Learning Partnerships: the use of poststructuralist drama techniques to improve communication between teachers, doctors and adolescents

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Abstract
Adults working as teachers and doctors can find it difficult to communicate well with young people about the issues that affect their wellbeing and learning and thus miss opportunities to contribute when their clients experience adversity. Drama is often used as a pedagogical tool to assist people to develop their communication skills. Dramatic portrayals however, can reinforce rather than challenge limiting stereotypes, and there is the potential for learning through drama to contribute to a patronising world-view and lead to the assumption that a set of formulaic approaches can bridge the communication divide. There is thus a need for research that engages both theoretically and technically with the use of drama as a tool for applied learning.

In this thesis, a reflective practitioner methodology is used to explore the use of drama as a method in participatory enquiry and as a tool in the professional education of teachers and doctors. Use of the practitioner perspective permits analysis of the alignment between theory and practice. The Learning Partnerships project provides the context within which to conduct this enquiry. In this project the researcher leads drama workshops that bring together classes of school students and tertiary students completing their studies in medicine or education. The adolescents work as co-investigators with the teachers and doctors, exploring how to communicate effectively in the institutional contexts of schools and clinics.

Poststructuralist theory is used to refine the drama techniques used as tools for enquiry into the discourses that shape behaviour in schools and clinics. Innovative drama techniques are used to deepen the investigation, to interrupt the tendency towards replication of the status quo within the drama, and to guide a critical analysis of the way in which young people are conceptualised. Theory is developed which addresses the way in which the selection of the dramatic form influences the knowledge that can be represented in the drama.

Participants find that the methodology makes possible a new level of authenticity in communication. They value the collaborative mode of working and the critical nature of the enquiry. They find that these techniques assist them to humanise each other and to re-frame their assumptions about what is possible in their relationships. The adults value the coaching they receive from the young people who represent their future clients and the opportunity to rehearse their skills in a life-like context. The students gain a sense of pride and purpose through using their skills to make a civic contribution.

This innovative approach to deconstruction through the drama contributes new methods to utilise in professional training and participatory enquiry. Recommendations are made about the use of drama to investigate complex professional situations. The research demonstrates the benefits of incorporating the client as coach when developing the skills of those entering the human services professions; the need to engage with investigation of discourses as well as development of skills when learning how to manage complex professional interactions; and the potential of drama as a tool for applied learning.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD,

due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

the thesis is less that 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed:

[Signature]
Acknowledgements

A number of people have contributed to my research, and without their support my accomplishments would not have been possible.

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Preface

The following papers drawing upon the research conducted in this investigation were published during the time of this study.


LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS: THE USE OF POSTSTRUCTURALIST DRAMA TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS, DOCTORS AND ADOLESCENTS

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Chapter One: Quest(ion)ing

Introduction

In this chapter I introduce myself as the reflective practitioner conducting an investigation into the use of drama as a methodology for poststructuralist enquiry. I identify the research questions that have emerged from the perplexity of my practice, and describe the approach I have taken to the investigation of these questions. I outline the theoretical and research traditions that I have used to inform my analysis, and provide an overview of the contents of this thesis.

To Start with a Story

The thesis is a story. This one starts in the middle and does not quite reach the end. This is because it presents a reflective practitioner account written by a teacher/researcher. She began her enquiry upon commencing work as a drama teacher in secondary schools, over twenty-five years ago. She continues to practice in new settings and with new groups, and hence her enquiry into the use of drama as a methodology for research and transformation stretches on beyond these pages.

This story traces her use of drama as a method in participatory action research. Pre-service doctors and teachers workshop with high school drama classes and engage in mutual exploration of how to improve doctor/patient or teacher/student relationships. Cultural stereotypes, categories, norms and assumptions hold certain behaviours in place. They also emerge by default within dramatic play and thus the drama can inadvertently contribute to maintenance of the status quo. Concerned to find ways to interrupt this tendency towards replication, the teacher-researcher evolves a range of drama techniques so as to better enable a deconstruction through the drama. In doing so, she finds that the shaping influence of the dramatic form is under theorised in the drama literature. To redress this gap, she investigates the way in which the framing of the question, the selection of genre or convention, and the relational context influences the knowledge that can be represented in the drama. She discovers that particular drama techniques can assist the participants to engage with the discourses
that shape behaviour and to create new possibilities in their relationships. The participants find that this methodology assists them to re-cognise each other and to reframe their sense of what is possible in adult-youth relationships.

**Positioning of the Writer**

As is common for the reflective practitioner researching in the drama in education field, she sees her work as part of a lifelong engagement that is both personal and professional (Taylor 1996; Taylor 1998; Nicholson 2005; Neelands 2006). However, in using her self as the instrument through which to collect data, she seeks to temper the way in which she represents her analysis. Thus she writes in different voices. This first (third person) voice in which she introduces her work is designed to alert the reader to the constructed nature of her tale. Her research story is fashioned and selected for a particular telling (Elliott 2005). This is so with any research text, as the writer assumes the traditions and paradigmatic world-view of the discipline within which they write (Denzin and Lincoln 2003; Lincoln and Guba 2003).

In using this third person voice she denotes that she belongs not only within the specifics of her tale, but also within a broader tradition of poststructuralist enquiry and standpoint research (Kamler 2001). This is a research tradition in which the writing itself is understood to be both a method of enquiry and the medium of representation (St. Pierre 1997; St. Pierre 1997; Davies 1999; Elliott 2005).

The second voice in which she writes is academic in tone. In this voice she charts the broader landscape of theory and research in which she locates her work (chapters 2-6). Here she writes in the first person to alert the reader to the personal nature of the way in which she has used poststructuralist theory to inform her use of drama as a methodology for social and transformative enquiry.

The third voice in which she writes is that of the practitioner, narrating stories of her practice (chapters 7-9). She writes these stories in the first person in order to capture the immediacy of her embodied engagement in leading the drama workshops, and to track the way in which she interprets and steers her practice whilst in action. In this
she explores the relationship between theory and practice which is a pivotal concern in arts-based enquiry (Chase 2005).

**Working in the Narrative Tradition**

Narrative research aims to communicate the meanings people have made of their experiences rather than to demonstrate historical ‘truths’ (Polkinghorne 2007). Narrative is both a way of understanding events and a means through which to communicate research findings to others (St. Pierre 1997; Kamler 2001; Chase 2005; Elliott 2005). The ‘aesthetics of representation’ become inseparable from the interpretation of data (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). In poststructuralist narrative research the writer acknowledges that she has applied particular paradigmatic assumptions to make sense of the world, and has constructed a research story with particular purposes and audiences in mind. She is likely to maintain her visibility as author of the text, and to engage in overt discussion of aesthetic choices made about the medium of representation (Lincoln and Guba 2003).

The validity of narrative research derives from the ‘believability’ of the argument mounted through or about the story. Stories are assessed for their plausibility, credibleness or trustworthiness (Polkinghorne 2007). The rigor associated with narrative research resides in the effort to provide access to the complexity and depth of the experience to be related through the tale (Polkinghorne 2007), and the use of disruptive questioning through which to consider alternative possibilities and points of view (Fine 1994). A degree of reflexivity is required, as is the use of multiplicity to bring different perspectives to the story (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). This may entail efforts to include the voices of the research subjects (Fine, Weiss et al. 2003), or to critically connect the personal story to broader cultural patterns (Ellis and Bochner 2003). Literary devices, such as shifts in voice, genre and metaphor, are used to evoke alternative readings or perspectives (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). Attention is given to the situated and constructed nature of the tale, and the way in which its structure will influence the meanings that are derived (Elliott 2005). Rigor is also generated via attention to the way in which the categories we construct, and the storylines that we inherit, influence the tales that we seek and can tell (Davies 1993). Thus the validity claims made for the poststructuralist research story arise from the
rigor with which questioning and scrutiny are applied to the subject matter, and relate to authenticity and believability, rather than to ‘truth’ (Lincoln and Guba 2003).

The Questions Grew from Practice

The reflective practitioner is immersed in questions about how and why. These questions evolve and shift over time. In the first years of her practice, this drama teacher’s chief concern was to find ‘what works’. She struggled with how to design the tasks, engage the students, manage the social dynamic, and direct the enquiry. With growing experience, she became more ambitious, seeking to stretch her students and press their learning into new corners, finding ways to develop their ethical and critical engagement as well as their aesthetic learning. She sought to understand how the drama might be used to enhance the resilience of young people and their capacity to contribute to their community (Cahill 2001; Cahill 2002). However, as is often the case in reflective practice, addressing one question merely opened the door to another. How? hitched up to ride tandem with Why? and assumptions were unscrambled into questions.

Some questions were slower to take form. They appeared first as shadowy uncertainties, and only later shaped into more lucid queries. This emergence of the questions, questions that are explored in this thesis, can be tracked through the following story.

A Classroom Story

The story below, set in her classroom, illustrates the teacher’s emerging interest in two themes that are pivotal in this study. The first is the analysis of the pedagogy that shapes the participants’ cognitive, affective and aesthetic engagement with the material. The second is the use of drama techniques as tools for enquiry into the discourses and storylines that orient our actions. This story charts her continuing interest in the function of the participatory tasks in enabling a collective exploration of social issues. More particularly, it marks the beginning of her quest to understand how the framing of the question and selection of form or genre might govern the knowledge that can be represented through the drama.
It is my Year 10 class of 1997. This day I tell them we will investigate the question: *How can a young person get a romantic relationship started? This person knows that s/he ‘likes’ another person, but has not yet disclosed this to anyone.*

Engagement is instant. The question is relevant. I ask them to brainstorm ideas about how a person might signal their interest in another.

I request a brainstorm rather than the telling of personal stories. I avoid these stories to protect privacy in the captive public space of the classroom. I know some students will feel excluded because they don’t ‘have’ a story – or they have the ‘wrong’ one. But as ‘ethnologists’ they can contribute via the brainstorm - they are all participant observers of their culture.

A long list emerges. *You can ask outright, get a friend to test the water, send a note, flirt, hint, invite.* The students agree - this is a scene that you could play badly – *stuff up.* You might make an idiot of yourself, get rejected, or get laughed at, and everyone would get to hear about it. On the other hand – this could be the beginning of something really good. So it is a scenario about risk – but risk with promise.

I ask for volunteers to enact various versions of a scene in which one character asks the other out. We will try some of the methods listed in the brainstorm and have a look at how they might work.

Romantic scenes are glamorised in the fairytale world of popular media. I anticipate the need to peel into the stereotypes if we are to deal with the reality of ungainliness and missed moments – the non-stories of everyday life.
There is a ripple of excitement as the first volunteers step forward and a reserve bank of players stands by. They will be ready to role-rotate, to appear as additional characters, or to re-play the scene using a different approach.

I position the play as an experiment. We are in a human laboratory. We can change the actors or the characters, or re-arrange entrances or exits, location or time. We can re-assign the sex, sexual preference or personality of the character. There is a sense of transgression as we prepare to play ‘as if’.

I produce two balloons and ask the first two actors to improvise the scene whilst sitting on an inflated balloon. I charge them with two goals – to play into the intent and concerns of their character, and to preserve their balloon.

I choose the balloon device (a form of clowning or physical theatre) to place the performance in the anti-naturalistic domain. This way the actor’s challenge will be embodied. I want the actors to be as physically uncomfortable as the characters are socially uncomfortable. I hope this constraint will invigorate their performance and cut into the anticipated soap opera.

The improvisations begins. The actors struggle for the ‘right’ things to say. They grapple simultaneously with the balloons, first perching, protecting the balloons, and then gradually sinking, bobbing. Everyone waits for the burst that doesn’t come. Everyone waits for the smooth pick up line – that doesn’t come.

The effort to preserve the balloon parallels the effort to protect the ego. The balloon symbolises the vulnerability, the risk of making the first move, the delicacy of the counter-move, the lack of useful scripts to fall back on, the promise of future prospects. This is both a playful and a serious business.

As the actors play on, everyone laughs. It is OK to laugh because of the balloons. The participants are aware of the tension between the real context and the fictional context. The two actors (class mates) are really doing this - though only in pretence. What if this was to spill over into real life? What if this was more real than pretend?
Can things that happen in the fiction in some way ‘cast’ the future?

The balloon constantly draws the spectators’ attention away from what is being said. This, in the Brechtian sense, distances the audience from the narrative. It has them focus on how the scene is being played; reminds them that it is only a game.

The scene is re-played. Different actors step forward to take on alternative approaches, or the same actor plays again – to take up the coaching or advice of the audience. There is more laughter. But actually – it is funny because it is serious – something is at stake here. We want to learn. We like also to be entertained. We want to swap parts. We want to both watch and play in the scene. We want permission to learn through play.

The balloon is associated with play, parties, and the ‘innocence’ of childhood. Now it is a reminder that the ‘children’ (teenagers) are playing at ‘grownups’. The balloon foreshadows the condom and a possible future conversation. Thus the balloon symbolically conjures both past and future lives into the present of the scene.

I remove the balloons. They have helped us break into the enquiry. Now, via the coaching and re-play, the asking for a date game becomes a sport. Will she play well – or fumble the pass? I stop the play and we re-start, playing with variables – What if she/he said/ did X instead? What if their friends appeared right at that point? Actors are replaced. New characters appear. The audience coach and comment.

Soon we note that advice is easy from the outside. You can be all-knowing out there. Inside the scene it is different. Some things cannot be said even when you are coached to say them – even when you intend to say them. What is the block? – I ask. What makes it so hard to do what you intend? What are the invisible rules that tell us what we can and can’t do?
I organise for players to use the ‘hidden thoughts’ device. Additional actors are interviewed to voice what the characters are thinking or feeling but not saying out aloud in the scene. We collect layers of possible thoughts, feelings, beliefs, fears, hopes. We find the scripts that might be in the head.

The new players work at speaking the sub-text that will not be spoken in the naturalistic version of the scene. The characters become richer, more vulnerable, less distinguishable.

The class is in the grip of the process. The bell rings too early. Miss - Can we do this again next week?

Following the class, I think back. Something was happening here to produce the engagement. What was it?

We shared an investigation. We created our enquiry with and through each other.

Was there something about the collective nature of the enquiry that assisted us to see things we would ordinarily miss – the patterns that exist beyond the personal?

There was a rub between the real context and the fictional context. The friction created an excitement. But it was hard to bend the rules of reality within the fiction.

Is the fiction separate from reality? If so, then how does it influence reality? And how does reality moderate what can be said or done in the fiction?

The aesthetic choices structured the enquiry – the clowning (balloon), the forum theatre devices, the hidden thoughts – each provided different ways to treat the material. They brought forward different sorts of responses, and invited different sorts of thinking.
What was the association between the enquiry tools and the responses given? Did the selection of form govern the meanings that we created? What would have happened had I selected a different form?

I have questions that I can continue to explore through practice. I can work in an inductive way, threading from instance to generalisation. But I lack a theoretical framework through which to interrogate my conclusions, or through which to orient my design.

Where are the theoretical frameworks I need to help me to understand this complex interplay of the social, the critical and the aesthetic? Could I gain a new leverage in my investigation of practice through engagement with theory?

The teacher-researcher continued her quest(ioning), but her questions did not dissolve with repetition, nor with continued experience. Indeed, they moved camp with her when she left the school and began to work in different settings, using the drama methodology for different purposes.

She left her school to work in a university research centre. She lost her ready access to the classroom as a site for critical engagement in the art of practice. However, she began to use drama pedagogies as a method to elicit data from young people and as pedagogy in the health promotion curriculum she was developing (Cahill and Sheehan 1995; Cahill 1999; Cahill 2000; Cahill, Murphy et al. 2006). She began to find that drama workshops could produce a more richly variegated set of stories than those she could gather via conventional survey, interview and focus group methods. However, she worried that she might be ‘making up’ the methodology. Was it a valid way to research? Where was the theory to guide this practice?
She began to note that if she used drama as a research methodology, many layers of story could be accessed – but only if she employed techniques to ensure that this happened. Most commonly, the first tale told would simply sketch in the stereotype. The students would create worlds in which the young people were the rebels, victims, or nerds, and the adults were the ogres, judges, or doormats. These scenarios, which were purported to represent their reality, had a prefabricated ring – they hummed with soap opera storylines. She came to suspect that these were the shrink-wrapped tales, learnt in the lap of the television, and that fiction had colonised reality. However, given that these tales were so readily offered, she began to consider that they must warrant attention rather than negation. Perhaps they were important because they housed the assumed norms. Perhaps they provided a subliminal benchmark against which the students would assess their own experience.

She experimented with modifying drama conventions in order to facilitate a critical engagement with these stories. She discovered that when the drama pressed them in certain ways, the students would disclaim these first stories, and present more mundane versions of their reality. If she pressed the enquiry further again, using alter-ego devices to invite them to voice the thoughts, fears, and hopes of their characters, they would overlay their characters with more richly nuanced stories of the self, bringing a layer of complexity to mundane lives.

She began to note that the framing of drama, and the selection of genre in which it was to be played, seemed to influence the sort of knowledge that the players could access and represent. Not only did the answers that the students gave seem to change in response to the methodology used, but it appeared that the children themselves changed. In giving different accounts of the world they seemed to become different people.

And so she began to wonder - Is the question the chicken, and the story the egg? If so, which comes first - the chicken or the egg, the question or the story? Do stories hatch questions, or do questions hatch stories? Or by some paradox, do they co-create each other?
After rolling around in her practice, her perplexities, concerns, hunches, and hypotheses finally gathered themselves into a set of lucid questions and pressed themselves forward to become the focus of her doctoral study.

**The Focus of the Study**

Let us leave the introductory stories now, and drop to the first person voice. It is time to state my research questions and outline the scope of this study.

As I have illustrated in the preceding story, I wanted to understand how the enquiry conducted through the drama might be shaped by the medium. Hence my question in this research became: *How is the knowledge of the self confined or enabled by the dramatic form and its associated performance discourse?*

I locate my work within the tradition of transformative research that seeks to influence change through the research process itself (Davies 1996; Park 2001; Schultz 2001; Fine, Weiss et al. 2003; Greenwood and Levin 2003; Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Given this interest, it was particularly important for me to understand how participating in the collective enquiry might enable insight and ethically driven change. I wanted to know how the drama methodology could contribute to the work upon the self, and enable participants to shape lives and worlds in accordance with their values. Thus the underpinning question relating to the epistemological and ethical purpose of my work was: *How can the collective engagement in fictional play enable work upon the self?*

I carried forward a concern about the potential for the drama to simply become a re-enactment of the dominant and the known, and for it to inadvertently solidify assumptions, rather than to invite critical thinking and open the possibility of change. Therefore I sought to understand how the characters that we create (and learn from through the fictional play) might be shaped by the societal discourses. This required that I set aside the notion that the drama occurs in a ‘protected’ space and look to see: *Is the fiction separate from reality? How is it influenced by the heritage of storylines, positions and relational games that we absorb as part of our culture?*
I wanted to know how the various drama conventions that I had modified might function as poststructuralist research tools. I was searching for devices that might facilitate engagement with the shaping expectations that influence our sense of how and who we should be. This shaped my question: Where are the theoretical frameworks I need to help me to understand the complex interplay of the social, the critical and the aesthetic? Because I was interested in the function and validity of the tools themselves, I studied their application with multiple cohorts addressing the same curriculum, as well as with multiple cohorts engaged with different curriculum goals. The replication of the work within the one curriculum enabled me to investigate the patterned nature of the responses that the drama-based tasks evoked from different groups. Working with a similar methodology, but addressing different material, allowed for a further point of comparison about the nature, as opposed to the topic, of the enquiry. This permitted me to pay ongoing attention to the dramatic form and its relationship with the creation of knowledge.

Given these questions, my enquiry does not focus chiefly on whether drama can stimulate thinking, learning and enquiry. This is already well discussed in the canon (Bolton 1984; Heathcote 1984; O'Neill 1985; O'Toole 1992; Fleming 1997; Mienczakowski 1997; Edmiston 1998; Edmiston 1998; Winston 1998; Gallagher 2000; Grady 2000; O'Toole and Lepp 2000; Taylor 2003; O'Toole, Burton et al. 2004; Nicholson 2005; Neelands 2006). Rather my interest is in how the form or genre can be manipulated to generate critical thinking, and to invite a poststructuralist engagement with the discourses that shape thinking and behaviour.

The Need for a Theorising of the Form

Drama is a field in which the leading researchers are also practitioners (Bolton 1984; Heathcote 1984; O'Neill 1985; O'Toole 1992; Nicholson 1995; Edmiston 1998; Taylor 1998; Winston 1998; Gallagher 2000; Ackroyd 2004; Neelands 2006). They engage in leading the educative art form that they must abstract about in their research. They thus have an interest in how they accomplish their work (a technical and aesthetic interest), as well as an interest in what is accomplished through their work (the learning and social outcomes). A critical and theoretical focus requires an additional interest in why this might be so.
Whilst the use of form is pivotal to drama practice, it remains curiously under-theorised in the field. Taylor (2006) notes that as late as the mid 90s, epistemological and ontological questions were sidelined in drama research gatherings and it has been only more recently that researchers have explored and critiqued their theoretical interpretive frameworks, turning to critical, post-colonial or poststructural theory as a lens upon practice. Ackroyd (2004) perceives that this may be because dramatists have tended to focus on the meaning making function of the drama rather than upon the relationship of the structures to the creation of knowledge. "While interested in form, it has been its relationship with the content that has concerned the field" (Ackroyd 2004: 21).

My aim is to bring the lens of poststructuralist theory to investigation of the use of drama as a method in participatory and transformative enquiry. Poststructuralist feminist theorists tend to focus on the shaping nature of the social text or discourse, examining the way in which social and cultural meta-narratives and available storylines influence the subject positions that people adopt or negotiate. They take an interest in the challenge for individuals of “recognising the powerful shaping (or constituting) of their bodies, of their desires, that take place through language, and of finding ways to counteract that force” (Davies 1996:13). The interest in the construction of identity that is pivotal in this tradition is particularly relevant to my critique of drama practice as a means through which to work upon the self. This theorising of the form may potentially make a contribution to an area of emerging interest in the drama in education field.

**Site of Investigation**

I investigate these questions within the context of the Learning Partnerships project. This project uses drama as a teaching methodology in the training of teachers and doctors. It places university students (pre-service teachers and doctors) into a curriculum of shared drama workshops with secondary school students. The concept behind the workshops is that teachers and doctors need to learn with and from (as well as about) young people if they are to become effective practitioners.
Initiating the Learning Partnerships Project

I initiated the Learning Partnerships project in the year prior to commencing my research (2002). I built the idea from my earlier involvement in the use of drama as a methodology in training projects in which I involved school students as both actors and coaches in drama-based workshops designed to help adults (teachers, parents or doctors) to learn how to relate more effectively with adolescents. I had contributed this methodology to an earlier research project which had demonstrated that experienced General Practitioners gained a significant and lasting improvement in their ability to conduct effective consultations with adolescents as a result of engaging in drama workshops in which they practised with adolescent actors and received feedback and coaching from them (Sanci, Coffey et al. 2000; Sanci, Day et al. 2002).

I approached the Deans of Medicine and Education at The University of Melbourne (my workplace), and the Principal and drama teacher of a local secondary college. I proposed that a program of shared workshops be located in the core curriculum for each of the parties and invited key stakeholders to a demonstration workshop held at the University. Representatives of each of the stakeholder groups attended the workshop. Following the workshop the program was adopted for all final year medical students as part of their study of adolescent health. I also attained permission to trial the methodology within a class I was teaching within the Diploma of Education.

Design Features of the Learning Partnerships Project

I designed the Learning Partnerships project around four principles. The first relates to the notion of learning in partnership. The operative assumption within this principle is that of reciprocity. Each of the parties has something to contribute and something to gain. The second principle relates to purposeful learning. The workshops serve specific curriculum goals for each of the participants. They are designed to impart key concepts and skills, and to inform committed action (Cahill 2005). The third principle relates to the choice of pedagogy. Specific drama techniques structure the interaction, and house the critical investigation of pertinent scenarios (Cahill 2006). The fourth principle relates to the positioning of the participants. The participants work as co-investigators, exploring issues of shared
concern. The students also work as coaches, advising the doctors or teachers how to communicate effectively when engaged in professional problem-solving dialogues with their students or patients (Cahill 2007). The participants are positioned to straddle the traditional divides of student/teacher, and child/adult, and school/university, engaging in a form of participatory action research in which they investigate matters of shared concern and equip themselves for action (Cahill 2006).

**Housed in the Core Curriculum**

The stakeholders engage in the Learning Partnerships workshops as part of their curriculum. The pre-service teachers (in groups of 30) complete three ninety-minute workshops with the students as part of their semester-long compulsory subject called *Education Policy, Schools and Society*. In this subject the teachers focus on how societal issues and school policies and practices can impact on student engagement, behaviour and learning. They explore how schools can best assist students to deal with social problems such as racism, bullying, family pressures, learning problems and mental health concerns.

The Medical students (in groups of 25-30) complete one two-hour workshop with the students as part of their study of adolescent health. A key finding in adolescent health is that young people are relatively free of disease, and are most likely to need medical help in relation to issues such as sexuality, substance use and mental health. Thus the doctor needs to be able to assist adolescents to talk about sensitive issues and to learn how to question and respond in such a way as to support the patient in telling their story (Bonomo and Sawyer 2001).

The high school students (aged 14-16) engage in the work as part of the Community Drama elective. They spend four ninety-minute sessions preparing for the Medical program, and an additional four sessions preparing to participate in the Education workshops. They learn a range of naturalistic and anti-naturalistic drama techniques, and develop case-characters for use in the shared workshops. These investigatory role-based techniques are later used to structure the enquiry.
Thus the Learning Partnerships project serves distinct but mutually enhancing curriculum goals for each of the parties. The pre-service teachers explore the impact of social problems on student engagement in learning. The medical students learn to take a psychosocial screening of a teenage patient. The drama students develop skills in the use of dramatic form and understandings about how drama can be used as the medium through which to contribute to their community.

**Data Collection**

I used the drama methodology within two different programs (in Medicine and Education) and with many different cohorts (as different groups of secondary and tertiary students participate in the program). This enabled me to research the application of the techniques both as a mode of enquiry and as a tool for professional and social learning. It is not possible to dedicate the space to a detailed analysis of both programs, hence I focus chiefly on the Education program (chapters 7 and 8), and use the medical story to provide a point of comparison (chapter 9).

During the active data collection phases of this research (2003-4), I worked with three cohorts of Year 9/10 Drama students (aged 14-16) at a local secondary school and together we provided Learning Partnerships workshops for eighteen classes of 5th year medics, and six workshops with two classes of pre-service teachers in the Education Policy, Schools and Society (EPSS) core compulsory subject in the Diploma of Education.

I obtained ethics clearance in 2003 from The University of Melbourne Ethics committee (HREC No 030496 A&E 3.378), as well as the Victorian Department of Education and Training (# SOS 002516), and the Principal of the local high school. This provided the necessary approval for me to collect data from the 2003 and 2004 cohorts of secondary and tertiary students. I obtained informed consent from the tertiary students and from the secondary students and their parents to conduct interviews and surveys, and to make video recordings of a selection of workshops.

Supported through receipt of a Vice-chancellor’s Teaching Innovation Grant, I expanded the project during the subsequent years (2006-7). I recruited an additional
nine schools and provided professional development workshops for the teachers, and
the Education and Medical tutors, who then prepared the students and led the
workshops. In 2007, ten schools participated in the program and workshops were
provided for all final year medical students, and ten EPSS classes (approximately 300
students). Due to limitations of scope, I do not focus on the transmission phase of the
project here. However, as I continued to lead workshops with students, teachers and
doctors during this phase, my ongoing engagement in the project inevitably informs
my reflective analysis.

Overview of the Thesis

My thesis investigates the use of specific drama techniques to structure research
dialogues between classes of secondary school students and groups of tertiary
students completing their studies in medicine or in education. I draw on
poststructuralist theory to inform the refinement and analysis of drama techniques as a
tool to facilitate enquiry into the discourses that shape behaviour.

The investigation focuses on the way in which drama strategies can house different
interpretive practices, and thus lead players to make the world visible in different
ways.

School students and adults are positioned as co-investigators as they engage in a form
of participatory action research in which they explore together how to relate
effectively in their institutional contexts. Through playing the subsidiary roles of key
informants, coaches, actors and percipients, the participants engage with relevant
professional and personal challenges, address the internal barriers to change, and
invent and rehearse new possibilities in teacher/student and doctor/patient
relationships.

In my discussion of the literature I consider how the way we conceptualise young
people influences the roles we allocate to them. Poststructuralist theory provides a
lens through which to consider how societal discourses shape our sense of who we are
and who we can be (Foucault 1980; Davies 1994; Fine 1994; St. Pierre 2000; Butler
2004; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). This discussion provides a theoretical platform
up upon which to consider the use of drama as a tool through which to engage in deconstruction of the discourses influencing behaviour in schools and clinics. Three practices stories provide the context within which I analyse the use of these techniques and their function as a tool to structure poststructuralist participatory enquiry. This discussion explores how the choice of medium might govern the message, or moderate the knowledge that can be accessed through the drama.

Interview data collected from the participants provides an additional lens through which to consider the mechanisms that structure the learning that takes place. Participants find that engaging in the workshops together assists them to humanise each other, and to re-frame their assumptions about what is possible in teachers-student or doctor-patient relationships.

I argue that this approach to deconstruction through the drama contributes new methods to utilise in participatory enquiry, and provides techniques that work beyond the dominant methodological individualism to enable access to the poly-vocality of the respondents, and to expressions of the shared and inter-connected nature of identity.

What’s Next?

