Artistry, identity and the Drama teacher: A case study using performance ethnography as mode of enquiry
Abstract

Drama is a compulsory subject in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia, with a rich history of dedicated and passionate educators. Despite this, little research has been done in recent times that investigates the professional lives of these drama teachers, and even fewer studies use drama as a method through which to do so. This research project reveals that drama teachers often experience feelings of being perceived by others as teaching a subject which is inferior, and whose value to schools lies more in extra-curricular activities than in the academic realm. This can result in teachers who are marginalised, yet whose time outside of the classroom is in demand.

This thesis presents the results of a qualitative case study, which investigated the experiences of seven drama teachers in Victoria, Australia who engaged in a process of ethnographic performance making about their professional lives, drawing on their own lived experiences as data. Interview transcripts, participant journals, creative artefacts and researcher observations were analysed to interrogate the responses and reflections of these teachers as they undertook a process of generating, analysing and presenting their lived experiences through performance.

Findings from the case study suggested that the process of ethnographic performance-making was invaluable to these teachers, bringing them to new understandings about their professional lives, as well providing insights into the context of their work. The ethnographic process gave them agency to find a voice through which to communicate the importance of their subject to others. Furthermore, it was found that the role of the audience was significant; the audience for the associated live performance came to new understandings about the drama teachers’ role and subject, and their responses energised the drama teachers to continue to advocate for the importance of their subject and identity within the school.
This study forms part of a growing body of research on the identity of the drama teacher, and contributes a crucial new dimension to the scholarship that supports professional development for teachers more broadly. Furthermore, it highlights how ethnographic performance-making can provide a framework through which all teachers may reflect on, and come to meaningful understandings of, their professional lives and possibilities for the future.
Declaration

This is to certify that:
(i) This thesis comprises only my original work towards the degree of Master of Education.
(ii) Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used.
(iii) This thesis is fewer than 22,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed: [Signature]
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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 A brief background

Drama is a compulsory subject in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia, with a rich history of dedicated and passionate educators. The late 1960s through to the mid 1970s saw drama teaching associations being established in each state of Australia, Victoria leading the way with the institution of the Victoria Association of Drama in Education (VADiE, now Drama Victoria) in 1968. In 1976 the National Association of Drama in Education (NADiE) was founded, which comprised the state and territory associations, advocating for Drama’s place in the curriculum nationally. Drama education in Australia was heavily influenced by British Drama in Education (DiE) and Theatre in Education (TiE) traditions. Many passionate and influential arts educators either emigrated (Ruth Large, John O’Toole) or visited Australia (Dorothy Heathcote, Gavin Bolton) from the UK, bringing with them a breadth of knowledge and skills. Since then, Drama has become a feature of the curriculum in all states and territories, and is a mandatory area of study for all students in Victoria (Saunders and Stinson, 2016).

Despite this rich history, little research has been done within the past decade to investigate the lives of drama educators in schools today, with even fewer studies using drama as a method through which to do so. In the 1990s, Donelan (1994) studied drama classrooms using an ethnographic approach; in the early 2000s, Anderson (2002) investigated the lives of early-career drama teachers using a narrative approach; and, more recently, Kempe (2012) investigated the motivations of drama teachers to pursue teaching as a career through questionnaires. The present study seeks to explore how drama teachers, using performance to investigate their professional role, can yield insights into the relationship between their teaching and artistic practices. By conducting a case study of seven drama teachers undertaking a process of ethnographic
I aimed to better understand the experience of drama teachers within the context of their schools, as well as examining the extent to which their professional lives related to their artistic lives.

The study will also explore how performance ethnography can provide an effective mode of inquiry for research of this kind, given that it privileges the craft of performance and performed experience as ‘a way of knowing, a method of critical inquiry and a mode of understanding’ (Conquergood, 2013, p. 190).

The study takes performance as a method for generating data about lived experiences, then interrogates those lived experiences, coming to new understandings about them. This case study seeks to investigate how utilising performance ethnography as a mode of inquiry can bring about new insights into the professional lives and practice of drama teachers.

The case study encompassed five, three hour workshops, with additional data collected through semi-structured interviews held prior to and after the workshop series. The participants were guided through a process of ethnographic performance making, drawing on their lived experiences as teachers. The first three workshops were dedicated to performance tasks designed to generate and analyse data in relation to key questions, which will be articulated in later sections of the thesis. The fourth workshop was analysis-based, as we mined the data for emergent findings and crafted a performance for an audience, which was then shown as part of the fifth and final workshop to colleagues, academics, family and friends. Immediately after the public showing, a discussion was held between the performers and audience, the substance of which formed further data for the case study.

1.2 The researcher

‘We encourage people to begin where they are – to begin not with answers but with interests, passions and questions.’ (Ely, 1991, pg. 16)
I came to teaching in an indirect manner. I undertook teaching studies alongside studying drama at university, viewing it as my 'back-up' job, should my lucrative dream career in the theatre not become a reality. After graduating from university I worked locally and internationally in theatre, and found the difficulty of gaining consistent and financially rewarding work frustrating. I turned to my secondary profession as a teacher as an intermediary means of employment, with the intention of continuing to pursue my artistic career. Aside from the welcome financial security that teaching afforded, I soon realised that teaching drama proved more exciting, satisfying and rewarding than any other work I had previously done. A passion for teaching drama quickly developed, and I felt excited to juggle my career in producing theatre outside of the school with the responsibilities of being a classroom teacher. This excitement was short-lived, as the day-to-day realities of teaching meant that there was limited time or energy to give to what had become my secondary career.

As someone who identifies as a drama teacher, and holds this as a central tenet of ‘who I am’, I came to be concerned with the professional lives of drama teachers based on my own experiences. As a teacher in a Victorian government school, I found myself frustrated with feelings of being on the fringes of what was considered ‘worthwhile work’ within the school (Wales, 2006). Having been taught, and fully subscribing to, the educational purposes and values of the subject, I felt a sense of frustration with the way that drama, and my subsequent association with it, was perceived within the school. Wales’ experience of hearing the cry, “Oh, you’re the Drama teacher!” spoken with humour or sarcasm, dismissal or disinterest, as if I were a joke, a freak, not quite a proper teacher,’ (2006, pg. 22) resonated with my own lived experience. It seemed clear to me that the value of the subject’s extra-curricular associations – the marketing value that public performances provided for the school – was held above the educational value of the subject itself, according to school leadership and teachers of other subjects.
Furthermore, I found that my skills, expertise and the time it took to coordinate and direct a production or play, or provide any other form of extra-curricular performance opportunity, in addition to my teaching duties were not taken into consideration. That I would undertake this additional role alongside my teaching duties, for no remuneration and limited time release, was simply taken for granted. I found myself conflicted with feeling that I was being unfairly treated with expectations that many (not all) of my colleagues did not have, yet knowing that if I did not provide this opportunity for my students, they would miss out on an experience that would contribute to shaping them as people.

Feeling disillusioned, I took leave to undertake postgraduate studies in education, determined to find a greater depth of meaning to the profession that I valued so highly. It led me to discover a breadth of literature around visual arts teachers and their relationship with their craft. Finding resonances with the themes of this literature in my own experience, I pursued this as an area of interest. Much of the literature indicated that it was an important part of these teachers’ practice to continue to make their own work outside of school in order to maintain an artistic identity, and that doing so would make them more effective and efficient teachers. I was keen to find out if the same principle could be applied to drama teachers, and whether creating performance work would be of benefit to them.

1.3 The pilot study

Prior to undertaking the present case study, I conducted a pilot study into the resonance of themes from the visual artist/teacher literature for drama teachers. The purpose of the pilot study was to investigate whether other drama teachers found the themes of this work as relatable as I did. The findings suggested a strong correlation between the tensions experienced by teachers of the visual arts and those of drama teachers. Using an online survey, participants were asked a series of questions relating to artistic practice and identity. What emerged from the study was a strong sense that the drama teachers surveyed identified themselves as either ‘arts educator’, or as ‘arts educator and artist’.
Respondents identified themselves as having an artistic title that sat alongside their educational one: director, musician or performer. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with Graham and Zwirn’s (2010) statement that a sense of artistic satisfaction was difficult to achieve alongside the professional requirements of teaching. Participants unanimously agreed that artistic satisfaction and the professional requirements of teaching were closely connected, and that balance of these two competing demands was difficult to achieve. Respondents claimed:

‘If you want to teach well, there is not much left in the tank for anything else, but particularly art practice.’

‘It is incredibly difficult to balance and I found the more I became involved in the school the more I gave over time from my own artistic practice.’

The findings from the pilot study indicated that an exploration into the relationship between drama teachers and their craft could also reveal important insights about the nature of this tension between artistic and professional demands, as with visual art teachers.

Whilst considering these common themes in the experiences of the drama teachers surveyed, I became familiar with approaches to conducting qualitative research involving performance. Of particular interest was what Ackroyd and O’Toole refer to as ‘a natural love match’ (2010, p. 3) between ethnography and performance. This ‘love match’ led to the development of a research proposal which became the basis of the current case study, centring on the question:

*How can the experience of ethnographic performance making by drama teachers be used to gain insight into the relationship between their professional lives and artistic practice?*

This research project therefore seeks to understand:
1. The perceptions drama teachers have of themselves within their professional contexts;
2. The role performance plays in coming to new understandings about professional lives;
3. The role the audience plays within this process of exploration; and,
4. The future possibilities for research of this kind to enhance the professional lives of drama teachers.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This first chapter of the thesis provides an overview of the study and introduces the reader to the researcher, as well as clarifies key terms to be used throughout. The second chapter introduces literature about the identity of visual arts teachers, the themes of which I compare to literature about drama teachers’ identities. I take up the suggestion from this literature to investigate the lives of drama teachers using their art form of performance. I then propose drama as a way of knowing, by referring to literature regarding the turn towards performance as a mode of data generation, analysis and dissemination in qualitative research. A justification for the use of qualitative case study methodology, as well as other interpretive and methodological choices made, are outlined in the third chapter. Here, I provide further detail about how performance ethnography was used as mode of inquiry.

Chapter four is a discussion of the key themes that emerged from the case study. The first section of this chapter explores the role that perception of others plays in the participants’ perception of their professional identities. Despite a desire from some participants to be able to practise artistically alongside teaching, more significant to them was an aspiration for drama – and ultimately their profession – to be seen by others as well-regarded and vital to the lives of their students. This is followed by a section that outlines the journeys of three participants throughout the workshop series. These examples within the study highlight how the experience of engaging in a performative process of identity
exploration can be beneficial to teachers in connecting them to a greater sense of professional self knowledge, or identity.

The next section of this chapter explores the presence of the audience at each stage of the workshop series. From the perceived audience that the participants held themselves accountable to in the earlier workshops, to the actual audience who contributed to the meaning-making in the performance, right through to the future audiences to whom the participants felt compelled to present their work, these audiences each played a vital role in the authentic and dialogic nature of the work that took place.

The final section of this chapter examines the impact of performing the work on the participants’ moral and political drive to share the work with the wider community. An overriding sense that the potential impact of the work had not been fully realised suggested possible avenues for future study.

The fifth chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the study and its findings, as well as making suggestions of areas for further study.

1.5 Clarification of terms

When using the term ‘teacher’, I am referring to a schoolteacher whose profession is to teach their specific area of specialisation such as visual arts or drama within a secondary school setting. I am not referring to artists-in-residence, nor visiting artists, which have already been the focus of a number of studies.

The terms ‘performance’ and ‘drama’ will be used interchangeably throughout, with the understanding that both refer to a live, performative mode of representation that is presented to an audience to explore and convey meaning. As such, it is understood that the craft and artistry of the drama teacher is performance making.
I use the term ‘performed research’ to refer to a broad category of approaches to research that are informed by performance. One such category, and the mode of enquiry for this case study, is performance ethnography. Throughout the thesis it will be referred to as ‘performance ethnography’ or ‘ethnographic performance making’ (Conquergood, 2013); a detailed definition for which can be found in the Literature Review.
Chapter 2 - Literature review

The literature review begins by providing an overview of the existing research into the identity of teachers of visual art and their relationship with their craft that informed the genesis of this study. It then goes on to discuss studies specific to teachers of drama, the themes of which suggest a correlation between the experiences of visual art and drama teachers. In doing so, an opportunity for a study that employs the craft of the drama teacher – that of meaning making through performance – is identified. This is followed by a discussion of theories and concepts around performed research that underpin the approach to this study.

