Can you describe your voice in March of this year and now during and after the final workshop?
- Which particular aspects of the workshop sessions contributed to this? Do you think it was the:
  - Repeated practice each week
  - Goal of preparing the workshop and your leadership within a particular chapter?
  - Your place in the group?
- Can you describe moments when you felt the training was beginning to have an effect on you in terms of:
  - the group
  - the physical/vocal activities
  - or at any other times
- Can you remember a particular incident/s when this took place?
- Can you describe the group dynamic at the beginning of the workshop and at the end? What was different for you?
- What did you learn about yourself on this project?
- What did you learn about the other members of the group?
- What did you learn from the other members of the group?
- What motivated you to come every week?
• Which aspects do you think you need to develop in terms of running the workshop and eventually the training?
• What has been achieved that you didn’t think would be achieved?
• What wasn’t achieved that you think could have been?
• What does the group need to focus on now? How?
• Who, in your opinion, is the leader of this group now? In the workshop, what qualities do they have which makes you say this?
• How do you relate to me now?
• How has that changed? Can you say when?
• What do you need from me now?
• What do you understand the role of a research assistant to be now? Do you remember when you began to have an understanding of this role?
• I often mentioned moving from knowing the work conceptually to knowing it kinaesthetically? What do you understand this to mean?

The final part of the semi-structured interview would refer to the statements the group wrote a series of statements responding to these questions on March 6th 2010. Read back the statements and ask them to comment. See Appendix 2.
APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO ATTENDED THE 26TH JULY WORKSHOP

1. Had you heard anything about this training before you came to the workshop? If so, what?
2. What were your expectations of the workshop?
3. Which aspects interested you the most and why?
4. Within your own professional expertise of speech pathology, teacher of the deaf etc. can you identify any gaps in knowledge that you think could be addressed by the group?
5. How would you describe the knowledge and skills of the group leaders?
6. How could these be enhanced and/or extended?
7. Did the workshop feel rehearsed? Performative?
8. Do you remember moments of insight? Moments of spontaneity?
9. What effect did the space have on your interaction with the group leaders?
10. What effect did the structure have upon your understanding of the training?
11. Are there any aspects you think could be integrated into your own professional practice? Which Why? How?
12. Would you be interested in developing an integrated workshop using your expertise and skills and the expertise and skills of the group?
13. Would you be interested in doing further training in this kind of actor vocal training techniques.
APPENDIX 5

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FROM PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST LET IT OUT WORKSHOP MARCH 6TH 2010

What do you want from the research team?

- Learning different ways of empowering whether it is voice, self-esteem
- Learn to be a leader, researcher, critic and followe
- Feedback on our progress e.g how do we relate to each other in terms of participants, experts, companions.
- Confidence in the program for it to work; empowering each other, support within the group.

What would be the ideal outcome of these sessions for you?

- Just like a movie called “Pay It Forward”
- That many people regardless hearing impaired or not can benefit from this and from us and the pass it on to many other people (without our help)
- Be satisfied in the knowledge that other people can benefit from this workshop – seeing how happy it would make them.
- To pass it onto the next generation and expand our workshops to help more hearing impaired children to feel confident, heard and enriched.

Who is on the research team?

- Everyone! (Geraldine)
- Participants who were involved in the ARC project
- People who are willing to contribute their time and effort into our workshops and who have similar goals to the rest of the group.

What is your aim?

- My aim is to improve confidence in verbal communication and help other hearing impaired young adults achieve the same result.
- To pass on what I learnt in this training program so that they can lead better lives.
- To improve my voice work and to gain more confidence to talk more.
My aim is to ensure that this wonderful work does not disappear, that it is carefully passed on to the next generation and not lost in the process. Also to ensure that this training helps the participants lead better lives due to higher self-esteem, confidence etc.

**What do you want to get out of these sessions?**

- The skills to develop a model
- Draw on our knowledge
- Be able to present the demo in a professional manner
- To be able to speak accurately, confidently and understandably
- And learn to use the same methods to help others
- To learn from others (be open, compassionate)
- To speak more clearly
- To use my voice properly in everyday life and continue to learn how to demonstrate it to others.

**What is your aim?**

- To incorporate an inner confidence in everyone involved
- To establish myself as a successful consultant among fellow peers
- To show hearing impaired people that they have nothing to lose by finding their confidence and voice
- To have more confidence
- To establish confidence in young hearing impaired people, which will aid them in many situations in life and quite possible stop taunting at school or in the workplace due to the “difference” in their voice.

**What are the roles and responsibilities of the research team?**

- Be a leader and participant at the appropriate times
- Do own research and carry it out. Be prepared to give up valuable time and accept consequences.
- Accept criticism and improve
- Professional, observer, participant, expert, critic, researcher
• Work with each other and find out what we agree and disagree on e.g. techniques and be able to agree to disagree.
• Commitment 1pm start??
• Have fun!
• Yeah, to have fun
• To be able to work together as a team, work harder when one member cannot fulfil something, have fun and accept constructive criticism and learn.

Who is our audience for this research training? Who do we want to reach? Why?

• Anyone associated with deafness; clinically, educationally, or even the hearing impaired youth and their family possibly
• And hearing people to learn and understand more about deafness
• To anyone who is interested in this project
• We want this research to help people empower themselves in everyday life – it is a common skill than anyone can learn from and benefit from IMMENSELY
• Hearing impaired people who have low self esteem, disillusioned because other people find it hard to understand them.
• Hearing impaired youth, speech pathologists, teachers of the deaf, possibly parents and anyone else interested in the project.
APPENDIX 6

Hear Me Out! Enhancing social inclusion and wellbeing for deaf and hearing impaired teens through an online peer support program

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Author/s:
Cook-Dafner, Geraldine

Title:
Resonating voices: the joy of hearing and being heard Hearing impaired young adults as vocal trainers

Date:
2016

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