In Chapter Two: Research Frames, I examine the orienting paradigm and research traditions that inform my research, discussing the methodological questions that are fundamental to my research as the reflective practitioner and to the use of drama as a method in participatory action research. This includes a focus on how our ontological assumptions inform our epistemological assumptions.

In Chapter Three: Positioning Youth, I discuss how the concepts of ‘youth’ and ‘adolescence’ inform approaches to working with young people. I review the way in which the concept of ‘risk’ has come to dominate current understandings of young people. I consider how the notion of the ‘risk society’ inter-connects with the concept of being ‘at-risk’ and argue that the trend towards individualization provides the backdrop against which the participants in the Learning Partnerships engage in the ‘project of the self’. I discuss the way in which the collaborative and exploratory
nature of the drama may work as a counter-point to the individualising trend of our age, providing an opportunity for people to examine the co-constructed rather than the singular nature of their identity, and engage in their quest for meaning.

Chapter Four: Identity and Change reviews the way in which identity is conceptualised in the poststructuralist tradition. Butler’s (2004) theory that identity is a form of performance provides a model through which to consider how playing out the norms associated with ‘youth’, ‘teacher’ or ‘doctor’ might lead to the persistence of a limited reading of the other, and to a constricted enactment of the self as member of the confining category. I employ Butler’s concept that fantasy and the associated sense of possibility is essential in creation of change, and discuss the way in which the creative mode of the drama can be used to re-imagine the limiting positions and categories provided in the dominant discourses relating to teacher/student and doctor/patient.

In Chapter Five: Truth Games, I use Foucault’s (1988) construct of the ‘technologies of the self’ to theorise the mechanisms through which the drama might function as a collective tool for personal and social change. I chart the arguments that a number of influential artists have made about the use of theatre to promote enquiry, noting that they problematise the self and reality differently, make different ontological assumptions, and employ different aesthetic practices as the means through which to pursue ‘truth’ and effect change.

Chapter Six: Learning through Fictional Play reviews some of the different assumptions that are made about how learning occurs through dramatic play. Here I discuss the way in which the boundary between the fictional and the real is conceptualised, and propose a metaphor that will more readily permit conceptualisation of the socially constructed nature of the fictional play and the presence of the real context within the fiction.

Chapter 7: Detecting Discourses through the Drama, presents a data story in which I analyse my practice in preparing the school students for their work with the teachers.
in the Learning Partnerships project. This story charts the mechanisms through which drama can be used to begin a process of discourse detection.

Chapter 8: *Boundary Crossings* narrates the story of the shared workshops between the teachers and the students. It provides an analysis of the use of drama techniques to create and enact new possibilities to interrupt or overlay the dominant storylines relating to student/teacher.

Chapter 9: *Positioning and Pedagogy* compares the work conducted in the Medical program with that of the Education program, highlighting the way in which the drama methodology can be used to engage participants in a form of identity work which is collaborative, ethical, pragmatic, personal and professional.

Chapter Ten: *Deconstruction through the Drama* presents theory about the use of drama conventions as tools through which to engage in poststructuralist enquiry into the discourses that shape thinking and behaviour. It presents a technical discussion of the use of modified drama conventions to facilitate deconstruction through the drama.

Chapter Eleven: *Learning With and From* presents an analysis of the interview data which demonstrates that the participants find the process of learning in partnership to be a humanising one. It not only enables them to engage in work upon the self, but also to re-imagine each other, and to develop new stories of hope about the possibility of crossing the institutionalised divide between teacher/student and doctor/patient.

Chapter Twelve: *The Question is the Answer* presents my recommendations about the use of drama techniques as a method of social and transformative enquiry, and identifies the way in which my research has equipped me with a theory of practice to inform my future endeavors.
Chapter 2: Research Frames

Introduction
In this chapter I examine the orienting paradigm and research traditions that inform my research. My primary research orientation is that of the reflective practitioner engaged in an ongoing study of the pedagogy I employ. My secondary research frame is that of facilitator of a participatory action research project (the Learning Partnership Project) in which co-investigators consider how to improve the communicative practices that occur between students and teachers, or patients and doctors. My tertiary research frame focuses on the use of drama-based processes as tools through which to investigate social practices.

In this chapter I discuss the methodological questions that are fundamental to my research as the reflective practitioner. I also discuss the use of drama as a method in participatory action research.

Paradigm and Orienting Traditions of Enquiry
In the following section I discuss the ontological assumptions that inform my research orientation. I begin here because it is the paradigm of the researcher that shapes the nature of the questions asked as well as the assumptions made about how best to acquire and represent knowledge gathered in pursuit of these questions. It is also this set of assumptions that informs the way in which I use drama as a method for enquiry.

The researcher’s paradigm comprises four elements: ontology, epistemology, axiology (ethics) and methodology (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). Whilst it may be easy to define research by referring to the methodology employed, the ontology of the research is the key defining feature. This is because assumptions about the nature of reality are made a priori and orient the epistemological and methodological assumptions that inform the research. The axiological or ethical thread can be common between paradigms, and even unite research conducted from different ontological assumptions (Denzin and Lincoln 2003). Methods can also be employed across paradigms, with interview and focus groups or drama tasks being used to...
gather data in both positivist and constructivist traditions. Thus it is not the tool that defines the paradigm, but rather the philosophical assumptions that influence one’s use of the tool and the conclusions that one assumes can be made through its employ.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) define four major interpretive paradigms including positivist and post-positivist; constructivist-interpretive; critical (marxist, emancipatory); and feminist-poststructural. They describe the positivist and post-positivist paradigm as working from a realist and critical realist ontology, objective epistemologies and as relying on experimental or quasi-experimental survey methods. In contrast, the constructivist, critical and feminist-poststructural paradigms all work within “relativist ontologies (multiple constructed realities), interpretive epistemologies (the knower and the known interact and shape one another), and interpretive, naturalistic methods”(Denzin and Lincoln 2003, p.35). The researcher tends to be a participant in all three of these modes of research and there is a common axiology relating to knowing as a means to social emancipation, with an accompanying assumption that the inquiry is incomplete without action (Lincoln and Guba 2003).

In the following discussion I use Denzin and Lincoln’s (2003) definition of the researcher’s paradigm as a framework within which to locate my own practice as a researcher. I begin with a discussion of the ontological orientation, as one’s assumption about the nature of reality influences the truth claims that one makes in research.

**Ontological Orientation**

Ontological assumptions are those a priori premises that relate to one’s views about the nature of reality and the nature of the human being in the world. They inform the questions that we ask in research (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). The positivist researcher searches for evidence of a direct cause and effect, assuming that under the right conditions an intervention could be employed to replicate a defined set of results. I work from a constructivist ontological position and in this assume that I (and the participants in my study) construct and co-construct our sense of what has ‘really’ happened. I assume that we have multiple views, and that our views about what our
experiences mean will be shaped by our prior experience, gender, age, and cultural locations, as well as the discourses within which we live.

The distinction in adopting a constructivist ontology resides in the status of the truth claims that one assumes can be made from the data. The positivist researcher assumes that the interview data (gathered in a rigorous and rational manner) will provide the ‘knowledge’ lodged within the person. The assumption is that experience and meaning is inherent within the person and can be discovered through a trusting encounter. In assuming a constructivist ontology however, I assume that the meaning of the experience is constructed, and that the interview data yields a set of stories (re)constructed for me by the respondents (Schwandt 2003). I in turn select and interpret aspects of these stories and use them to inform my larger research narrative, which in itself I design within a set of assumptions about the genre, readers, and purpose of the text.

My constructivist ontological assumption informs my choice to use narrative forms to present my data via case stories. I select narrative as a form that represents the storied nature of my own understanding of my practice. A story is understood to be a construct that includes or excludes certain material according to the effect sought by the writer. It is not assumed to be a direct representation or re-enactment of the world. Rather it is an attempt to communicate the meaning made of experience (Polkinghorne 2007).

In chapters seven, eight and nine I present case-stories of my practice. These stories are built from the field records, reflective notes and video-taped recordings I kept whilst leading the work across two years of active data collection with different cohorts of students, medics and teachers. I have constructed them with a particular intent in mind – to use practice to generate theory, and to apply theory to analysis of practice. This field experience provides the ‘evidence’ upon which I mount my argument about the efficacy of particular drama conventions as tools to enable a poststructuralist approach to participatory research.
Epistemological Orientation

Epistemology incorporates theories about how one comes to learn about or understand the world. These beliefs orient how one assumes that knowledge can be gathered through the research as well as assumptions about the status of the knowledge claims that can be made.

Schwandt (2003) discusses our ‘understanding of understanding’, or our assumptions about how we come to know. He points out that different epistemological traditions lead to different assumptions about how best to understand human action. His discussion is relevant here as different assumptions about how we come to know lead to different enquiry practices and to different sorts of knowledge claims. Schwandt (2003) describes Interpretivism, Hermeneutics and Social Constructivism as three different epistemological traditions, each of which leads to different assumptions about how best to understand human action. In the following section I consider each of Schwandt’s (2003) three categories and discuss their relevance to analysis of my drama practice.

Interpretivist Assumptions

In the tradition of Interpretivist Philosophies one sets out to “find meaning in an action, or to say one understands what a particular action means” (Schwandt 2003:191). The epistemological assumption behind this approach is that the individual knows the meanings of his or her actions and thus can report them to a researcher (e.g. via interview). One tradition then in Philosophical Interpretivism is that of learning through empathetic identification. In this approach one seeks to understand human action by "grasping the subjective consciousness or intent of the actor from the inside" (194). This is an act of psychological reenactment or "getting inside the head of an actor to understand what he or she is up to in terms of motives, beliefs, desires, thoughts…” (194).

Much of drama in education practice is founded on this interpretivist assumption. The assumption is that by standing in the shoes of another one can come to know what it is to be in that person’s story or predicament. When, as drama teachers, we talk as if we think we have actually experienced what it is to have this experience, we convey
the assumption that there is such a thing as this body of knowledge to be ‘discovered’. Alternatively, if we say we have *imagined* what it *might* be like to be in that circumstance, our speculative framing acknowledges the notion that we have *constructed* rather than *discovered* this ‘meaning’ or experience. Similarly in research it can be comforting to make an interpretivist claim that we have ‘discovered’ the impact of the respondent’s experience because she has told us about it in a candid interview. A different epistemological assumption is made if the researcher understands the interview as a co-construction (between speaker and listener) in which the speaker attunes the story for the listener. The respondent might have multiple and possibly contradictory stories to tell about the one event and will have shaped the telling to fit her assumptions about what she should or can say (Elliott 2005).

*Philosophical Hermeneutics*

When we understand the meaning we have made to be a construction, we are working within the epistemological tradition of Philosophical Hermeneutics (Schwandt 2003). In this tradition the assumption is that understanding is an *interpretation* rather than a *discovery* or a body of knowledge with an independent existence. ‘Meaning’ is understood to be something that is negotiated, rather than something that is discovered. From this premise, understanding is not seen as arising from a procedure of seeking and then finding knowledge, but rather meaning-making is a process that one is always engaged in.

If a drama practitioner operates from this tradition, the design focus is likely to be on creating the pedagogical conditions in which understanding can be both co-created and *seen to be* co-created. From a constructivist orientation there may be less interest in realism as a form of transmitting knowledge through performance, and more emphasis on the use of anti-naturalistic forms to make transparent the constructed nature of the interpretation. In addition, when talking about the drama, the teacher would emphasise the constructed nature of the meanings one develops, asking, for example, *What did you make that mean?* rather than *What does it mean?* This small shift in language represents a large shift in the ontology assumed.
This notion is relevant in my use of the drama as a tool for enquiry. It directs me to understand the performance texts as co-constructions that have been negotiated and fashioned with an audience in mind. In the collaborative form of the drama the ‘listeners’ consist both of fellow players who are engaged in co-creating the scenario, and fellow participants who observe the text in performance.

**Social Constructivist Assumptions**

Schwandt defines a third category through which we can approach our understanding of understanding. He defines Social Constructivists as those who believe that we do not ‘discover’ knowledge but rather that we “construct it or make it” (Schwandt 2003, p.197). Schwandt argues that "there is an inevitable historical and sociocultural dimension to this construction" as we construct our interpretations "against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language..." (Schwandt 2003:197). Building on this notion, a social constructivist might ask about the drama (just as about her own research data) *Where did those ideas, roles and interactions come from? What meanings have we inherited that would have us play the character, scene or story like that? How might this work be interpreted or understood by our audiences?*

The three philosophies of interpretivism, philosophical hermeneutics and social constructivism define differently what ‘understanding’ actually means. This is an essential difference in the notion of epistemology and is likely therefore to translate as difference in teaching or research methodology, as well as difference in the texts (both research and performance texts) that are created to represent (and create) understanding. For dramatists, this can translate as making different assumptions about how we learn about the world through drama as well as different assumptions about how best to portray the world when constructing ‘texts’ or performances.

I assume a constructivist epistemology and hence believe that the meanings or insights I arrive at in this research, or we (the participants and I) arrive at during the workshop process, are co-constructed in the communicative space and are informed by the heritage of thought, culture and discourse that we reside within. I assume that my (or their) way of making sense out of what has happened is to some extent ‘pre-
shaped’ and influenced by a heritage of thought and experience. In addition, I assume that when reporting on and making meaning of experience, I (and they) speak into the assumed ‘listening’ of the audience or reader. Thus my assumption is that the reporting on experience should not be taken to be the essential ‘truth’ of the matter. Rather it should be understood to be an explanatory theory that draws on a range of material (including stories) to justify its logic of argument and its conclusions.

**Axiological Orientation**

Axiology encompasses values, ethics and aesthetics, and informs one’s sense of the means, conduct and purposes of the research (Denzin and Lincoln 2003: 245). The axiological axis is the gestational home of my research and practice. It generates the sense of social purpose that drives me to take action and informs my view as to the appropriate means and methods through which to work as both teacher and researcher. Further, the aesthetic domain of my work is integrally connected to the ethical domain. The aesthetic methodology (collaborative and creative) is both an expression of the underpinning ethics (inclusive and emancipatory) and the mechanism through which ethical approaches to the enquiry is managed (participatory, consultative, poly-vocal, multi-perspectival).

As a teacher I aim for integrity of process and purpose so that the means might be an enactment (in the present) of the ends, rather than only a path through which (in the future) to reach the goal. This is an aesthetic as well as an ethical goal in that I aim to promote positive social practices via the use of such practices. I choose dialogic research and teaching methodologies in order to support my emancipatory goals. I see dialogue as a method that embeds the ends within the means in that agency and understanding are both means and ends. I am centrally interested in praxis because attention to both theory and action is needed to ensure that the work progresses in an ethical manner. It is through the focus on praxis that I am most likely to be able to accomplish the aesthetic, ethical and epistemological integrity that occurs when process, purpose and product align.
Methodological Orientation

Assumptions about methodology arise in association with epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions. I have selected a range of methods through which to gain access to the knowledge I seek. I have used my reflective practitioner notes and video-tapes of classroom activity as the basis for constructing reflective stories about my practice. Through these stories I set out to analyse my actions, intent, reflection and theories. In this I aim to illustrate the reciprocal relationship between my theory-building and action-taking. I describe what I set out to do, and what I see as I ‘read’ the participants’ engagement with the curriculum and with each other. I outline the thinking that guides my choices as an educator. I aim through this process to scrutinize the thinking or theory-of-action that informs my work.

Story collection and subsequent re-storying is a methodology used in the tradition of narrative research. Chase (2005) defines narrative as a form of “retrospective meaning making – the shaping or ordering of past experience” (656). Even in telling one’s own narrative the writer or speaker “shapes, constructs, and performs the self, experience, and reality” (Chase 2005: 657). My writing of the classroom stories operates both as means of analysis, as is common in the field of narrative inquiry, and as a means of representing knowledge via the research text (St. Pierre 1997; Elliott 2005).

Though it is more common to collect others’ stories and then re-write them into a new story (Chase 2005), in this project I collect my own (multiple) stories of practice (with a variety of cohorts) and then re-write them into practice-stories which exemplify and analyse the praxis. I use the process of re-storying to feature those elements of my teaching experience that focus on the association between the design of the task and the responses of the participants. This is because I am interested in the architecture of the pedagogy. My focus is on identifying the integral elements of the pedagogical design, rather than on providing rich descriptions of the specifics of personalities and contexts as is common in the ethnographic tradition.

I base my practice stories on data collected whilst leading the work in 2003-2004 with three cohorts of drama students, two cohorts of education students, and eighteen
cohorts of medical students. However, as the reflective practitioner, I am ongoingly engaged in reflection on my practice. Hence, I inevitably draw my insights from what I will describe as three phases of my work. The first phase is my prior professional practice. In this phase I ran the early prototypes of the workshops investigated here, and over years of engagement as a drama leader refined and developed techniques then used in the Learning Partnerships project. (This has been illustrated in the Hot Air Balloons story in the previous chapter). The second phase is the active data collection stage in which I conducted research as part of this study. This is the phase during which my ethics clearance permitted collection of data from the participants in the form of video-tapes, interviews and survey. (Ethics approval was granted by University of Melbourne HREC No 030496 A&E 3.378, and by the Victorian Department of School Education # SOS 002516.) The third phase is my ongoing work in which I have continued to lead and reflect upon these workshops, but not to collect data from the participants.

In telling my own story I run the risk of romanticising my own voice or of presenting in an unduly authoritative manner. Chase (2005) points out however that there is a distinction between the narrator’s voice, such as the one I use when relating my classroom practice stories, and the researchers’ voice, such as the one I use now in talking about the research. This distinction is important as it allows for the creation of a dialogue between the two voices. In order to temper the use of ‘self as instrument’ I also gather knowledge from other perspectives. I interview and survey the participants to seek their views about the value of the Learning Partnerships and the pedagogical processes employed. I use my analysis of their responses as an additional lens through which to review my practice stories. Thus I am able to interrogate my own assumptions in the light of responses from the three different groups of participants (the school students, medics and pre-service teachers). However, the text remains the reflective practitioner story about the use of drama as a method in participatory enquiry.

**Theory as a Lens**

In addition to collecting the reflective practitioner and the participant data, I use theory as a research tool – a lens through which to engage in analysis. The theoretical
distinctions orienting the ontological and epistemological assumptions are particularly relevant in my research. Hence I dedicate substantial attention to establishing the theoretical framework and to applying a theorized perspective throughout the thesis.

Having discussed here the way in which our ‘understanding of understanding’ affects our approach to learning, I now focus more specifically on my use of the reflective practitioner methodology to research the use of drama as a tool for learning. I then review the tradition of critical action research and relate the use of participatory approaches in research to the collective approach used when learning through drama. In subsequent chapters (see chapters 4-6), I discuss the use of aesthetic drama-based methods as tools through which to engage in analysis of social practices and as mechanisms to enable shifts in thinking. This discussion then provides the theoretical framework through which to interpret my practice and the data collected from participants.

**Primary Frame: Reflective practitioner**

**Insider and Instrument**

In my role as teacher/facilitator I am located inside the body of education practice that I am investigating. Neelands (2006), Gallagher (2000), and Taylor (1998) have each employed a reflective practitioner methodology in their research of drama practice, and each note the integrated and ongoing nature of operating as both practitioner and researcher. Neelands (2006) describes reflective practice as ‘research from the inside’ and sees the ongoing nature the enquiry is one of its strengths. Taylor (1996) suggests that this methodology is an ideal means through which to contribute to the development of a theory of practice as it honors the ‘intuitive and emergent processes that inform artistic meaning-making” and the immediacy of aesthetic and artistic practice (Taylor, 1996: 29).

**Methodological Rigour and the Reflective Practitioner**

Gallagher, Taylor and Neelands argue that the reflective practitioner needs to problematise their interpretation of the data by seeking views from angles other than their own. Each has incorporated responses from participants in their own reflective
practitioner research. I too have collected interview and survey data from the participants. I have also used my engagement with theory to provide a conceptual frame through which to analyse my work.

Neelands (2006) proposes seven characteristics of methodological rigour for the drama educator working as a reflective practitioner. I have mapped these characteristics of rigour against the definition of the researcher’s paradigm (comprising ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology) as proposed by Denzin and Lincoln (2003) in order that I can better use them to guide my approach in this study.

Neelands argues that the researcher should take a critical position, aware that knowledge is not neutral and that as researcher/practitioners we will have a tendency to re-create patterns of power. In this he can be seen to encourage a constructivist ontology. He argues that the work should have emancipatory goals and progress in an ethical manner, ensuring that the relationships are equitable and inclusive. In this he maps out the axiological domain. The approach should be cyclical and ongoing and progress through collaborative modes. This can be seen as epistemological advice. One should take an evidence-based approach that incorporates multiple views and gathers material at every stage throughout the pedagogical process. This includes the reflective practitioner adopting a reflexive stance, modeling social democratic values and generating critical dialogue, and seeking responses from the participants. This can be seen as methodological advice.

My approach is commensurate with Neeland’s model in that I engage in a cyclical and reflexive process of teaching, reflection and writing, and repeat the cycle across a number of different cohorts. Further, the drama process itself is interactive and collaborative in structure and the work addresses emancipatory goals in an inclusive manner. The stakeholders are gathered to investigate problems of shared concern and I use investigatory drama practices to collect data from the participants within the workshops themselves as well as seeking their views via interviews and surveys.

Key to the reflective practitioner methodology however is the reflection that is done
Schön’s (1983) analysis of how professionals think in action has been influential in the drama in education field (Taylor 1996; Taylor 1998; Gallagher 2000; Neelands 2006). Researchers have drawn upon his work to theorise about the artistry of the drama educator and to proffer reflective practitioner analysis as a methodology suited to the research of drama praxis. In the following section I use Schön’s theories relating to reflective practice to outline the process whereby I set out convert much of my tacit knowledge about ‘what works’ to a level of principle or theory.

Thinking in Action – the Practitioner as Researcher

Schön (1987) uses the three terms ‘knowing-in-action’, ‘reflection-in-action’, and ‘reflection-on-action’ to distinguish between some of the elements that constitute the ‘artistry’ of the practitioner. He defines ‘knowing-in-action’ as the dynamic knowledge we display in executing our work. This is a form of tacit knowledge that we are rarely able to make explicit. Our descriptions of this action after the event are constructions – attempts to convert action into theories or stories. He uses the term ‘reflection-in-action’ to define the activity whereby we reflect whilst in action, often prompted to do so by a surprise that interrupts the flow of our knowledge in action. It is a different activity again to reflect-on-action, or to think back on what happened in order to inform oneself for future action. My research interest lies in lifting the tacit to the explicit such that my knowing-in-action can be more robustly informed by theory.

Schön defines reflective practice as involving problem setting rather than just the problem-solving more commonly associated with a positivist technical approach to professional practice. Problem setting involves a framing of the problem or challenge to be addressed. In choosing a frame through which to define a problem, one chooses a view of reality, and in choosing, the possibility must be considered that there are alternative views of reality or alternative ways of framing the problem. Thus Schön believes that the reflective practitioner is of necessity taking a constructivist view of reality. This he contrasts with the objectivist view of reality that underlies technical rationality whereby the practitioner sets out to apply a body of knowledge as if transfer of theory to practice is simply a technical matter. Using Schön’s model, my reflective practitioner study can be best understood ontologically within the
constructivist paradigm as comprising both framing or problem setting and the storying or explanatory accounts of practice.

The Tasks of the Reflective Practitioner

The reflective practitioner is consciously engaged in a spiral of enquiry or a kind of experimenting in real time (Schön 1983). Reflection-in-action entails framing, hypothesis-building, experimental design, intervention, and theory building.

I have employed this spiral of enquiry in the following way:

- I have framed my interest in the use of the drama pedagogy to enable change.
- I have hypothesised that the form used moderates the construction of meaning.
- My experimental intervention has involved the use of refined drama pedagogies within the Learning Partnerships project.
- I have engaged in building pedagogical theory from practice, and additionally have used poststructuralist theory as a lens through which to analyse practice.

In this I have engaged in an ongoing spiral of action and reflection.

Artistry and the Imagination of the Professional

Schön (1987) points out that professionals engage in ‘virtual worlds’ as they spin long lines of invention and inference whilst in action, simultaneously imagining into possible choices and consequences whilst engaging responsively in real time. In this the practitioner’s imaginative ability is an essential component of their artistry and contributes directly to their engagement as a researcher of their own practice.

Taking on Schön’s analysis, it is relevant to consider that as the leader of the drama I engage at a virtual (as well as practical) level with the business of running the class. This entails a triple imagining on my part. On one level I theorise about what might ‘work’ and then act upon choices arising from this thinking (imagining ahead). Here I work much as the playwright and designer does. On another level I interpret the responses to my choices, making meaning as I go about what happens (interpreting and theorising the moment). Here I engage as the director, working with the actors as they interpret the material. On a third level I look back at what transpired, reflecting upon my assumptions, intent, actions and the consequences (retrospectively re-
interpreting and re-theorising). Here I work additionally as critic and connoisseur and re-inform myself as designer and director. At each level theory is critical.

Much has been written to inform the aesthetic repertoire of the drama educator. Less however has been written about how the theorising of the leader informs the selection and modification of tools or conventions that occurs as part of the ‘artistry’ of their practice. This requires a scrutiny of how one’s explanatory models shape and house the professional decisions that may seem to just ‘emerge’ in the moment. Senge (2002) highlights the importance of understanding the theory that drives selection of method and tools, arguing that without a sound acquaintance with the theory behind one’s selection of tools, one will not know when to use them, when to modify them, and when their use may be counter-productive. This is as true in drama as in any other field. I seek in this study to illustrate the use of theory in attuning methodology to one’s purpose.

As the reflective practitioner I thus set out to convert my knowledge from a tacit to an explicit form. I use the practice stories to chart the detail of how I imagine ahead, how I interpret as I go, and how I re-theorise. In this I seek to make explicit how theory gives carriage to practice, and in turn, emerges from practice.

Relating Reflective Practice to Participatory Action Research

Schön’s analysis of the ‘work’ entailed in reflection-in-action holds much in common with the definition of action research as involving ongoing, overlapping and fluid phases of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and re-planning (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Both reflective practice and action research involve researching through practice, in order to better effect change in practice. The action researcher commonly works with a group of fellow stakeholders, and the reflective practitioner commonly engages as a sole investigator, however, the recursive processes of action and reflection, and of theory-building and theory-testing, are common to both. In the following section I discuss the use of participatory action research within the secondary frame of my research.
Secondary Frame - Co-Investigators in a Participatory Action Research Project

As a reflective practitioner I conceptualise the Learning Partnerships project as a form of action research (Park 2001). Participatory action research is a methodology in which “ordinary people address common needs arising in their daily lives and, in the process, generate knowledge” (81). In participatory action research the emphasis is on the involvement of the stakeholders themselves in “studying, reframing, and reconstructing social practices” (Kemmis and MacTaggart 2005: 563). It is a process through which participants strive to understand and to change what people do as well as to change the discourses through which people understand and interpret their world (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005).

It is common for action researchers to address change in organisational practices as the object of their research. It is also valid to use action research to generate change in relational practices (Kemmis 2001). The Learning Partnerships workshops are a form of participatory action research in that the workshops bring the key stakeholders together, framing them as co-investigators enquiring into issues of shared concern. The goal is to address shared problems and to re-shape social practices such that both parties gain from improved student/teacher or doctor/patient relationships.

Dialogue and Praxis

Participatory action research is a highly interactive and exploratory mode of building change. It is a form of research that moves from the specific to the general, aiming to connect the local to the global, and the personal to the political (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). The process is particularly valuable because it integrates theory and praxis through the focus on collaborating to find solutions to problems (Greenwood and Levin 2003). Dialogue is the key method through which this process is accomplished (Sanderson and Allard 2003). Participants talk through issues, raise awareness, and together build the vision, capacity and commitment necessary for emancipatory action (Freire 1985).
Positioning of the Participants in Participatory Action Research

Certain epistemological and axiological assumptions underpin the relational design of the participatory action research methodology. The positioning of the participants is a defining characteristic. They are the co-researchers rather than the ‘researched’. Researchers choose this methodology because they see the need to step beyond the colonial tradition in which the outsider or ‘expert’ visits the site, defines the problem, and provides the solution, thus positioning themselves as provider and the people as recipients (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). In action research the stakeholders are positioned as the agents who are best able to know and consider the specifics of context, culture and values that shape their needs, constraints and opportunities. External expertise that is sought is considered within the frame of this contextual knowledge.

There is a similar need to deal with the paternalistic assumptions about empowerment that can be made when working with youth. Young people tend to be excluded from both problem-definition and problem-solving activities related to their own affairs (Wyn and White 1997). They are commonly pathologised or glamorised in health and education discourses, and once relegated to the role of ‘object of concern’ can only with difficulty be seen as the source of solutions (Kelly 2003). Rather they must be helped, protected, informed or curtailed. A participatory approach that uses dialogue as a key method invites a fundamental shift away from this positioning of young people. In the Learning Partnerships project, youth are identified as a source of solution rather than the site of a problem. As can be seen in chapter 11, they find that being given a role of value is one of the most significant things about the Learning Partnerships. Being useful and being listened to changes their sense of who they are (Cahill 2005; 2007).

Critical Theory Approaches to Participatory Action Research

Just as the drama field has relatively recently turned towards theory to throw light on practice, so too has the action research field. Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) note that once it was sufficient to define action research in relation to its spiral of action and reflection, its social and participatory nature, and its emphasis on practical and collaborative approaches to addressing emancipatory goals. They observe that over
the last decade there has been a shift towards critical theory amongst proponents of this methodology.