2.1 The identity of the teacher of the arts

Historically, the identities of the artist and teacher have been linked via different interrelationships. Daichendt (2009) charted the connections between the two throughout history, citing contrasting attitudes towards the role and function of the artist, and that of the educator of the artist. From the Ancient Greek and Roman artisans whose trade skills were passed through familial generations, to the monastery decorators of the Middle Ages who operated within the master/apprentice system; the emphasis of the production of art was on trade, as opposed to ‘Educational innovation [which] was likely overlooked unless it increased production or income’ (2009, p. 34). While the Renaissance represented a time of artistic innovation, along with a belief in the arts as a form of intellectual discipline as opposed to mere trade, Daichendt contends that it was in the late-eighteenth century that an important shift in emphasis took place, with teachers of the arts being trained to replace masters in order to deliver new curriculum that would serve emerging schools of design (2009). By the twentieth century, the term ‘artist-teacher’ was in common (although not undisputed) usage to describe someone who is at once an artist and a teacher. Proponents argued that the term represented an educational philosophy that valued creative activity as an important aspect of the teaching profession, rather than one that placed emphasis on one role versus the other. On the other hand,
Daichendt cites Lanier (1959) as holding grave concerns ‘... that the term would have negative implications because art education did not belong to the field of education and classroom teachers might feel inferior to artists’ (2009, p. 37) This indicates that, for some, the dual terms represented two opposing schools of thought, rather than complementary ones.

This nexus between the identity of the artist and that of the teacher in the contemporary context is one that Thornton sees as being of particular interest. He holds that ‘... by the time students decide to train as teachers of art, their identities as artists have usually been developed’ (2012, p. 43). This artist identity, he contends, is one that holds autonomy, originality and individualism as valuable. This is supported by a society that places the artist outside of the confines of institutionalisation, as it is their understood role to question that which we have come to accept. Thornton questions how well these values of the artist sit within the educational institutions in which these artist-teachers teach.

When a student asked Laurie Ball, an art teacher, if she always wanted to be one, it led her to ponder the question. Outlining what she sees as a paradox between her identity as artist and art teacher, Ball professes:

> The artist in me is that internal, private self who strives to remain creative, autonomous, and individual. I am protective of my creativity, often resenting external demands of time constraints, job demands, familial relationships... To be a teacher, one needs to be outgoing, analytical, and confident. The introspection which is often characteristic of the artistic temperament must be set aside as the teacher focuses on the needs of his/her students. (1990, p. 54)

Ball sees this paradox as being one that, like art itself, is ambiguous in nature. According to her statement, for an artist, autonomy and introspection is key whist, for a teacher, a much more altruistic and outward-facing persona is key. She contends that these characteristics run counter to one another, implying that the differences between the two identities make them difficult to reconcile with one another. She continues to question whether or not she will always teach, but holds that art has and always will be a central aspect of her identity; a statement
that supports Thornton’s claim that the identity of the artist is more important to the participants in his study than that of the arts teacher.

In their study seeking to make sense of identity issues often plaguing teachers of the visual arts, Hatfield, Montana and Deffenbaugh (2006) also found that the artistic identity was something these educators held as ideal, but which was perceived by others as marginal to the school community. Colleagues and administrators were seen as affecting art teachers’ identity struggles the most, with a lack of knowledge about effective arts programs resulting in poor scheduling of classes, as well as a lack of financial support and recognition. The majority of art teachers in their study valued acknowledgement of their status as artist and teacher, both inside and outside of the school. For most, this recognition as artist was achieved through an ability to create art in an ongoing manner; something that was often stifled by the demands of being a teacher. For those teachers who wanted and were able to fuse the role of artist and teacher together, recognition of their artistic work by school administrators was extremely empowering. For those who wished to continue their artistic practice, but were unable to find the time or courage to do so due to their teaching roles, this resulted in an identity conflict that pitted the roles of artist and teacher against one another rather than working in tandem.

Imms and Ruanglertbutr, who also explored this role conflict, cite the commonly quoted Bernard Shaw adage, “those who do, do; those who can't, teach”; the assumption being that art teachers are failed or uncommitted artists’ (2012, p. 8). Despite a dearth of evidence to support such a claim, they suggest that this perception is one that is widely held in the broader community, and further serves to provoke identity issues for teachers of the visual arts. The move towards valuing the teacher above the artist means that ‘...the artist’s identity within a teacher’s professional practice can become invisible’ (2012, p. 8). They suggest that art education programs that assist students in maintaining and valuing the roles of both the teacher and artist by valuing artistic practice can be beneficial. They advocate for the early career art teacher to act as art maker alongside teaching, in order to close the chasm between the apparently
conflicting roles of artist and educator. They contend that ‘for many it is highly desirable – even mandatory – to make art as part of a teaching identity, but for many it proves correspondingly depressing and harmful if this can’t be achieved’ (2012, p.12).

Graham and Zwirn similarly promote an approach to balancing the identity of artist and teacher through ongoing art making practice alongside teaching. In the findings of their study into the art making practices of teachers of the visual arts they contend that ‘Most people considering the career of art teacher are educated to believe that they will be able to continue their artistic pursuits in tandem with their teaching careers... but the sense of artistic accomplishment acquired during formal art training is difficult to sustain in K-12 schools because of the time and energy that teaching requires’ (2010, p. 221). They found that mastery and expertise provided both resource and inspiration, not only for the teacher, but also for the student. For the teacher, practising one’s craft was a way of sustaining one’s teacher and artist identity concurrently and complementarily. For the student, having a teacher who understood the creative process in a current and productive manner meant that spaces of play, experimentation and mistake-making were created and encouraged, resulting in a more open and encouraging environment in which to develop their own artistic interests. Not only did their artistic practice validate them and their own identity in important ways, it opened up space for them to validate their students’ emerging identities through the art form.

Each of the authors calls for some form of professional development for visual art teachers that encourages art making alongside teaching, with Graham and Zwirn claiming that ‘there is much to be gained from the struggle to keep the artist alive, particularly if it contributes to sustaining art teachers’ interest in school learning as an extension of their artistry’ (2010, p. 230). Whilst no teacher should feel that not practising art making necessarily makes them a poorer teacher, these authors all agree that some form of artistic professional development can be of benefit for teachers of the arts in order to add value to their sense of professional self, and in turn their engagement with teaching.
2.2 Drama teacher identity

Whilst literature about the dual and sometimes conflicting identities of teachers of the visual arts abounds, studies about similar themes for teachers of drama are less prevalent. The following section outlines and evaluates three studies that explore different aspects of the identity of drama teachers, each either directly or indirectly echoing themes from the artist/teacher literature.

Wales (2006) has explored the role that the identities of drama teachers played in their teaching practices in schools. Using memory-work as the basis for her methodology, Wales investigated how the women in her study shaped their own perceptions of themselves as teachers. She refers to the subjective power relations at play in school environments. In doing so, she proposes that ‘teachers have a moral and ethical obligation to understand how their own [identities] can be imposed upon and influence their students’ (2006, p. 277). She paints a picture of the drama teacher as ‘a curious phenomenon... a part of the education system yet often experienc[ing] feelings of being apart from it’ (2006, p. 22). This echoes Hatfield, Montana and Deffenbaugh’s (2006) claim of the marginalisation of the visual arts teacher. Referencing the work of Donelan (1989), she reports the findings that some drama teachers felt burnt out and had to leave the profession, based partly on the belief that the marginalised position of their subject meant that they worked harder but with less recognition.

By way of better understanding oneself in relation to one’s professional identity, Wales advocates that teachers engage in a practice of ethical caring for themselves, not just others, as doing so can reveal more about their teaching. Wales’ methodological approach included a single workshop in which some of the teachers’ memories were interrogated through a dramatic exploration using the motif of the hero’s journey. The participants involved in this stage of Wales’ research felt that this aspect of the study was both enjoyable and empowering, perhaps due to the engagement of their craft as a tool through which to reflect and explore. Wales herself commented on how, when her own drama students were able to explore ideas over time that they were able to find deeper truths in
their work. This notion of using drama as a method to explore drama teacher identity was something that Wales suggested as a potentially worthwhile and interesting avenue for further study (2006, p. 337).

Cynthia Brown undertook a case study of an experienced drama teacher of over thirty years in a bid to find what could be learned from someone who had sustained herself in her profession when others had been unable to do so. She focused on exploring what had kept the teacher engaged in her work for so many years, the intention being to find what kinds of controls a teacher of drama can put in place to foster meaningful longevity (1999). Echoing Donelan’s sentiments from a decade earlier, Brown was concerned with finding out how some teachers were able to remain vital in the profession of drama teaching, when others were unable to meet and withstand the demands of the occupation (1999, p. 38). Collecting interviews, artefacts and field notes of observations, Brown concluded that two specific support systems contributed to the teacher’s longevity: one internal and the other external. The internal support systems were identified as: organisational skills; the ability to plan and be flexible; and, the ability to respect one’s own work alongside that of the students. The external systems that contribute to longevity, according to Brown’s study, are the influence of previous high school teachers, collegiality, and autonomy. Resonant with Thornton and Ball’s claims about the importance of autonomy to the visual arts teacher, Brown asserts that ‘Autonomy is perhaps the most important external contributor to longevity. Theatre teachers should be allowed the freedom to teach and direct creatively and without undue restraint. When a teacher is given autonomy, a sense of respect is implicit; respect is important for job satisfaction and longevity’ (1999, p. 39).

Kempe (2012) investigated through surveys and questionnaires the influences and motives of trainee drama educators to undertake training in the field, as well as how they saw performance relating to their developing identity as drama teachers. Like Imms and Ruanglertbutr (2012) he cites the statement that, ‘those who can, do; those who can’t, teach’, part of Kempe’s intention was to see how much that adage rang true for his respondents. Finding that only a small
percentage of his cohort had made any meaningful attempts at a career in the performing arts, Kempe concluded that drama teachers’ decisions to pursue their subject as an academic discipline in preparation for becoming specialist educators were more purposeful than simply going into the profession having failed as artists.

His respondents echoed the sentiments reported in Thornton’s (2012) exploration of visual art teachers that many had discovered their affinity for the art form of drama well before the age of 16, arguably before considering drama teaching as a career option. His findings about the trainee teachers’ understanding of performance in relation to their work as drama teachers suggested that there was an expectation ‘... that teaching could afford satisfying artistic rewards just as well as a career in the industry and perhaps on a more regular and even-keeled basis, while fulfilling their interest and commitment to the education of young people’ (2012, p. 530).

He refers to Schonmann’s model in which the self, role as teacher, and performative behaviours of character are seen as being at the core of all teachers’ identities, regardless of the subject they teach. The notion put forward is that all teachers should be trained ‘... on the grounds that the process of building a “character” [or professional identity] demands an aesthetic distance between “person” (the self) and “role” (the formal task) and in this distance a reflective process takes place’ (Kempe, 2012, p. 532). Here he posits that drama can be a useful tool for creating such distance and ultimately space for the character building identity work to be undertaken by all teachers.

### 2.3 Research and performance

Performance has long been an accepted approach to coming to know and understand human experience in the area of qualitative ethnographic research. Originating from cultural anthropology, traditional ethnography is a form of qualitative research that attempts to write about and represent cultures in order
to increase knowledge and social awareness (Denzin, 2003). In order to develop deep understandings about groups of people and how they experience the world, the ethnographer immerses her/himself in the culture and its inhabitants to create dense and layered accounts of everyday life. Ethnography is rooted in the epistemological view of empiricism and the notion that knowledge comes primarily from sensory experience, and is often then translated into written form. It is well described by Elliot Eisner who states:

Humans are sentient creatures who live in a qualitative world. The sensory system that humans possess provides the means through which the qualities of the world are experienced... out of experience, concepts are formed... Our conceptual life, shaped by imagination and qualities of the world experienced, gives rise to the intentions that direct our activities (2005, p.152)

In what is variously referred to as the performance/performative turn, performance came to be viewed as ‘a performative, dramatic framework, viewing culture as a verb, not a noun; fieldwork as a collaborative process, a performance; and knowledge as performative, not informative’ (Denzin, 2003, p. 28). In this light, subjective and localised experience is as valuable a form of knowledge as the universally generalizable, and performance is recognised as a revelatory act.

At the vanguard of this performative turn was cultural anthropologist Victor Turner. In coming to understand performance through his relationship with performance theorist, Richard Schechner, Turner was attracted to the conceptual lens of performance as it concentrated on the ordinary yet creative expressions of humans displayed in their everyday struggle for meaning (Conquergood, 2013). Turner stated:

If man is a sapient animal, a tool-making animal, a self-making animal, a symbolising animal, he is no less, a performing animal ... his performances are, in a way, reflexive; in performance he reveals himself to himself (Turner, cited in Madison, 2005, p. 149).
This performative turn towards better understanding humans and their contexts created space for a favourable relationship between ethnography and drama. For ethnographers, appreciating humans as multi-dimensional and subjective creatures means striving to find a method of reporting that allows for rich data to be represented. Dramatic reconstruction as a mode of representation allows for multiple stories and voices to be heard as well as championing human stories as alive, subjective and contingent.

One such form of dramatic reconstruction is known as the Ethnodrama:

...a word joining ethnography, and drama, [ethnodrama] is a written play script consisting of dramatized, significant selections of narrative collected from interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journal entries, personal memories/experiences, and/or print and media artefacts such as diaries, blogs, e-mail correspondence (Saldaña, 2011, p. 12).

In this definition, provided by ethnodramatist, Johnny Saldaña, ethnodrama is a way of reporting ethnographic findings that is chosen when the researcher or artist wishes to create a portrait of the lived experiences of the participants that is at once informative, as well as engaging both aesthetically and emotionally (Saldaña, 2011).