Critical theorists tend to focus on criticism of society and its shaping influence, and may for example critique the role of ideologies in shaping behaviour, or the function of texts, practices and symbols in perpetuating the status quo. They tend to have emancipatory goals and have an interest in notions of agency and empowerment, which are also central concepts in action research (Kemmis and McTaggart 2001). Kemmis and McTaggart (2005, 2001) draw on Habermasian critical theory theory to problematise these notions and to conceptualise the mechanisms whereby empowerment might occur. They draw on Habermas’ theory of system and lifeworlds to rework of the notion of empowerment. They use his concepts to consider why collective and participatory approaches to problem-solving might be more effective than inviting in an expert. They note that empowerment is not simply about personal liberation, nor is it just about the development of knowledge or skills. It also entails seeing oneself as part of the system, and working within the system to effect change. In discussing the use of drama for empowerment, Neelands (1996) notes that work may be conducted in the communal, cultural and political domains as well as in the personal domain. If the personal story is seen also as an exemplar of the political story, and as part of the jigsaw of communal stories, then attention in one domain may accomplish shifts in another.

Habermas’ concept of systems and lifeworlds offers a model that explains the interplay of the personal and the political. Habermas (1987) argues that we must understand societies as incorporating both systems and lifeworlds. The ‘system world’ is defined as encompassing institutional structures and their associated roles, rules and norms. The ‘lifeworld’ is defined as arising from people’s everyday experience and consisting of the three ‘structural nuclei’ of culture, society and person. These three nuclei interact through the three processes of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialisation.

Habermas argues that in earlier times there was a closer integration of system and lifeworld, but in late modernity societal structures have become more complex and
the ‘system’ has ‘colonised’ the lifeworld. The logic of the marketplace now intrudes into and becomes the worldview of the lifeworld. Thus individuals increasingly define themselves in terms of the systems world, understanding themselves as consumers, workers and clients. Traditional ways of making sense of the world and of constructing personal and social meaning have been disrupted without being replaced. At a cultural level, this leads to a loss of meaning as consumerism replaces the sense of having a higher order purpose. At a societal level, individualism brings a breakdown in solidarity, and leads to the sense of anomie or alienation. At a personal level, this leads to depression and de-stabilisation of personality due to a breakdown in the processes of socialisation and individuation. In short, individuals find it hard to make meaning, feel connected and maintain an ongoing sense of self (Habermas 1987).

From a Habermasian perspective, the dialogic and reflective process of ‘communicative action’ is needed to create and reproduce the lifeworld from one generation to another. It is thus essential to cultural, social and individual health and learning. Through a Habermasian lens, the dialogic processes of action research and the drama workshop can be seen as a means through which participants can establish a sense of themselves and others that is greater than the roles prescribed and defined at a systems level. They can address change in the lifeworld as well as the systems world, forming an integrative link between the two (Kemmis and McTaggert 2001). The dialogic and integrative practices of the drama workshop may thus answer a particular need in groups affected by a de-personalisation of their societal roles. As can be heard in the data presented in Chapter 11, the participants experience a sense of personal dislocation when playing out their institutional roles and also experience a reduced capacity to humanize the other. One of the key benefits they identify in the Learning Partnerships is that the process is humanizing, connective and meaningful.

The Relational Space

What then is the mechanism that generates this humanising connection? Habermas theorises that ‘communicative action’ opens ‘communicative space’ between people and it is this ‘communicative space’ that generates a sense of solidarity and legitimacy around the understandings and choices of the participants. Conversation does not
necessarily constitute communicative action however. Rather communicative action is that which occurs when we interrupt what we are doing in order to examine its worth or function. It entails a level of shared, critical and reflexive enquiry (Habermas 1987). As in any enquiry, truth claims will be made and considered. Habermas believes that the process of communicative action entails people addressing four key validity claims. People must consider whether the statements made by fellows are comprehensible or make sense to them and others; whether they are likely to be true or accurate in relation to what else is known; whether they are authentic in terms of being sincerely held or stated; and whether they are morally right or appropriate in the circumstances (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Thus communicative action is a process of shared enquiry in which participants make readings of the truthfulness and viability of other people’s contributions. When the drama workshop provides opportunities for participants to interrupt and examine the status quo, and to engage in this validity work together, they can be understood to have engaged in communicative action.

The theory of communicative action is a useful framework through which to consider the epistemological work that the participants engage with in the drama workshop. Participants must review the extent to which the material revealed in or through the drama fits with their knowledge of the world and of human being (asking is this world view comprehensible? Could it be like that for this character? Would it really happen like this?). They assess the fit of what they are shown with what they already know (asking how does this example fit with my theoretical learning or my experience of life?). They assess the sincerity or authenticity of the contributions made in role (via the performance) or out of role during interpretive discussion (asking do I trust this source of information? and do I find this portrayal or interpretation to be convincing?) As the players watch, play and respond, they also assess the ethical and contextual appropriateness of the advice, models, scenarios and coaching they are given (asking to what degree does this approach fit with what I believe to be ethical conduct in such circumstances? Would this be a ‘right action’ for me to take?). In this they engage in the four phases of the validity work that Habermas defines as integral to ‘communicative action’.
In this discussion it can be seen that credibility is essential when learning together. If the participants did not assess each other’s contributions as valid and authentic, they could not learn from each other. By this theory, the sense of connectedness and insight that the participants report gaining from their work in the Learning Partnerships project can be understood as arising from a dialogic process which has allowed them to find each others’ contributions to be credible, sincere and ethical. It is then of particular interest to consider how participating in the fiction together might generate authentic enquiry.

**Communicative Action and Empowerment**

Empowerment can be understood as a form of communicative action that entails the exchange of lifeworld experiences, which in turn enables action at both a personal and a systems level (Kemmis 2001). Calling upon this argument, the notion of empowerment can be extended from the personal, where it tends to be associated with notions of skill, awareness or knowledge, to encompass the social domain through which we construct a sense of solidarity and can be impassioned or encouraged by perceptions of the support or sincerity of others. Essential in the social creation of meaning are the discourses which cast our sense of what is appropriate, the imaginative domain through which we create a sense of what is possible and desirable, and the cultural and symbolic domains through which we make and enact meaning about that which we value, desire or fear.

This understanding of empowerment can be applied to the drama workshop. If empowerment is achieved via the collective, then the participatory nature of the drama work can be understood as the mechanism which allows meaning to adhere and validity work to be undertaken. Further, the sharing of lifeworld experience may be of particular benefit when it occurs across the systems boundaries of student/teacher or doctor/patient.
Considering the Drama Workshop as a Site for Participatory Action Research

As has been argued, there are structural similarities between action research and drama. Despite the shared interest in dialogue, praxis and participatory exploration however, I note two significant differences between participatory action research and drama. These relate to the declared purpose of the activity and the positioning of the participants.

The chief purpose of the participatory action research project is ethical and political in that the primary aim of the work is to generate change in the real world. The chief goal of the classroom drama workshop is more commonly (though not exclusively) epistemological. Seated within education contexts, the focus of the drama class is more likely to be on promoting learning about life and about the art form of drama. The primary intent is to promote developmental change in the individual participants. Secondary goals may or may not include enabling collective efforts towards change in the affairs of the world.

The second key distinction between drama and participatory action research relates to the positioning of the participants in the real (rather than the fictional) context of the workshop. In participatory action research the stakeholders are actually represented and are positioned as the key informants and agents of change. In the drama the participants are positioned as students and more commonly pretend to represent different stakeholders and viewpoints. When Heathcote’s ‘mantle of the expert’ convention is used to cast students into role as if a teacher, naturalist, historian, or some other ‘expert’, this framing of character and perspective occurs within the fiction (Bolton 2003).

For the drama workshop to become a site for participatory action research, the players must be actually positioned as informants drawing upon an expertise and viewpoint that they have in relation to the real world, and additionally be collectively pursuing change outcomes in the world. They may play additional roles within the fiction, but a positioning as key informant and change agent must surround and inform interpretation of the fictional play. Following this line of argument, forum theatre can
be seen as a form of participatory action research in that players and spect-actors
gather to identify their (real world) oppression and to rehearse for change (Boal
1985). The dialogue for change that occurs in and through the dramatic form takes
place in order to rehearse for change in the real world. Heathcote’s later work
(described in Bolton 2003) involving children in the commission model whereby they
work to inform real world projects, comes closer to the participatory action research
model. So too does the deployment of students in a form of enhanced forum theatre in
the Cooling Conflict project (O’Toole, Burton et al. 2004). In this project school
students lead a forum-theatre process with younger classes and assist them to explore
relevant social challenges in order that they deal more effectively with conflict.

The Learning Partnerships project is a form of participatory action research because
whilst problems are defined, enacted and investigated through the drama, the enquiry
is specifically designed to inform real world action. In addition, the key stakeholders
draw upon their ‘real world’ experience and examine together how best to take ‘real
world’ action.

**Consulting Youth**

It is common amongst those who engage in emancipatory research with marginalised
or oppressed groups to attempt to access the voice of those who are normally silenced.
Within this tradition sits the attention to student voice. It is easy to assume that simply
by consulting with young people we can shift the imbalance of power between adults
and young people. However, it can be difficult to find appropriate methods to
generate young people’s participation and to stimulate critical engagement (Miskovic
and Hoop 2006). Schultz (2001) suggests that we may need to re-conceptualise roles
and modes of participation in order to account for imbalances in age, status and
power, and should seek structures that allow for "multiple kinds of investment” in the
process (Schultz 2001: 23). Cook-Sather (2007) recommends approaches in which
students are involved as co-investigators rather than just as respondents.

The selection of methodology and tools can provide a form of enabling rigour when
using students as researchers. A key weakness in standpoint research (whereby the
members of the marginalised group are assumed to share the same views) can be
averted through use of scenarios and photographs to elicit responses (Thomson and Gunter 2007). Fictional scenarios can provide a protective distancing, assist respondents to talk about sensitive situations without revealing their own stories, and provoke a deeper understanding of the others’ perspectives.

When working as co-investigators, one must be mindful that different methods will elicit different styles of talk. In this the voices heard will be created by the pedagogies used to elicit them (Arnot and Reay 2007). Thus, what students say when consulted about their learning will vary in response to the types of questions asked, as well as the methods through which they are asked. By this argument, it is important to focus on the methodology through which the participants will be consulted or located as co-researchers, as well as on the types of questions they will be asked.

**Positioning Participants within the Learning Partnerships Project**

I employ two key methods to straddle the classroom and institutional boundaries and to enable the participants to interact across the divides of age, status and custom. The first is via the positioning of the school students as co-investigators, coaches and key informants. The second is via the use of fictional play in which all participants are positioned as co-creators, actors, characters and witnesses.

As coaches and key informants the school students have an overt role in the co-teaching of the curriculum. The coaching they are asked to give comes from the perspective of one who can currently identify with the location of adolescent patient or school student. Their positioning as coach assists to rectify the age-related status difference of youth/adult and the knowledge-related status difference of student/teacher.

Through the fictional play both youth and adults are located variously as co-creators, fellow actors, characters and witnesses. As co-creators, they share the roles of writer/directors as they make and shape the narrative and address decisions relating to both form and content. Within the dramas they are also called upon to work as actors. As actors they are inter-dependent and work together to co-create the unfolding drama. As actors they play characters who may be located in an array of status or role
positions, some of which may resemble, and others of which will be very different
from those they play in real life. As percipients of each other’s scenes, the participants
are in the shared role of witness of the fictional play. The material presented becomes
a shared body of knowledge around which to talk.

Thus the interactive and enquiry-based tasks invite modes of interaction that overlay
those relational patterns and positions associated with ascribed real-world roles.

Tertiary Frame - Arts-based Enquiry

Within the participatory project I use arts-based methods as enquiry tools, with drama
activities used to structure the participation and to frame the enquiry tasks.

Much of the work of this thesis charts the use of specifically refined drama
conventions as enquiry tools, and such is concerned with innovation in research
methodology. As with any innovation in research, one must consider the issue of
standards and validity. Finley (2003) has explored these issues in her review of the
emerging field of arts-based methodologies. She recommends that arts-based enquiry
should embrace the three key commitments common to other forms of qualitative
enquiry, including the use of dialogic and nurturing relational practices; the adoption
of action-based approaches which focus on providing useable and responsive
research; and a visionary and critical orientation which aims both to research ‘how
things are’ and to address ‘how things could be otherwise’ (293).

In the Learning Partnerships workshops I set out to address each of these criteria. The
drama process is participatory, dialogic and inclusive. The workshops address
relevant challenges, and centre upon the purpose of enabling change. The drama-
based enquiry tasks invite the employ of multiple perspectives, enable poly-vocal
responses, and call for both creative and critical thinking.

Finley also offers criteria for assessing the quality of arts-based enquiry, offering a
collection of questions around nine key themes. These include assessment as to
whether the research 1) is useful to the community; 2) is inclusive of perspectives of
both participants and researchers; 3) generates ethical and caring relationships; 4)
positions participants as co-researchers as well as the subjects of research; 5) experiments with form in both research and representation; 6) uses dialogic and representational forms which open questions relevant to participants, researchers and artists; 7) creates open texts which invite multiplicity in response; 8) invites passion and participation; and 9) connects audiences to the broader purpose of serving community and moves them to take action (Finley 2003).

There are similarities between the criteria Finley (2003) proposes and the characteristics of methodological rigour that Neeland’s (2006) recommends to guide the drama educator working as a reflective practitioner. Both emphasise the need for an alignment of the axiological, methodological and epistemological domains, noting that the work should be characterized by its emancipatory goals, by its inclusive, dialogic and reflexive processes, and by its critical orientation. Participatory action research is similarly concerned with dialogue, praxis and social change, and with positioning the participants within the enquiry process (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005).

**Fractal Framing**

The fractal is characterized by self-similarity, that is, the parts have the same shape as the whole. So too there is a synchrony between the primary, secondary and tertiary frames of my research. As reflective practitioner (primary frame), as leader of the participatory action research (secondary frame), and as the director of the arts-based enquiry (tertiary frame), I use dialogic, creative and reflective processes to engage in critical readings of ‘life as it is’ in order to pursue ‘life as it could be’. Further, in this study, the methodology is not only the means of enquiry, but also the subject of investigation. I both work with my tools, and develop theory about their influence, efficacy and validity.

**Summary**

In this chapter I have outlined the paradigm that orients my research, locating myself as the reflective practitioner, assuming a constructivist ontology, and informed by the poststructuralist research traditions. I have argued that ongoing theorising of action is
at the heart of reflective practice. The practitioner acts out of her hypotheses, and refines or produces new theory along the way. Theory also provides the conceptual sieve through which to sort and scrutinise experience. In this it provides a tool for analysis. One’s theory-of-practice becomes an evolving set of design principles called upon to inform the architecture of one’s approach. It is therefore logical that theory be understood as both a primary tool in analysis and as the product of analysis.

I have discussed the way in which my primary research frame as a reflective practitioner incorporates a secondary frame within which I investigate the Learning Partnerships project. Within the Learning Partnerships project I attempt to achieve emancipatory outcomes as is common within the tradition of participatory action research. Here I turn to Habermasian theory as I seek theoretical tools to assist me to reflect upon the function of the relational space of the drama and to make sense of the value that the participants put upon the opportunity to engage in dialogue with each other. Within this secondary frame of the participatory research, I employ a tertiary frame in which I study the use of drama as a method of enquiry. Here I draw upon poststructuralist theory as a lens through which to review the aesthetic methodologies that shape the participants’ interactions and engagement via the fiction. Here my interest lies in applying poststructuralist theory to the use of the dramatic form as a method of enquiry.

**What’s Next?**
As researcher and practitioner I interweave theory and practice. I not only work across the fields of health, education, drama and youth development, but also seek to straddle customary divides between critical and poststructuralist theory. This necessitates engagement with a broad range of theoretical and discipline-based literature. Within the disciplinary fields I set out to consider the way young people are commonly positioned in health and education discourse and practice, to review traditions informing the use of drama as an educational tool, and to bring theory to bear in analysis of my practice. At a theoretical level I set out to establish a number of lenses through which to critique my practice.
In the next chapter I consider the way in which the assumptions we make about ‘who’ young people are inform the way we position them within education and research. I contrast the discourse about youth ‘at-risk’ emerging from the psychological tradition with the discourses about youth in transition in the sociological tradition. I argue that the trend towards individualization and associated disconnection from community may mean that young people are particularly in need of opportunities to engage in collaborative ventures that provide an opportunity to create a sense of purpose and meaning.
Chapter Three: Positioning Youth

Introduction
In this chapter I discuss how the concepts of ‘youth’ and ‘adolescence’ inform the way young people are positioned within health and education interventions. I review the constructs of risk and resilience that have come to dominate current understandings of young people. I contrast the discourse about ‘adolescence’ emerging from the psychological and public health tradition with the concept of ‘youth’ in the sociological tradition. I consider how Beck’s notion of the ‘risk society’ interconnects with the concept of being ‘at-risk’ and discuss how the trend towards individualization and associated anxiety, alienation and anomie described by theorists such as Beck, Giddens, and Giroux may inform the imperative of the self as in need of connection and meaning. I consider how the collaborative and exploratory nature of the drama may work as a counter-point to the individualising trend of our age, providing an opportunity for people to examine the co-constructed rather than the singular nature of their identity, and engage in their quest for meaning and agency.

Who are They?
Who we understand young people to be shapes our assessment of their needs and capabilities, orients the design of our education and health promotion interventions, and informs the way we position the young people within them (Giroux 2000). For example, when we conceptualise young people as being ‘in development’, we are likely to assume that they ‘need’ education or protection. A logical outcome of this assumption is to provide education or health promotion interventions that instill knowledge or skills or that safely house young people until they ‘come of age’ and are ‘ready’ to contribute. If, however, we see young people as ‘victims’, we may think that they need to be helped or rescued. We are likely then to design therapeutic responses and perhaps to lower our expectations of them in accord with their lack of ‘wellness’. If we believe young people to be ‘deviant’, we may assume the ‘need’ for correction or surveillance. In this case we would be unlikely to trust them, we might segregate them to protect others from ‘contagion’ or for the purposes of ‘fixing’ them. (We can of course see young people as deviant victims who are still in development.
In which case we may simply excuse them, justify their actions and lower our expectations of them.) If, however, we see young people as *already fully human*, or as ‘citizens’, we may assume that they can contribute (now). In this case we would be likely to design opportunities for them to do so, and assume that they would bring persistence and the preparedness to learn from the challenge, adversity or failure that may be part of the venture.

Giroux (2000) argues that the trend nowadays is either to conceptualise youth as a threat to society or as defenceless and vulnerable. This leads to a loss of agency for young people as instead of designing opportunities for them to contribute and engage with adults, we isolate or protect them, and they internalise a need to be recipients. He argues that a border-crossing pedagogy is needed which both allows for adults to learn from young people and for young people to engage as contributors in society. Fundamental to this notion of border crossing is the assumption that young people need to be engaged in a critical interrogation of their world and of how to operate within it. Giroux does not believe that getting youth to participate as active citizens is as simple as giving them a voice, or asking them their opinions.

To take students’ voices at face value is to run the risk of idealizing and romanticizing them. The contradictory and complex histories and stories that give meaning to the lives of students are never innocent, and it is important that they be recognized for their contradictions as well as for their possibilities. (Giroux 1990:45)

He suggests that knowledge must be generated through a more robust partnership with youth than that which is usually accomplished through the consultation process or the research interview.

Educators must do more than simply interview youth through academic-based research methods. They must become border crossers (without passports), willing to examine the multiple sites and cultural forms that young people produce in order to make their voices heard within the larger society. (Giroux 2000:29)

Hence Giroux argues that educators must not only be ‘border crossers’, they must create a ‘border pedagogy’ (Giroux 1990).
This notion of border crossing implies the creation of a reciprocal relationship, or a two-way transfer of knowledge between students and teachers, operative across customary borders associated with age, role and status. It also implies a unification of both parties in pursuit of emancipatory goals. However, border-crossing learning partnerships of this nature will not be designed if a limiting concept of who the students are locks the teacher into a traditional transmission model of schooling, or if the students do not see that they have the capacity to contribute.

To ascertain how discourses about youth may be shaping the design of education programs we need to distinguish first what these discourses are. They can all too readily exert influence whilst evading discussion, simply because they are unnamed and hence remain ‘invisible’ (Davies 1989). Sometimes it is only through contrast that current assumptions can be recognised. Therefore a historical overview is useful as it can distinguish how concepts of youth have changed over time. Also useful is comparison of discourses from different disciplines as the contrast in approaches and language can heighten awareness of the nature of the assumptions. In the following section therefore, I chart the way in which assumptions about who ‘youth’ are have changed over the last century, and I compare the psychological and sociological traditions of thinking about youth, noting the tensions between the two fields, with different paradigms and methodologies orienting research and associated recommendations.

‘Youth’ or ‘Adolescent’ – What's in a Name?

‘Youth studies’ and ‘adolescent health’ have emerged as distinct fields of study across the last century. The terms ‘youth’ and ‘adolescent’ can be seen as signifying two different traditions of thinking about young people. ‘Adolescence’ is the term most commonly used in the scientific tradition, informed by medicine and psychology. Here the term evokes notions of a biological developmental phase commencing upon reaching puberty and lasting until adulthood is attained. It forms part of a universal linear progression and is associated with discussions about puberty, brain development, the accomplishment of developmental tasks including separation from parents, and formation of an independent identity (France 2000). It is assumed to be a
period of storm, stress, and risk-taking, experienced as part of the challenge of developing a separate adult identity. The interplay of risk and protective factors, operative at individual, family, school and community levels, is assumed to influence the healthy progress towards adulthood (Beyers, Toumbourou et al. 2004; Bond, Butler et al. 2007).

The term ‘youth’ is more commonly used in the sociological literature. Sociologists contest the notion that adolescence is a universal phase (Wyn and White 1997). France (2000), for example, points to anthropological research showing variation from culture to culture and across historical periods. He argues that “adolescence or youth can only be understood by recognition of the cultural, political and social contexts in which it is located” (2000:322). Amongst sociologists, discussion of youth tends to centre on function, role or position, rather than on biological development. In this tradition the notion of a linear transition to adulthood is contested (Giddens 1991; Beck 1992; Wyn and White 1997; Giroux 2000). There is emphasis on the multiple social roles played by young people (including employee and care-giver).

The sociological tradition places greater emphasis on considering the impact of society on young people, or of young people on society, and the multiplicity of factors affecting the way in which young people construct their sense of self, including class, gender, sexual preference, ethnicity, location, culture, family and education (Dwyer and Wyn 2001). Wyn and White (1997) note that a focus on adolescence as a developmental stage results in a static categorization of youth, and that this occurs at the expense of a more longitudinal view of some of the commonalities that occur across the life course (such as gender, class and ethnicity), and at the expense of a more relational perspective which considers the social meaning of growing up.

**Changing Concepts of Youth**

Not only are young people understood differently in the two disciplines of psychology and sociology, but the dominant concept of ‘youth’ has changed across the last century. Morch (2003) tracks the emerging concept of youth in the Western world across the 20th century. According to his analysis, in the early 20th century adolescence came to be defined as a biologically based stage of psychological
development, whereas formerly young people had been incorporated in a more fluid manner into the adult world. This medicalised distinction led to understandings of youth as in need of nurture and discipline as they negotiated their growth. The fifties and sixties saw the development of concerns about youth as problematic and deviant. This led to a reactive focus and emphasis on the control and socialization of youth. By the seventies and eighties there was a shift towards a view of youth as critics of a society that suppressed individual identity. This led to an interest in promoting self-expression and creativity in youth. The later decades of the century brought attention to problematic transitions to adulthood. Young people were seen to be making faulty transitions, failing to progress along previously recognizable pathways towards employment and domesticity (Morch 2003). The period of youth had become prolonged (now considered to be up to the age of 25, well past puberty) (Dwyer and Wyn 2001). This led to a concern with vulnerability and risk, and efforts to ensure effective transition into adult citizenship.

The challenge of attaining effective citizenship has become a focus of concern amongst those who address the impact of consumerism and the commercialisation of society. Giroux argues that “as culture becomes increasingly commercialised, the only type of citizenship that adult society offers to children is that of consumersim” (Giroux 2000:19). Children and young people are increasingly targeted as consumers, with the media being used as a vehicle to create the set of desires that will propel young people’s activity in the market. In addition, young people’s sense of who they are or should be is increasingly created through the media. Today’s youth exist in somewhat of a ‘hyperreality’ with notions of what the norm is increasingly becoming disconnected from everyday life and increasingly being set by the fantasy world created in the media (Kincheloe and McLaren 2003).

Hyperreality is a term used to describe an information society socially saturated with ever increasing forms of representation: filmic, photographic, electronic, and so on. These have profound effects on the construction of the cultural narratives that shape our identities. (Kincheloe and McLaren 2003: 454)

If young people centre their identities around being consumers, then perhaps they will
relate to their own lives as commodities, hence leading towards the packaged life, a life which is a series of experiences which one must ‘possess’, ‘collect’ or ‘buy’ if one is to amount to anything. If this is so, then one’s life may seem like a ‘possession’, and ‘getting’ or ‘having’ a life may become a significant pressure. This may lead to a sense of fracture between the life one should have and the life that one has. Living in the ‘wrong’ life or the wrong story may be particularly dislocating. There may be a particular need for connective experiences – experiences that not only connect people with others, and with a sense of meaning and purpose, but also that allow them to claim their life and experiences as their own.

France (2000) considers the interplay between the psychological and sociological traditions of understanding youth and concludes that psychological traditions of understanding youth have come to dominate in our culture. Morch (2003) agrees, pointing out that there is a tendency now for people to relate to ‘social problems’ as if they are individual psychological or developmental shortcomings rather than problems that occur as the result of social processes. Dwyer and Wyn (2001) note this domination of the medicalised model. They point out that the term ‘at risk’ has become identified with the status of youth as a whole. They argue that there has been a loss of focus on the multiple dimensions of the lives of youth with a concomitant lack of attention on the way in which class, gender, location, and culture shape or moderate their life experiences.

The Risk and Resilience Model
It can be seen then that the ‘story’ of who young people are changes over time, and that the story of risk has become a pivotal one in the current era. Within the psychological tradition, the concept of risk and protection has become central to discourse about youth and informs many interventions designed to enhance the resilience of young people (Glover, Burns et al. 1998; Wyn, Cahill et al. 2000; Sheehan, Cahill et al. 2001; Bond, Butler et al. 2007). Large-scale psychological studies have helped to shape current knowledge of factors associated with wellbeing (McNeely, Nonnemaker et al. 2002; Beyers, Toumbourou et al. 2004; Bond, Butler et al. 2007). These longitudinal studies have identified a range of factors associated with an increased likelihood of negative health or learning outcomes. These are termed
‘risk factors’. A (different) set of factors has been found to be associated with positive health and learning outcomes. These are termed ‘protective factors’. This notion of risk and protection has become dominant in discourse about young people and the stated goal of many initiatives is now to reduce risk factors whilst at the same time increasing protective factors (WHO 2002; ANCD 2004).

The practices of scientific categorisation and separation influence how we come to know ourselves and each other, and have a concomitant effect on our behaviour (Foucault 1980). The risk and resilience framework is a form of medicalised categorisation, with the terms risk, protection and prevention now routinely applied in discourse about young people. These concepts may therefore have considerable influence in shaping how we think about young people as well as how they think about themselves. It is therefore relevant here to review some of the research literature within the resilience tradition so as to become familiar with the nature of the inscription that may be currently in place in relation to youth and their ‘at-risk’ status.

A ‘wellness’ focus initially prompted the interest in ‘resilience’, with investigators setting out to find out why it was that many young people turned out to be healthy citizens despite being raised in difficult circumstances or experiencing considerable adversity such as that associated with war, poverty, and poor parenting (Benard 2004). Initially the focus was on identifying the individual attributes associated with effective coping. Later came an additional focus on charting the environmental factors associated with resilience, that is on identifying the nature of the family, school or community within which the individual was more likely to thrive (Luthar, Cicchetti et al. 2000). This inclusion of an environmental focus occurred alongside the developing public health and epidemiological research traditions in medicine which consider the broader patterns of health or illness and the role that environmental as well as behavioural and genetic factors play in establishing wellbeing (Nutbeam and Harris 2004).

Despite the significant shift towards an understanding of wellness rather than illness, the impetus of the research still seems to centre on ensuring that the population does not become unwell. Foucault (1980) argues that the interest in public health is driven
by concerns with order, social control and the economy. Unwell citizens are costly to
the state, are not productive, and may be hard to control. Thus what manifests as
health promotion may actually be a concern for productivity and public order. Others
argue that a rights perspective should drive the interest in public health. The World
Health Organisation (WHO) defines access to the conditions which sustain health as
the most fundamental of human rights (WHO 2002).

The field of public health promotion has adopted the terminology of prevention, early
intervention, treatment and postvention. Mrazek and Haggerty’s widely adopted
model for public health expresses this with public health programs conceptualised as
best occurring across a continuous spectrum of universal prevention (addressing the
entire population), selective intervention (for high risk groups), indicated
interventions (for those with existing needs), and with treatment and maintenance for
those with ongoing conditions (Mrazek and Haggerty 1994). Much of the language
that now dominates public health discourse and health promotion activity designed for
education settings centres around prevention or reduction of the incidence of risk
factors. This seems to indicate a cultural preoccupation with focussing on what can go
wrong in life. Paradoxically, this preoccupation with prevention is occurring at a time
when health outcomes have never been higher in the Western world. Aside from
increases in the prevalence of mental health problems and obesity, Australia’s young
people have never been healthier (AIHW 2007).

In addition, prevention seems to have become a goal in itself (rather than ‘prevention
from X, in order to Y’) which implies that a higher order social or moral purpose
might be in place. Health has become a responsibility or duty, and thus health shifts
into a moral domain.