Sallis (2010) took up this method when he investigated how teenage boys perform their masculinities in a school drama classroom. Undertaking an extensive immersion in the drama classrooms of an inner city, co-educational government school, Sallis collected a variety of ethnographic data throughout a full school year. These findings were then analysed inductively, with the most relevant data to present the findings being crafted into a script as a means of reporting them to the community whom it represented. Sallis' principles for crafting the script were four-fold:

- The script would avoid incorporating any incidents that served the dramatic engagement of the script, but not the themes that emerged from the data;
• The dialogue constructed would be quoted verbatim from his recordings;
• The words and actions of participants would not be imaginatively reworked so that they became unrecognisable from their original context;
• The final script would be crafted with the anonymity of participants in mind.

(Sallis, 2010)

Throughout the process, these principles were negotiated due to both the style of reportage, and the nature of working closely with participants so as to ensure that they felt that the representation of themselves within the performance was a truthful one. This raises a tension within performed research as to whose purposes are best served in performance: those of the ‘insiders’ or participants who may wish to either protect their anonymity or be presented in a certain light, or those of the ‘outsiders’ or audience to the ‘truth’. In negotiation with those involved, Sallis amended his initial second and third principles, and imaginatively created composite situations and characters from what he had observed, in order to represent the findings that had emerged from his data through the analytical process he had undertaken.

The final script was non-naturalistic\(^2\) in style, with Sallis incorporating dramatic techniques that the participants were familiar with as students of this style of performance. These techniques also lent themselves to ‘providing a reflective voice for the participants and added a deeper subtext to the dramatic action.’ (Sallis, 2010, p. 199). The school’s senior drama students and teachers performed the script to an audience primarily made up of the student participants of the study, which was followed by a discussion of the themes in the play. This discussion added more data for Sallis to draw out his findings on masculinities in the drama classroom, but also informed the teachers on the gender dynamics within their classrooms. A benefit identified by the school’s drama teachers was that the accessibility of the medium allowed those with a lack of understanding of drama to develop an appreciation of the benefits of the

\(^2\) ‘Non-naturalistic’ is a term used in the curriculum for Drama in Victoria. It is defined as: ‘a broad term for all performance styles that are not dependent on the life-like representation of everyday life and is based on the work of Antonin Artaud (Theatre of Cruelty), Bertolt Brecht (Epic Theatre) and Jerzy Grotowski (Poor Theatre). It can allow an actor to explore and present ideas or stories conceptually.’ (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2014)
subject for students. Furthermore, a senior student commented that the performance felt like a natural way to inform drama students about themselves, as ‘...it kind of “speaks our language”’ (Sallis, 2010, pg. 202).

This example demonstrates a number of benefits to using performance as a mode of reportage, as well as some tensions present when conducting research in a performative manner. Sallis’ concern with creating composite characters and scenes within the representation of his research highlights a common tension between more positivist theories of objective data analysis and ‘scientific’ modes of representation, and post-positivist views of truthfulness and subjectivity in research. Tom Barone (1995) offers an argument for new forms of inquiry that accept previously dismissed elements of the arts – including fiction, symbol or metaphor – as being as valuable as more traditional or modernist perspectives. He cites Latour (1988) in arguing ‘...that scientific texts are as open to interpretation as literary texts’ (Barone, 1995, p. 171). He goes on to say that art takes a different view of truth than does science: engaging in another purpose of human enquiry, which is to question the values associated with knowledge in a particular world view. As audiences already associate art with the notion of verisimilitude – an appearance of being true or real - they are equipped with the skills to step into the virtual (fictional) world that is based on real events yet created by the researcher, with the understanding that it is not a literal rendition of people and events. They no less partake in the process of meaning making and, by representing through the fictional, this can be of benefit to audiences in a way that a literal representation may not. As opposed to representing real people and contexts that the audience must simply observe, the distancing through fiction extends an ‘...invitation to the reader to play an active role in constructing what the text should mean and to whom and what it should refer’ (Barone, 1995, p. 173).

Reporting of findings is just one way that performance can be used as a research tool, and there are many terms associated with performed research. According to Saldaña, several other labels are often associated with, or used in place of, ethnodrama. Citing ‘verbatim theatre’, ‘docudrama’, and ‘performed ethnography’, among others, he suggests that, depending on which text you read,
these can be used interchangeably (2011). Ackroyd and O’Toole (2010) consider what determines the use of different labels employed to describe research that is performed. In differentiating between related terms, they conclude that the distinction often lies in the motive, which then sometimes results in different practices. For them, the agenda behind ethnodrama is to deliver ethnographically derived and analysed findings through performance. This is different to performance ethnography, which is driven by equally valuing both performance and ethnography throughout the entire research process of generating, analysing and presenting data.

In a seemingly natural progression from the work of Turner and Schechner, Dwight Conquergood wrote extensively about performance ethnography. For him, performance affords ethnography an enhanced perspective on the physical nature of human culture, because of the way in which it honours the intimate, the dynamic, the contingent and the historical when investigating embodied experience. As he argues, ‘Another way of saying it is that performance-centred research takes as both its subject matter and method the experiencing body situated in time, place, and history’ (Conquergood, 2013, p. 92).

Performance ethnography immediately invites participants into the research process, offering a performatative and embodied approach to knowing that draws out responses that are tacit and intuitive, as well as cognitive. For example, in the work of Sinclair, Donelan, Bird and Wales, the four researchers engaged in a process of collecting interview and historical data about experiences of female educators in a university. This data was then analysed through various drama techniques such as: physical and symbolic representations of data; spoken verbatim text; improvisations; and, role-play. They analysed the data from ‘inside’ as performers, as well as from alternative perspectives as audience and theatre-makers (Sinclair et al, 2003, p. 91). This process opened up space for dialogue in the analysis process, allowing for a critical approach to both scrutinizing the data and performance creation. It also opened up a tension common within performed research practices: ‘The problematic, enticing and complex relationship between the needs and demands
of recording and representing the life of a community and those of making a play.’ (Ackroyd and O'Toole, 2010, p. 59).

The study was as much an investigation of methodology as it was about women in academia, and sought to interrogate the tensions often apparent in conducting research using performance. These tensions included: the desire to move beyond a literal presentation of ethnographic data towards a more fictional narrative in which to house emergent themes; a researcher's ability to locate truth that is independent from their own construction of meaning; and, the ability to achieve an academically acceptable level of rigour through the ethnographic performance making process (Sinclair et al, 2010). Although there are no obvious antidotes to such concerns, 'There are ways of circumventing some of these problems, and diffusing the tensions, such as using the researchers’ positioning as part of the performance...' (O'Toole and Beckett, p. 55). This is precisely what the researchers sought to do. Instead of shying away from these tensions, they were placed centre stage within the performance with the creation of a character called 'The Researcher', who drew attention to some of the methodological questions that the group navigated throughout the process. This was their approach to addressing some of the issues that can arise in an ethnographic performance making process.

The final product was one that utilised the aesthetic production values to deliver a polyvocal script that the women themselves performed. The audiences to whom they performed their script were afterwards invited into a discussion about themes the play raised, as well as the research process, the outcomes of which became a critical aspect of the dialogic nature of the research outcome. In this example, drama processes are a way to both discover and communicate, with performance being valued as a way of coming to understand ethnographic research cognitively, as well as corporeally and figuratively (Sinclair et al, 2003). The approach is reflexive throughout the entire process, giving rise to the dialogic nature of both the human and research experience.
Part of Conquergood's (2013) argument for the value of ethnographic performances – or what he also refers to as ‘cultural performances’ – is that they provide ‘...an alternative to the atemporal, decontextualized, flattening approach of text-positivism’ (p. 189). For him, the performance paradigm allows for subjects and positions to be conveyed and challenged in a manner that invites and provides opportunity for dialogue and discussion. Conquergood cites Jackson (1989, p. 184) and states that:

‘the idea that “there is nothing outside the text” may be congenial to someone whose life is confined to academe, but it sounds absurd in the village worlds where anthropologists carry out their work. In other words, textualism tends to ignore the flux of human relationships, the ways meanings are created intersubjectively as well as “intertextually”, embodied in gestures as well as in words, and connected to political, moral, and aesthetic interests.’

(Jackson cited in Conquergood, 2013, p. 188)

With this move towards inviting other modes of representation into the world of academia, ideas of relationships and intersubjectivity are opened up, as well as the recognition of the political and moral nature of the individuals involved in the work. According to Denzin, performance ethnography is by its very nature political. Those involved in work such as this have undeniably subjective motivations and relationships with the world they interrogate. By engaging in embodied processes of data generation, analysis and representation to an audience of interested parties, ‘Performance ethnography is more than a tool of liberation. It is a way of being moral and political in the world’ (Denzin, 2003. p. 224).

2.4 Conclusion

The first part of this literature review provided a background to the research discussing literature that explored issues around being a teacher of the visual arts, with a focus on the relationship between teachers’ professional and artistic
identities. A comparison was made between this work and that which relates to similar themes for drama teachers. The literature review has identified that, whilst there is a substantial body of research into visual arts teachers exploring their identity through their art making, there is a dearth of research into the closely related plight of drama teachers utilising the art form of performance. This highlights the need for further investigations into the lives and complex identities of drama teachers, which draw upon their own craft as a methodological tool.

The latter part of the literature review was dedicated to proposing drama as a way of knowing. That performance can be used in to generate, analyse and present rich data in a dynamic and multi-dimensional was supported by explorations of ethnography, ethnodrama, and performance ethnography. In explicating theories and concepts around performed research, I have established the foundations for a case study that employs performance ethnography as a mode of enquiry into the lived experiences of drama teachers. The following methodology chapter will explain this approach in further detail.
Chapter 3 - Methodology

‘Case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of object to be studied. We choose to study the case’ (Stake, 1994, p. 236)

This chapter explores the methodological choices underpinning the present study. The study had two primary aims. Firstly, it sought to establish whether drama teachers could gain meaningful insights into their professional identities by engaging in performance processes. Secondly, it investigated if performance ethnography could provide an effective mode of inquiry for such a study, given that it privileges the craft of performance and performed experience as a way of coming to know and understand.

The question underpinning the research project was:

*How can the experience of ethnographic performance making by drama teachers be used to gain insights into the relationship between their professional lives and artistic practice?*

### 3.1 Qualitative Research

In order to explore the research question, a qualitative approach was appropriate as it allowed for the lived experiences of people, and the meanings that they attach to those experiences, to be explored with the necessary analytical depth. Yin (2015) claims that qualitative studies can attend to the contextual richness of these experiences, enabling the researcher to understand, not only the every day lives of a variety of people and their contexts, but also how they themselves view them. In a study such as this, attempting to understand the experiences of seven individuals through quantitative measurement would be to neglect the sentient and heuristic aspects of those experiences. Alternatively, a qualitative approach that is reliant upon the sharing of human perception and understanding can allow for a more complex and
nuanced story to be told, one that invites and allows for multiple voices to be heard and valued (Stake, 2010).

Cresswell (2013) metaphorically describes qualitative research as a fabric, woven together using colourful, minute threads of different materials and textures. In this study, the participants and their experiences form the threads of the fabric, each unique in their origins and representations. In Cresswell’s metaphor, the loom on which the fabric of qualitative research is woven reflects the assumptions and interpretive frameworks that hold a qualitative research study together. Added to this is the variety of creative methods that a researcher might use to achieve their aim. Despite differences between qualitative researchers’ approaches, all are driven by the goal of making the world that they study visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

This notion of qualitative research gives rise to the position of the researcher as a craftsman or artist. In weaving the fabric, painting the picture, or indeed directing the theatre that is qualitative research, the artist/researcher is driven by an imperative to select the methods at their disposal by which to best achieve her or his aims.

3.2 Case Study methodology

The methodological design of the current case study served to support my goal of understanding the experiences of the seven drama teachers within the workshops. Stake (2000) cites Louis Smith in defining the case as “a bounded system”, drawing attention to it as an object rather than a process... thinking all the while that [the case] has boundary and working parts’ (2000, p. 2). In the present study, the case is a series of five workshops conducted with the participants, concluding with a performance for an audience of colleagues, academics, friends, and family. As such, the workshops became the sites of the data collection, with additional data generated in the form of pre- and post-workshop interviews with each participant, as well as reflective journals that the
participants submitted at the end of the workshop series, and my own participant reflective observations.

The case-study approach allowed for flexibility to determine the methods by which to best document these experiences, and to analyse them in relation to the aims of my research. This methodological flexibility evokes an image of the researcher that aligns with Denzin and Lincoln’s (2000) notion of the bricoleur. Rather than adhering to an inflexible methodological design, determined prior to the commencement of the study, I was able to design activities suitable to my needs, and then be flexible and reflexive in response to the needs and opportunities that arose throughout the research process. Such flexibility allowed me to attempt to understand how the participants saw things throughout the workshop process. In doing so, I attempted to find, not one singular truth or version of events, but to try ‘…to preserve the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of what [was] happening’ (Stake, 2000, p. 12).

3.3 The interpretative lens:

‘All research is interpretative, guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied.’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 13)

A constructivist view holds that reality is socially constructed, and is best understood through interaction and dialogue with the individuals involved. (Jamar, 2012). As such, this study is grounded in the constructivist philosophy that recognises and values individuals’ varied backgrounds, assumptions and experiences that contribute to the on-going construction of an understanding of their reality. As Cresswell (2007) explains:

In this worldview, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences... Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words, they are not simply imprinted on individuals
but are formed through interaction with others, and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individual’s lives. (pp. 20-21)

Denzin and Lincoln (2013) call for two processes to be employed in order to construct meaning with multiple knowers. The first seeks to reveal the knowledge (knowledge constructed from their lived experiences or, constructions) held by each participant, through a process in which the constructions are collectively revealed and explored in an ongoing manner. Resonances are found and then pursued for further collective interpretation. The second process involves what is referred to as an ‘encounter situation’ in which the various constructions are ‘confronted, compared and contrasted’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2013, p. 40).

This is highly relevant to my study in which the mode of inquiry provided by performance ethnography called for collective investigation of lived experiences, and the performance of the findings provided an ‘encounter situation’ in which the various constructions are placed alongside one another for contrast and comparison. Gaining an understanding of how this experience assisted the teachers in making meaning of their own constructions through this process is one of the aims of the study.

3.4 Recruitment and participants

The case study was undertaken in Victoria, Australia, with data collected between February and May, 2015. Secondary school drama teachers with five or more years of teaching experience were invited to participate. The intention was to involve eight participants, both male and female, from a variety of institutions including private, Catholic, independent and state contexts. An email was sent out via an online network of drama teachers in Victoria, inviting expressions of interest (see Appendix A). There were two informing reasons for the decision to focus on secondary school drama teachers with five or more years’ experience.

Firstly, as stated by Wales in her study of female drama teachers, ‘In Victoria all
primary pre-service teachers must undertake a study unit in the Arts – although not all primary schools, in fact very few, have a drama specialist. Drama at secondary level is offered widely throughout Victorian schools’ (2006, p. 4). Therefore, in order to ensure that the teachers involved in the workshops could identify with one another as drama specialists, those involved in the secondary context were sought.

Secondly, with the aim to engage the teachers in work that investigated their experiences, a minimum amount of experience needed to be set. As reports abound of teachers leaving the field within five years of beginning their career (The Conversation, 2015), I was interested in those that had pushed through those initial years of difficulty and had demonstrated commitment to their career as drama teachers.

The response to the initial email, sent out in early January 2015, was immediate and sizeable. Over forty teachers expressed their interest in being involved in the workshop series. Each respondent was sent four questions to answer regarding their reasons for wanting to be involved in the study, as well as their availability. These questions received approximately a seventy percent response rate, with some indicating that they were not available for the required dates.

At the end of the recruitment process, seven respondents were selected to participate in the workshop series. I planned and facilitated these workshops which were undertaken in a drama studio and performance space at the University of Melbourne. The final group included: one male participant with eight years of experience teaching at an independent girls’ school (Steve); one female teacher with eleven years experience teaching at a boys’ Catholic school (Rachael); three female teachers with between eight and fifteen years experience teaching in co-educational state schools (Hannah, Cat and Jess); a female teacher with over six years teaching experience who was on a short-term contract at a girls’ private school (Jasmine); and, a female teacher with over five years experience teaching in both local and international schools who was on a short-term contract at a co-educational state school (Allison).
3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was sought and granted by The University of Melbourne Human Ethics Research Committee. The participants each signed a Plain Language Statement form (Appendix B), which outlined the requirements for participation. In these forms, the process for withdrawal was also made clear. As the workshop series took place outside of their teaching institutions in their own time, no approval was required from individual schools.

Ethical considerations were put in place from the outset of the workshops. All personal stories were volunteered by the participants, and in performance the participants were able to select characters that they would perform on the basis of what they were comfortable with. In some instances, composite characters were created to protect the anonymity of who the story belonged to.

In reporting on the findings from this study, no teacher or school has been identified in any way. The data collected through the questionnaire and interviews has been coded so that only the researcher is aware of the participants’ identities. Pseudonyms have been used in the transcription and reporting of data from the interviews.

3.6 Data collection

The main instruments for my data collection were semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and participant observation field-notes. These were supported by audio and video recordings, as well as the creative artefact of the performance.

Semi-structured interviews:  
The interviews took place in two stages: pre-workshop and post-workshop. Once the participants had been selected, a pre-workshop interview was conducted to meet them individually and to find out more about them and their
experiences as teachers and artists. This was the first data of the study that was collected. For logistical purposes, the decision was made to conduct each thirty-minute interview via Internet video chat at a date and time that was determined via email. I employed a semi-structured approach to interviewing, in which I followed a guided list of questions (see Appendix C). This approach allowed me to gather responses to common questions, but also to tailor the questions in a particular order to seek clarification, invite expansion or explore a response further as required (O’Toole and Beckett, 2012). Not only did I gather data that would later inform the analysis of each participants’ experience of the process, but it was also a key process in developing a mutual sense of confidence and trust in one another. These interviews were audio recorded, and later transcribed.

The post-workshop interviews were also of a semi-structured nature, and were designed to elicit responses that would inform me of the participants’ experiences throughout the process of engaging in performance ethnography, and how (if at all) their experiences had informed their perceptions of themselves as teachers and artists. Five of the seven interviews were conducted individually in a café at the University of Melbourne. The sixth and seventh interviewees were interviewed at the home of one participant, and at a café close to the home of the other in order to ensure convenience for them. The responses to the designed questions, as well as the questions that arose during the interview as a result of the participants’ replies, indicated the variety of meanings that the seven individuals had attached to their experiences.

Participant Observation reflections:
Within the workshops I took on the role of facilitator, guiding – and sometimes participating with – the participants through the drama activities that would generate, investigate and analyse the stories and experiences of the teachers. As stated by McCormick-Steinmetz (Anzul et al, 1991), ‘Participant observation covers a broad continuum of kinds and degrees of participating’ (p. 42). For the purposes of the case study, my role is best described by Wolcott (1988), as an ‘active participant-observer’. Heeding Wolcott’s (1988) advice that anyone
wishing to claim such a title ought to provide a full description of how each of the sub-titles within the role title plays out, here I attempt to do so: As the facilitator within the workshops, I was an active member of the group that the participants relied on for guidance, clarification, and assurance. During some of the activities, I was also an active participant, sharing my own stories, experiences and resonances. Within these moments, I was both a participant and observer, seeking to participate in the activity fully, but always with an eye to the wider context of the case study. Throughout the workshops there were moments when the participants were undertaking a performative process of inquiry, and I had a moment to stand back and take a more observational role. Whether participating or not, I was active as the facilitator throughout, ready to be called upon should guidance or clarification be required. In each instance, I was neither just one of the roles, nor the other. After each session, I wrote a participant observation reflection, which was first informed only by my experiences, and then by the review of the video recording of the workshop.

**Participant Reflective Journals:**

At the beginning of the first workshop, the participants were each given an exercise book to use as a Reflective Journal. The intention for the books was so that they could be used for some of the activities that had written components to them. Additionally, it was so that participants could write reflections after each session that could be analysed later as a further source of data. This was a practice that was prompted and invited, but not demanded as being compulsory. Taking up the suggestion of O’Toole and Beckett (2010), after each workshop, I emailed suggestions for guiding questions to be considered in any reflections written. This was due to the recognition that allowing them to ‘dive into unstructured stream-of-consciousness personal feelings about the experience’ (p. 124), might not yield the specific kind of reflection that would be useful for the study. The amount of written reflection varied from participant to participant, but each book yielded valuable insights into their experiences of the workshop series to further add to the data for analysis.
Video-recording:
Video recording was used as a method for data collection and later analysis. Recognising the ‘...almost limitless potential for gathering, analysing, writing up, and disseminating the research findings’ (Harris, 2016, p. 6), using video recording as an integral part of my data collection and analysis process was an obvious choice. For each workshop conducted, a video camera was set up in the room to document the process. This was done with the consent of each participant, and the knowledge that the footage would only be used for data collection and analysis purposes. The video recording of each workshop was an invaluable tool in widening my ability to observe what was taking place in the workshops that was constrained by my active role as facilitator and participant. It recorded moments that I was unable to witness, and then gave me access to those moments for later analysis; it provided an excellent opportunity for me to be present and active within the workshops, with the knowledge that anything I had missed could later be reviewed.

Performance ethnography at work in this study:
The ethnographic performance work itself, the focus of which was the lived experiences of the drama teachers, provided an integral source of data for the case study from which to derive a sense of the meanings the teachers attached to their experiences. The participants were given a theoretical background to the ethnographic performance process as part of a Plain Language Statement prior to the first workshop, as well as an overview of how we would be employing it as a mode of enquiry in an introduction to the first workshop. The distinction between the work we were doing within the workshops and that of mine as the case study researcher was made clear. The participants were aware that they were co-investigators into their lived experiences as drama teachers within the workshops, and that the meaning they derived from the process of ethnographic performance making was of interest to me for the purposes of my case study. Their reflections in these journals were useful for them to record their developing understanding of their professional identities throughout the workshop series, and would provide important data for me in my case study.
As was made clear to the participants, the role that performance played in the workshops included that which was generated throughout the workshop process, as well as the performed representation of our findings to our audience in the final workshop. Each aspect of the workshops employed performance either to generate data about the lived experiences of the participants, or to enquire more critically and deeply into the themes that had arisen as a result of a previous activity. Here, Conquergood’s (2013) notion of performance as being at the core of knowing (data generation), critical inquiry (analysis), and understanding (presentation) can be seen as being at the centre of the method underpinning the case study.

### 3.7 Validity

Typically, for a study utilising a qualitative case study method, the protocols determining validity come under the name ‘triangulation’ (Stake, 1995). Triangulation means ‘that data or inferences that have been corroborated from at least two other independent angles are logically three times as likely to be true as uncorroborated data’ (O’Toole & Beckett, 2010, p. 33). Whilst this is a widely accepted method of ensuring validity, an alternative approach is offered by Laurel Richardson and her term ‘crystallisation’. Typically associated with arts-based methods of inquiry, Richardson proposes:

> that the central image for ‘validity’ for postmodern texts is not the triangle – a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather, the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach... Crystallisation provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know.  
> (Richardson, cited in Ellingson, 2008, p. 4).

Richardson’s image of the crystal encourages a different way of thinking about what could come to be known and understood about my topic, and to accept the
paradox that knowing more simply leaves me with more to know yet. The metaphor of the crystal for validity seems fitting alongside Simons’ (1996) perspective of case studies as providing us with incomplete knowledge that provokes us to think differently. These ways of viewing the case study and its validity seem to sit comfortably alongside one another.

3.8 Data analysis

Merriam (2009) states that, in qualitative research, data collection does not precede analysis, but that collection and analysis are part of the same, simultaneous activity.

The analytical process for this study began well before the first workshop, or even the first interview. With the many expressions of interest from teachers wanting to be a part of this study in response to the first email sent out through Drama Victoria3, I was given my first indication that a study that involved drama teachers using their craft to explore their professional lives and practice was seen as valuable by those within the profession.

In terms of analysing the teachers' experiences of being drama teachers, and how their understanding of their identities as artists and/or teachers is formed, a large part of this analytical work happened as part of the ethnographic performance process. As the participants' lived experiences in response to a stimulus were generated through performance, the analytical process of finding resonances, commonalities and disparities was also taking place. At times, the emergent findings were evident to both the participants and myself. At others, the findings became clear to me after a process of much closer analysis of the data.

After each workshop I engaged in a process of writing my own reflections, followed by a close review of the video footage to see what emerged as being of

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3 Drama Victoria is an association of drama teachers in Victoria, and functions as a resource for professional development and networking.
interest for further exploration. I would then plan the subsequent workshop, all
the while remaining open to what was emerging from the performance work and
subsequent discussions, whilst also keeping in mind the scope of the study itself.

Once the final interviews had been conducted, a lengthy process of analytical
writing began. Heeding the advice of Merriam (2009), rather than hiring
someone to transcribe the interviews, I used it as a means of generating further
insight into my data. I transcribed the pre-and post-interview audio data – a
process that was time-consuming, yet profitable. In engaging so closely with the
words, intonations, pauses and inflections of my participants, I began to develop
new understandings of their histories and experiences that I did not pick up on
in the interviews themselves. The process also allowed me to find similarities
and disparities in the words of the participants, whose individual stories began
to emerge as I transcribed. Each story contributed to the larger narrative that I
was discovering in this phase of analysis.