In the resilience literature, risk and protective factors are identified as occurring at the
four levels of the community, the family, the school and the individual. Risk factors at
the community level include poverty, war, refugee status and natural disaster. At the
family level risk factors include parental neglect, parental mental health or drug
problems, or family breakup. At a school level risk factors include being a victim or
perpetrator of bullying, poor attachment to school, membership of a deviant peer
group, truancy, school failure, and social isolation. At an individual level risk factors include temperament, low intelligence, chronic illness, early initiation into drug and alcohol use, being a victim of abuse and mental illness. Protective Factors include cultural identity and pride, good physical health, supportive parents, family harmony, responsibilities at home, social competence, optimism, problem-solving skills, adequate nutrition, a sense of belonging to school and community, membership of a pro-social peer group, positive school climate, opportunities for success/ recognition, and a good relationship with at least one adult (Beyers, Toumbourou et al. 2004; Bond, Butler et al. 2007).

McNeely’s (2002) research shows that the most significant of the protective factors, providing protection against negative health and learning outcomes, is the feeling of connectedness to family and/or school. This model breaks down however when this key protective factor is demonstrated to place some communities at risk. Some research conducted with aboriginal communities (Hunter 2004), disadvantaged urban communities (McDonald 1999), and ‘at-risk’ youth (Dishion, McCord et al. 1999; Dishion 2004), shows that a high level of bonding or connectedness can be a risk factor, particularly when the norms or benchmarks in that community involve risk behaviours, stigmatisation or separation. A range of explanatory models are used by those who note this, including Putnam’s (2000) social capital theory. In this theory it is argued that ‘well’ communities are high in both ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ practices, with reciprocal relationships occurring both between like and different groups. Applying this theory, Hunter (2004) points out that when communities are low in bridging practices, that is low in the capacity to seek help outside their circle in order to attain employment, education or services, that bonding or connectedness can in fact operate a risk factor as well as a protective factor.

The ‘Risk Society’

Whilst the risk and resilience model is compelling within the psychological and public health traditions, sociologists tend to locate risk in the society surrounding youth, rather than in the youth themselves (Giddens 1991; Beck 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). Beck coined the term ‘the risk society’ to convey this concept. Giddens and Beck both work from the thesis that society around youth has
changed and this has had an impact on the identity and wellbeing of young people. They believe that the escalation and dominance of the market economy has led to a breakdown in older markers of social identity such as class and gender. In the Western world, class, gender and family no longer dictate choices; rather, these are encountered at an individual level.

Giddens (1991) argues that modernity has radically altered the nature of day-to-day social life bringing a level of uncertainty about the individual and shared future.

Modernity breaks down the protective framework of the small community and of tradition, replacing these with larger, impersonal organizations. The individual feels bereft and alone in the world in which she or he lacks the psychological supports and the sense of security provided by more traditional settings. (Giddens 1991:33)

Giddens describes an additional burden upon the individual in modernity as he or she struggles to deal with the presence of the global within the communally impoverished local domain. This is because the media intrudes into personal life bringing news of global or distant risks and thus heightening the sense of risk and uncertainty. The individual must engage in a constant process of connecting personal, social and global change and assessing choice in an uncertain world. This engenders a pervasive sense of anxiety and meaninglessness. Giddens describe this anxiety as “fear which has lost its object” (Giddens 1991:44). This free-floating anxiety forms a backdrop to people’s lives and its diffused nature means it is difficult to deal with. It leads to experiences of meaninglessness and alienation.

Personal meaninglessness – the feeling that life has nothing worthwhile to offer – becomes a fundamental psychic problem in circumstances of late modernity. (Giddens 1991:9)

The ‘Project of the Self’

Giddens (1991) sees the pattern of pervasive anxiety as having a number of effects, chief amongst them being the pressure on individuals to engage in a reflexive project of the self, to deal with perceptions of risk and readings of trust, and to manage the sense of personal meaninglessness. He argues that the project of self-identity is no
longer one just associated with youth but rather one that forms a ‘trajectory’ across the life cycle. How shall I live? becomes the question of modernity.

Beck’s (1992) thesis is similar. He argues that identity has increasingly become something that must be constructed, rather than inherited or pre-ordained in relation to one’s gender, class, location and family. He too believes that this identity ‘work’ continues into adulthood. He sees modernity as the era of choice and with choice comes risk, if only the risk of failing to make the ‘right’ choice.

Despite this understanding of the risk as inherent in society, rather than as inherent in the person, family, school or neighbourhood as in the risk and resilience model, a tension occurs because the individual has become the frame of reference or the site where the choice and associated risk is experienced. Beck (1992) terms this phenomenon ‘individualization’.

Individualization in this sense means that each person’s biography is removed from given determinations and placed in his or her own hands, open and dependent on decisions. The proportion of life opportunities which are fundamentally closed to decision-making is decreasing and the proportion of the biography which is open and must be constructed personally is increasing. Individualization of life situations and processes thus means that biographies become self-reflexive; socially prescribed biography is transformed into biography that is self-produced and continues to be produced. (Beck 1992:135)

Beck believes that this leads to a centering on the self and a loss of shared purpose and meaning.

In the individualized society the individual must learn, on pain of permanent disadvantage, to conceive of himself of herself as the center of action, as the planning office with respect to his/her own biography, abilities, orientations, relationships and so on. (Beck 1992:135)

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) argue that in the individualized society, identity becomes a task to be completed. They call this 'the project of the self', a project which has come to dominate our thinking. Augmenting the challenge of working on this
‘project of the self’, people now find that due to the highly differentiated and disconnected nature of society, they have a sense of playing a multitude of disconnected roles across their work and home life. Therefore within the ‘project of the self’ there is a need to join up and make meaning of disparate parts of the self (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002).

Habermas’s (1987) analysis of the thrust of modernity is similar. He describes the syndrome whereby the ‘lifeworld’ or personal world becomes increasingly disconnected from the ‘systems world’, or world of institutions and the workplace. He argues that the roles and norms of the systems world, which are somewhat dehumanizing in their emphasis on function, are increasingly invading the lifeworld, and thus people are increasingly defining themselves in terms of their professional or consumer roles.

**Considering the ‘Project of the Self’ as the Existential Backdrop**

According to these thinkers we live in an age of loneliness and disconnection. With the freedom to choose comes individualization, anxiety, disconnection from the self and others, and the problem of meaninglessness. In association comes the requirement to work on the ‘project of the self’. If these anxieties and tasks are part of the challenge of our age, they will form a backdrop against which the students, medics and teachers will be playing out their quest for a personal and professional identity. They will thus form part of the ontological context within which they work, and will influence their needs as learners.

If the young teachers, doctors and students are engaged in the ‘project of the self’, and if it is *always and everywhere also an ontological quest for meaning*, then this will be the context within which the Learning Partnerships program operates. If the Learning Partnerships program contributes to this ontological quest then this is likely to affect the participants’ satisfaction or engagement with the work. That is, if it satisfies their need to work on both ‘becoming’ and on finding meaning, then they might relish the work simply because it aligns with their endeavours on this quest.
As drama is a collaborative mode of interaction, it may provide this connective experience for the participants. It is also an enactive and narrative medium, and can be used to characterize and embody the fears that might otherwise dwell as a formless and nameless presence in people’s lives. The mechanism of enactment may in itself offer a level of satisfaction as in improvised drama the actors invent and manage the manifestation of the fears, thus bringing them close whilst also exerting control via the shaping decisions exerted within and across the border of the fictional play. Once storied, or embodied, fears can more readily be compared, interrogated, parodied, or confronted. Potentially, the collaborative mode of the storytelling can reveal the shared, inherited and acculturated nature of the fears, thus working against the individualizing drift that the participants live within.

The extent to which the drama process meets this ontological need may govern the value that the participants place upon it. Part of my analysis of the participants’ responses has been to interpret their appreciative comments in the light of this existential context. When they describe the experience of connection and value, it may be that this is because they are grateful for an opportunity to engage in their quest for meaning. If they are in need of experiences of connection, purpose and meaning, and if the workshops provide this, then the work may have a particular personal and ontological value, regardless of the content covered in the workshop. The oasis encountered on a desert trek is valued in a way that the well in the rainforest cannot be. The water may be of similar quality, but the perception of need in relation to scarcity will make one more valued than the other. Should we substitute connection and meaning-making for water, the analogy may hold true for education. In an education system rich with opportunities for connection, purpose and meaning, and in a society redolent with the sense of shared purpose, this project may be of little interest. Against a backdrop of anxiety, isolation and meaninglessness, a chance to engage with others may cater to a particular thirst.

**Metaphors and Meta-messages – Inscribing Youth**

Certain meta-messages are transmitted via the risk and resilience nomenclature and its associated imagery and metaphors. It is important to distinguish them as they are
likely to inform our concept of young people and our associated sense of how to work with them.

**The Balance**

The dominant metaphor underlying the risk and resilience model is that of a see-saw. On one end we see the weight of the risk factors the young person has accumulated. On the other end is the pile of protective factors, the presence of which helps to ameliorate or outweigh the effect of the risk factors. The metaphor perpetuates the understanding of a binary between risk and protection. By an internal logic an item cannot belong on both ‘sides’ of the balance. That is it cannot be both positive and negative.

When the assumptions inherent in this model are interrogated, it can be seen that some elements defined as a risk factors such as single parent status, living in poverty, illness of the parent, or refugee status, may in the lives of particular individuals be the very experience which helped to generate their compassion, sense of social justice, capacity to endure, and to persist and strive for goals, all of which would be seen as factors belonging in the protective pile. In addition, an individual may see these factors as part of a personal narrative of success, for, without adversity, one’s success is no great accomplishment.

If we conceptualise instances of deprivation or hardship within the metaphor of the balance, the logic dictates that any success or mastery occurs because the risk factors are overridden in a form of negation or cancelling out. It cannot be logical that possession of the risk factor is *casual* in the success. It is even difficult to allow that the risk factors may be interwoven in a reciprocal relationship with protective factors, or that in some curious way they may from time to time shift sides, with advantage and education in some instances being a risk factor, then at other times being protective. However, should one adopt the metaphor of ‘the story’ and understand one’s life as a narrative, one’s experience of hardship, deprivation or discrimination can be easily understood as integrally connected with the experience of mastery, learning and development of resilience.
It can be seen then that whilst at a medical and descriptive level, the terms risk and protection seem to be logical and compelling, the binary is to some degree an artefact of the taxonomy of terms, and thus its explanatory power is quite confined. Over-dependence on its use can potentially lead to a simplification of the interrelationship between adversity, and mastery or failure. This is of concern when it leads to a reductionist mode of understanding people and when it overly moderates the design of health or education interventions. A simplistic understanding of risk can lead to an overemphasis on ‘helping’ and to the storying of young people as victims, perpetrators or deviants.

The Tightrope

Beck’s notion of the risk society conjures a different metaphor, that of the tightrope walker seeking to cross a void (on an inherently unsteady path), all the while seeking to avoid a fall. In this image, risk is inherent in every step as any step could be a false one. Also inherent in this image is the story of the true path and the dangerous journey. Perhaps this notion of the dangerous journey is another compelling explanatory metaphor of our times, as is the supposed ‘nirvana’ that would be attained via achievement of the ‘balanced’ life.

The underpinning metaphor influences our understanding of the nature of the work we need to do upon the self. Foucault (1988; Foucault 2001) has pointed out that in different eras, the ontological quest for meaning has taken different forms, with different priorities as well as different understandings about the appropriate practices or mechanisms through which to pursue to attain one’s goal. It can be seen that the quest for balance may lead to efforts to acquire or bolster some experiences whilst moderating or reducing others. The notion of the perilous path may lead to efforts to avoid risk and attention to choice and management.

The Smorgasbord

As Giddens (1991) points out, the tendency towards individualization leads to the placement of the individual and his or her choices and behaviour as the central point of meaning. When choice (rather than duty) is glorified, a new metaphor comes into
play – that of the smorgasbord. This metaphor carries notions that choice is pleasurable and unrestricted, and that options are bountiful. When choice is conceptualised as a pleasure, what is missed is that it may amount to a burden of work, an endless task, or a fatiguing form of oppression in disguise as freedom. Imagining options as unrestricted blurs attention to the reality of access. One may choose, but be denied access, as when one fails to gain entry to a particular profession despite having trained for it, simply because the job market is confined. When attention is given to choice rather to the conditions that influence access, the individual is increasingly de-politicised and is left to construct failure in personal rather than in systems terms.

**The Disenabling Curriculum**

What can be seen here is that metaphors incorporate meta-messages that influence the conclusions that people make about themselves. Similar messages may also be transmitted via the covert curriculum. Students read messages not only from the overt curriculum, but also from the null or missing curriculum, and from the covert or subliminal curriculum (Eisner 1985). Potentially, the covert curriculum can subvert the messages transmitted via the overt curriculum. For example, whilst we may set out to promote social skills and active citizenship within the overt curriculum, unless students get to use these skills for real ends, then the implicit curriculum message may ‘teach’ that they are not yet able to employ the skills, or that the skills are not really valued.

The challenge for the educator is to align the process and ‘messages’ of the implicit curriculum with those of the explicit curriculum. It is easy to assume that if we devise the overt curriculum with care, that an education intervention with health promotion goals will result in good outcomes. Post-colonial theorists point out however, that if we occupy the stance of rescuer or expert helper, then our programs can disempower the recipients, and our interventions can feed into a rescue-failure cycle. Particularly when working with young people, good intentions are not enough to ensure good outcomes, and certain efforts towards emancipation may perpetuate patterns of dominance and marginalisation (Arnot and Reay 2007; Cook-Sather 2007).
Dishion (1999; Dishion 2004) led a body of research investigating the outcomes of education interventions devised for young people defined as ‘at-risk’. His suite of research has brought to attention a disturbing finding. His longitudinal studies have demonstrated associations between receiving protective interventions in a group with like peers and an escalation in the risk behaviours the program was designed to reduce, this happening despite initial impact evaluations showing that leaders and participants were happy with the program. The research showed that those who received the interventions were more likely to engage in problem behaviours and to experience negative life outcomes than those with similarly indicated needs who had not been assigned to the intervention.

Following Dishion’s study, a number of other researchers have made similar findings when evaluating interventions which group high-risk adolescents for the purposes of the intervention (Gifford-Smith, Dodge et al. 2005; Hyunsan, Hallfors et al. 2005). This is important research as it reports within the scientific paradigm to those working within this tradition, thus it has a credibility which critique from another field might not have. However, this seems to be a piece of knowledge that is ‘resisted’ as despite this evidence most interventions for ‘at-risk’ youth continue to group them (Gifford-Smith, Dodge et al. 2005; Hyunsan, Hallfors et al. 2005). Perhaps this is because those who devise the programs are governed by the assumption that the best to provide for those with indicated needs is through ‘targeted’ interventions which are setting and person specific.

It is worth attending to the theories that have been developed to explain these iatrogenic effects. Dishion (1999) developed a theory to explain the negative effect he had identified. This was the theory of peer contagion or ‘deviancy training’. A number of subsequent studies both by Dishion and others have engaged with this theory (Dishion, McCord et al. 1999; Dishion 2004; Gifford-Smith, Dodge et al. 2005; Hyunsan, Hallfors et al. 2005; Leve and Chamberlain 2005).

Dishion’s theory of ‘deviancy training’ arises from his study of videotaped conversations between boys and a chosen friend (Dishion et al 1999). The boys were given the tasks of planning a peer activity, and dealing with a peer and a family
problem. Dishion observed that some pairs engaged in a lot of ‘rule-breaking talk’
together with positive reactions (e.g. laughter) to such talk. Other pairs engaged in
normative talk or did not reinforce rule-breaking talk with laughter or attention. The
rule-breaking-to-laugh pattern, termed ‘deviancy training’, was associated with later
delinquency. Those pairs who engaged in ‘deviancy training’ were more likely to
move on to drug and alcohol use, self-reported deviancy and violence, relationship
problems, sexual promiscuity and adult convictions than those who did not. From this
Dishion (1999) theorized that the reinforcement processes within the peer group are
powerful and subtle, being provided in the form of reinforcement through laughter,
social attention and interest. He posited that intensity of reinforcement from peers
may outweigh the adult role-model or leadership provided in the education
interventions. He argued that teens need normative education because those who are
in the high-risk group have a different benchmark as to what constitutes acceptable,
expected or ‘normal’ behaviour and are particularly vulnerable when they associate
with others with similarly skewed benchmarks.

In order to further investigate Dishion’s notion of ‘deviancy training’, Prinstein and
Wang (2005) set out to examine the role that young people’s perceptions of peers
behaviour may play as part of the mechanism for ‘peer contagion’. Their study
demonstrated that adolescents, particularly those who engage in high-risk behaviours,
overestimate the level to which their close friends engage in risky behaviours. Thus
the benchmark of norms that is in their mind is actually higher than that which occurs
in reality. They theorize that alongside of the positive reinforcement for negative
behaviours (‘deviancy training’) posited by Dishion (1999), peer modeling, peer
demands (pressure), or adolescent’s beliefs that emulation of peers’ attitudes or
behaviours may earn them social rewards may also form part of the mechanism. They
argue that each of these assumptions can raise the young person’s threshold of the
behaviour that they believe is normative.

A key recommendation arising from these studies is that it is important to dispel
misconceptions about peer behaviour and to conduct normative education (Dishion,
McCord et al. 1999; Dishion 2004; Hyunsan, Hallfors et al. 2005; Prinstein and Wang
2005). A similar hypothesis has been developed in the field of drug education
research (classroom intervention programs designed for delivery to the entire cohort of students rather than for delivery to targeted groups with indicated needs). Normative messages are now assumed to be an essential component of effective drug education programs (Dielman 1994; Dusenbury and Falco 1995; Tobler and Stratton 1997; Midford 2000; Cahill 2006). This suggests that the need for normative education is not restricted to ‘at-risk’ groups but should be applied to the general population.

It is debatable however whether the provision of an overt normative education curriculum for groups that are gathered and defined through their risk status will be sufficient to change their behaviour. The assumption made here is that an overt curriculum can correct for messages that may be learnt through a parallel covert curriculum, which in this case emanates from peers.

**Explanatory Models**
The ‘deviancy training’ model put forward by Dishion is not the only possible explanatory model. Where Dishion posits the rule-breaking-to-laugh pattern as a ‘cause’, understanding it as a mechanism of peer influence, a poststructuralist thinker might note that the pattern pre-existed the boys who exhibited it. They had already learnt it somewhere and simply exhibited it when together. Where did it come from? And why did some use it whilst others did not? Using a discourse model, it can be argued that the identification with certain patterns of behaviour will have one perform those behaviours. If these behaviours were part of a set of an already learnt pattern or storyline, once they are set into play, whether for the ‘gaze’ of the camera, the reaction of the fellow player, or to match one’s notion of who one is, then a performance tightly connected in a feedback loop with audience-as-fellow-player, will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. By playing oneself as ‘bad’ one becomes bad (Butler 2004).

Discourse theory provides an alternative explanatory theory through which one could explain the iatrogenic effects of these interventions. Foucault (1980) points out that practices of segregation and classification are mechanisms for shaping identity, thinking and behaviour, as people internalize the externally imposed codes. Using a
Foucaultian model, one could see how the combined effects of categorisation and separation (as a result of being placed in the targeted program) might contribute to the participants forming or reinforcing their identity around their risk status. A mode of separatist and specialised intervention may thus help to create or to perpetuate victim or deviance narratives that become easier to live into than to step out of. Thus the overt ‘work on the self’ that is done during the intervention may be undercut by the meta-messages about who one is and what is possible for one’s self.

Davies explores the concept of *positioning* to explain how we become who we are (Davies 1989; Davies 1994; Davies, Dormer et al. 2001). Bringing a poststructuralist lens to her analysis of the classroom, she argues that it is the binary models inherent in our discourse that pattern relationships. For example, the binaries of teacher/student and male/female position the players and shape their scripts and their perceptions. She argues that this shaping is due to ‘positioning’ rather than simply to playing into ascribed ‘roles’, and uses the term ‘positioning’ to draw attention to the ‘inherited’ storyline in which a person positions himself or herself. Potentially good/bad, or success/failure are other such binaries that could have been activated via the targeted segregation.

Each of these explanatory models carries assumptions about the nature of learning and the nature of identity. Just as different theories can be used to make sense of a set of data, these different concepts will inform the design of the educational approach. This is as true for those working within the dramatic form as for those using more traditional transmission approaches to teaching. Inevitably, the methods or conventions used within the drama will also carry their own inherent implicit curriculum, housing assumptions about the nature of being and the nature of reality. It is these assumptions that I set out to interrogate in this study.

**Purpose and Positioning**

The assumption is often made that the appropriate (or therapeutic) content focus of arts programs which serve the ‘at-risk’ is the very behaviours which identify the participants’ risk status. The assumption is that to tell one’s story is to be liberated from it. This assumption derives from the psychological or confessional tradition in
which it is assumed that the ‘cure’ must take place within the individual. What is under-explored in this assumption is the potential for the iatrogenic effects that Dishion and others have noted. Potentially, to re-tell only certain aspects of one’s story (the bad/sad moments) is to pin this story more securely to one’s identity. As White (1990) notes, to tell only certain aspects of one’s story is to neglect the ‘untold moments’ which house a form of evidence for an alternative pathway. Conrad (2006) discusses her ethical issues about using devised theatre as a mode through which to work with ‘at-risk’ young people. Her concerns include the young people’s perception of the offensive nature of the label assigned them, and the difficulties they have in relating their personal stories about their ‘risky’ behaviours in school settings. She raises the ethical dilemma of ‘speaking for the other’ as she writes about their work. However, there is an accompanying question that could be raised – that of the manner in which the students (assume) they are asked to speak about themselves. If they assume that it is only their ‘risk’ stories that make them worthy of attention, then perhaps they will play into this image, and leave aside their small stories of heroism, resilience, generosity, or tenderness. Conrad is concerned that students feel that they have to censor their own ‘dangerous’ stories in the school context. However, potentially of equal concern may be a censorship of the ‘gentle’ stories, which may not be deemed tell-able because they do not fit within the ‘at-risk’ story.

If the participants are positioned to focus on the construction of social or political tales, rather than upon relating personal stories, then it may be easier to avoid the confessional, include multiplicity, and to stay alert to the civic and ethical purpose of the work. If the young people are positioned to use the arts to inform, inspire or educate others, then potentially they come to define themselves and each other by their status as ‘contributors’ and ‘artists’, rather than by their status as the ‘troubled’ or ‘deviant’. To understand myself as the actor/writer is to think of my self as an agent. To know myself and to be known as the character is to be objectified.

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed how one’s underpinning assumptions about who the participants are will shape the approach taken in the design of the health or education intervention. These assumptions inform the choice of material and the positioning of
the participants. Covert messages can inadvertently subvert the overt curriculum objectives, and a curriculum that seeks to enable can have disenabling outcomes. A critical reading of the design of the intervention is necessary in order to ascertain how it may create a particular story about the nature and identity of the participants.

Additionally, it is important to consider how the larger ontological challenges of the era, including the experience of individualization, the quest for meaning, and the ongoing project of constructing the self, may form a backdrop to the learning. If the project caters to the need for collective meaning-making and provides opportunities for shared engagement with the questions of how to play oneself, then it may be particularly appreciated by the participants, simply because they are hungry for connective experience.

This consideration of theory is particularly relevant to me as a drama educator as I work through collective processes and have designed a project that works across the institutional and role-based boundaries of school/university, youth/adult, teacher/student and doctor/patient. At a theoretical level it can be seen that this boundary crossing may be integral to the value of the learning experience. Locating the young people as co-teachers and co-investigators provides the context within which the learning tasks take place. This positioning may construct the covert curriculum and transmit particular assumptions about how the participants should read each other.

It is clear from this discussion that my assumptions about who the participants are will inform the way I position them within the work. My assumptions about how they learn will inform my choice of method. My assumptions about what they need will orient my selection of material and associated tasks. Thus my ontological assumptions will cohere with my epistemological assumptions and together they will shape my teaching practice.

**What’s Next?**

If youth and adult, teachers and students, and doctors and patients are to be able to develop different and more fruitful relationships, then we must understand what it is
that may lock existing patterns into place, and what it is that might enable a shift or the creation of new modes of relationship. To explore this concept, I use the next chapter to begin a discussion of identity, or how we become who we are, and consider how the drama may be used as a means through which to work on the self. I draw upon poststructural discourse theory (in particular Foucault, Davies and Butler) to discuss the shaping nature of discourse and the concept of subjectification. I chart at a theoretical level how the drama may become a platform for the re-playing of hegemonic storylines, which can in turn lead to the reinforcement of the status quo. I also draw upon theory to posit how the drama might be used to generate the possibility of change, calling upon Butler’s concept of performative identity and her understanding of the role of fantasy in the creating the sense of possibility, which in turn enables new modes of relationship.
Chapter 4: Identity and Change

Introduction
The discussion of the way in which young people are conceptualised requires a deeper inquiry into how identity is theorised. In the previous two chapters I have discussed how our beliefs about the nature of reality inform the way we understand who we and others are. They also inform assumptions about how we learn and how we can change ourselves. In this chapter I discuss the way in which identity is conceptualised in the poststructuralist tradition, drawing chiefly upon the work of Foucault, Butler and Davies. I discuss concepts of subjectification and positioning as key theories through which to understand how the self is constructed and how the shaping discourses are played out through the self. I discuss Butler’s theory of identity as performance, examining how the playing out of the norms associated with ‘youth’, ‘teacher’ or ‘doctor’ might lead to the persistence of a limited reading of the other, and a constricted enactment of the self as member of the confining category. I examine the mechanisms that be used to re-narrate the self through detection of the discourses that shape identity. I employ Butler’s concept that fantasy, and the associated sense of possibility, is essential in creation of change. I discuss the way in which the creative mode of the drama can enable a re-imagining of the limiting positions and categories provided in the dominant discourses, and the way in which the collaborative mode of the drama can provide a mechanism for re-imagining the humanity of the other.

Theory as a Lens for Practice
Poststructuralist thinking is an important part of the education discourse that I now inhabit. This was not so when I was a beginning teacher some thirty years ago. However, in the ensuing period the ideas generated by poststructuralist thinkers have leaked out from academia into the world of everyday practice. Terms such as deconstruction seemed to suggest that things could be pulled apart in order to see how they worked. The idea of standpoint or ‘point of view’ brought attention to the way in which our perspective affects the way in which we read reality. Years of watching characters co-create each other in the improvised fictional play have provided me with opportunities to witness the co-constructed nature of identity.
When I began to read poststructuralist philosophy, I found theory offering explanatory models to deepen my understanding of the mechanisms that I had found to work in practice. The theory is esoteric and the language remote from the world of everyday classroom practice, hence I set out here to discuss these key theoretical concepts within the context of the drama classroom experience. Through working in a hermeneutic fashion between theory and practice, I aim to make applied sense of the concepts and the way they have come to inform my teaching and research.

**Conceptualising Identity**

The concept of identity has been approached differently across eras and cultures and has also been differently understood in the disciplinary traditions of psychology and sociology. In the psychological tradition the focus on identity tends to reside around the inner life of the individual. Attention is given to the developmental tasks that the individual must engage in as part of becoming adult. Key areas of interest include self-esteem, communication and social competence. Sociologists, on the other hand, have tended to focus on the social aspects of identity, or the individual as a member of defining groups such as class, gender, age or culture (France 2000).

Alongside the difference between the individual and the social orientation in understanding identity, there is an important ontological distinction between those who conceptualise identity as inherent (employing a humanist understanding of identity) and those who conceive of identity as constructed (employing a poststructuralist understanding of identity).

**Poststructuralism and the Re-Thinking of Reality**

Poststructuralism is a term used to describe a tradition of academic theorising which offers an ongoing critique of humanism, including the understanding of the self or subject. Many theorists have contributed to this evolving field of thought, and they do not necessarily agree with each other. However, they tend to share an interest in the constitutive power of discourse and the way in which language defines reality (Davies 1994).
Derrida (1978) challenged the tradition in Western thought that language represents the thing in itself, arguing that there is no correspondence between a word and a thing. Rather, meaning is generated through definitions that are based on comparison or opposition. Thus we understand ‘student’ by reference to the term ‘teacher’, or ‘child’ by reference to the term ‘adult’. The word or sign cannot carry the entire meaning, but must refer to other signs or terms to gather its meaning.

Derrida advocated the use of deconstruction, or a process of questioning the way in which language moderates the way we understand the world. He argued that one of the key ways that language comes to create reality is through the use of binary terms whereby things are defined by contrast with their opposite. In the binary, the first term is understood as the dominant term and the second is the negation, the not-that, or opposite. So the second term becomes a form of not-something and therefore is associated with absence. Binaries such as male/female, sick/well, teacher/student and adult/child become organizing terms that determine our view of the world and our sense of what is possible within it. Thus, by definition, teachers teach, and students learn. Within this binary division it is not obvious that the students can also be the teachers, or the teachers the learners. In the Learning Partnerships project the teacher/student binary is dislocated. Participants report this dislodging of the teacher/student and youth/adult binaries to be integral to the value of the experience.

Following Derrida’s logic we can see that without attention to the organizing principles suggested by the terms we use, we are swept into thinking that the terms represent reality, rather than that language creates a way of understanding reality and that there are many ways of reading reality.

To change reality we may have to change the way we use language. I found that there were two key binaries that I had to traverse (via a re-naming) in the design of the Learning Partnerships project. The first was to name the participants as ‘co-investigators’. I could then conceptualise the workshops as mutually beneficial, and the notion of reciprocity became a fulcrum around which to pivot the notion of working in partnership. The second traverse was to name the school students as coaches. I could then describe them as key contributors, and the notion of learning
with and from rather than about young people was created and could readily be communicated to others.