Once the transcription process was complete, I turned to another lengthy writing
task, which was to describe and analyse in detail each of the five workshops. The
aim was to develop what Geertz (1973) describes as a ‘thick description’, the
process for achieving which Laurel Richardson refers to as ‘creative analytical
practices’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Although not undertaking a strictly
ethnographic study, I took Richardson’s view that ‘When using creative
analytical practices, ethnographers learn about the topics and about themselves
that which was unknowable and unimaginable using conventional analytical
procedures’ (Richardson in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, pp. 962-963). Taking this
view, rather than trying to supress the presence of my self in writing up my
descriptions, I instead initially wrote each workshop as a story, in the present
tense, in the first person. This process allowed an initially very personal view of
events, capturing my own thoughts and opinion of the proceedings, individuals,
as well as myself and how I was enacting the role of facilitator. Moving deeply
into my writing in this manner allowed me to develop a richer sense of
compassion for my participants and conviction about the events that happened
in the workshop. In doing so, I was better able to move into an independent
space where I could see more clearly the interrelationships between each individual in the room, and the activities in which we were involved (Richardson in Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

From this point of familiarisation and personalisation with the workshop proceedings, I engaged in a process more typically in line with qualitative case study data analysis. Guided by Cresswell’s ‘Data Analysis Spiral’ (cited in Kervin, et. al., 2006, p. 140), my process was broken down into three recurring stages:

1. Familiarisation with the data;
2. Categorisation of the data;
3. Synthesis of the data.

I engaged in a process of open coding (Merriam, 2009), categorising the written interview and workshop data into recurring themes (eg. ‘Identity’, ‘Craft/Artistry’, ‘Performance’, ‘Other’s perspectives’). One I had done this which each data unit, I then began the process of seeking what O’Toole and Beckett refer to as corroboration (2010); sifting through each data unit and cross-referencing them to identify exhaustive (Merriam, 2009) themes that were present each data unit. These exhaustive themes for which I could find clear evidence to support their relevance for discussion became the basis upon which the discussion and subsequent findings were constructed.

3.9 Conclusion

The design of the methodology in this study was to enable the effective generation and analysis of data, and subsequent reporting of findings, about the professional lives of seven experienced drama teachers. Employing a qualitative case study method to do so allowed me the flexibility to be rigorous in my approach to collecting and analysing a range of data, so as to be able to construct the meanings that emerged throughout this dynamic and enlightening process. The ethnographic performance making process not only provided a participatory mode of enquiry that yielded insights into the lived experiences of these drama teachers, but also into the revelatory nature of the process itself. In doing so I
was able to privilege the voices of the participants themselves, as well as performance as a legitimate and powerful tool in coming to understand them.
Chapter 4 - Discussion

In this chapter I discuss the key themes that emerged from the case study relating to the drama teachers and their identities, as well as performance ethnography as a mode of inquiry for such a study. In doing so I discuss both the process of the workshops, as well as the participants who took part in them. By combining data collected from performance work, interviews, participant journals, observations and reflections, I provide a description of critical events, as well as in-depth account of particular participants who serve as exemplars of my findings. Particular participants have been selected as the focus for some discussion points. These were chosen to best encapsulate the large range of data and experiences. As such I focus on these three particular examples within the case study overall.

4.1 I will continue to feel self-conscious about this, despite the confidence that I have in my work.

In this first section I discuss the participants’ preoccupation with the perception of their subject, and ultimately the way they are perceived within their schools as drama teachers. In discussing this, I also orientate the reader to the workshop series by referring to critical incidents and activities within them.4

One of the first things I was keen to explore in the initial workshop was an article that had sparked my interest in this study. By Graham and Zwirn it explored the relationship between teachers of the visual arts and their artistic practice, citing frustration often felt by these teachers relating to ‘challenges of time, energy, and stereotypes that insist that a real artist would not teach’ (2010, p. 219). As the themes in this article resonated so strongly with my own experiences, I decided to use this as the basis for the first activity in order to explore the participants’ views of these ideas.

4 Each time I use the term ‘activity/ies’, I am referring to a performance-based approach to both generating and analysing data.
I asked the participants to read the article and find a word, phrase or sentence from the text that resonated with them. Once they had done so, I told them that the intention was to use these to create a spoken poem. Having come across this technique presented by Fitzpatrick (2014) at a symposium exploring methods of conducting performed research, I felt it would be useful to metaphorically and literally put the participants on the same page at the outset of the process. They were asked to say their selection aloud, listening in an attempt to find which one would be the opening to our poem, then the second line, then third, and so on. We continued on through the process of ordering the poem from start to finish until we had a complete poem.

Steve: We were artists, we were educators, and we were struggling to be both;

Allison: The naming of professional self;

Jess: Educating the students, nurturing the artist;

Jasmine: Not one solution, but many solutions!

Rachael: Able to fuse the two roles together;

Cat: I am an anomaly: one of those teachers of drama without performance credentials, about whom other drama teachers will justifiably complain. I will continue to feel self-conscious about this, despite the confidence that I have in my work;

Hannah: I will continue to feel self-conscious about this, despite the confidence that I have in my work.

(Artistry, Identity and the Drama Teacher: A Performance, April, 2015)

With the text of our poem established, the participants went through an analytical process of identifying the key themes from the poem by physicalizing the ideas that had emerged for them when making their selection. These were identified in the subsequent discussion as being: a duality between the roles of teacher and artist; a struggle of the mind in attempting to find a balance between
the two roles; a sense of conflict; and, feeling judged by others impacting one's confidence.

What was prevalent in the discussion was a focus on the perception of the teachers that was held by others, as opposed to a need or desire to practise artistically. Whilst the diversity of the selection of phrases evidenced the range of experiences and positions in the room, Cat and Hannah’s choice of the same line was of interest, foreshadowing the repetition of the theme of ‘perception of others’ that would continue to arise in subsequent activities.

In another activity during the first workshop, designed to have the participants consider their daily experiences of teaching drama, I asked them to explore what
teaching drama looked, tasted, sounded, smelled and felt like. They interviewed one another and selected ideas that resonated with the group and/or held dramatic potential for performance. One group presented a scene involving two students entering a drama class in a bad mood, but then participating in a task and forgetting their worries because they were partaking in the physical activity. At the same time, an administrator wandered around the school observing classes and deciding whether or not they were to receive a literal and metaphorical ‘tick of approval’. Upon entering the drama class, she observed what looked to be chaos, but was actually a drama teacher in control of an active and enthusiastic class of engaged students. After a moment’s hesitation, the administrator reluctantly gave the class a ‘small tick’ of approval before moving on her way. This scene reflected some of the participants’ perceptions that those in leadership positions in schools are not able to see beyond what they perceive as ‘just games’ to have an appreciation of the physical, social and emotional learning that goes on in drama.

Cat explained that she could relate to the performance because, although her school Principal was generally supportive, she felt that she was perceived as having too much fun in the classroom:

**Cat:** Because she doesn’t understand what we’re doing.

**Kelly:** Do you have any evidence to suggest that she does feel the way you think she feels?

**Cat:** Not at all. I’m just self-conscious. It’s just my insecurity.

**Jess:** I think this relates back to the fact that not just anyone can teach drama. It’s not just people running around. I feel the same. Our Principal is so intimidating. I feel like he’s going to come around and say, ‘What are you doing?’.

*(Workshop data. March, 2015)*

Investigating this idea further in the second workshop, I asked the participants to select someone with whom they come into contact each day in their schools and use them as the basis for a role-play showing how the participants think they
feel about drama as a subject. One scene, generated by Rachael, Cat and Allison, portrayed a student who was unsure of what to expect in drama class, and therefore did not want to do the work. It was only once having participated in a class and subsequent performance and receiving applause that she realized drama could be an enjoyable and rewarding learning experience. This further demonstrated the participants’ perceptions of uncertainty from those in their schools about the purpose and content of the subject. This was a view that was met with frustration.

Allison: I don’t think anyone understands just how complex teaching drama is; how much there is to it...

Jess: And there are no tables and chairs so (sarcastically) the kids are going to go wild...

Rachael: I think it comes down to what you guys thought with the administration. I find at our school they don’t understand our role. They think, ‘Oh, you teach dance, so you can teach drama. It’s all the same.’

(Workshop data. March, 2015)

The participants felt as though others perceived drama as somewhat of a mystery, lacking understanding of the dynamic and complex nature of it. This lead to a dismissal of the subject’s educational value, as well as trepidation from teachers of other subjects, administrators and students when it came to them engaging with drama on any level. This left the drama teachers feeling as though they and their subject were battling to be taken seriously, and resulted in them feeling devalued as professionals.

In an effort to invite the participants to explore their own perceptions of their professional life, the question of ‘What do we do?’ was explored in the third workshop through movement and sound. Beginning by brainstorming their responses to the questions on the whiteboard, the multi-faceted nature of these teachers’ responsibilities was clear.
Each participant was asked to select a responsibility that they felt they could physicalize and add a repetitive sound to in order to create a collective representation of a drama teacher’s daily experience. What emerged was a depiction of teachers who perform duties ranging from modelling skills for their students to completing administrative tasks; from fighting losing battles with technology to working around Occupational Health & Safety restrictions. The activity permitted a multi-faceted representation of the group’s understandings of being a drama teacher that involved many tasks not related to the subject specifically. Of note was the lack of subject-specific references within this activity, which indicates that teachers’ roles often involve greater administrative tasks than those relating to the effective teaching of their subject.

The objective of the fourth workshop was to analyse the performance data generated in the previous three workshops to determine emergent themes and ideas. Upon reviewing the material there was a realisation that no direct reference to the school production had been made. This had been a topic of many
discussions, generally focussing on the idea that it was an expected, time-consuming and often unrewarded responsibility that was additional to the role of being a drama teacher. Deemed an oversight that required rectifying, the decision was made to incorporate many characters that had emerged in various activities into an experience about her involvement in the school production that Cat had reported in an earlier workshop.

The scene showed an enthusiastic and supportive Principal who was excited about the school presenting an annual musical production for the first time in many years. The Principal came in to watch a variety of students who would not normally socially interact audition for a role: sporty; autistic; international students for whom English was an additional language; some who were enthusiastic without being particularly talented; and some who were talented and experienced. Once the students had auditioned, the Principal excitedly told the teacher how much publicity for the school the project would result in, and that it would be good for future enrolments. The teacher broached the subject of a budget with which to put on the show, at which time the Principal became cagey and hurriedly left the room without a committed response. The end of the scene was a flash-forward to the end of the closing night of production. The students celebrated and bowed, and the social connection they had all built throughout the project were evident in their interactions. The Principal came on stage to congratulate them and thank all those who had been involved, with the final thanks being a somewhat cursory one to the drama teacher.

The scene was a creative summary of the conversations in the workshops about the participants’ feelings concerning the role of the production within schools. There was an awareness of the fact that the production provided important social and emotional benefits for students that they would not necessarily get in the classroom, and that school leaders saw it as an opportunity for marketing for the school that would hopefully lead to increased enrolments and, subsequently more income. Despite this, the teachers felt that a blind eye was turned to the amount of work that goes into such a project, especially when it came to appropriate budgeting and remuneration. This resulted in feelings of resentment.
towards the responsibility, contributing to a sense of being devalued and unengaged.

4.2  **Really put myself in their shoes**

This section discusses how engaging in a process of identity exploration using performance ethnography as mode of enquiry was beneficial to the participating teachers in connecting them to a greater sense of professional self-knowledge, or identity. Here I combine observations and interview data of three participants – Jasmine, Cat and Hannah – to be viewed as exemplars of the growth that the participants experienced throughout the workshop series.

**Jasmine**

Despite this endless repetition of contract work, anything else would be second consolation. My students get to know themselves, other people, and think about what it is to be human in this world. How cool is that?

(Artistry, Identity and the Drama Teacher: A Performance. April, 2015)

When we met for the pre-workshop interview, Jasmine had a six-month contract that she was waiting to begin at a suburban girls’ private school. In the meantime she was attempting to gain work as a Casual Relief Teacher (CRT). She expressed the frustration she felt at her difficulty gaining ongoing employment as a drama teacher in recent years, but this was countered by her love of the subject: ‘I just can’t believe they pay me to do this. It’s so enjoyable!’

Her passion for the subject was evident in the way that she spoke about the power of the arts:

I think that theatre helps us to examine the human condition, and kids can start to see this. So, if you’re that person [the drama teacher], that’s such an honoured position to be in, to steer a class or a student through that kind of discovery about themselves, at a time when they’re discovering a lot about themselves.

(Interview data. February, 2015)
The longest position Jasmine had held at one school was at a government school in a lower socio-economic area at which she had taught for four years, but left out of frustration. Beginning at the school with plans to impact the students through engagement in drama, she soon found that the students were resistant to her attempts, and she felt an overwhelming sense of dissatisfaction due to ‘the realisation upon reflection that I wasn’t working as an artist; that I was working as a policeman.’ After leaving that school, she had spent some of the previous year teaching in the private system at an all-girls’ school, and was looking forward to working in a similar environment later that year. She expressed her passion for working artistically with students in an environment in which the engagement levels were so high. Her enthusiasm was tinged with guilt for having left the government system where she regretted not being able to have as significant an impact as she set out to. Despite feeling a great deal more satisfied working in her current environment – regardless of only being able to find short-term contracted work as opposed to ongoing – she expressed remorse at ‘not being that person to make a difference in the lives of those who really deserve to have a difference to be made’.

Whilst Jasmine was concerned about employment and financial stability, her story was more focused on a desire to engage young people in drama-based processes of exploring their own lives. She felt that this was a vitally important process, and one that could be most impactful on those who experience struggle, such as the students in the lower-socio economic school she had previously worked at. In practice, however, this was not always received with the kind of enthusiasm that she had for it. This resulted in an interesting kind of tension for Jasmine: while she was able to engage young people in drama at a school with more privileged students, she found it difficult to reconcile with herself that she felt unable to achieve her goal with those she saw as needing it most.

In the third workshop the participants were asked to interview one another about their motivations for teaching drama, and to then present the responses in vignette form. Each vignette gave insights into different aspects of Jasmine’s
experiences as a drama teacher: a conversation with her husband in which he, sick of her complaints, told her to leave her previous school because her complaining was affecting their relationship; sitting at a desk with a bored student and asking him if he wanted to move around to become more engaged; and, a conversation with a Swedish backpacker who very simply told her that if she wasn’t happy or fulfilled, she should just change her situation.

These vignettes showed the deeply personal connection between Jasmine and her profession. The conversations with both her husband and the backpacker provided evidence to suggest that Jasmine’s struggles with her work had gone well beyond the professional realm, permeating her personal life as well. The second vignette was evidence of a teaching style informed by her firmly held belief that people learned best by physically engaging with their work through embodiment and performance. The first and third vignettes indicated that teaching in a context that was unreceptive to such an approach impacted her so negatively that it was threatening her marriage and was a topic of conversation with strangers.

In the post-workshop interview, Jasmine expressed how the workshops had provided her with an opportunity to reflect on her career: ‘It helped me work through the guilt a little bit. I still feel guilty that I’m not at the coalface helping the kids that are disengaged and disempowered. I always thought that’s where I would be as a teacher; that I should be with my politics.’ When asked where she thought she would be in five years time, she expressed that she hoped she would still be at either of the girls’ schools that she was involved with, and that she would have enough influence within the school to run a community theatre project: ‘and then I could bring in my beliefs and my values into these schools... because for me that would be the guilt cycle come full circle.’

For Jasmine, the analytical work within the workshops allowed her to reflect upon her background as a teacher and her experiences that didn’t always accord with her ideals and values. The performance allowed her an opportunity to explore and come to terms with difficult emotions around what was essentially
an idealised version of what her work as a teacher should be, and the reality of her situation. In doing so, she was able to reflect on the shape that her career had taken, as opposed to that which she had imagined it would take. This resulted in opening herself up to new possibilities for how the reality of her career as a teacher could align with her ethos, giving her a new sense of power and ownership over her professional life and potential direction.

**Cat**

Growing up my family always told me I’d be an actor on the stage, but I never really believed them. I kind of always knew deep down I was going to be a teacher.

*(Artistry, Identity and the Drama Teacher: A Performance. April, 2015)*

At the time of beginning the workshops Cat was a drama teacher and year level coordinator in a suburban secondary college. Growing up, Cat was often told by family, friends and teachers that she was going to be an actor, but she secretly wanted to teach. Too embarrassed to pursue a Bachelor of Education straight out of school, she undertook a Bachelor of Arts for two years before withdrawing from the course. In her early twenties she admitted that she wanted to be a teacher, so returned to university and got her degree. She taught in a range of schools and positions, and commented in the pre-workshop interviews that she saw her niche as working ‘... with kids that maybe aren’t high achievers, with kids who have social issues...’

One character that Cat portrayed in the final performance represented her empathy for such students. The character emerged out of an activity in which the participants were asked to consider colleagues and students from their own experiences. Each selected one to analyse by sitting in the ‘hot seat’ and answering questions as that character. Cat portrayed a defensive student who was only interested in ‘friends, hanging out and partying’. The only reason the character went to school was because, if they didn’t, their mother would get cut off from Centrelink payments. When pressed about her character’s parents it became apparent that the father was absent, and mother rarely around. It was
the student’s responsibility to look after their two-year-old sister. The portrayal of the character was authentic and engaging as she depicted the student with great empathy and commitment.

When selecting data from the workshops to include in the final performance, Cat’s character was identified and selected on the basis of being representative of the kinds of students that the participants felt it was not always possible to reach. This echoed Jasmine’s frustrations about wanting to assist less fortunate students, but feeling unable to. In the performance Cat expressed the character’s attitude towards the drama teacher, which were reflective of her perception of how these students considered her efforts to engage them:

I just want to sit in the classroom. I just want to be left alone, but she always gets me up there to participate. I don’t want to be in front of anyone; I just want to sit there.

(Artistry, Identity and the Drama Teacher: A Performance. April, 2015)

In the post-workshop interview Cat spoke about her experience of playing this character:

I guess for the first time ever I can remember I was really in character, and it was a really emotional experience for me, because I guess that troubled teen – that’s been my specialty over my whole teaching career, and I have a real empathy for them – so I guess I have a very strong feeling of social justice with that sort of thing, so it was very emotional for me because I was able to express myself – really put myself in their shoes.

(Interview data. May, 2015)

Whilst her empathy for these kinds of students was not a new realisation, it was through the exercise and subsequent performance that she reconnected with her motivation to support them. She cited a situation at school that had occurred shortly after participating in the workshop activity. She was dealing with a student in a particularly bad situation and went out of her way to work with the school’s head of wellbeing to help the student:

instead of just doing my job I went to the wellbeing coordinator and said “We haven’t done enough. What else can we do?”, and spurred her into
action, because I think she was a bit apathetic ... and I haven’t had that drive for a couple of years, so it was good to have that back and remember... And it will probably stay with me for a really long time, that activity we did.

(Interview data. May, 2015)

The activity and subsequent performance allowed Cat an opportunity to perform and analyse her experience of a character that she naturally empathised with, and in doing so, she was able to reconnect with what lay at the very heart of that which motivated and drove her to be the teacher she is. In embodying that character of the troubled teen, she used the craft of performance as a tool to uncover some meaning behind her connection to teaching. In doing so she rediscovered a sense of motivation for her students that had become lost over time. This had already impacted one student’s life significantly, and stood to be of benefit to many more.

**Hannah**

I will continue to feel self-conscious about this, despite the confidence I have in my work.

(Artistry, Identity and the Drama Teacher: A Performance. April, 2015)

A performing arts teacher at a co-educational secondary college, Hannah came across as confident, energetic, knowledgeable and enthusiastic in her pre-workshop interview. Speaking freely about what drove her to become a teacher, Hannah expressed that she had always wanted to be one, and how her passion for performing and education had always seemed to her to be a natural match. Seemingly secure in her professional self, Hannah admitted to wanting to undertake the workshop series to do something for herself, as well as to prove herself to her Principal after a shaky previous year due to a marriage breakdown: ‘So this is my way of proving I can handle a bit more and just to reignite that passion and focus on me for once, because I’ve always done it for the kids, or I’ve done it for the school... I wish she [the Principal] actually understood all of the extra hours we put in’.
She carried this excitement with her into the first workshop to which she arrived thirty minutes early and, about fifteen minutes into the introductions exclaimed, ‘It’s like being on my home planet with my own people!’ It was in the first activity that Hannah’s insecurities about teaching began to override her initial veneer of security. A preoccupation with administrators failing to acknowledge the work that she did emerged; something she would make reference to several times when analysing her own and others’ performance work. In one instance, a group presented their own perceptions of self in relation to the teacher-artist dichotomy in tableau form. In the tableau, Steve could be seen bowing theatrically to Allison who was miming writing on a whiteboard. Hannah did not hesitate to offer up her interpretation that Steve was ‘…acknowledging her fabulousness as artist and educator’. Although not reflective of what the group were trying to portray in that image, her comment was one early example of a recurring theme for Hannah to do with her lived experience as a drama teacher within her school.

For Hannah, her frustration at this lack of recognition was exacerbated by what she saw as an unfair disparity between what was expected of her as a drama teacher and those ‘…who just to pack up at the end of the day and just go home…’ Hannah was often required to remain at school to run production rehearsals after a full day of teaching. In the post-workshop interview and her reflective journal she noted how, at one point in the workshop series, she seriously considered whether or not she was inclined to continue teaching: ‘I think of all the negativity and not being appreciated, and it’s that unpaid love and you do it for the kids and all that’.

In the performance, Hannah both voiced and embodied these insecurities: ‘I know I do a good job, and I can see the benefits of what I do, but I will always have doubts based on how my colleagues perceive me.’ This sentiment from her opening monologue was reinforced by a number of scenes in which she played a drama teacher in situations where administrators or school leaders either actively expressed their distaste for the work she did, or took for granted the manner in which she was willing to go over and above the expectations of a
classroom teacher to give her students performance experience. Upon reviewing the video footage of the final performance, the number of scenes in which Hannah portrayed the character of a drama teacher feeling unappreciated was greater than that of any other participant. Considering the scenes selected for inclusion in the final performance were self-cast, I interpret this as being significant in terms of Hannah’s particular overriding attitude towards teaching within her school at the time of the workshops.

Despite Hannah reporting that she experienced feelings of negativity about her future in teaching in the times between the workshops, the activities and performance provided her with a timely opportunity to reflect upon the previous year, and the point she had reached with her teaching:

I think last year I went into [teaching] and was winging it because I knew the content, but there was no passion behind it because I had such a bad year last year. And having done all of this I realised I’d stopped doing warm up games... It made me plan more. It made me more enthusiastic and I manage my time better.

(Interview data. May, 2015)

Hannah’s response suggests that an opportunity to engage with an ethnographic performance process afforded her the opportunity to reflect on her experiences in a manner that opened up new possibilities for her future engagement with the profession. Through this growth Hannah developed more security and satisfaction, as well as effectiveness as a drama teacher. As she put it: ‘I feel more like an adult now. I feel like I can take responsibility’. Throughout the workshop series her focus shifted away from blaming others for her negative experiences, and towards having a sense of agency in the direction of her profession.

Hannah’s example, discussed alongside those of Cat and Jasmine, suggests that an ethnographic performance process in which participants are invited to generate, analyse and present performance work was beneficial in allowing them to reconnect to their personal motivations to teach. Furthermore, doing so
encouraged a rediscovery of a sense of autonomy and drive to continue the teachers’ work, despite the often-imperfect contexts that they work within.

4.3 I am a storyteller, and you are offering an audience

This section explores the significant role that the audience played throughout the workshop series. It explores how, at each stage of the process, the audience was central to the dialogic and authentic nature of the work that took place.

From the outset of the workshop series, there was always an understanding that there would be an audience for the work we were undertaking. In the initial email that was sent out to participants, explicit reference was made to who the audience would consist of:

You will take part in workshops with a group of other drama teachers to create original performance work, depicting your experiences and presenting them to an audience of your family, friends, and other interested parties.
(Plain Language Statement. February, 2015)

This was reiterated throughout the recruitment process, and was evidently a driving force in the participants’ motivations to become involved in the project:

**Steve:** I am a storyteller and you are offering an audience.

**Rachael:** Obviously there is the great opportunity to share ideas and knowledge, however it is the performance element of the study that I am really keen to be involved in.

(Email Correspondence, January 2015)

Throughout the workshop series, the implied audience provided impetus and inspiration for the participants telling their stories. In the first workshop, when engaging participants in the language of the ethnographic performance process we were undertaking, I reiterated that there would be an audience for the work that we were doing. At the end of the second workshop I brought up the subject
of potential performance spaces in which to present our work, and naturally the
issue of audience arose. Steve asked, ‘Obviously whenever I’m writing things I
have the audience in mind. I’m assuming it’s not only going to be for our family
and friends?’ I confirmed that he was correct, and that there would be some
academic staff with an interest in Drama teaching and performance ethnography
who would be attending. Other participants then mentioned colleagues of theirs
that they felt would enjoy or benefit from seeing the work, some even indicating
that they would like to invite their Principals. Allison suggested that we perform
at a state drama teacher’s conference at the end of the year, which engendered
support from the rest of the group. From this brief discussion, it was clear that
each participant was committed to and enthusiastic about presenting the work
to an audience.

In the fourth workshop I turned the focus solely from data generation and
analysis towards crafting and shaping what the group would show to our
audience. We had generated a great deal of material and made discoveries about
where the group’s experiences aligned and differed. The task at hand was to
consider what findings we wished to present, and how to do so. I initiated a
discussion around what the participants felt was important to convey out of
what they had discovered. The group agreed upon a central message for the
performance that best represented the conclusions that had been drawn from
the analysis of the work we had done:

We all took different paths to get here, but here we are, united by a
passion for a subject that we think is misunderstood or under-valued.

(Workshop data. March, 2015)

Once this was decided, we discussed possibilities for the structure of the
ethnographic performance. After a lengthy discussion in which many
possibilities were explored, the decision was made to focus on the content that
had been produced in the workshops rather than attempting to come up with a
narrative or story arc, letting the individual performance pieces speak for
themselves.
Throughout the structuring process there was a real concern about not wanting to come across as indulgent or pretentious that permeated the discussions and conversations. This concern permeated the discussions and conversations and was often linked to words such as ‘stereotype’ and references to the Australian television character ‘Mr G’.\(^5\) This reinforced the self-consciousness that the participants had touched on in previous workshops, and was now a driving force behind the choices made in representing the data that had been generated. The implied audience whose presence at the performance was initially a driving force for the participants to become involved in the process were now viewed with trepidation, providing further evidence of the negative perception that the participants assumed others had of them.