**The Shaping Nature of Discourse**

In poststructuralism the attention to language encompasses a broader focus on the way in which identity is shaped through discourse. By discourse is meant the way in which stories, traditions, practices, ideas, categories and definitions operate to organize their thinking and behaviour.

Foucault (1980) argues that we inherit a way of understanding the world established in the discourses or sets of cultural ideas, explanatory models and practices that pre-exist us and surround us. He conceptualises identity as shaped when we adopt subject positions that are already part of the discourse. He argues that from the time of industrialisation forward, various dividing practices, such as the segregation of the poor, the deviant and the mentally unwell, have become mechanisms through which we define and construct identity. These segregating practices, together with the process of medical and scientific classification, have increasingly become mechanisms through which we define our selves and each other. In addition, the processes of observation, measurement and categorisation have established norms and deviations against which we moderate ourselves.

The processes of segregation and categorization come to define what is ‘normal’. The normalization of certain behaviours has a controlling as well as a defining effect. People internalize the definitions and norms learnt within their culture, and they self-monitor and enact the categories that pertain to themselves and others. Thus the processes of segregation, classification and normalisation form part of a mechanism of control and power whereby individuals monitor their own behaviours to fit within the norms of society. In this way, the societal discourses about who and how to be influence behaviour, and we are controlled by our ‘knowledge’ of how things ‘are’ and how they ‘should be’ (Foucault 1980).

This understanding of identity is useful as a lens through which to consider the current category of ‘youth’ in Western society. As discussed in the previous chapter,
young people are increasingly segregated in schools, remaining for longer periods of
time in education than ever before. At the same time, due to changes in society, they
are participating less with the adult population, extended family and non-school peers
via church, family, sports, arts or neighbourhood activities (Putnam 2000). Alongside
this prolonged and segregating institutionalisation there has been a growth in the
medicalisation of adolescence (Dwyer and Wyn 2001). Normative development has
been charted and the use of the term ‘at-risk’ to incorporate depression, promiscuity,
alienation, deviance, substance use, unemployment, truancy and poverty has come to
be increasingly dissociated from social conditions relating to the economy.
Medicalised categorisation has lead to an increasingly individualised understanding of
adolescence as a developmental phase with associated norms and deviance.
Normalisation also increasingly occurs via the portrayal of youth in media and
marketing. Images and behaviours associated with youth are crafted for the market
place and the hyper-reality becomes a pervasive benchmark against which to measure
everyday experience (Kincheloe and McLaren 2003). Thus, what is understood to be
normal may be learnt through the fantasies played out in the media.

Applying Foucault’s thesis about identity to the category of ‘youth’, it can be
assumed that segregated and classified young people would tend to play themselves
out to be distinct from adults, and that adults would also maintain this separation in
their view and treatment of youth. By this understanding, ‘youth’ may increasingly be
understood as a defining marker of identity. The binary markers between adult and
youth have been heightened to such a degree that they have assumed the status of a
‘natural’ law. It is easy to see how, once separated and allotted different sorts of roles,
the arrangement becomes self-fulfilling. If adults (and young people) never see the
young in roles of responsibility or contribution, then this will become a form of proof
that they are not yet capable. If this is so, the boundary between youth and adult will
be internalised and naturalised, for both young people and adults, and so the invitation
to work in partnership will occur as a radical departure.

The positioning of young people as co-teachers within the Learning Partnerships
project is one such departure.
Identity Work and Story

Poststructuralist thinkers believe that the stories we tell about ourselves, and those that are told or received about us, shape our identity (Elliott 2005). Thus they are of pivotal interest to those of us interested in enabling change. Giddens (1991) believes that a person’s identity resides in the ability to keep a particular narrative going and that self-identity is “something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual” (Giddens 1991:52). The personal biography requires an ongoing process of storying. The story of the self thus entails ongoing work. However, if it is always in progress, then there is leverage for change, for if the identity is not ‘set’, but rather constantly under construction, then it may be re-constructed.

White (1990), approaching therapy from a poststructuralist perspective, also believes narrative to be at the heart of identity, and sees the potential for re-storying as offering hope of change. He notes that we commonly give our stories a truth status, though they are in fact constructed from those aspects of our experience that we choose to focus on. We tend to discard those parts of our story that do not fit with our interpretive line and thus certain modes of being are held in place. White argues that we can usually find pieces of discarded ‘evidence’ through which to re-author our selves. He finds that when his clients work to create new stories of who they are, the presence of an audience of significant listeners contributes to the viability of the story. It helps to make the new story come true if it is narrated to audience members who will be implicated as co-players.

A reworking of identity requires a dismantling of the categorising that has occurred. In the Learning Partnerships project, there is a temporary dislodging of the adult/youth and teacher/student binaries. The participants report that this contributed to the learning that occurred. It assisted them to dismantle the dominant stories defining teachers, students, doctors and patients.

Positioning and Storylines

Poststructuralists use the term ‘position’ to discuss identity. The term ‘positioning’ encapsulates a concept that is rather more extensive than that of role as used by
Goffman (1959). One’s role can be adopted or put aside, and is understood to be something separate from the ‘self’ (Davies 1994). However, one’s positioning is integral to the shaping of the self. Its associated storylines and scripts will shape desires, and therefore influence actions. Davies outlines the difference in the two concepts of position and role.

Position is a much more fluid concept than role and recognises the constitutive force of discourse to make/fabricate the stories or narratives through which meaningful lives are made. (Davies 1994: 23)

Positioning will influence the roles taken on and the way they are played. It takes place through “ways of speaking-as-usual” (Davies 1994:23). This can be explored in the following example: The student misbehaves. He understands that in the game of school this is what certain students do. He sees himself to be one of those certain students. The teacher believes she must manage this recalcitrance by condemning it. This is what she thinks teachers must do. She admonishes the student, and finds in response that the student is defiant. Did her manner of condemnation, rather than questioning, create the defiant response? The student anticipates condemnation and judgment in the view that ‘teachers never understand’. He prepares a defence, rather than an apology. Is his response to some extent created ahead of time in anticipation of what will come to pass? Is it the logical expression of the position that he has adopted? And did his response to some degree invite the teacher’s condemnation? If so, it can be seen that this is an ongoing and interconnected cycle in which teachers and students co-create their own and each others’ identities, drawing upon their knowledge of how things go to do so. In this their knowledge of the patterns of the past influences the story of what their futures can be.

As we adopt certain positions from those available to us, we internalise certain desires associated with those positions, and learn to behave according to the concomitant ‘rules’ or norms (Davies, Dormer et al. 2001). Using this concept of positioning it can be seen that in life (and in the improvised drama), our characters are drawn from and informed by a series of patterns already available in our cultural stories (Edmiston 2000). Thus when we play a role whether in the fiction or in real life, we also embrace a larger position which will inform that role (Davies 2006).
Subjectification

In bringing a feminist-poststructuralist theoretical lens to my drama practice I have drawn heavily upon the work of Bronwyn Davies (Davies 1989; Davies 1993; Davies 1994; Davies 1996; Davies 2000; Davies, Dormer et al. 2001; Davies 2006; Davies 2007) who has used the work of Foucault and Butler to inform her analysis of children’s construction of fictional tales and the challenges educators face when overtly intending to disrupt the gendered nature of storylines and characterisation. Her work in applying theory as a lens when researching identity and subjectification in school settings provides a valuable model for the use of theory as a tool in research.

In discussing how we come to be who we are, Davies (1993) argues that "people are not socialised in to the social world, but that they go through a process of subjectification." (12). The term subjectification refers to our production of our sense of who we are. The concept of subjectification entails a focus on how the person actively takes up the discourses as if they were their own, internalising the desire to be a certain way. In contrast, in socialisation theory the focus is on how others shape individuals. Davies argues that the process of self-knowledge entails individuals “recognising the powerful shaping (or constituting) of their bodies, of their desires, that take place through language, and of finding ways to counteract that force” (Davies 1996:13). Thus to know our self entails seeing the mechanisms by which we are constructed, the storylines taken up and enacted, and the intersection between the stories of the self and those of our culture (Davies 1993). In order to understand the process of subjectification, we must think of ourselves both as actors and as those who are acted upon, experiencing the ‘complex conditions of mutual formation’ (Davies 2006).

Davies (1989) argues that subjectification involves four processes. One entails the learning of binary categories that include and exclude, such as male/female, child/adult, friend/stranger, teacher/student. The second mechanism through which we learn who we are is by participating in discursive practices through which meanings and storylines are allocated to these categories. We learn such things as what males and females are supposed to do, how students should be with teachers, or how doctors
should be with patients. The third mechanism through which we develop our sense of who we are is through *positioning our self in terms of these categories and storylines.* This entails seeing oneself as belonging in one category and not another (I am the teacher, not the student). The fourth mechanism entails recognising oneself as having the characteristics of a category. That is, *developing a sense of fit and membership.* This involves an investment and emotional commitment to that membership, along with beliefs and values that fit with that membership. (I must do the expected teacherly things.)

We are thus in part shaped by the desire to be appropriate (Davies, Dormer et al. 2001). We seek to ‘fit’ and to please, within our membership categories. Thus we play our selves to the imagined audience of others. Through working hard at becoming appropriate (as a school girl, or perhaps as a teacher or doctor), we gain a certain mastery over this way of being and of doing our selves correctly. Through this process of mastery, we are subjected by the norm. However, this mastery also provides us with the wherewithal to subvert the norm, to play the system, or to reject the norm.

One of the paradoxes Davies notes is that “one must submit in extraordinary ways in order to gain mastery”, but that this submission “provides the conditions of possibility for inventing something new” (Davies, Dormer et al 2001:181). This paradox is also seen in the improvised drama in which the rules and boundaries that constrain the play are also those that enable the play. Thus control and submission operate as dualities rather than polarities.

Recognition of the process of subjectification is fundamental to its interruption, and interruption is necessary if change is to take place. For the drama to contribute to this, it must facilitate recognition of the constructed nature of identity, and of the constructing nature of dominant storylines. It must make visible the *storying* (the shaping mechanisms) rather than simply the story.
**Difference and Effacement**

In discussing the process of subjectification, Butler (2004) points out that a profound suffering is felt when a person cannot identify with the key characteristics of a category to which they belong (such as occurs when one is female, but not heterosexual).

When the norm appears at once to guarantee and threaten social survival (it is what you need to live; it is that which, if you live it, will threaten to efface you), then conforming and resisting become a compounded and paradoxical relation to the norm, a form of suffering and a potential site for politicization. The question of how to embody the norm is thus very often linked to the question of survival, of whether life itself will be possible. I think we should not underestimate what the thought of the possible does for those who experience survival itself as a burning issue. (Butler 2004: 217)

Teachers and doctors in training may experience a disturbance of this kind as they engage in bending themselves to fit their ideal of the professional persona. They may still identify with the ‘youth’ category more readily than with their inscription as professional adult. They may find norms of their profession that are a poor fit with their sense of their own identity, or conversely, they may find that they are not able to enact themselves professionally in a way that ‘fits’ with their notion of who they think they ought to be as a doctor or teacher. In each of these cases they may experience the sense of effacement that Butler describes. In this case they may be particularly hungry for a humanising curriculum.

**Identity as Performed**

Butler (1999), building on the work of Foucault, uses a theatrical metaphor to carry her concept that identity is located in ‘doing’ rather than in ‘being’. In this it is a performative act. We are who we play ourselves to be, and the more we play out our selves the more it seems true or natural to be who we are. Butler develops this thesis through her discussion of gender. She describes gender as something which appears natural and becomes believable simply because it is constantly being performed. The performances of gender appear within a collective agreement or set of norms and expectations that operate in such as way as to compel our agreement and belief in the
‘naturalness’ of gender. Thus, Butler argues that gender attributes “are not expressive but performative” (Butler 1999:180).

This notion of identity as performative is fundamentally distinct from the notion of identity as inherent or innate. In Butler’s (2004) view, gender is an incessant kind of “doing”, a form of improvisation that occurs with or for another.

If gender is a kind of doing, an incessant activity performed, in part, without one’s knowing and without one’s willing, it is not for that reason automatic or mechanical. On the contrary, it is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint. Moreover, one does not “do” one’s gender alone. One is always “doing” with or for another, even if the other is always imaginary. (Butler 2004:1).

Thus from her ontological premise, Butler argues that there is no natural or essential gender identity. Rather, gender meanings are created as part of the culture. The often-played story becomes its own evidence for the naturalness of the existence of a certain phenomenon. In this the story enacted becomes evidence that the story is true, thus contributing to the survival of the story and the belief that its occurrence is natural. Via this mechanism the power struggle between teacher and student can come to be understood to be natural and inevitable. As the often-played story, the oppositional divide will come to be known as the ‘truth’ of how things are.

Though Butler’s foundational work is done in relation to gender, this concept of identity as performance is relevant to consideration of ‘youth’, ‘teacher’ or ‘doctor’ as a marker of identity. Using Butler’s notion of performativity, ‘youth’ may be seen as an act that is played out or performed into a set of cultural agreements that pre-exist the individual. Similarly, the professional aspects of one’s identity (I am a teacher, I am a doctor, I am a student) that are relevant in the Learning Partnerships project will also be enacted, and there will be a discourse of assumptions about who and how one ought to be as part of enacting or mastering membership of these categories. This discourse will pattern assumptions, behaviours and interpretations of the actions and motives of others.
To make deliberate shifts in the repertoire associated with these acts, we need to find a point of leverage within the background of assumptions that generates these acts. If it is the stories about what is normal, desirable and possible which shape our actions, then change will not occur without a re-storying. When working through the drama to enable change, I will need to question whether the drama is working to reinforce existing stories, or to generate shifts in the dominant stories. This will require a critical approach to both form and content, and to the positioning and meta-messages that are transmitted via the process itself.

**Conceptualising Power**

Foucault (1980) uses the term knowledge/power to indicate the interconnectedness of what we ‘know’ and how we act. In this he re-conceptualises the notion of power. He argues that "The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge, and conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power" (1980:51). In the humanist tradition power is understood to exist as a possession. It is something we wield or something that operates from the outside, as those who possess power exert it over others. Power is often thought to be oppressive or evil, and is seen as something to be resisted or overthrown. In contrast, Foucault names power as the *effect* (not the possession). He argues that power exists in *relations* in that it operates in exchange *between* people. Thus power is not negative or evil, but is positive in that it ‘produces reality’.

Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization ... In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (Foucault 1980: 98)

According to Foucault’s thesis of knowledge/power, one’s knowledge of the way one ought to be is learnt via the discourses of the culture. This knowledge in turn influences one’s choice of action. Thus, I am not chiefly ‘made’ to behave well as a teacher by some external supervisory power, but rather, I moderate myself in accordance with the standards that I have learnt. In this I enact my knowledge of the
rules and norms of society and the profession, and I am also complicit in maintaining these mores.

Similarly, when the players improvise in the drama they will draw upon their ‘knowledge’ of the world to create the characters, narratives and images. In the dominant humanist tradition people are assumed to have an inherent nature, and therefore the characters are likely to be played as either guilty or remorseless, greedy or generous, compassionate or cruel. Given that binaries or opposites are logically assumed not to co-exist, we are therefore likely to end up with a typing or simplification of a character. This might serve the narrative, but not the enquiry. Knowledge/power is thus an important concept for me as a drama educator. It prompts my interest in tasks that work to straddle the binaries, and in techniques designed to bring forth the voicing of multiple motives or to provide a poly-vocal accounting of character and experience.

To consistently design the aesthetic tasks in such a way as to support exploration of these concepts I must first have this theoretical concept in place. If it is not something I can be intentional about, then, whilst on some occasions I may intuitively or fortuitously use techniques that support such an inquiry, on other occasions I may not. The theory must live in the praxis, and hence the need to examine practice in the light of theory.

**Governmentality**

In his discussion of power, Foucault (1988) proposes the interconnected function of four types of ‘technologies’, which interact to provide “modes of training and modification of individuals, not only in the sense of acquiring certain skills, but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes” (18). He defines these four types of ‘technologies’ as the technologies of production, technologies of sign systems, technologies of power, and technologies of the self. By ‘technologies of the self’ he refers to those means whereby people effect “operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (18). Foucault is particularly interested in the interaction between the technologies of
power or domination of others, and those of the self. He calls the interaction between these two technologies ‘governmentality’.

If Foucault’s concept of governmentality is applied to the drama, it can be argued that genre, style and convention function as a technology of sign systems as they encompass the organising rules of the performance language that is used, including the visual, verbal, kinaesthetic and symbolic. In this the performance tradition normalizes certain modes of expression and identifies certain subject matter that it is appropriate to address in the drama. The performance convention can also be seen as a ‘technology of power’ because it lays out the rules of the ‘game’ and the norms associated with its play. Thus the convention or performance tradition is a form of ‘knowledge’ about how to produce and communicate meaning. It functions to normalise and shape the representation of meaning. This dual function of the ‘technology of power’ and the ‘technology of sign systems’ interfaces with the ‘technology of the self’ when the drama is used as a practice through which to come to know and work on the self. This interplay between three key technologies of power could be described as the ‘governmentality’ of the drama.

It is the ‘governmentality’ of drama and its function in the production of knowledge that I research in this study. In this I seek to understand better the way in which the mechanisms of the drama function to shape, constrain and enable approaches to meaning-making.

**Theory Shaping Education Practice**

The poststructuralist understanding of power will inform assumptions about how the educator can approach liberation or resistance. If people are seen to be complicit in their own oppression, due the process through which they have internalised the ‘rules’ and social order and work to help maintain it, the oppressor cannot be entirely externalised. St. Pierre (2000) describes a necessary shift in the practice of blame. Poststructuralism does not allow us to place the blame else where, outside our own daily activities, but demands that we examine our own complicity in the maintenance of social injustice (484).
This re-conceptualisation of the nature of power has major implications for those of us who see our work as belonging within the tradition of empowerment, emancipation or social change. This can be explored via an example relating to my work as a classroom drama teacher.

Working within the humanist tradition of understanding power, I may design a task to equip students to deal with harassment. This might entail asking them to enact scenarios in which the ‘victim’ or ‘bystander’ encounters the negative treatment of the ‘bully’. Using a forum theatre approach, we may then focus on how the oppressed teenager might resist or overthrow the bullying peer, or how the bystanders might intervene to avert the action. The focus will be on strategies, scripts, stances, and actions that can be used to deal with the bully. Given that in the humanist tradition power is something to be deflected or taken away from those who have it and abuse it, we are likely to be satisfied when we have demonstrated how a particular character can seize power for themselves by standing up to the oppressor.

Informed by a poststructuralist understanding of power I am likely to engage the students in additional work. Given the assumption that power operates in relations between the characters, I will design exercises to reveal how the characters play out the positions and desires that are part of a broader cultural discourse. I will look for tools to detect the binaries that hold the situation in place, and pre-exist the particular incident. To do this we may ask if the victim can also be a perpetrator, and the perpetrator also a victim. We may explore how the characters may be co-creating the patterns of their relationship, conferring victim, bully, or bystander status on themselves and each other. We may ask where the ‘scripts’ have come from that create our understandings of what it is to be the weak or the strong, the complicit or the innocent, the central or the peripheral. We may examine what it is in the operation of school and society that calls for people to adopt such roles, or rewards them when they do so. We may explore the ways in which assumptions about who and how to be in these circumstances limit what is possible and lead to the persistence of the status quo.
To work from this poststructuralist perspective does not mean that I surrender my initial pragmatic or emancipatory goals, or that I reject exploration of rehearsal strategies for resisting, preventing or deflecting harassment. Rather I seek additional approaches in order to reveal the mechanisms of oppression. I assume that emancipatory change will be enabled by focus on the governing discourses as well as by any overt development of skill or capacity to negotiate particular situations. I will strive to prompt the moments of ‘real-isation’ or the awareness of how things are made ‘real’ through our beliefs, expectations and actions. In this my theoretical concept of power will inform my pedagogical choices.

**Working from the Humanist Platform**

Using a poststructuralist perspective does not require that one demonise the positivist tradition. After all, humanism is the paradigm through which we make operational sense of our daily lives. St Pierre (2000) argues that “poststructuralism can not escape humanism since, as a response to humanism, it must always be implicated in the problematic it addresses” (479). By extrapolation, in the drama workshop, the dominant humanistic mode of understanding the world will always be the backdrop against which we engage in deconstruction. My task is not to negate this dominant way of reading the world, but rather to find the portals through which to enter a different paradigm of thinking.

Following Derrida’s (1978) lead, the portal is likely to be opened through questioning and through detection of the implicit binaries. The process of questioning can provide a partial erasure of the old ‘text’ so that new text can be written. Derrida uses the analogy of the palimpsest to illustrate the notion of the partial erasure that occurs in deconstruction. The palimpsest or parchment was inscribed with text that was then scrubbed off to make space for new text to be written. However, traces of the old text could be seen and read through the overwritten text. In a similar way, the traces of the dominant mode of reading reality will, though ‘crossed out’ by the question, or by the fiction, will still show through, and the ‘answers’ will in some sense still be a response to, or relate to, that earlier set of knowledge.
Agency and Change

The interest in subjectification is linked to an associated interest in how the individual attains agency, or the freedom to act. Thus the way in which agency is theorised is also relevant to those of us interested in the use of drama to empower individuals to engage in social change. In the humanist tradition, the individual is assumed to possess free will and agency, but within the poststructuralist paradigm, will and agency is understood to be to some degree always already shaped and attuned or constructed by the casting discourses and the subject positions available within them. Thus a poststructuralist thinker will understand the formation of identity as the ongoing taking up and/or resisting of the various subject positions available within the discourses or organising set of ideas and practices of society.

This focus on the generative power of discourse may sound like a deterministic philosophy, carrying a notion that the individual is entirely pre-scripted or wired up. This is an over-simplification of the concept of subjectification. Rather, it is argued within the poststructuralist tradition that there is always the possibility of reconstruction, which can be fostered through practices of deconstruction, imagination and resistance. Thus identity becomes an ongoing task of resistance and innovation. St. Pierre (2000) argues that we have the ability to analyse, contest, and change practices that are being used to construct ourselves and the world, as well as the practices we ourselves are using in this work of praxis (493).

Thus in the poststructuralist tradition, agency is understood to involve resistance, and change is achieved via an alertness to the shaping nature of the discourses. This is a somewhat different notion to that causing change through the exercise of ‘free will’. Butler (2004) argues that it necessitates acts of the imagination, or the creation of a sense of the possibility of being or doing things differently.

Davies describes this as the subject having available to them certain ‘conditions of possibility’ which he or she can then take up or resist (Davies, Dormer et al. 2001). What we imagine to be possible and desirable for ourselves will influence our actions. A mode of being cannot be elected if it does not exist within the domain of the possible. So, if a teacher cannot imagine the possibility of apologising to a student, or
if an adult cannot imagine that a young person can teach them how to do their job, then this will not occur. For change to occur through the drama, the work must produce possibility.

**Deconstruction and Change**

Davies argues that in order to achieve change, we must engage in a process of deconstruction to make visible the discourses that normally escape our attention. "By making hegemonic sets of assumptions visible, the nature of what we take to be factual or real is profoundly shifted..." (Davies1994: 20). Thus, just to ‘see’ the way in which these processes function, changes one’s view of the world. We come to see that ‘me’ is also ‘we’, in that others before and around us are in large part creating the possibilities of being which are available for our selection. Having seen what it is that shapes us, we can engage with re-shaping.

Poststructuralism opens up the possibility of agency to the subject through the very act of making visible the discursive threads through which their experience of themselves as specific beings is woven. It also defines discourse and structure as something which can be acted upon and changed. (Davies1993:12)

This distinction is relevant to me as an educator because if we conceive of what shapes us as our will or our skill (as in the humanist tradition), we will direct our change efforts towards bolstering knowledge and skills. If on the other hand we understand that the very creation of our (conflicting) desires, fears, assumptions and sense of possibility is ‘learnt’ through the shaping discourses, then we will see that some of our change efforts must be directed towards detecting and rethreading this invisible tapestry of the self. This distinction in the understanding of agency is important as it informs the focus of the learning activities I will design.

**Building Agency through the Drama**

Davies’ (1993) sees three factors involved in the attainment of agency. First is the ability to recognise the constitutive power of discourses. (We need to see the sea we swim in and are sustained by). Second is the ability to catch discourse in the act of
shaping our desires and perceptions. (We need to be able to catch ourselves playing into the pattern, yearning to fit a certain image, and reading others’ actions through a pre-scripted storyline). Third is to engage in a collective process of re-writing and re-positioning. (We need to work with others to create new possibilities for ourselves and each other).

Extrapolating to my work in leading the drama, I see the following possibilities: Firstly, drama is a medium that has the capacity to make the invisible visible, and thus can help us see and hear the discourses at play. Through stylised play we can embody, enact, exaggerate, voice, sing or symbolize these discourses, and thus come to recognise them. In this the drama can help us to recognise the constitutive power of the discourse.

Secondly, the drama can be used to help us catch the shaping nature of the discourse at play in orienting our desires and perceptions. We can pause the action, suspend time, replay and re-examine instances of action or desire. We can wind back time to explore where those desires came from, or move to other realities to demonstrate where else they may be at play. We can shift roles and perspectives and thus reveal the way that positioning can shape perception. We can hear the different perceptions of different characters as they differently read the same event, ascribing different motives to the other.

Thirdly, drama offers a communitarian form and a number of mechanisms for employing the imagination. Through collective enactment of the imagined we can create new possibilities, and taste new modes of being, and engage in the processes of re-writing, and re-positioning.

When the drama houses a theatre of revelation it helps us to see that much of what we take to be 'natural' and 'obvious' about the world is in fact something that we have learned to see as natural. When the theatre of revelation also generates a theatre of vision, capable of evoking the possibility of change, then perhaps it will be emancipatory and empowering.
Fantasy and Change

Where Boal (1985) suggests the need for rehearsal in building the capacity for change, Butler suggests the need for invention. She discusses the role that the imagined and the imaginary plays in enabling learning and change in the self. She describes fantasy as

the art of the articulation of the possible; it moves us beyond what is merely actual and present into a realm of possibility, the not yet actualized or the not actualizable. The struggle to survive is not really separable from the cultural life of fantasy … . Fantasy is not the opposite of reality; it is what reality forecloses, and, as a result, it defines the limits of reality, constituting it as its constitutive outside. The critical promise of fantasy, when and where it exists, is to challenge the contingent limits of what will and will not be called reality. Fantasy is what allows us to imagine ourselves and others otherwise; it establishes the possible in excess of the real; it points elsewhere, and when it is embodied, it brings the elsewhere home. (Butler 2004: 28-29)

This notion of fantasy as allowing us to ‘imagine ourselves and others otherwise’ may be at the heart of the transformative power of drama. By embodying the possible, which is not yet part of reality, we ‘bring the elsewhere home’, thus bringing it into the realm of that which can be considered. Having been enacted, even in the fiction of the drama, it becomes a part of our reality. Then it becomes an opportunity, an option, and hence can be chosen.

If real creativity lies in imagining that things can be otherwise, it will be crucial to frame the drama in such a way as to permit or invite a rich and radical imagining. A mere duplication of reality as it is commonly understood, such as one often gets through a naturalistic drama, may invite little re-imagining. Despite being a fiction, the drama may leave little room for departure from the norm. The social rules and expectations may so govern the play that little room for divergence is given. However, when the dramatic play is framed in a more radical manner (as seen in non-naturalistic drama traditions) a stretching of the real to the surreal is required, and thus the genre can invite the employ of imagination.
Recognition and Identity

Deepening her discussion of identity as performative, Butler points to the desire for recognition or for an ‘audience’ for one’s performance. She asserts our very sense of personhood is linked to the desire for recognition, and that desire places us outside ourselves, in a realm of social norms that we do not fully choose, but that provides the horizon and the resource for any sense of choice that we have (Butler 2004:33).

The mechanism of recognition can be understood as an interaction between audience and player where each party fulfils both functions; each plays both the observer and the observed. Butler describes ‘recognition’ as the process of the subject and the other seeing themselves reflected in each other whilst still remaining separate.

Butler argues that when we give an account of ourselves to another, we engage in an act of recognition. We seek to be recognized and to recognize the other. This striving for visibility assumes also a striving for singularity – an urge to be seen as ‘me’ as well as ‘we’. Butler argues that "The norms by which I recognize another or, indeed, myself, are not mine alone; they function to the extent that they are social, exceeding every dyadic exchange that they condition." (Butler 2007:31). Thus every act of recognition is bound and enabled by the pre-existing ideas we have of the world, the self and the other. In this "the regime of truth offers a framework for the scene of recognition, delineating who will qualify as a subject of recognition and offering available norms for the act of recognition itself." Butler 2007: 30)

In her focus on the process of recognition, Butler builds beyond Foucault’s focus on the effort of the individual to shape the self via work on the self. In his work on the technologies of the self, Foucault considers the question Who can I be? Butler adds the question Who are you? In this she considers the way in which the desire for recognition is a form of shaping. Because recognition can only occur in the presence (real or imagined) of the other, it is always inherently social. Further, it is always inherently ethical as it involves the regard for, and reading of, the other, and the subsequent playing of the self.
The account of the self is given to another. The ‘I’ assumes a ‘you’ and thus the telling of the story of the self entails a parallel act of exposure, which is not the story itself, but the act of giving the story to the other (Butler 2007).

The notion of exposure conjures the notion of vulnerability. Butler highlights the way in which the self presumes and desires the separateness and difference of the other so that in contrast it (the ‘I’) can be singular and recognized. In this yearning the self is vulnerable, for without recognition one is invisible and thus does not ‘exist’. Without ‘you’ there cannot be ‘I’. The self resists ‘we’ whilst yearning for ‘me’, but in doing this must also assume a degree of similarity or we-ness with the other. Thus recognition is a paradoxical process that requires the assumption of both difference and similarity.

Butler does not set out to establish a deterministic view of the world. Rather, she argues that "new norms are brought into being when unanticipated forms of recognition take place" (Butler 2007:31). The Learning Partnerships workshops seem to provide opportunities for certain ‘unanticipated forms of recognition’ to take place. The workshops are used to enable the participants to engage in stretching the type of recognition that is possible between teachers and students, or doctors and patients. The participants describe the work together as ‘humanising’ (see chapter eleven). This suggests that the process of working together enables them to shift somewhat the defining frame, and to employ different explanatory models. This requires a re-storying of the other and of the self to allow an enhanced recognition.

My analysis of the data collected from the participants in the Learning Partnerships workshops suggests that the process of recognition depends on both the recognition of difference (me/you, us/them, teacher/student, youth/adult), and the recognition of similarity (I/We are human). This process of recognition also engenders a re-cognition: I re-think my self, I re-learn my peers, and I re-imagine the other.

Thus the focus on the interplay of recognition is particularly relevant to my study of drama as a tool through which to develop the self and enable professional, personal and social change. Using Butler’s thesis, if people can play themselves out differently
with and for each other, even within the frame of the fictional play, then this enactment becomes a form of ‘knowledge’, if only the knowledge that this is a possible mode of being. This is because if identity resides in the doing, then there is always the possibility of doing differently, or being done to differently.

In relating this theory to the Learning Partnerships project, I see that if students and teachers (or doctors and patients) cannot recognize each other as anything but types, then their interactions will be limited and role bound. If they can imagine the other as more fully human, then a different type of interaction will become available. The humanizing of the other may be fundamental in creating the possibility of change.

**Rupture and Change**

From the poststructuralist perspective the imaginative act provides a fundamental platform for the change actions. By this theory, for change to take place, we have to look at what can become imaginable, and at the way in which currently constructed desires constrain this imaginary. We must look also at what sorts of mechanisms may assist in the dislodging of these desires.

Davies sees the possibility that laughter may be one such anti-coagulant. While its constitutive power must be recognised, the possibility that it can also be laughed out of existence, played with, disrupted, or used to manufacture new possibilities, can also be recognised. (Davies 1993: 198)

The possibility that laughter can be a dislodging agent is of interest to me as a dramatist. This may be the power of parody. It may also be ‘the laughter of recognition’ which I observe to operate in the workshop when an accurate rendition alerts the audience to the absurdity of a common behaviour. When a character’s ploy is obvious to the audience, but not to fellow characters, we hear the laughter of recognition and feel the tension associated with the potential that the character’s machinations will be discovered by their fellow characters. When, as audience, we catch the game at play (rather than being seduced by the detail of the narrative), we can laugh at the pre-scripted and position-maintaining nature of the interactions.
If our human nature is not something innate or something that can be ‘discovered’, but is a conglomeration of our enactments, then if we want to shift our understandings of self and others, we will need to find new forms through which to define who we are. Drama and theatre may have a particular power as a mode through which to create and define who one is. The public and enacted form provides a mechanism for a collective imagining through which new possibilities, once enacted, can ‘evidence’ themselves into the possible, and perhaps through the communal nature of their creation, they can enter the domain of the acceptable and desirable.

**Summary**

In this chapter I have explored a poststructuralist approach to identity. Drama practitioners have pivoted their practice around the much loved and heralded question “What if...?” This is the permission-giving and generative question that provides the point of departure and the platform for the ensuing fictional play. Poststructuralist thinking has provided a companion question for me. It is the question: *What is happening here?* This question draws the eye to the mechanisms of construction. It prompts analysis of the patterned nature of relationship and the interplay of power relations. It invites enquiry into the culture, discourse and traditions that inform, and are replicated within, the stories told. It prompts examination of the aesthetic mechanisms, devices, and semiotics through which meaning has been evoked or ideas embodied.

If meaning is liquid and story is the shaping container, then when the story is ruptured, meaning can trickle out to take new shape. If we do not crack open the story containers, we will simply arrive at the same interpretations. We will reinvent the meanings we already have. Teachers will continue to be cast as the dominating, the dogmatic or the dismissive; students will still be the subversive, the submissive, or the sycophantic. The drama that simply replays this knowledge will drive a stake into the story and pin it into the realm of certainty. If change requires a foregrounding of the adhesive nature of the discourse, then attention must be placed upon the extent to which the drama makes visible this constituting glue. If real change is made possible through a process of identifying the constructing discourses, and a re-storying of the possibilities for being, then the drama must enable this work. It must invite
recognition of the constituting nature of socially constructed desires. It must prompt
the creation of new explanatory models, and storylines.

Learning through ‘standing in the shoes of the other’ will retain its importance,
equipping our capacity to imagine beyond ourselves. This act of imagination will not
however be sufficient to prompt deeper change. There will be an additional need for
critical thought, for an uncoupling of defining binaries, and for a hyper-vigilance in
relation to the sticky nature of the linear storyline.

In this chapter I have drawn upon poststructuralist theory to argue that the drama must
make visible the shaping nature of the discourses as without recognising their
confining influence we can neither resist them nor create new possibilities. For
change to occur, the drama must produce the possibility of doing ourselves
differently. If people can play themselves out differently with and for each other, then
this enactment becomes a form of ‘knowledge’, if only the knowledge that there are
other possible modes of being. Having been enacted this knowledge then becomes a
part of our reality. It then becomes an option, and hence can be chosen.

**What’s Next?**

In the following chapter, I look at the relationship between the way we problematise
the self and the practices that we use to work upon the self. I discuss the use of drama
techniques as ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault 1988), or as mechanisms through
which to know and to shape the self. I compare the use of the question in qualitative
enquiry with the use of framing in the drama, arguing that the framing device not only
tells us what to look at, but also suggests how to look, or the ontological world view
within which we should make sense of what we see. I use this discussion to argue the
need for greater theoretical attention to the way in which the conventions of the drama
might influence the pursuit of knowledge.
CHAPTER 5: Truth Games

Introduction
In this chapter I address the question *How does the way in which we pose the questions within the ‘project of the self’ influence the practices that we use to know and shape the self?* I use Foucault’s construct of the ‘technologies of the self’ to theorise the mechanisms through which the drama might function as a collective tool for personal and social change. I compare his notion of problematization to the use of framing in the drama, and consider the importance of the framing of the question in shaping the nature of the enquiry and the subsequent learning. I draw upon Butler’s discussion of the frame as inherently social and inculturated, influencing that which can be seen and shown.

I discuss Foucault’s theory of the way in which different practices are selected to pursue knowledge about the self, and the way in which these practices relate to the initial problematization. I relate the distinctions he makes between parrhessia (truth-speaking) and rhetoric, and between dialogue and polemic, to traditions of learning through drama. I examine the arguments that a number of influential artists have made about their use of theatre to promote enquiry, noting that they problematize the self and reality differently, make different ontological assumptions, and employ different aesthetic practices as the means through which to ‘reveal’ truth and effect change.

This prepares the ground for a deeper discussion conducted in the following chapters of the way in which the conventions employed within the drama might influence the nature of the enquiry and the subsequent learning.

Framing – a Form of Problemization
To make deliberate change one must engage in thought. Foucault (1984) defines thought as a form of detachment or stepping back, which allows something to be
distinguished as a problem, and thus reflected upon. He argues that we will only engage in thought about situations that hold some uncertainty or challenge. That is, the matter has to come into our attention rather than just residing amongst the body of our ongoing assumptions. Foucault terms this process ‘problemization’, or the process of making the familiar unfamiliar.

This development of a given into a question, this transformation of a group of obstacles and difficulties into problems to which the diverse solutions will attempt to produce a response, this is what constitutes the point of problemization and the specific work of thought. (Foucault 1984: 389)

Dramatists use the concept of ‘framing’ to denote the way in which the construction of the scene is used to focus attention on a specific aspect of the narrative (Heathcote 1984; O'Toole 1992; Ackroyd 2004) Just as the picture frame delineates the painting as the object of focus, rather than the wallpaper against which it is hung, in the drama, the way the scene is ‘framed’ marks that which will be heard, seen or discussed in the action. Heathcote (1984) argues that "participants have to be framed into a position of influence" (Heathcote 1984:168), in this highlighting the importance of the positioning of the characters in relation to the subject matter of the inquiry. The framing of the scene can thus be seen as a form of problemization.

**Traditions in Understanding Framing**

In the drama literature the notion of framing is commonly discussed in relation to aesthetic aspects of the work. Framing may be used to maintain suspense, build dramatic tension, and thus contribute to aesthetic engagement (Haseman and O'Toole 1987). In this, framing is understood in relation to the way it moderates engagement with the narrative. Framing is also discussed as an ethical device offering a form of protection for the players. A protective or reflective distancing can be established when one increases the distance of the scene from the main action so that the players or audience do not empathise unduly with distressing issues (O'Toole 1992). In this, framing is understood to attend to the relationship the player or audience has with the material explored within the narrative. Others discuss the framing of the action in terms of its potential as a therapeutic device (Krusic 1996). Models of hope or resolution can be offered through the provision of parables, metaphors or analogies.
Here again the focus is on the way in which the selection of the subject matter might resonate with the participants’ experiences in the real world. In this it fits alongside attention to framing as a protective device.

Framing is seen by some to be a political act. A range of dramatists employ feminist or critical theory to point to the way in which the framing of the drama ascribes centrality to some characters, privileging their concerns and interests, whilst leaving other characters silenced or marginalised (Fletcher 1995; Nicholson 1995; Nicholson 1995; Berry 2000; Grady 2000). In this, framing is understood to reflect the stance or ideology of those who establish the frame.

Many dramatists discuss their use of framing as an investigatory device. They use the drama to pose problems or ethical dilemmas, explore consequences or provide models (Bolton 1984; Heathcote 1984; Boal 1985; O’Neill 1996; Cockett 1997; Bailin 1998; Edmiston 1998; Winston 1998; O’Toole and Lepp 2000; Taylor 2000; Edmiston 2001). In this framing is understood as a device to promote modes of problem-knowing, or problem-solving.

The framing of the scene can then be understood to house questions that are fundamental to the subsequent enquiry. Framing is therefore worthy of both theoretical and technical focus. A theoretical focus is needed because our assumptions about reality influence how we look, what we assume we can find, and what status we think our ‘findings’ have. The theoretical must also incorporate a technical discussion to ensure that the tools or methods align with the theory.

In researching the use of drama for enquiry I aim to develop theory about how the framing of the drama enables learning and what sort of learning it privileges.

**The Ontological Frame**

Butler uses the concept of the frame at a philosophical level. She describes as 'frames' those structures that "decide our capacity to apprehend the political and social world affectively" (Butler 2007: 5).

our idea of the world - that is, the idea of what can be narrated or shown or
framed as the world - is a way of regulating affect and has a direct bearing on what we take the world to be, and the kinds of political judgments we can make about it. (5)

In this, the ‘frame’ both restricts and amplifies what we can see. It “constitutes the basis on which we come to know, and ultimately the basis on which we form opinions and deliberate on our views” (5). Our way of knowing shapes our political and ethical views because it informs what we can see, the interpretations we make of what we see, and the ideas that we can articulate. “In this way, it is a restriction that establishes a certain conception of the public sphere and that delimits in advance the kinds of political views we might be able to articulate and espouse” (Butler 2007:5). Butler’s concept of the frame operates at a paradigmatic level. It moderates what is knowable about the self and the world.

The purpose of the enquiry is to increase what is known. Using Butler’s analysis, this will also require a stretching of what is knowable. My intent is to examine how particular drama conventions might function to increase the domain of what is knowable and say-able so that new norms in relationship might be created. This will entail attention to the paradigm that is assumed as one asks the questions through the drama.

Framing and Paradigmatic Assumptions

Building upon Butler’s thinking it can be seen that whilst the framing of the drama denotes what to look at, potentially, it also tells us how to look – that is, it suggests the ontological assumptions we should make as we look at the fictional world. In research, the questions are understood to carry ontological assumptions and invite forms of knowledge commensurate with the orienting paradigm. If this is true also for the drama, then the framing of the scene will also call particular ontological assumptions into play.

This possibility can be explored via example. A surrealist scene casting the key characters as Desk, Blackboard and Text Book will inform us that we are to read reality in a certain way. We would be invited to make a different reading if the characters were the Teacher, Student and Principal. In the surrealist mode, we are
permitted to suspend the rules commonly shared between the fictional and the real worlds, such as those pertaining to physics and biology. Time need not be linear, and sentience may be ascribed to insentient objects. Rather than a child becoming a man, a man may turn into a rhinoceros (Ionesco 1960). In contrast, in reading a naturalistic scene, we are invited to use the same ontological assumptions as we would in life. We should assume the operation of the same norms, assumptions, practices and ‘natural’ social as well as physical laws.

In the naturalistic frame, the question what might happen next, if…? is likely to invite engagement with a linear narrative, and demonstrate a line of causality. Characters who propel the plot are likely to be organised into binaries or distinct types, and the differences between them heightened. For the observers, deductive meaning making occurs via the conclusion implicit in the closure of the narrative see how \textit{X} causes \textit{Y} to happen! There may be associated judgemental responses promoted by the revelatory nature of the narrative, such as see how bad this situation is! (and how certain villains are to blame for the suffering of certain victims). Alternatively, the play might explore the narrative from a psychologised perspective, exploring what might it feel like when…? Conclusions will be similarly explanatory so that’s how you would feel, and extrapolative and then you would be likely to….

In the surrealist scene the Desk, Blackboard and Text Book may more readily comment upon or subvert the practices established in everyday society, and thus draw attention to the discourses that inform our routines. In the breach, or in the commentary, the shaping discourses can be lifted from the invisibility of the given and thus come to our attention.

The selection of genre can then be understood to provide an additional level of framing which establishes the rules of play, and the rules of reality operative within that play. The naturalistic frame establishes that the play should obey rules of the culture, as well as those of physics and biology, and in this imitate the everyday world. The surrealist frame establishes that anything imaginable is possible, and that any known rule may be consciously inverted or ignored. The naturalistic frame assumes a positivist ontology and a phenomenological epistemology. The surrealist
frame assumes a constructivist ontology and a critical epistemology.

Thus when I invite players to explore within the naturalistic genre, I may assume that they will draw upon the rules of everyday world and thus are likely to replicate types, perspectives, categories and storylines with which they are familiar. They are also likely to assume the centrality of the individual, the inherent nature of identity, and the integrity of the will and inner life of the individual. If I want the drama to surface the operative grip of these patterns, I may need to turn to anti-naturalistic modes of play, in order that the norms can be fore-grounded rather than operate as the invisible givens.

Potentially the more the laws of ‘reality’ are suspended within the rules of play, the greater the freedom players will feel to suspend additional ‘rules’ pertaining to the culture and the discourse. This may produce additional freedom to speak and to re-think. The argument here is that rupture in one domain may ‘permit’ a rupture in another. So if I want the participants to register the storylines, and to engage in a re-storying to enable change, then attention to the way I frame the tasks will be an essential part of my work.

From Framing to Fashioning
Given that framing is a form of problematising the subject matter, which tells us both what to look at and how to look, then how one frames the enquiry will influence the subsequent approach and the associated learning. However, it is necessary also to consider that after (and within) the framing of the problem players engage in certain practices as they fashion their responses to the ‘question’. These practices also require theoretical and technical scrutiny. To assist with this I draw on Foucault’s work in theorising the connection between the problematising and the practices or ‘technologies of the self’ that are evoked by the question.

By ‘technologies of the self’ Foucault refers to those means whereby people seek to understand and shape themselves as part of their pursuit of meaning and happiness. He describes the ‘technologies of the self’ as the way in which people undertake
operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (Foucault 1988:18). He contends that the way the self is problematized influences the selection of practices through which to work upon the self.

He notes that the self has been problematised differently over time, and in association, different practices have been favoured as means to know and shape the self. In the early Greco-Roman tradition, the interest was in coming to know the self in order to be able to become a good citizen and leader. The central question may have been how does a good citizen live their life? In early Christianity however, one had to know the self in order to renounce the self and thus attain salvation and reward in the after life (Foucault 1988). The problematizing question in these times may have been how do I overcome my nature in order to attain salvation?

Foucault argues that these questions invited different practices through which to work on the self. The Socratic tradition invited dialogue, reasoned enquiry, associated awareness-raising and subsequent rectifying actions. The early Christian tradition invited study of a cannon (the Bible), the exercise of obedience, scrutiny of one’s thoughts, and associated confession and penitential practices. In the Socratic tradition the individual was expected operate as an artist, working on the aesthetics of his life, shaping and crafting his life through attention to daily practices, and thus bringing his actions into a pleasing alignment with his reason and beliefs. In the early Christian tradition one became a judge of one’s life and then worked upon curtailing or moderating behaviour to fit with the instructions of the canon.

It is relevant for me to consider how the self may be problematized in the current era, and to speculate about how the practices of the drama may be useful in exploring this question. This is because in the Learning Partnerships project, the question of the self will form the meta-question within which questions about the professional self will be explored. As argued in chapter three, the ‘project of the self’ will provide the backdrop against which to consider one’s identity as teacher, doctor, or student.
Problematising the Self

Building upon the work of sociologists (discussed in chapter three) it can be seen that in modernity we struggle with isolation and personal meaninglessness (Habermas 1987; Giddens 1991; Beck 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). Hence the problem of the self that dominates thinking in modern times may reside around the question who will I be such that I can live a meaningful and satisfying life? In this the individual must operate as the builder and narrator of their life, rather than as the judge or artist. He or she must be the one who tells and enacts the tale of the self in order to know and be known, and in order to establish connection and meaning.

A shift in the question suggests a shift in the associated work through which to respond to the question. The question who am I? suggests an effort to search and discover. The question who should I be? suggests practices of monitoring, evaluation and rectification. The question who will I be? (relevant in the current era) suggests work on choice and construction.

Practices of the Self

Given that the way the question is problematized affects the choices of practices used to ‘find’ the answers, it is worth considering the practices that might be called forth by the question who will I be? Playing upon the implicit theatrical metaphors suggested by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002), and the notion of identity as performative as suggested by Butler (2004), associated practices through which identity is constructed include shaping the body, selecting the costumes, collecting the appropriate props, selecting a cast of fellow players, finding the rights sets and backdrops, and building the public relations portfolio. In addition a narrative or storyline is constructed and enacted with and for others. The narrative provides cohesion, continuity, tension, meaning and impetus.

If these practices of enactment, or ‘doing’ are used to show and know the self, then potentially the collective and performative nature of the drama workshop may mirror this work. If the way in which the identity is invented and performed nature in the drama mirrors the constructed and the performed nature of identity in life, then the drama is potentially a technology of the self which not only permits rehearsal for life,
but which can also enable recognition of the phenomenon of construction. In short, it may not only help us to play the game, but to understand that we are playing, how we play, and that this playing is the doing of the self.

If the drama is to do this, then a particular technology will be needed to draw the eye to the mechanisms of construction, rather than just to the narrative fruits provided for consumption. A discussion of ‘how’ this might be accomplished requires both technical and theoretical attention. To engage further with this discussion, I draw upon Foucault’s work examining how various ‘truth games’ or ‘technologies of the self’ relate to the types of questions asked. I then draw upon this work to consider the way in which style and structure in the drama might be moderated to enable enquiry into the shaping nature of the discourses we dwell within.

**Truth-Seeking and Truth-Speaking**

Foucault’s (2001) work on the pursuit of truth through parrhessia, or free speech, is particularly relevant in my exploration of how the drama might support personal and social learning. He defines the tradition of parrhessia in the early Greek tradition as when the speaker

chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy (Foucault 2001:20).

This act of speaking the truth was associated with a risk to the speaker as the opinion may potentially incur the wrath of others. Thus courage was a marker of the sincerity and authenticity of the speaker, and telling the truth was seen as an act of civic generosity as well as courage.

Foucault argues that parrhessia had three interrelated functions in early Greek society. It was a means to discover truths about the world. It was a way of contributing to society; and it was a means through which to work out the relationship between truth and one’s style of life “or truth and an ethics and aesthetics of the self” (Foucault 2001:106).
I find this triumvirate particularly appealing as I have a similar tri-fold interest in the use of the drama to assist players to learn about the world, to contribute to their community, and to work on their capacity to live in alignment with their beliefs and values. I am therefore interested to chart the way in which the mechanisms used in the collective process of the drama workshop may have a parrhessiastic function, or operate as a methodology through which to engage both in ‘truth-seeking’, truth-speaking, and an ‘ethics and aesthetics’ of life practice.

Dialogue

Foucault notes that parrhessia occurs in dialogue, evolving through a pattern of questions and answers. It is thus co-created. A dialogic pattern will therefore be important in the drama workshops. For my purposes this will be best achieved through a reciprocal exchange rather than a one-way interview/response mode as is common when adults work with youth. If the questions flow only one way then the risk and revelation occurs on only one side of the partnership. If the partners are to re-learn each other then the questions and responses must be multi-directional.

Foucault also defines parrhessia by contrasting it with rhetoric, which he describes as long and uninterrupted, ornamented, manipulative and designed to sway an audience. Parrhessia however, is authentic and natural in register. To further distinguish the character of dialogue Foucault (1984) also differentiates between dialogue and polemics. He describes dialogue as a game in which the rights of each party are respected. In contrast, he defines polemics as a form of combat which "establishes the other as an enemy" (1984:382) who must be proved wrong or defeated. Thus he argues that polemics cannot produce creativity as it has "sterilising effects" (Foucault 1984:383) and negates the birth of new ideas.

Talking a lead from this idea, if the Learning Partnerships work is to produce enabling new possibilities for the way in which teachers and students or doctors and patients relate with each other, then it will not be sufficient to use the didactic model traditional in the education practice of schools and universities. Rather, the creation of new ways of being will arise from an authentic and courageous dialogue.
Defaults to the Didactic

In drama the overt intent and style of approach is to work in a dialogic rather than a didactic mode. Despite this overt intent, as O’Toole (1992) points out, the work in drama or theatre may adopt a polemic mode, making an argument through the selection of the narrative, and positioning the audience and participants in a certain way in relation to the subject material. This may happen through the inadvertent selection of the ‘maverick metaphor’ through which the covert messages of the drama work against its overt aims, as for example when the drama glamorises the behaviour it aims to critique (O’Toole 1992). This may also be the product of the practitioner’s ideology or standpoint (Nicholson 1995) and thus result from a default series of assumptions rather than from any conscious intent.

The didactic method has been dominant in the tradition of education and thus is likely to be the default position in classrooms. This is true also in health promotion education where the operative assumption has been that if one mounts a well-argued and evidenced case, those exposed to it will readily change their behaviour, adopting healthier practices in relation to diet, exercise, drugs and sex. However, reviews of health education programs have shown that that the didactic approach shows weak associations with behaviour change (Tobler and Stratton 1997; James, Reddy et al. 2006; Bauer, Lozano et al. 2007). Rather, it is those programs that address normative assumptions and involve participants in interactive and dialogic problem-predicting and problem-solving approaches that are more powerfully associated with behaviour change (Dusenbury and Falco 1995; McBride, Farringdon et al. 2003; Cahill 2006).

Another argument by which to justify the dialogic approach can be built upon the ‘evidence’ established in the field of motivational interviewing, where it has been well established that ‘insistence’ can promote ‘resistance’, and that people tend to resist solutions that are pushed upon them by others (Baer and Peterson 2002; Winters, Leitter et al. 2007). In this field, studies of therapeutic conversations have revealed that in the face of persuasion to change their behaviour in relation to alcohol, drug or food intake, people rebut arguments, highlighting the barriers that must be surmounted to make the change. In this they speak the argument against change, thus justifying their position and strengthening the case against taking change oriented
actions (Baer and Peterson 2002). Conversely, when the solution is imagined and spoken by the person, then they are more likely to enact it. In explaining the merit and possibility of the strategies they need to take, they end up making a persuasive case for action, and are more likely to go on to adopt the changes they have described.

The choice to work through a participatory methodology may seem to be sufficient to ensure that participants do the work to develop solutions. But it is not just the structure of the encounter which produces dialogue, it is the thinking space within which we are free to imagine. A dialogic drama-based process may transmit didactic messages simply because the stories that are related contain a certain polemic which may be neither noted nor contested. Poststructuralist theory suggests that there may be a more insidious form of argument to combat than that housed within the overtly didactic or the polemic. The polemic can be recognised for what it is, and thus it can be contested. More slippery is the line of argument which is so carefully veiled that it is not noted; a type of propaganda manifesting as a ‘natural’ state of affairs. The ‘natural’ laws are the hardest to note, contest or change. Thus part of my business in managing the enquiry will be to understand this default to the dominant storyline, and to find ways to bring it forth for attention. Unless the discourse is brought forward into our overt attention via language, we cannot begin to moderate its influence (Davies 1993).

When designing and managing the structure of the drama workshops, I will need to be aware that I, and others, will be vulnerable to the comforting authority of the didactic approach. To create and preserve a dialogic space will take both design and vigilance. In addition, given that the positions and types we are familiar with (such as teacher, rebel, victim, helper) will have a seductive authenticity, a questioning design will be needed to routinely trip us out of our certainty, dislodge our knowledge, and lead us through questioning. In this, theory must inform practice. My judgements in the moment will be vulnerable to the assumptions and positions of the discourse I inhabit, and theory-in-practice will be needed as governor upon the default to the agreed or the known.
I will need to understand how best to use the pedagogical design to withhold certainty about how things should go, and to make a space within which the assumed and the familiar can be questioned, and thus be fore-grounded for rigorous thought. It will be important, for example, to resist the epistemological assumption that if the medics are shown a best practice example, or are told how to interview the adolescent patient, then they will attain mastery. Rather, to attain a level of mastery, they not only need to develop the necessary skills, but must also traverse the limiting assumptions that will govern the interaction. They must make the situation unfamiliar so that they might see it, so that they might note the way in which their assumptions might lead them to assume, to judge, to avoid and to silence, rather than to open an enquiry with the patient.

**Theatre Traditions as Truth Games**

Drama educators draw upon the performance traditions created in the world of theatre to inform their practice. It is relevant therefore to review the work of some influential artist/theorists, considering their approaches to the ‘project of the self’, and the practices they have used to enquire into the human condition.

In the following section I examine the different ways in which Stanislavksi, Brecht, the Absurdist, Grotwoski and Boal have approached the pursuit of ‘truth’ through the theatre. I discuss the different paradigmatic assumptions they make about how to examine life through theatre, and the different aesthetic ‘mechanisms’ or language they employ to have their actors and audiences learn and change. I note the different practices they use to assist the actor to represent their knowledge through performance. In this I chart how they each relate differently to theatre as a ‘technology of the self’ or a means to engage in shaping the self or the world.

**Replicate**

Naturalism is a tradition in theatre that sets out to relate what life is like though a form of replication. The material is selected and crafted, despite that it premises itself upon creating the illusion that what is presented is simply a slice of life. As naturalism is the dominant form in Western film and television it has a particularly long reach into
the drama in education tradition. This tradition of performance shapes what teachers and students expect that they should be doing in the drama (Fleming 1997). They can tend to conceptualise the purpose of the drama activity as "replicating real experience" (Fleming 1997:4).

Stanislavski (Stanislavski 1980) is the great theorist of the naturalistic acting style. For Stanislavski the goal was for the actor to ‘become’ the character, rather than just ‘seem’ to be the character. This was to be accomplished through a series of disciplined acts of imagination through which the actor defines the ‘objectives’ or ‘wants’ of the character and expresses these objectives in the language of action. Stanislavski believed that when the actor was focussed on the objectives of their character, they would generate ‘true’ performances that were satisfying and meaningful for the audience. His approach to acting favours the creation of the sub-text or internal dialogue as pivotal to the attainment of performance accuracy. Thus the practice of the self that is favoured in the naturalistic tradition is that of knowing one’s self well as an actor and imagining into the circumstances of the other (Neelands and Goode 2000). This too is what the audience is asked to do as they empathetically imagine into the lives of the characters.

The ontology assumed in naturalistic theatre is a positivist one in that the internal world of the individual (memory, emotion, motive) is of key importance in defining the identity and agency of the character (Fortier 2002). In this psychologised and phenomenological tradition of understanding human being, identity is thought to be inherent within the individual, and to be created by the internal world of affect and memory.

Stanislavskian techniques inform the tradition of naturalistic role-play in classroom drama. The focus on the mechanism of ‘being’ rather than ‘seeming’ can be heard amongst those dramatists who focus on the belief or engagement in the play as an aesthetic accomplishment. In this tradition, to be absorbed is to achieve a level of quality.
The problematizing which informs the naturalistic drama is phenomenological in orientation and centres upon the characters’ reactions to the events of the narrative. A common thread through which meaning will be spun out of the naturalistic drama will travel thus: *If this happens then I will feel a certain way. If I feel this way, then I will take this action. This action will then cause certain consequences, including the emotional response of the others, who will then take actions aligned with their affective response.*

*Rouse*

Brecht took a different approach to theatre and to actor training. Working from a Marxist orientation, he believed that the purpose of the theatre was to educate the audience about political and social issues. He used parables or historical stories through which themes could be explored and analogies drawn. Brecht also developed performance modes through which he sought to evoke rational and critical responses from the audience, rather than the emotive responses that Stanislavski valued. He saw the empathetic emotional engagement of the audience that occurred in response to naturalistic theatre, as leading to catharsis or passivity. He strove to create verfremdungseffekt, the distancing or alienation effect, so that the audience could think critically about the content of the drama and go on to participate in acts of social change. The theatre was a practice through which to *rouse* and to instruct the audience (Neelands and Dobson 2000). They were to be woken up from their sleep, educated about what is going on, and geared up to go forth and engage in political action (Fortier 2002).