To address the concern of being perceived as self-indulgent, the suggestion was made to begin our performance with a parody of the stereotypical drama teacher. Rachael came onstage covered by a single bed sheet and writhed around whilst the other ‘class members’ entered the performance space wearing white masks and moving in a staccato manner to a drum beat. As the character of the teacher, I chastised them all for doing a poor job of performing as trees, and then took them through a ‘how to be a tree’ masterclass. As the masterclass got underway, the students stopped responding to the instructions, with Cat eventually coming over and interrupting me:

**Kelly (as Teacher)**  This is the pinnacle of your drama education...

**Cat**  Hey, Kelly. Are you taking the piss?\(^6\) Cos this is not what we do. Are you?

**Kelly**  A little bit...

**Cat**  Alright, can we show people what we do now as drama teachers?

\(^5\) Mr G. is a parody of a self-centred and pompous drama teacher in a well-known Australian television comedy, ‘Summer Heights High’ who is considered by audiences to be the embodiment of the drama teacher stereotype that the participants were disinclined to be associated with.

\(^6\) This is an Australian expression meaning ‘being facetious’.
Kelly

Alright, let’s go.

(Artistry, Identity and the Drama Teacher: A Performance. April, 2015)

The decision to open the performance in this manner was made in response to the way in which the implied audience was perceived. Ultimately, it was based on the assumption that the audience made up of friends, families and colleagues did not understand what drama teachers do, and held a negative or limited perception about what goes on in the drama classroom. As Jasmine put it: ‘well, we’re debunking the stereotype, aren’t we?’

On the evening of the performance workshop the real audience, as opposed to the implied audience that had impacted the group’s choices throughout the creative process, provided insight and feedback. The opening generated laughter from the audience, indicating that they understood the joke, or were at least supportive of our endeavours. Throughout the forty-minute ethnographic performance, the audience responded with more laughter, empathic sighs and rousing applause at the end. Following the performance there was a twenty five-minute discussion between the audience and the participants in which the audience members were invited to give feedback on their experiences of the performance.

I had asked the participants to come up with questions for the audience that they were curious to know the answers to. Rachael began the conversation by asking the audience if they felt confident after having watched the performance that they knew what a drama teacher did other than play games. One audience member responded by saying that she had two very good friends who were drama teachers and she kind of knew what they did, but that the performance had shown her how much more complex the teaching of the subject was.

Cat’s question was concerned with whether or not the audience actually understood the performance, to which they responded with nods and affirmative comments. Allison wanted to know if we came across as though we were
whinging, and a teacher of a subject other than drama responded that our gripes and frustrations were complaints that teachers of any subject could relate to. There seemed to be a sense that the audience understood that, as one member put it: ‘the pride was there, but it felt like it kept getting pushed down.’

In the post-workshop interviews I asked the participants about the feedback they received from family and friends after the performance. For some, it was a sense of relief as well as affirmation that their loved ones understood the performance and had a better appreciation for the work they did as a result. Jess had not expected her husband to understand the performance:

... I thought he’d be like, ‘Oh, a bunch of fucking drama wankers... ah you just play games…’. But the fact that, you know, he was like, ‘No, I got what you were trying to say there and it was really interesting... It isn’t just a “job” and it isn’t just playing a couple of games.

(Interview data. May, 2015)

Rachael, who seemed a little hesitant as to how the audience might perceive the performance, was surprised as to how it was received:

To be honest, I was a little worried that the performance may have seemed whingey to non-drama teachers, so it was a pleasant surprise to hear from the audience that this was not the case. In fact, many sympathised with the plight of the poor drama teacher.

For her, the understanding of others struck a cord:

There are times when you feel like your hard work goes unnoticed. But the truth of the matter is, more often than not, someone has noticed and sympathised, just not verbalised.

(Interview data. May 2015)

Steve spoke about how he was actively talking with colleagues more about his work in the drama room to help people to help them better understand and appreciate the subject of drama and his role:
I’m explaining a bit more about the sorts of stuff we do, and probably engaging them in a little more conversation about what I do. And uh, just the stuff that we’re doing in class, you know… Probably bringing what goes on in the classroom into the staffroom a little bit more, being more open about what goes on.

(Interview data. May 2015)

The ‘audience’ for the work fell into two categories: perceived, and actual. The perceived audience originally provided a source of inspiration to perform, but later came to influence the meaning that was made on stage. They became representative of how the participants felt they were negatively viewed within their role, not just by others within their schools, but also by friends and family. This appeared to be symptomatic of an awareness of cultural attitudes towards teachers, particularly teachers of the arts, which left the participants feeling self-conscious, even when it came to presenting their own lived experiences on stage to an audience that consisted of mainly loved ones.

The actual audience provided a source of validation for the experiences of the participants, legitimising their roles as drama teachers by simply understanding them, as well as identifying with the themes and relating them to their own experiences. This endorsement provided not only a great sense of comfort to the participants, but for some it influenced changes in the way in which they viewed their colleagues’ perceptions of them, and even how their own actions informed their colleagues’ perceptions by being more open and explicit about what, how and why they teach drama.

4.4 The ones we need to invite

There was another unexpected category of audience that arose in the post-workshop interviews: that of the future audience. The first mention of this was from Allison who in the fourth workshop suggested that we present the work again for an audience of principals and policy makers: ‘They’re the ones we need to invite to come’. The second mention was after the public performance. I had
heard mention of a desire for the group continuing in some form, and so was interested to see how the participants saw this coming about.

As part of the post-workshop interviews, I asked each participant how they saw a group like ours continuing into the future. For Rachael, she was disappointed with the size of the audience and was keen to share the performance with more people. Hannah felt that the state drama teachers’ conference would be a good place to take the performance to show other drama teachers who might be able to relate to the themes: ‘I mean, especially in a drama department when you don’t have many other drama teachers, it’s always such a small faculty at most schools, and I think that reaching out to those who feel a bit more alone and, yeah… it would be nice to reach those groups of people.’

Jasmine echoed this sentiment of ensuring that those who shared similar frustrations and experiences had the opportunity of seeing the performance so that they felt represented: ‘I want to have that experience of holding up a mirror to all those women – mainly women – in the audience and I want to feel them all going, “Yes!” So to me, that is really what I want to do.’ Steve was also interested in performing at the conference in order to start the conversation with other drama teachers, rather than just those who were already inclined to support the group due to previous relationships.

Many months after the final workshop and subsequent post-interviews, the opportunity arose to present the ethnographic performance work at the Victorian drama teachers’ conference. An annual event, the conference involves a range of professional development workshops, most of which aim to engage the teachers in activities from units of work devised by presenting teachers. Teachers who take part in the workshops usually have access to the units of work to take back to their school and use with their students.

Prior to applying to present I contacted the participants to see if they would agree to participate, and was heartened to receive an affirmative response from each one. Not only were they keen on presenting the work once more, they were
willing to give up a full day on a weekend prior to the conference to rehearse. Their enthusiasm indicated that the significance of the workshops series for them had hardly diminished in the time that had passed.

We were given a two-hour workshop in which to present the performance. I had prepared a short presentation outlining the literature and mode of inquiry informing the work. Furthermore, I intended to engage the audience of teachers in activities that the group had undertaken in the workshops in order to give them an understanding of how the performance came about, and an opportunity to reflect on their own professional identities.

I was disheartened to find that only a handful of teachers had registered for the workshop and our audience was quite small. I consoled myself with the knowledge that this was the first year that the conference had run on a Saturday, and so attendance numbers were low. Furthermore, from looking at the workshops that we were scheduled alongside for the morning session, it was evident that the more popular ones were offering teachers a unit of work to take back to school with them. As discouraging as this was, the group members were committed to the work, and so we adapted to the more intimate nature of the audience.

After the successful presentation and performance, time remained for discussion and reflection with the small but enthusiastic audience. Two of the audience members were ex-performers and could relate to the struggles of adapting to the title of ‘teacher’ as opposed to ‘artist’. All related to the idea that drama is undervalued as an academic subject, but that, when it came to being an extra-curricular activity that would bring the school much-needed publicity, it was regarded as highly valuable. One audience member spoke through tears about how a particular scene had resonated with her. It portrayed a student who was told by staff and students at his school that he was useless so often that his sense of self-worth plummeted. He later found the performing arts and started to find positivity and self-belief. The audience member expressed how it echoed an experience she had that year with one of her own students, and that seeing the
scene was cathartic and allowed her to view her experience through a different lens to better understand it.

The work was valuable to drama teachers who performed and viewed it, even in this more limited two-hour form. Whilst the non-drama teachers had identified with some of the key themes and ideas in the initial performance, teachers of drama were able to engage with them even more so. The audience’s desire to continue to discuss the work in light of these resonances indicated to me that opportunities to reflect on one’s professional experiences and identity are wanted, yet lacking.

After the performance, I debriefed the presentation with the participants to gain their final thoughts on the process. Many of them echoed the audience's disappointment that not many people had seen the work, as they felt it was a missed opportunity for those teachers who had relatable experiences. They agreed that most teachers understandably select conference workshops based on areas of the curriculum that need improving and will want to leave with a unit of work, as opposed to taking up what might seem on the surface to be a self-indulgent opportunity to reflect on their professional lives. Questions turned to what other forum might be suitable in which to present the work and expose more people to it, and a suggestion was made about the possibility of presenting at a Principal’s conference, as they are the only ones who can really enact change. There seemed to be a shared sense that we were not finished with the work yet, and that the participants’ voices had not been heard in that forum in a meaningful way.

The performance had, for the participants, become much more than a desire to perform or share their experiences. Beyond that, it had become about having something to say about the importance of their subject and role within schools. Although it had not been directly discussed, I understood from their comments that the hope for the performance at the conference had been to create a groundswell of support from the drama teaching community with the prospect
of banding together to raise the profile of the subject, and raising awareness of what they saw as being unfair extra-curricular expectations on drama teachers.

What this ethnographic performance work had given the participants was a voice and a desire to be heard, as well as a vehicle through which to communicate. With that voice and the transformative power of the performance vehicle, they craved an audience so as to be able to create meaningful change about what the group had identified as some of the institutional barriers to drama teachers feeling satisfied in their work.
Chapter 5 – Findings and Conclusion

This chapter concludes the study by providing a summary and overview of the findings. I begin by briefly reviewing the question and genesis of the study, before summarising the responses to my initial concern with the participants’ perceptions of their artistic identity in relation to their drama teaching identity. I then explore the ethnographic performance making process and how it allowed the participants to come to new understandings about their professional lives, before going on to explore the role that the perceived, actual and future audiences played throughout the case study. These findings each inform areas for further study.

This thesis set out to explore the question:

_How can the experience of ethnographic performance making by drama teachers be used to gain insights into the relationship between their professional lives and artistic practice?_

Many studies have been conducted into the relationship between the teacher of the visual arts and their artistic identity – some using visual arts practice as their method of inquiry – but fewer have explored the relationship between drama teachers and their identity; even less using their craft as method. The pilot study undertaken prior to the commencement of the current project indicated that many teachers of drama feel the desire to practise their craft alongside teaching, and that not being able to do so was a source of discontentment. Existing literature also reveals concerns about the lack of recognition of the subject within schools as being educationally valuable, as well as a feeling that the demanding nature of the work is incompatible with the expectations placed on teachers of other subjects (Wales, 2006). I identified an opportunity to build upon and contribute to this literature, by exploring the lived experiences of drama teachers using performance ethnography as a mode of enquiry.
5.1 **Artist or educator? Is that really even the point?**

The data that was generated in the workshops indicated that, for these participants, a concern with an acknowledgement of them as artists within a school was less an issue than was their desire for the subject of drama to be seen as relevant and important to others. Unlike the visual arts teachers in Hatfield, Montana and Deffenbaugh’s (2006) study, these teachers’ identity-conflicts related more to their desire to have the work that they do in schools appropriately valued than with a perceived dichotomy between ‘artist’ and ‘teacher’. This supports Wales’ (2006) claim that drama teaching is seen as sitting outside the bounds of worthwhile work in schools, and Kempe’s (2012) statement of the need for drama teaching to be recognised as a unique and purposeful identity.

Imms and Ruanglertbutr’s (2012) study contends that, for early career visual arts teachers, there is a sense that continuing to create art alongside teaching is a need for many that could prove harmful to their efficacy as teachers should it not be met. For these experienced drama teachers, the harm lies not so much with an inability to create performance work, but with the perception that their subject and work holds value only when it relates to marketing schools rather than the academic, social and emotional learning benefits of engaging in drama studies. The response from the audience member who teaches a subject other than drama that these are themes that all teachers can relate to suggests that their experiences are not limited to teachers of drama or even just the arts.