To assist in generating the alienation effect Brecht placed emphasis on performance conventions that called attention to themselves as performance (rather than seeking to conceal the artifice as in the naturalistic tradition). Hence the actors in Brechtian theatre may address the audience directly, speak the stage directions, or use stylised conventions such as song. In this Brecht’s theatre can be seen as leaning ontologically towards the notion that the human being is constructed, or is both shaped by and a shaper of the cultural attitudes and beliefs and political actions of their society. Brechtian performance conventions provide a different set of ‘truth games’ or ‘technologies of the self’ from those provided in the naturalistic tradition.
The introduction of these techniques into the world of theatre in the 1920’s meant that they became part of the performance canon available to drama educators. The influence of Brechtian theatre techniques can be seen in the use of process drama to explore social justice issues through multiple framing and traditions of direct address, and the use of the historical parallel story or analogy. Also influential is the notion of detachment or ‘alienation’ as a tool for critical thinking. When theorists such as O’Neill (1996) point to the need to engage with forms such as fable, irony and parody in order to promote a critical engagement with the subject matter they draw from a theatre heritage that has exemplified this process.

**Rupture**

Those working within the Absurdist tradition invited a different thinking again. Absurdist approaches to theatre emerged in the 1940’s and continued into the 1960’s with notable works from playwrights such as Ionesco and Beckett. The absurdists worked in response to the existentialist notion that there is no meaning to life, and therefore one must find or create one’s own meaning (Esslin 1980). They approach social critique through use of the *rupture*, distortion, the symbolic and the metaphoric. Their work abandons realistic depiction of characters, sets and circumstances, and sometimes even the ‘logic’ of causality. Dream or nightmare-like qualities are evoked. Horror and comedy are combined. There is a reliance on imagery rather than language to create meaning. The use of random comments and interruptions are employed to rupture reality and engage the audience in a questioning of reality (Esslin 1980).

The absurdists problematize the ‘reality’ of reality, and subvert fundamental laws such as the laws of cause and effect, or of the chronological nature of time. The use of story often follows a circular rather than linear structure. The practices through which this theatre tradition seeks to contribute to the shaping of the self include surprise, disruption, rupture, distortion, comedy and analogy, all of which are designed to have the audience confront their assumptions and question and re-engineer their meanings.
The ontology called upon in this tradition is constructivist in that identity and meaning is understood as something in flux, and something to be created rather than as something inherent that can be discovered and then expressed. It is an existentialist theatre in that it is concerned with the way in which meaning is ascribed and comes to govern actions. Its direct call is not to action, as in the more political theatre of Brecht, but rather to thought – or to a thinking about thinking (Esslin 1980).

Reveal

Grotowski (1969) left a different influence again. He distances himself from both Brechtian and Stanislavskian traditions, arguing:

It is not a question of portraying himself under certain given circumstances, or of “living” a part; nor does it entail the distant sort of acting common to epic theatre and based on cold calculation. The important thing is to use the role as a trampoline, an instrument with which to study what is hidden behind our everyday mask – the innermost core of our personality – in order to sacrifice it, expose it. (Grotowski 1969: 37)

In his theatre laboratory productions of the late 1950’s and 1960’s, Grotowski rejects representation as a discipline (fundamental to naturalism), steers also away from political commentary (integral in Brechtian theatre), and rather than presuming that life is without inherent meaning (as in the Absurdist tradition), he sets out in pursuit of the core of meaning. His theatre laboratory was centered on “a penetration into human nature itself” (p27). To do this, an assumption must be in place that there is a meaning there to be found. He aims for a form of essentialism whereby the actor takes on a symbolic role in order to address “the myths which are not an invention of the mind but are, so to speak, inherited though one’s blood, religion, culture and climate.” (p.42)

His approach to work is exploratory of the deeper discourses of the human condition rather than of the individual as a discreet being in particular circumstances. The aesthetic mechanisms that he advocates include the ‘poor theatre’, stripped bare of all things supplementary to the relationship between spectator and actor. The actor similarly must be stripped bare, and trained through rigorous physical and vocal
exercise to dislodge particularities of personality and deportment in order to reveal what lies beneath.

The understanding of identity that underpins the Grotowskian tradition is thus quite different from the Stanislavskian tradition. A study of the individual is approached through the collective, the symbolic and the archetypal, rather than the unique and specific. Grotowski has a deconstructive interest in straddling the binaries of discipline and spontaneity, corruption and purity, birth and decay (Fortier 2002). Details of personality relevant in the psychologised tradition give way to a focus on underpinning patterns of power, yearning, suffering and joy. Aesthetic criteria in this performance tradition are spiritual in nature, as they are associated with the quest for insight into meaning. The performance is markedly physical, and the body (rather than the spoken text) is the chief vehicle and the site of the work. The aesthetic practices employ the assumption that the body is the site of truth.

The Grotowskian influence in process drama can be seen in the use of conventions calling upon ritual, archetypes, and symbolic objects and in the emphasis upon physical theatre.

Rehearse

A more recent theatre influence adopted widely within the drama education tradition has been the forum theatre of Augusto Boal (1985; Boal 1995). Boal uses theatre to address imbalance of power and achieve change through politicized action. Through his Theatre of the Oppressed he structures the involvement of both actors and ‘spect-actors’ (his term for the audience members who will become active participants in enacting solutions to problems posed within the dramatic scenario). He works within a post-colonial sensibility, aiming for a theatre through which the oppressed liberate themselves (Fortier 2002). He seeks to turn the theatre into "an effective tool for the comprehension of social and personal problems and the search for their solutions" (Boal 1995: 14-15). He emphasises the power of the aesthetic space as an arena in which to conduct rehearsal for life. His vision for Theatre of the Oppressed is twofold:

it aims (a) to help the spect-actor transform himself into a protagonist
of the dramatic action and rehearse alternatives for his situation, so that he may then be able (b) to extrapolate into his real life (Boal 1995: 41).

Boal’s forum theatre technique of re-playing a given scenario with the express intent of changing its direction, and thus solving a problem inherent in the scene, has met the need for a pragmatic approach to problem-solving through the drama and has helped drama educators to find a methodology through which to pursue their interest in promoting social justice. Thus engaging through the drama can become an act of citizenship, rather than just a form of personal development.

Boal, like Brecht, is directly concerned with questions of power, oppression and liberation and sees the theatre as a tool to drive political and social change. His methodology is different however in that he believes that the audience must step into the drama to ‘rehearse’ for change. In this he takes a positivist approach to power and relates to oppression as if it occurs in a binary of oppressor/oppressed.

The mechanisms he employs include the rehearsal and ‘difficultating’ of the change action. The performance work is of necessity inclined towards naturalism, as spect-actors trial their interventions within scenes that represent reality (in fact there is a specific effort to avoid ‘magic’ or the enactment of fantastical solutions). The role of the ‘joker’ or facilitator however straddles the divide between the fiction and the forum, and the narrative is constantly interrupted as spect-actors struggle to change its direction. The joker pays a particular role in managing the connection between the forum and the fiction and in enabling the progress of the enquiry. The joker ensures a distancing from the action such that it can be reflected on and retains the question will this work? whilst the spect-actors engage with building the solutions. In this the joker can be seen to be holding open the critical perspective that can be readily foreclosed once the narrative takes our attention. The emphasis on changing the thrust of the narrative and the positions of the characters within it is still however inherently a form that is concerned with linearity, or with the notion that the past shapes the future. It is a way to approach change at a political level through personal acts.
Different philosophies, different practices, different realities

Though Stanislavski, Brecht, the Absurdists, Grotowski and Boal represent different traditions in theatre, they each stake a claim to pursuit of ‘truth’ as a tool to move, educate, liberate, or transform audiences. Whether they set out to replicate, rouse, rupture, reveal, or rehearse, they each intend to influence the world in some way. However, they assume different ontological paradigms, have different understandings of the practices through which the difference should be made, and different notions about how ‘truth’ should be approached. They pursue a different aesthetic through which to represent the world and favour different theatrical exercises through which to prepare the actor. Thus they each relate differently to theatre as a ‘technology of the self’.

In short, they problematize the self and reality differently, and employ different practices as the means through which to effect change in society. Each of these practices has left a legacy in the drama in education canon. However, whilst these artists had a rationale that informed their selection of style and practice (a theory of practice), there is a risk that once absorbed into the canon, their practices will dislodge from this theoretical genesis. The practitioner now adopting or modifying these conventions must construct his or her own theory-of-practice and become in this both artist and theorist.

My interest is in finding the practices that bring rigour to the enquiry. My quest is to find ways to lead students through a process that moves from replication, to rupture, revelation, rousing and rehearsal. It is important that the rehearsal for change comes after, and is informed by, the investigatory phase in which one deconstructs and deciphers the situation. To move straight from replication to rehearsal is to run the risk that one will miss the possibility of real change or will focus on the symptoms but not on the causal factors that hold practices in place.

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the framing of the drama as a form of problematization which influences that which is given attention in the drama, the viewpoint from which the material is considered, and the rules of reality or ontology
within which the action can be played and understood. I have discussed the
problematisation of the self that may be dominant in the current era and considered
how the drama might provide particularly valuable mechanisms through which to
work on the self. I have argued that whilst theatre and drama can be included amongst
the ‘technologies of the self’, a range of very different epistemological and
ontological assumptions are made about how the theatre may assist people to effect
change upon the self or the world. These have led to the adoption of different
practices through which to know, represent and change the self. This points to the
importance of one’s selection of tools or methods through which to explore, and
represent reality. The framing of the question is important, and so too are the
associated practices through which to address the question.

What’s Next?
In the following chapter I discuss the changing approaches to the ‘project of the self”
within the tradition of classroom drama and argue the need for a more theorised
approach to the use of drama for social and personal change.
Chapter Six: Learning through Fictional Play

Introduction
In this chapter I chart some of the influential traditions in the use of drama as a tool for learning. I discuss assumptions that are made about how learning occurs through fictional play and the way in which the boundary between the fictional and the real is conceptualised. I propose a metaphor for conceptualising the socially constructed nature of the fictional play and the presence of the real context within the fiction.

Understanding Role in the Positivist Tradition
The way in which ‘role’ is understood is fundamental to the practice of learning through drama. It is therefore important to review the theoretical assumptions underpinning the notion of what it is to play a role in the drama and how learning occurs through this play. In the following section I discuss the positivist tradition of understanding role that informs the tradition of role-play in drama education. This prepares the ground for discussion of the shifting assumptions made about the use of classroom drama to promote personal and social learning.

Role in the Drama Tradition
In the drama and theatre traditions, ‘role’ defines the part one plays in the fiction of the drama. Players are ‘in role’ when they are playing within the fiction, and ‘out of role’ when they have ceased their dramatic play. Haseman and O’Toole (1987) equate taking on a role with “representing a point of view” (3) in that when “we adopt the appropriate attitudes we say we have taken on the role of the character” (7). It follows that to engage in role-play demands that the player imagines into the situation of the character, behaves ‘as if’ that character, improvising appropriate text and engaging in believable exchanges with other characters. To do this the player must call upon his or her familiarity with the way in which their role is adopted in society, addressing the question: how might people behave or think in these circumstances?
Role in the Sociological Tradition

Dramaturgical models have also been used to help describe the parts people play in society. Goffman (1959) describes social roles as those parts conferred and played out in reference to societal expectations and norms. He argues that social role behaviour involves micro performances involving actors and audiences who sustain performances through mutual impression management.

Goffman uses the term ‘role distance’ to describe the distance between the ‘self’ and the role. Role distance is purported to allow for attachment to multiple roles and to provide the space to reject some role expectations whilst embracing others. Thus ‘role distance’ is understood as the space within which one can express the ‘self’. Building on this theory, Kahn (1964) uses the term ‘role set’ to define the sending of expectations or requirements relating to role. He describes ‘role sets’ as interdependent patterns with members of the group sending and receiving ‘messages’ in the form of expectations, demands, complaints and pressures. The expectations transmitted and pressures exerted influence others to conform to one’s ‘role expectations’. Thus ‘role sets’ are part of the mechanism that holds role behaviours in place.

Whilst Goffman borrowed from the theatre in his development of role theory, drama educators have also drawn on Goffman’s work to inform their practice. Heathcote has drawn upon Goffman’s ideas of role to inform her approach to learning through drama. In her ‘mantle of the expert’ device, she calls upon participants’ knowledge of the norms and stances associated with certain professional roles in society. The students are cast as ‘experts’ who have particular concerns, interests and capacities to bring to bear in solving problems (Bolton 1998). Once cast into the mould, the players are asked to engage in a range of investigatory or problem-solving tasks.

A humanist notion of identity underpins this understanding of role. The assumption is that there is such a thing as the ‘inner being’ or ‘self’ that can be expressed and can keep itself separate from its roles, thus generating ‘role distance’. The tradition of naturalistic drama employs this ontological assumption. Hence the player is asked to adopt stances and behaviours appropriate to the given social role of the character in
real life, imagine into the possible deeper self that would be in situ behind the role, and work to respond within the ‘role set’ of behaviours that could believably occur between the characters. Thus the actor will replicate what they have seen in real life in order to make the drama work and to make it believable to the audience. A skilled player will rise above the type, perhaps inventing some role distance between the character and their social role, and finding some unique scope to tailor quirks or complexities of character within this ‘role distance’. A less skilled player will flatten the character so that it is little more than the stereotype locked into the assumed norms of the role set. Thus the stereotype of the nagging parent, the judgemental teacher or the defiant student comes to be played out.

**Positioning and Role**

Those working from a poststructuralist tradition tend to address the concept of ‘position’ rather than role. As discussed in chapter four, positioning is a larger concept than role. One’s role can be adopted or put aside, and thus is understood to be something separate from the ‘self’. However, one’s ‘position’ entails the storylines and scripts, expectations, desires and assumptions absorbed through the discourses within which we live (Davies 1994). Thus it shapes one’s sense of who one is, and who one ought to be. Therefore, one’s positioning will influence the roles taken on and the way they are played.

The dominant understanding of role and role-play derives from the positivist tradition and it is this heritage that provides the inescapable platform upon which much of drama education practice is premised. My interest is in researching how one can use the drama methodology both to work upon the positivist platform and to engineer portals through which to engage in poststructuralist analysis of what occurs upon this platform. The heritage of thinking and practice that shapes current traditions and practices in drama education informs this discussion. In the following section I review this tradition.
Changing Practices in Drama Education

The practices and orienting assumptions of drama educators have been part of a changing landscape. There have been shifts in the assumptions made about the epistemology of learning through drama as well as associated changes in methodology. Also apparent are shifts in the ontological assumptions made about the nature of reality and the interplay between being and learning.

Developmental Play

Early drama education practice was influenced by Slade’s work in the 1950s on drama and child play. He advocated free play as the optimal way to learn, encouraging practices assumed to release the creativity and flow of the spontaneous play (Slade 1976). He worked within the philosophical heritage of Rousseau, believing in the inner goodness of the child. For Slade the essential qualities of dramatic playing were ‘absorption’, or being wrapped up in what is being done to exclusion of awareness of audience; and ‘sincerity’, a complete form of honesty which could only be achieved through absorption. In this approach to the drama, ‘performance’ was seen as contrived and was held in a distinct binary from ‘spontaneity’ which was seen as natural. Slade saw the teacher’s role as to provide a protected space, rather than to intervene in the play. He valued the kinaesthetic experience of ‘free flow’ in physical and imaginative play and assessed the quality of the work via his observation of this state of circular flow. In this tradition, the assumed epistemological ‘mechanism’ was that of free flowing absorption in the fictional world.

The assumption that absorption or belief is a marker of authenticity persists across subsequent traditions in drama practice. Bolton (1984) for example, distinguishes dramatic ‘playing’ which he defines as an ‘intention to be’ from ‘performance’ which he defines as the ‘intention to communicate to an audience’ (32). More recently a critical view of the natural and healthy nature of spontaneous play has been offered by those who point to the way in which students are inclined to employ stereotypes, and to replicate gender, class and cultural bias in their storied play (Fletcher 1995; Nicholson 1995; Grady 2000).
**Movement towards the Exercise**

Brian Way (1967) led a new thread of influence in drama education. His interest was in the use of the drama to engage in discovery of the ‘real me’ or the inner self. In pursuit of the question *who am I?* his approach to personal development through drama was to be achieved through games, acting exercises and experiential activities, rather than through unfettered free play (Bolton 1984). Thus the drama practices shifted from free flow in play to play within the constraint of the exercise. Many of these exercises were influenced by Stanislavski’s actor training approach and embraced the strongly psychologised techniques of recognizing the emotional life of the character.

The assumption behind Way’s practice is that drama is a tool for self-discovery and personal growth, and that students can come to know and learn themselves and the world through dramatic exercises. The ontology is humanist, as the exercises are designed to assist in the discovery of the inner self. Affect and authenticity continue to be seen as the aesthetic and epistemological criteria of central importance, even though the mechanism has changed from free play to organized play.

**Process Drama and Structured Play**

Heathcote’s influence in drama education led a movement away from the individualised approach assumed in Way’s tradition of practice to an emphasis on the collective nature of the experience, and a re-positioning of the teacher as someone who could lead within the fictional play whilst operating as a character within the drama (Bolton 1984). Heathcote employed the drama as a means to address content or themes, and to involve participants in learning about the world. In this she turned the practice of drama away from an expression of the self to an examination of the affairs of the world. Her underlying question was often *how did this come to be?* or *what is the story behind this sign?* or *what sort of a mess is this— and what should be done about it?* (Bolton 2003). She employed a considerable level of task focus within the fiction, with students completing many non-drama tasks (such as planning, drawing and writing) whilst in role. Heathcote often worked as ‘teacher in role’ in the dramas,
leading interaction through the play. Thus the teacher playing in the fiction became one of the shaping practices of the drama. One of the epistemological assumptions underpinning the teacher in role device is *If I play with you in role, I can help you enter and establish yourself within the fictional world. I can help you to create your new identity*. Heathcote also commonly used the ‘mantle of the expert’ convention to locate the students in role as characters whose social or professional role bound them in a particular way to the subject matter to be investigated.

The style of working in drama used by Heathcote has evolved into a tradition of practice now called ‘process drama’ (O'Neill and Lambert 1982; Bolton 1984; Heathcote 1984; O'Neill 1985; Taylor 1996; Fleming 1997; Edmiston and Wilhelm 1998; Winston 1998; O'Connor 2003). Process drama has become a collective term used to describe approaches to building dramatic experience in which the participants, free of an external audience, engage in the exploration of a theme, pre-text, problem or story (O'Neill 1985). As is suggested in this name, the emphasis is on learning about the world through engagement with tasks conducted within the fiction. The leader of the drama utilises a number of conventions that engage players with various representational, problem-solving or analytical tasks. The term ‘convention’ is used to denote the device that organises the rules and structure of different types of fictional play utilised within the drama (Neelands 1990; Fleming 1997).

In process drama, the work in the fiction is highly structured through the employ of the conventions that house the tasks to be completed in role. In the structure of this work “it is the teacher rather than the pupils who is acting as 'playwright', orchestrating the work and planning which conventions to use” (Fleming 1997:4). Thus the ‘technologies of the self’ or the practices of learning through process drama include working under the leadership of the teacher/artist who orchestrates the work, and learning through the various tasks allocated within the fictional play.

An abundance of texts describe methodological approaches to process drama (O'Neill and Lambert 1982; Heathcote 1984; O'Neill 1985; Haseman and O'Toole 1987; Neelands 1990; Fleming 1997; Winston 1998; Taylor 2000). In addition, a rich array of writers have illustrated the way in which aesthetic modes of work can be used to
learn about history or society (O'Neill 1985; Taylor 1998); to engage in moral enquiry (Edmiston 1996; Winston 1996; Edmiston 1998; Winston 1998); to explore controversial social issues and human interactions (Boal 1985; Boal 1998; O'Toole, Burton et al. 2004); or to explore issues relating to culture or gender (Fletcher 1995; Nicholson 1995; Berry 2000; Gallagher 2000; Grady 2000). These texts take as a starting point the assumption that employ of the aesthetic form is integrally connected to the learning that takes place through the drama. Regardless of the practices that they adopt, or the epistemological tradition that they operate within, dramatists tend to share a passion for the epistemological potential of the dramatic form and an interest in the exploration of social and ethical issues (O'Toole 1998).

**Applied Theatre**

Process drama is commonly conducted in the school classroom. However drama techniques are also used in professional training, health promotion and in community development exercises (O'Toole and Lepp 2000). The terms ‘applied theatre’ and ‘applied drama’, usually used interchangeably, came into common usage during the 1990’s to describe types of theatre that have health promotion, community development, therapeutic or political goals and which occur in non-traditional theatre spaces in the community (Taylor 2003; Nicholson 2005). Taylor describes applied theatre as harnessing “the power of the theatre form as a powerful educative medium (Taylor 2003:33).

In applied theatre the emphasis is on responding to the needs of specific contexts, settings or groups of people (Taylor 2003; Nicholson 2005). Often the target groups are people who are disadvantaged politically, financially or socially. Applied theatre activities centre on the aim of making a difference, and can be seen as a form of theatre for citizenship as there is often a focus on rights, voice and participation in community (Nicholson 2005).

The literature investigating the use of applied theatre in health promotion shows it has varied epistemological goals, including providing knowledge and promoting awareness about issues such infection control (Nyangore 2000; Ghosh, Patil et al. 2006) or sexual health (Odhiambo 2001; Dugga 2002; Dalrymple 2006), and
promoting more inclusive and caring approaches to those who have suffered disadvantage or marginalization due to their health status (O'Connor 2003). The aim is often to cause a change in behaviour as well as attitudes, and information and models are provided to encourage such change. This can be seen for example in the use of drama for environmental education (Patrick 2000; Pattanaik 2000; Branagan 2005). Whether the goals be pragmatic, political or educational, the aesthetic nature of the endeavour is leant upon to heighten the quality of the message or to augment the audience’s engagement (Taylor 2003).

In attending to questions of quality and design in applied theatre, Taylor (2003) provides a series of eight guiding principles. He states that applied theatre should be thoroughly researched, use aesthetic tools, ‘seek incompleteness’, open questions, explore dilemmas, demonstrate possible narratives, take a future or change-oriented focus, and give voice to communities. These principles refer chiefly to the participatory nature of the enquiry.

In applied theatre, problematization is geared towards change in the world. The imperative is explore what is happening here, in order that we might be better able to.... Thus applied theatre can be understood as a ‘technology of the self’ or a practice through which to accomplish personal, professional, social, or political change.

*Simulated Patients in Medical Education*

Drama is also used as a tool in professional learning. Here the aim is to equip people with the skills and awareness to transact effectively in their jobs or relationships. Rehearsal and observation helps learners make sense of the complexity of everyday life, or to develop skills in accomplishing demanding interactions (van Ments 1999).

There is a robust tradition of the use of actors in medical training (Denholm and Wilkinson 1997; Lepp 2000; Knowles, Kinchington et al. 2001; Henderson and Johnson 2002; Sanci, Day et al. 2002; Singh, Wechsler et al. 2002; Brown, Doonana et al. 2005; Cahill 2005; Cahill 2007; Schultz and Marks 2007). In medical education the aim is for the health professional to craft their skills and heighten their capacity to respond effectively to the needs of the patient. The terms most commonly used to
describe the role of the actor are ‘simulated patient’ and ‘standardised patient’, indicating that the actor’s skill is chiefly used to create a believable and accurate ‘type’ upon which the health professional can practice and develop their skills, including the skill of attuning to the patient’s needs.

In this type of work the role-play exercise is spliced between fiction (the actor is only pretending) and ‘reality’ (the medical person is playing ‘as if’ themselves albeit only in a ‘practice’ or fictional situation). Thus the role distance between the actor and their character is usually larger than that between the medical practitioner and their character. However, the practitioner knows they are playing within a fiction and understands that there is not a real complaint to uncover, but rather that they are engaged in a form of detective work in which they must follow the ‘clues’ that are performed by the actor. In this the tradition of ‘simulated patient’ has something in common with forum theatre, which uses the role-play as a rehearsal device for real change. Boal understands the importance of rehearsal in preparing the way for action, though in his work it is liberatory change (the political in the personal) that is the focus rather than the development of a professional skill set (Boal 1985).

A key assumption underpinning the use of actors as simulated patients is that they will bring their artistry to the task and that the accuracy of their portrayal will contribute to the learning that can take place. One study of the use of simulated patients compared the use of actors in role with the use of fellow medical students (Eagles, Calder et al. 2001). This study showed that the learning outcomes were better when actors were used. This seems to lend strength to the notion that the skill of the actor (or the aesthetic component of their work) is of epistemological value in the learning experience. Research has also demonstrated that high school drama students perform effectively as simulated patients and in the process continue to develop their performance skills (Schultz and Marks 2007).

The other assumption made when drama is used for professional training is that learning will take place through the fictional play. Ideally these learning tasks are crafted with a sense of the how the aesthetic choices will support the learning (Smigiel 1996; O'Connor 2000; O'Toole 2000; Smigiel 2000; Taylor 2000). Ackroyd
(2007) describes an exception to this trend in her critique of the use of ‘real play’ in training exercises for health professionals. ‘Real play’ denotes that the players are to use their own personal stories rather than fictional stories as the basis for the training exercises, and to ‘really’ engage in personal change exercise through work on the personal story. Ackroyd notes that a number of problems arise through the choice to abandon the fictional in favour of the real. The loss of distance between the self-as-player and the self-as-working-upon-the-self reduces the level of protection offered to the players. This then diminishes the freedom to experiment whilst in role and reduces the likelihood that co-players will give authentic responses. The fear of causing offence or harm becomes a constraint upon the interaction.

Fictional stories are used in the Learning Partnerships project. I make this choice to protect the privacy of the players and to invite a de-personalisation of the challenges inherent in the scenario. Selection of a relevant fiction rather than a personal tale provides a greater social permission for players to hold open the line of enquiry rather than to rush to resolution in order to help, heal or absolve.

**Troubling the Approach**

Whilst the tradition of process drama and applied theatre has been evolving, a level of dissatisfaction and critique has emerged within the field. The theorist/practitioners offering these criticisms tend to be concerned about questions of quality in relation to the *aesthetics* of representation, the *rigour* of the enquiry, or the *politics* of representation, or to be concerned with all three.

Those raising issues about the rigour of the enquiry point out that the work in drama does not necessarily provide an experience of depth. O’Neill (1996) argues that

Too often, the worlds that are generated in drama remain teacher-directed, one-dimensional and stereotyped. They may demand little or no interrogation, elaboration or interpretation from the students. (O’Neill 1996:117)

O’Neill argues that naturalism constrains the exploration of the themes of the drama and recommends the use of irony as a tool to help teachers to “avoid the obvious, the stereotyped and the didactic” (117). She advocates experimentation with “the surreal, the absurd, allegory, parody and other stylistic possibilities” (123). A number of other
dramatists also argue for the avoidance of realism and the active employ of anti-naturalistic structures as a way to develop critical thinking through the drama (Fletcher 1995; Nicholson 1995; Simons 1997; Berry 2000; Grady 2000; Ackroyd 2004). In this they share the assumption that a shift in genre will provoke critical thinking. Thus the solution to the shallowness or bias within the enquiry is seen to reside in the choice of the theatrical methodology.

Others note however, that the weakness in practice needs to be addressed at an ideological level as well as at an aesthetic or methodological level (see for example Fletcher, Grady, Gallagher, Nicholson). They note that the standpoint and ideology of the dramatist will influence their choice of material. These theorists believe it is also necessary to address the orienting philosophical and political stance of the teacher, such that they can then employ any methodology with an eye to its implicit politics. These critics use ideological as well as aesthetic frameworks against which to assess the merit and the rigour of the work through drama.

Theorists working from feminist poststructural or critical theory perspectives warn that although drama processes are often heralded as emancipatory, they may be as likely to perpetuate sex or race-based stereotypes as to ‘liberate’ the players, may reinforce rather than investigate cultural bias, and may perpetuate dominant readings of reality via the silencing of the stories and perspectives of the marginalised (Fletcher 1995; Nicholson 1995; Simons 1997; Berry 2000; Grady 2000; Ackroyd 2004). They recommend a critical reflexivity and the use of a theoretical lens through which to analyse one’s practice. The argument is that if the teacher is alert to her own bias, she is more likely to correct for it in the workshop, and is more able to lead the students in similar reflective processes.

Through the argument of writers taking the critical turn, an additional set of ‘truth games’ or practices are added to the drama teacher’s lexicon. Now she must not only engage with the aesthetics of the tasks, manage the social chemistry associated with the participatory nature of the methodology, and lead enquiry into the nature of the self, the world and its affairs, she must also aim to deconstruct the meanings assumed, engage critically with the representation of knowledge, and adopt a reflexive stance,
considering how her own standpoint might influence the way she designs and leads the drama.

**Common Methodology Amidst Divergent Philosophy**

One of the notable features of the drama education literature is the passion with which the writers herald the possibilities of working through drama. The strong tradition of advocacy is in part a response to the marginalised status of drama and the need practitioners and researchers have felt to justify their right to a place at the education table (Anderson 2004). However, this tradition of advocacy may also serve a binding function in a disparate field. As has been argued above, there are competing epistemological assumptions about the nature of learning through drama, competing axiological assumptions about the purpose of engaging through the drama, and competing ontological assumptions about the nature of being or the reality that one is to explore through the drama. Some of the different epistemological assumptions include that one learns through immersion and unrestrained self-expression, through guided enquiry, through politicisation and rehearsal, or through rupture and critique. Different axiological goals include transformation of the self, engagement in political action, the development of communicative skills or problem-solving abilities, and the development of tolerant and inclusive social attitudes. Different ontological assumptions orient positivist quests for the knowledge that awaits discovery, critical interrogations of the interplay between the personal and the political, and dissections of the discourses shaping societal norms.