In terms of what this suggests about these drama teachers’ relationship between their professional lives and artistic practice, it is evident that they pride themselves on the work that they do, and hold their craft as valuable to the students that they teach, as well as central to their profession. The preoccupation with how others perceive them is indicative of a widely held cultural perception that teaching is a lower status profession than that of the artist (Daichendt, 2009; Hatfield, Montana and Deffenbaugh, 2006), and teaching drama in a school is less valued again (Wales, 2006). This perception, held by some of the participants
themselves, is one that leads to the resistance to teaching that Cat expressed. This suggests that, for these teachers, attempts to encourage them to identify as both artists and teachers (Hatfield, Montana and Deffenbaugh, 2006; Graham and Zwirn, 2010) at once would miss the point. Rather the need lies with a change in perception of both the subject and teachers of drama, approaches to which are worthy of further investigation. I propose that this study offers some innovative methods.

5.2 The ethnographic performance making process

The analysis of the data from three of the participants demonstrates the professional growth that took place throughout the ethnographic performance making process. The examples of Cat, Jasmine and Hannah show the profound development in professional self-knowledge that these three participants experienced. Other participants had similar experiences that resulted in a greater sense of autonomy and agency within their roles; a trait that was consistently cited as being fundamental to a teacher’s satisfaction and longevity within the profession (Thornton, 2012; Ball, 1990; Brown, 1999).

The performance work that led to these shifts in awareness proved fundamental to the insights being generated. Taking up Wales’ (2006) suggestion that using performance as a method to explore drama teachers’ identity proved fruitful, in that it allowed the participants to find deeper meanings in the work that they do. The ‘distance’ that Kempe (2012) suggested drama created in order for character identity work to be undertaken by teachers allowed the participants to develop a greater appreciation of themselves as professionals. However, his implied requisite for them to do so in order to appreciate themselves as artists seemed secondary to the need for them to appreciate themselves as educators who provide valuable and meaningful learning opportunities within schools.

Going beyond only doing drama activities, the performed interrogative approach to data generation and analysis underpinning performance ethnography opened up new spaces for dialogue that invited analysis from multiple perspectives – the
participants’ own, one another’s, as well as that of the audience. Whilst the study moved away from a specific focus on the relationship between the drama teachers and their craft, using drama as a means of examining their sense of professional self was nevertheless evidence of a profound relationship between these teachers and their artistry. As with the drama student in Sallis’ study (Sallis, 2010) who claimed that the process spoke their language, the proficiency with which the drama teachers were able to generate meaning through performance is further evidence of a profound relationship between these educators and their craft. Whether such a study would be as successful with teachers of subjects other than drama is a potential avenue for further research.

The positive impact of this approach for these drama teachers adds to the literature that calls for changes to what Anderson (2002) refers to as a top-down approach to teacher professional development, in which students’ needs are at the centre. Instead, he proposes a shift towards acknowledging the complexity of the teacher’s journey, and the recognition of each teacher’s contextual environment and self-understanding. He suggests that, through this, there may be a successful move towards overcoming obstacles that prevent arts educators from having their potential impact on students. Certainly, the examples of Jasmine, Cat and Hannah support the provision of more professional development opportunities for experienced teachers that engage them in meaningful reflective work on their own practice and context, not just on student improvement and data. I assert that it is worthwhile and even necessary for such opportunities to be made available to all experienced teachers to rejuvenate them in their practice. I propose this as an area for further study.

5.3 Audience

The perceived audience provided a sort of creative constraint for the participants. As the medium of theatre is reliant on the co-presence of both actor and audience for collaborative meaning-making (Antomarini and Berg, 2013), an actor’s choices can be informed by the audience for whom they are performing. This was true in this case, in which this perceived audience originally provided a
source of inspiration to perform, but who later came to influence the meaning that was made on stage. The decision around the opening of the performance was made solely on the basis of the participants’ concerns with how they felt they were perceived, and how they wanted to be received. The presence of the perceived audience was significant in terms of the meaning that was made throughout the process.

The real audience provided recognition and endorsement for the participants – the kind of approval that they felt like they did not receive in their workplaces. There was a sense that the audience members were now part of a community of those who understood the teaching of drama and the value of the subject. In addition, the real audience’s responses and contributions in the post-performance discussion added to the dialogic nature of the process that Sinclair et al referred to in their study (Sinclair et al, 2010). The significance of the role of the audience in contributing to meaning making was noteworthy enough to warrant further study.

5.4 Performance as a moral and political act

The emergence of the third category of audience – that of the future audience – suggests that the work that took place in the workshops was not only introspective, but also outward facing. Whilst the insights that the participants had generated about themselves were valuable in shaping their own individual professional identities, the performance piece that was created through the process was seen as valuable for other teachers who might be able to relate to the themes of based on their own experiences. The reactions from the participants at the conference supports this and, just as the teachers in the audience of Sallis’ (2010) ethnodrama came to better understand the gender dynamics in their classrooms, the participants felt that future audiences could benefit from gaining a better understanding into the lived experiences of teachers.
Furthermore, the participants identified other audiences, such as principals and policy makers, who they felt might benefit from such an insight into the lived experiences of teachers. The theory was that school and educational leaders might gain a better understanding of the way in which their policies and actions impact teachers and, through witnessing their ethnographic performance, consider future decision-making. This desire to share their work is evidence of the performance moving beyond a personal expression of identity toward becoming a public process with a political and moral agenda (Denzin, 2010). For these participants, the meaning generated in the performance had become something that they felt was powerful and had potential to make real and lasting change. The performance itself had become their vehicle through which to convey that meaning, and they wished for their voices to be heard. Taking up this prospect of presenting such work to audiences who could enact the kind of change that would see teachers’ professional lives improved is a topic worthy of further investigation.

5.5 Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, I undertook my post-graduate studies in response to feelings of frustration I experienced as a drama teacher. In working with these participants I made discoveries about their experiences, but also about my own. These discoveries led me to reconnect with my own drive and motivation to facilitate others in making meaning through performance, which was the aspect of drama teaching that I enjoyed so much as an early career teacher. I discovered that my concern about whether I identify as a teacher or artist is secondary to the value that I, myself, place upon my role as teacher.

Furthermore, the process of ethnographic performance making reminded me of the power of performance in bringing us to new insights about the world in which we live. Despite discovering that a need to identify as artist was not of immediate importance, through the process we were unwittingly enacting
Thornton's (2011) view of the role of the artist as challenging that which we have come to accept.
Reference List


offs of ethnodrama (pp. 187-202) Stoke-on-Trent : Trentham.


Appendices

Appendix A:

Call for Expressions of Interest.

Wanted: Eight drama teachers to participate in workshops, investigating through drama and performance what it means to be a drama teacher.

This is a fantastic chance to be involved in a study into the experiences of drama teachers, using the tool that drama teachers know best - performance. By participating in this study, you will have the opportunity to stretch your drama muscles and be part of an academic exploration into what it means to be a drama teacher. You will take part in workshops with a group of other drama teachers to create original performance work, depicting your experiences and presenting them to an audience of your family, friends, and other interested parties.

Criteria:
- You must be a current teacher of Drama with no less than five years experience teaching the subject at a secondary level.
- You must have some formal Drama/Theatre educational training (Eg. Bachelor of Arts (Drama), Bachelor of Education/Arts (Drama)),
- You must be available for two half-hour interviews and five three-hour workshops at The University of Melbourne between January and April, 2015. (Please note: the interviews and workshops can be negotiated in terms of when participants are available. All interviews and workshops will be conducted outside of work hours).

Note: These workshops will be conducted as part of a broader research project being undertaken through The University of Melbourne as part of a Masters of Education I am undertaking.

Interested in this fantastic opportunity and want to know more? Please email me via kmcconville@student.unimelb.edu.au to find out more information.

Cheers,

Kelly McConville
Appendix B:

November, 2014

Dear Teacher,

I am undertaking a Masters of Education via Research through the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at The University of Melbourne. This involves conducting a research project titled ‘Artistry, Identity and the Drama Teacher: A case study of performance ethnography as a mode of enquiry’, under the supervision of Dr. Richard Sallis and Dr. Christine Sinclair. This research project has received clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at The University of Melbourne (ID no.: 1442906.1)

The aim of the project is to investigate what it means to be a drama teacher through the use of drama and playbuilding. It will use what is known as ‘Performance Ethnography’ as a mode of enquiry to undertake the investigation. This refers to a way of exploring the lives of a group of people (in this instance, drama teachers) through drama exercises such as improvisation, and performance making. By participating in this study it is intended that you will contribute to developing new knowledge and insights about what it means to be a drama teacher, as well as research about Performance Ethnography.

If you agree to participate, you will be involved in a series of eight x two-hour workshops that I will be running at the University of Melbourne, in which you will use drama exercises and performance to explore your own understanding of what it means to be a drama teacher. Within the workshops, you will be asked to share stories, reflections, memories and perspectives on your experiences as a drama teacher.

Based on what emerges from these discussions, you will then be asked to participate in dramatic play-building exercises such as improvisation. It is intended that the results of the work developed within the workshops will be performed publicly to friends, family and other interested parties as part of our final workshop.

In addition to participating in these workshops, you will be asked to take part in one 30-minute interview both before and after the workshop period, at a time and location that is convenient for you. These will be audio-recorded and later transcribed for research purposes only. You will be asked to keep and submit a journal of your reflections on your experiences, as well as to give your permission for the workshops to be filmed for research purposes only. The video footage will not be seen by anyone except the researchers.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw consent to participate and discontinue participation at any time until data become analysed. You may, if you wish, withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied. Withdrawing from the research will not jeopardise the relationship between you and myself in any way, or your involvement in the remaining workshops if this be the case.

The data will be used to complete a research report in the form of a thesis for my Masters assessment. Once the thesis has been examined, you will have access to an executive summary of the final product. It is possible that this project will be drawn from for conference presentations and/or journal articles.
Anything shared by you or any of the others participants will be dealt with sensitively and respectfully at all times. I am working under the supervision of experienced researchers at The University of Melbourne and they are considered to be a part of the team conducting the research. This is a small research project, which will involve a maximum of eight participants and, as such, there may be some issues with protecting your identity. However, all participants will be given a different name to disguise their real identities in my research report and any future publications produced from this research.

When the project is completed, the information collected will be held in a secure location in the MGSE at The University of Melbourne for five years. After that it will be destroyed according to the requirements of The University of Melbourne Policy on the Management of Research Data and Records.

The risk for physical or psychological harm for this project is deemed to be low. However, if, while participating in this project, you have any concerns or questions, or experience any difficulties arising from your participation, you can contact me via email at any time. If you are concerned at any time about your well-being, provisions will be made for debriefing or follow-up after the workshops.

It is hoped that this project will be of benefit to the educational community, including the participants, by enhancing its/their understanding of how performance ethnography can be useful to develop understandings of what it means to be a drama teacher. Furthermore, an understanding of ways in which performance ethnography can be employed to enhance the professional lives of drama teacher will be of benefit to those engaged in research about the mode of enquiry.

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research project you can contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, the University of Melbourne, Vic 3010, ph: (03) 8344 2073; fax: (03) 9347 6739. You can also contact me personally (my email address is included below) or one of the supervising researchers: Dr Richard Sallis, sallis@unimelb.edu.au, 03 98344 8799: or Dr Christine Sinclair, cesi@unimelb.edu.au, 03 8344 0337.

It would be appreciated if you could complete the attached consent form and return it to me at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Kelly McConville

kmcconville@student.unimelb.edu.au
Appendix C:

**Pre-workshop interview questions**

What is your educational background?

What artistic training associated with drama/theatre have you undertaken?

How long have you taught Drama in a secondary school setting?

If you had to define yourself as an artist, what would your title be (eg. actor, director, choreographer, etc...)? Why?

In the last 12 months, have you undertaken any artistic projects as an individual outside of the school setting? If no, why not? If yes, please detail.

With which of the following titles do you align yourself with most closely: A teaching artist; an artist who is also a teacher; an arts educator; an arts educator and an artist. What is the reason for your choice?

Have you managed to maintain your artistic practice alongside your teaching practice? If so, detail why. If not, why?

To what extent do you think that making reference to your own experiences as an artist impacts students and their learning in the subject?

Have you ever experienced tension between your identity as an artist and your role as a teacher? If so, please detail.

To what extent do you think that the following statement is true to drama teachers: 'Most people considering the career of art teacher are educated to believe that they will be able to continue their artistic pursuits in tandem with their teaching careers.. But the sense of artistic accomplishment acquired during formal art training is difficult to sustain in K-12 schools because of the time and energy that teaching requires' (Graham and Zwirn, 2010).

Works cited:

**Post-workshop interview questions:**

Tell me about your experience of participating in the workshops in relation to developing or refreshing your capacity as an artist.

Tell me about your perceptions of yourself as both an artist and teacher since participating in the workshops.

Have your experiences in the workshops impacted the way in which you have approached, or intend to approach, teaching your students?

How beneficial would you say that participating in workshops such as these would be for drama teachers on an ongoing basis throughout their careers?