In addition to the differences between dramatists, the drama leaders themselves may shift between one orientation and another in response to the context or the commission that surrounds their work. With each of these shifts, a different problematization will have taken place, and hence a different question will have been framed (even if only implicitly) beneath the drama. Questions around the one theme might range from *How can we heal this hurt?* (therapeutic), to *How can we redress this injustice?* (liberatory), to *How is my story part of a bigger pattern?* (politicising).

Despite that they may operate from different ideological standpoints or hold different epistemological or ontological assumptions, dramatists employ many of the same
conventions or methods to pursue their goals. We could look into their work and see
the same call upon conventions, games and exercises; the use of story as stimulus for
response; use of naturalist role-play to illustrate or explore; use of forum theatre to
rehearse for change; and use of metaphors, symbols and analogies. We will certainly
see the use of ‘fiction’ to explore ‘reality’. It is therefore important to reflect upon
assumptions made in the field about the relationship between the fictional and the
real.

### Re-Conceptualising the Fiction/Reality Boundary in Dramatic Play

Despite differences between them, dramatists share the assumption that to engage in
the fiction is of epistemological value. Something can be learnt or some change can
be made through engaging in the fictional play. Fundamental then to the notion of
learning through drama is the understanding of the boundary between the real and the
fictional.

In the drama literature a paradox occurs in the discussion of this boundary. On the one
hand reality/fantasy tends to be treated as if it is a binary with a clear divide between
the fiction and the pretence. On the other hand there is recognition that one’s
knowledge of the real world informs what happens in the fantasy play, and concern
that the social prejudices and hierarchies of the real world can transfer into the drama,
thus jeopardising the safety of the play that is contained within (Bolton 1984;
Nicholson 1995; Edmiston and Wilhelm 1998; Grady 2000; O'Toole, Burton et al.
2004; Ackroyd 2007). There is also an operative assumption that learning occurs due
to a flow back from the experiential engagement in the fiction into one’s ‘reality’.
Within this thinking is an implicit recognition that the boundary between fiction and
‘reality’ is porous, despite the language of the divide that is used to organise the
drama.

However, despite this awareness of a two-way flow, a focus on the separate and
special nature of the fiction dominates in the drama education tradition. A number of
leading dramatists use the term ‘metaxis’ to denote the simultaneous (but separate)
presence of the real and the fictional world (Allern 2001). Boal (1995) defines the phenomenon of metaxis as “the state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different, autonomous worlds: the image of reality and the reality of the image” (43). Bolton argues that the metaxis is “a heightened state of consciousness that holds two worlds in the mind at the same time.” (1984:142). In these definitions fiction and reality are assumed to be autonomous or separate worlds which exist in close relationship.

Somers (2001) posits a number of different models that could be used to conceptualise the relationship between the fictional and the real. They include understanding the fictional play as

- spending ‘time out’ from reality,
- a return journey from reality to fiction and back, made via a ‘bridge’ provided by the drama,
- a ‘symbiotic’ relationship, or
- an indistinguishable conglomerate in which the two worlds are not separate but “the real and fictional form the almost undifferentiated elements of existence” (Somers 2001:91).

This last is the model that fits best with a poststructuralist perspective as it bridges the binary model in which the terms define a clear and necessary separation between the real and the fictional.

Working within an assumption that the fictional is part of the real, Maitre (1983) describes fiction as the ‘possible worlds’ through which we speculate about our actual world. Perhaps because she is writing about fictional texts (which look to be separate from the reader in whose hands they are held), rather than about fictional play (the text of which is an embodied creation constructed by the players) she is not concerned with the separation between reality and fiction. Rather she assumes a fluid movement between the two in which ‘possible worlds’ are used to help us understand the actual world, and knowledge of the actual world helps to us create or interpret fictional worlds. She argues that the learning occurs when the fiction assists us to engage in sustained acts of imagination in which possibilities are held open and explored with greater rigour than they would be if simply the object of our individual speculations.
Thus the fiction is understood as a tool to hold open a line of enquiry in which our thinking about ‘what might be’ helps us to understand ‘what is’. By this argument, the fictional is interdependent with the real, and the two exist in a symbiotic relationship.

**Belief or Agreement?**

Attention to a fiction/reality divide is also heard in the terms used to describe the rules of engagement in the dramatic play. It is common to describe the fiction as something to become immersed within, as if it is a state of being that exists independently of the persons, rather than that it is something co-created by the players. It is also common to describe the operative mechanism enabling play as ‘belief’ or ‘absorption’.

Heathcote, and others after her, use the term ‘suspension of disbelief’ to describe the mechanism that allows the actors to play within the fiction despite that it is only make believe (Bolton 2003). The ‘suspension of disbelief’ or the creation of ‘belief’ is seen to be essential to engagement in the dramatic tasks (O'Toole 1992). These terms suggests that one must believe in the fiction in order to engage, and in this ascribe independent existence to the fiction.

Despite the prevailing use of the term ‘belief’, many dramatists (also) suggest that it is tacit agreements or rules that enable participation in the role-play (O'Neill and Lambert 1982; Bolton 1984; Dunn 2001; Somers 2001). O’Neill notes that participants "must be able to understand and accept the 'rules of the game' as they would if they were playing together", and that these possibly unspoken rules will be "bound by the constraints of the structure in which they are working" (O’Neill and Lambert 1982:12). Neelands notes that to play within a specific convention entails both tacit consent and accepted standards (Neelands and Dobson 2000). Eriksson (2007) argues that awareness of the fiction is created by a form of distancing which incorporates a *tacit knowing*, or a form of situated and embodied knowledge; *volition*, or the choice to engage with the fiction; and *perception as unreal*, or the understanding that the fiction is a construct. Others point out that players maintain the illusion of divide whilst also managing the evolution of the narrative and the challenges of casting or portrayal. This can be see when children engage in communication across the fictional boundary to transact about what will happen in the drama (Dunn 2001; Mackey 2003).
Mackey (2003) critiques the tendency to discuss immersion and detachment in children’s fictional play as if they exist in a binary, arguing that detachment and immersion are twinned mechanisms, which together support the fictional play. She suggests that when we give privileged attention to the experience of immersion, we de-value (by omission) the ‘border play’ or the experience of negotiation and the imposition of control.

From a poststructuralist perspective, a separation between reality/fiction and immersion/detachment is not possible. In constructing the fiction we pull from the same pantry of ingredients that we eat from in everyday life, and in playing within the drama we use the same embodied self that we use in everyday life. Thus the same bodies, storylines, assumptions and rules of reality find their way into the fiction. Further, from a poststructuralist perspective, reality is understood to be a set of ‘stories’ or discourses which are inherited, shaped and sustained by those who live within them. Thus reality as well as fiction is understood to be constructed.

**Rule-Play or Role-Play?**

It is useful for drama educators to have terms (which are inevitably binary in nature) that permit discussion of fiction and reality, or immersion and detachment (Fleming 2000). These terms provide categories within which to discuss various aspects of our experience. However, to take the divide that exists in language as if it represents the way things work is to foreclose on thinking through other possibilities. Some deconstruction of this binary is useful in order to attend to the way in which knowledge is created within and through the fiction. If we accept the binary, certain phenomena drop quite readily into invisibility. What is most likely to slip from attention is the presence of the real context in the fictional context, including the re-creation of discourses, storylines and subject positions within the fictional narratives, and the operations of thought through which players manage themselves both as characters and as persons. This is because these phenomena exist across the divides of the binary.

In taking a poststructuralist perspective to understanding the process of engaging in
fictional play, it can be seen that players must engage with two forms of ‘rule-play’. On one hand they must understand how to play within the rules of the convention, obeying the norms of the performance discourse. These rules may pertain to genre or style and carry conventions associated with embodiment, text selection, characterization, or narrative structure. The second form of knowledge that they must call upon is that relating to the rules of the societal discourses, or the social ‘rules’, norms and behaviours which form the common patterns or ‘role sets’ wherein people perform their social, familial, gender, class and institutional roles. In this they must obey the norms of the cultural discourses. This form of ‘rule-play’ calls upon the players’ capacities to re-play, re-fashion, voice or embody the stances, attitudes, concerns, and desires associated with certain social roles.

If the actor must maintain both the ‘rules’ of the performance discourse and the societal discourse, then the term ‘suspension of disbelief’ may not accurately describe the mechanism of en-rolling. Rather it may be ‘rule-play’ that governs entry to the role-play. If the ‘rules’ of the drama convention belong in the real context, but govern interactions in the fictional context, a type of ‘literacy’ in the ‘rules’ of these games is necessary to support the play. This literacy can be seen as a form of performance discourse, or set of organising ideas and norms which the players inherit, and which they can shape and modify through their own usage.

**Mastery and Submission**

Using this theoretical model, then perhaps to play in the drama is to experience the paradox of both mastery and submission that Davies defines to be central to the process of subjectification (Davies, Dormer et al. 2001). That is, we engage in becoming who we are both by submitting to the expectations transmitted through the discourses and practices of our culture, and by mastery of them. Thus to be engrossed in the play may be not so much an experience of ‘belief’ as an experience of ‘mastery’. By this argument, the feeling of engagement would be dependent on focus, control, concentration, agreement, reflexivity and proficiency, rather than upon ‘belief’.
Somers (2001) favours the notion that “The fictional world experience allows our psyche the potential to escape, for a while, our normal structure, assumptions, values, and behaviours, to speculate and imagine ‘the other’ in ways that can modify our ‘real world’ experiences” (92). Perhaps to enter the fiction is not to escape, but paradoxically, it is to be confined. We agree to certain rules and limits and in doing so both submit to them and gain mastery over them in order to shape and control what happens. In this it is the confined nature of the play space that permits our freedom to explore.

The confinement feels like freedom and the decisions feel like control. But, if freedom is conceptualised as the room to move within a set of boundaries, then the freedom that the drama offers is this clarity about the boundaries. When one introduces a constraint relating to style or genre (play in slow motion, or play as if you were termites nibbling the framework of the house), the constraint introduces a new level of challenge or a further confinement, and a consequent increase in the interest in the play (with associated increase in the opportunity for mastery). When constraints are introduced via twists in the narrative, a similar rise in interest is introduced through the increase in tension, mystery, or frustration. Thus, by making the task more difficult or multifarious, we increase the mastery that we must bring to management of form and content. We then relish the experience of mastery, and feel more satisfied.

Given the weight of the real context and the manner in which it presses upon the fictional context, then as the drama leader I need to consider that not only is the person ‘playing the part’, but the part is playing out through the person. That is, the cultural discourse will be playing itself out through the character. Thus the rules of the performance discourse or genre will shape (enable and confine) the mode of expression, and thus will also influence the type of knowledge that can be brought forth in the drama.

If immersion and detachment, or submission and mastery, are twinned mechanisms, then I will need models that assist me to conceptualise the way in which they function as a duality and influence the learning that occurs through the drama.
Leaky Divides

Metaphors and figurations can help us to think across the boundaries defined by our familiar categories and terms (St. Pierre 1997). It is common in the drama literature to find use of metaphors that refer to the ‘space’ in which the drama occurs, the ‘boundary’ that ‘protects’, and the process of ‘entry’ into play. However, use of a ‘liquid’ metaphor may assist us to think across the binary that is produced via references to a geographic divide existing between the fictional and the real.

We could think of the fiction as a sac suspended in the larger sea of stories that we call reality. If we imagine the boundary between the fiction and the reality to be a semi-permeable membrane, then we can conceive readily how the membrane might enable a two-way flow. This metaphor would invite us to imagine that ‘being’ is liquid and shared, rather than solid and separate.

Liquids carry substances that may be held in dissolve or in suspension. Particles in suspension can settle, and those in solution can crystallise out via process of evaporation, and thus can be noted as they appear in solid form. So too assumptions and norms are suspended in the sea of practices. Via deconstruction, they can be drawn out for our attention. In dramatic play, they can be voiced and embodied. The liquid metaphor assists us to focus on the need for a distilling of the ideas carried within the drama.

The semipermeable membrane allows some particles through whilst holding out others. Perhaps the agreement to engage in fictional play operates in a similar way, holding at bay some of the norms and assumptions that govern life in ‘reality’ whilst others seep through.

In nature, flow through membranes can be restricted or enhanced via changes in the weave of the fabric or by changes in the ‘osmotic pressure’ (pressure that must be applied to a solution to stop the inward diffusion though the semipermeable membrane). Varying forms of osmotic pressure moderate the absorption through the membrane. The constraints associated with the choice of framing, style or genre, and
the tasks set for accomplishment within the fiction can be understood to exert a form of ‘osmotic pressure’.

The membrane metaphor permits focus on the way in which different aesthetic rules moderate the seepage into the drama of the storylines and positions suspended in the sea of ideas that we swim within.

What can be readily imagined via this figuration that emphasises liquidity is that the discourses that inform the ways in which we understand the world cannot be entirely withheld during the fictional play. The liquid is both inside and outside the sac. Therefore we must find devices that assist us to distil the salts held in suspension, so as we can de-sacralize their ‘sacred’ or ‘natural’ status and know better the way they flavour existence.

**Implications for Research**

There is limited technical discussion in the drama literature of the paradigmatic view invited via use of the conventions themselves or the way in which they might be attuned to match the ideological intent of the drama leader. Ackroyd (2004) expresses concern about the lack of attention to the value-laden nature of the functional strategies used to work within the drama, and the negative impact upon the learning when the distinction between the fictional and the real is lost in the framing of the drama (Ackroyd 2007).

My concern is to address this gap in the literature by focusing greater attention on the way in which various conventions might be employed to invite paradigmatic shifts and thus facilitate different approaches to reading reality. This necessitates both a theoretical and a technical examination of the conventions.

I have modified or devised a range of drama conventions as tools to facilitate deconstruction through the drama, and investigate their application in the Learning Partnerships workshops. In the following case stories (chapters 7 – 9) I analyse the use of these conventions in this particular context. This provides opportunity for both technical and theoretical attention to the methodology (chapter 10).
Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the shifting assumptions made about how drama is used to effect personal and social learning. This discussion of the emerging tradition of process drama has illustrated the way in which artist/teachers dwell in the philosophical, educational and performance discourses of their times. Slade conceptualised his approach within the romantic heritage of Rousseau. Way can be seen to be influenced by the discourses and assumptions of developmental psychology and the Stanislavskian performance tradition. Heathcote is influenced by the socialization theory of Goffman, with its emphasis on role behaviours, and so is it not surprising that in her practice there is use of naturalistic improvised play and the casting of player to work within various social and professional roles. O’Neill is working at a time of increased interest in postmodern forms in representation and enquiry. Others have begun to call upon critical theory, poststructuralist theory or postcolonial theory in orienting their work, thus have engaged in re-thinking their work in drama within the new set of theoretical discourses available.

I have identified the epistemological shift from pursuit of free flowing play to the use of the structured exercise as the key mode of learning through drama. Processes of rehearsal, awareness raising, critique, and problem-solving are now understood as the mechanisms through which to effect change.

I have discussed the critique provided by proponents of feminist, poststructuralist and critical theory, and the way in which their perspectives have contributed additional mechanisms to the lexicon of learning through drama – most notably the use of reflective analysis, deconstruction and personal reflexivity, and a heightened awareness that the selection of form might moderate the rigour of the enquiry.

Using poststructuralist theory I have argued that the immersion/detachment binary be re-conceptualised as a duality of mastery and submission. I have posited an alternative metaphor to help re-conceptualise the boundary between the reality and the fictional play, arguing that whilst images of the ‘space’ and the ‘boundary’ have been dominant in the drama tradition, the metaphor of the semi-permeable membrane may
be more useful in calling attention to the way in which the storylines and discourses of the real context seep into and shape the fictional play. I have foreshadowed the need for attention to form, framing and genre, and for analysis of the function of the medium in moderating the meaning-making that occurs within the drama.

What’s Next?
In the next three chapters I present case-stories through which I discuss the way in which the drama might be used to assist in crystallisation of the assumptions held in solution within our cultural sea of stories. In this I argue the need for a more theorised approach to understanding how the framing of the drama governs the approach to meaning-making, and explore the use of certain modified conventions as tools through which to engage in deconstruction through the drama.
Chapter Seven: Detecting Discourses through the Drama

Introduction
The following chapter presents a narration and analysis of the three workshops that prepare the students to work with the teachers. In these ‘data stories’ I outline the methodology employed in the workshops, describe the characteristic responses of the students, and analyse the relationship between the methodology and the type of knowledge produced.

The Data Stories
The data stories are informed by my reflection and analysis of the experience of leading the process with the first two cohorts of students (2003 and 2004), and by my continuing experience in leading this work in subsequent years (one cohort in 2005 and another in 2006). The data I have used to inform this account includes my lesson plans made prior to the sessions, my reflective notes on what transpired in each session, the video-recordings of six workshops (three in both 2003 and 2004), and my ongoing reading and reflection as I continue to lead this work with new groups of students and teachers.

The School Context
The program takes place in an inner-city state high school located close to the University. The school serves about eight hundred students, of primarily middle class and Anglo-Celtic backgrounds. The school program is part of the curriculum of an elective class called ‘Community Drama’, offered to Year 9 and 10 students (aged 14-16 years).

The drama class typically includes 20 - 25 students, with boys and girls in roughly even numbers. To prepare the students for the work with the teachers, I lead three preparatory sessions of 1.5 hours in duration, at weekly intervals, commencing some
weeks after the class has convened for the semester. These workshops take place in
the school drama classroom and involve the whole class.

The Selected Tale

Research stories are defined as much by what is omitted as by what is included (Fine
1994). I have chosen in this account to focus on the structures of the pedagogy, rather
to present an ideographic description of each of the rotations of the project. The
pattern (though not the fine detail) of the participants’ responses is similar from
cohort to cohort. This may seem surprising, given the differences between groups, and
given the scope within the aesthetic tasks for ideas to be expressed in creative and
unique manifestations. However, given that the workshops are a form of enquiry in
which the drama-based tasks house a series of questions, it is actually not surprising
that similar material may be generated in response to the questions. When focus group
interviews are used to collect data it is not uncommon to find that different groups
may give similar responses (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005). In fact this
phenomenon is so widely accepted that attention is often given to how the investigator
will code, group and analyse the responses different participants give to roughly the
same questions.

My focus is on the relationship between the drama-based enquiry tasks and the types
of knowledge that participants generate. Thus whilst there has been a tradition in
ethnographic drama research of providing rich description of the particular, here I set
out to do something quite different, and that is to theorise about the use of the
dramatic form in the participatory enquiry, considering the relationship between the
methodology used and the types of knowledge created.

I have made this choice because my research question addresses the way in which the
pedagogical ‘architecture’ shapes the nature of the subsequent enquiry and the type of
knowledge that is created. I reflect upon the methodology in order to build a theory of
practice. Therefore I engage in both description and interpretation of what takes place.
In this I seek to address the three aspects of educational criticism defined by Eisner
(1985), which include a description of what happens, a theorised interpretation of its
value and impact, and an evaluation of the import or significance of what has
happened (Eisner 1985).
Building Theory

The case stories provide a context in which to trial techniques and to build theory about their function. I use my analysis of *Workshop One: Power Play* to illustrate the use of the drama to throw stereotypes into relief and assist in making clear the patterned nature of the interactions between people. Here aesthetic techniques are used to expose the ‘invisible rules’ that are at play in relationships and thus begin a form of discourse detection in which participants consider the co-created nature of relationships.

I use my discussion of *Workshop Two: Bridging Binaries* to identify aesthetic techniques that deepen the enquiry by exposing the underlay of thoughts, feelings, fears and desires that may be part of a character’s internal conversations. Poly-vocal alter-ego devices are used to assist players to traverse the good/bad binary associated with discourses around school bullying.

In my analysis of *Workshop Three: Wide Angle Lens*, I examine the use of aesthetic techniques to prompt engagement in critical theorising and the adoption of systems perspectives on individual stories. I illustrate the way in which a macro-view can be prompted by the use of surrealist devices that call for players to engage with the way in which our explanatory models direct our interpretations of events and our consequent actions.

The theory of practice that I develop through reflection upon the pedagogical design of these workshops is further evolved in the subsequent chapter in which I chart the impact of the methodology in the context of three partnerships workshops conducted between the students and a class of pre-service teachers.
Workshop One: Power Play

Overview

In the story of the first workshop I chart the use of the drama to assist participants to discover from first principles that power occurs in relations between people. I discuss the use of ‘The Strategies Game’ to assist players to observe that status is co-created as characters confer identity upon each other and to draw attention to the patterned nature of the teacher/student interaction. I analyse the use of ‘The Director Game’ to foreground the mechanisms through which characters are positioned and position themselves and their fellow characters. I illustrate the use of ‘The Truth Game’ to expose that ‘invisible rules’ are at play in relationships. I observe that these three exercises assist the participants to note and name the norms and expectations that shape the way we play our selves, and in this the participants engage in a form of discourse detection.

Orienting: The Strategies Game

I return to the class soon after the beginning of their new term. I have not worked with them since completing the medical program with them approximately six weeks ago. I ask the class to sit in a circle and I explain the nature of the coming project.

This term we will be going to the University to work with a class of 30 tertiary students who are preparing to become teachers. We will have three workshops together, using drama techniques to help the teachers understand how issues such as discrimination and emotional problems can affect students. The teachers will be interested in your points of view and your coaching. You will work in the role of actor, investigator and coach. We will workshop school-based scenarios with the teachers and then discuss the material that we create.

I explain that in the warm up we will use an actor’s game to begin a focus on power and status because as well as being important concepts to understand in drama, they can be an important theme in student-teacher relationships. I ask them to mingle and then form pairs. You are siblings. Person A - you are the older sibling, aged 18. You
work a part time job as well as your uni studies. Person B, you are the younger sibling, aged 16. You want to borrow $20 from your sibling so you can go to the movies with your friends. Older sibling – you have experienced difficulty in getting money back when you lend it – so give some resistance.

We begin with a sibling relationship so as our discussion of power play will not be framed entirely within the institutionalised relationship patterns of the school. I want us to explore rather than demonise the notion of power and look at the strategies people use to pursue their wants.

I ask them to play ‘The Strategies Game’ whereby the scenario is played over a number of times. Each time the actor playing the younger sibling is directed to use a different persuasive tactic. They then engage in variations of the scene in which they enthuse, reason, flatter, bribe, plead, tease, hint and blackmail in order to get the money. I ask them to stay alert to how the mode of play affects what happens in the scene and influences who each of the characters ‘become’.

‘The Strategies Game’ is an actors’ exercise which I have evolved from the Stanislavskian notion that the character has an objective and then utilises various strategies to pursue their wants (Stanislavski 1980). The game is played within a naturalistic mode, inviting a phenomenological reading of character. The players are asked to note what it is ‘like’ to play the character differently, to register what effect they have on the other, and to note how different responses are drawn forth from them by the other character. Thus in the re-playing housed within ‘The Strategies Game’ the actor plays the fictional self a number of times, doing themselves (and the other) differently each time. This provides a practice of experimentation as they shift some variables (the ‘how’) whilst holding others constant (the who, the where and the want).

Rehearsal and Recognition

I ask the pairs to choose one mode of their scene to show and to rehearse it once again before we take a short look.
I give them a chance to rehearse their scene so the work, when shown, has a better chance of being aesthetically satisfying for both actors and audience. We need clarity in performance so as the aesthetic exercise can best support the subsequent focus. The cognitive work we are to do on the scenes will commence with a form of ‘recognising’. It is this recognising which will support a re-cognising. The students will engage in ‘connoisseurship’ (Eisner 1995), or seeing, naming and knowing distinctive patterns. I aim to use this ‘connoisseurship’ to enable the cognitive act which Eisner (1985) calls ‘criticism’ – or the process of enabling others to see the qualities inherent in a piece of work.

This practice of recognising is part of the work upon the self. Not only will the players act the fictional self differently in each of the scenes, but when watching their peers in the short performances, they engage in the collective practice of reading and naming the games they see at play.

**Patterned Play**

A whip around the room shows the scene at play in various modes – whingeing, enthusing, demanding, hinting. We see a spectrum of power-plays. Each mode displays a different expression of power and resistance occurring in relations between the characters. Strategy and response becomes inter-action. Together the players co-create a relationship.

The students laugh as they watch the scenes. It is the laughter of recognition as they register the patterns: in the bodies, in the voices, in the words, in the moves in the game. We talk and note the differences observed. *How does the way one character behaves affect the other? What is the interplay of power? Who is assuming higher status? How is one conferring status or power upon the other? Where do these patterns of relationship come from?* The students begin to develop a language through which to discuss power-play.
When we talk about the effect of one move on the counter-move of the other, it becomes clear that the ‘relationship’ or inter-action is co-created. The characters create each other as well as themselves. This is an important insight. It assists us to move beyond the notion of the identity as fixed and inherent (a humanist view) and towards an understanding that identity might also be understood as conferred and as co-created (a constructivist view). These are significant ontological distinctions and they will give rise to different ways of making sense of ‘observed’ reality (Denzin and Lincoln 2003).

Through the smorgasbord of the re-played scenes, we see positions, moves, assumptions and expectations known in our culture (Davies 1989). Thus we start to see the extent to which individuals are patterned in their responses. This cuts against our usual focus, which is on the uniqueness of the individual, circumstance and story.

To ‘see’ the discourse we must first foreground it – catch it at play, or catch ourselves playing it out (Davies 1994). In this variation of ‘The Strategies Game’, the process of watching, naming and questioning assists to make visible what was going on between the characters. The kinaesthetic and visual form assists with the process of recognition. Rather than relying solely on abstractions, the scenarios provide some physical evidence around which to talk.

**Bodily Acts**

As each scene is played out I ask the students to name what they have seen. I use the question: what was the actor doing? I ask Laban informed questions (Hodgson and Preston-Dunlop 1990) relating to space, weight, time and flow – was that quick or sustained, strong or light, direct or indirect? I explain the different terms that Laban uses and ask them to look at how the different strategies they observe have a physical register. In response to my questions they note that ‘enthusing’ is quick, strong and direct, whereas ‘pleading’ is sustained, strong and direct. ‘Flattery’ is quick, light and indirect. In contrast, ‘blackmailing’, also indirect, is sustained and strong.
Laban’s terms were originally developed to assist the dancer. Here they alert the players to the embodied nature of their interactions. This helps us to focus on what the players are doing to each other as well as what they are saying to each other. The exercise will help the players to note how what the character is doing is related to who the character is being. Butler (2004) points out that speech acts are performative acts. Here the tasks invite the actor to observe that saying is a form of doing.

**Patterning**

Having developed some language to describe what the characters are doing to each other, I ask the pairs to take one of their scenarios and play it over again, using only gibberish language, thus emphasising the pattern of the interaction. Following that, I ask them to play the scene again, this time using highly exaggerated movement but no sound, thus creating the ‘dance’ of that interaction.

In the gibberish version the students are pushed to distil the pattern of the interaction. In the movement version, having lost the use of sound, they use the body to exaggerate and heighten this pattern. The genre shift from the original naturalistic rendition to these non-naturalistic movement-based renditions assists them to abstract the interaction. The pattern is easier to see without the naturalistic dialogue. From observing patterns, it is a short step to identifying patterning. The concept of patterning or of the constructed nature of being can thus be ‘discovered’ kinaesthetically and later this knowledge can be brought forward to verbal language.

I ask them to complete their work on this scenario by constructing a freeze frame that demonstrates their relative status or power at the beginning of the movement scene. They are to begin play from that pose. Then, at the end of the scene they are to finish in a pose that represents the state of their relationship at that point in time.

I use this combination of the ‘still image’ and the ‘dance’ to assist them to find and display for their audience the shifting nature of the power-play. This may
help them to conceptualise and verbalise the notion that power and resistance is fluid. In the humanist tradition of Western culture we commonly construct power as a possession, inherent in one party and wielded over another (Gallagher 2003). This is an essentialist notion of power. Without a design to disrupt our tendency to enact power within this assumption we will portray it this way and thus (mis)learn it to be so. The structure of this task is designed to enable the students to find patterns through which power is conferred, assumed and resisted.

When the students play back their scenarios the class is treated to quite a theatrical display. I hear the laughter of recognition and the occasional moan of horror as what one human is revealed to be doing to another becomes all too clear to the audience.

In the subsequent discussion the students observe how unusual it is for the pattern of interaction to be ‘even’ – mostly the players are not on an equal level – they are not equals unless they are on the same level of respect – you can see it in their poses.

I hear a tone of discovery as they make their observations – it is as if we are playing a detective game. It seems that through enacting and naming these distinctions the students are ‘discovering’ their knowledge of power. This is a tacit or subliminal knowledge. It was already there to be surfaced through the exercise, though what has always been there is not ‘there’ until it is seen and said.

**Shifting the Power Dynamic**

I re-mix the pairs. This time I ask the pairs to allocate themselves to play the Teacher and the Student. The Teacher is to ask the Student *Why are you late for class?* The Student is to give the reason or excuse for their lateness. Once the scenes have been prepared we take a short look at each. A recognisable assortment of types is shown, including the student as rebel, nerd, bimbo or geek, and the teacher as tyrant, doormat, scatterbrain or hippy.
The stereotypes serve a function. Everyone can recognise the story. My concern here is not to unpack the stereotype, but rather to use it to press us towards recognition of patterns and positions within well-known storylines.

As we look at each scene, I ask the observers to describe the relative status created between the characters. Does one seem to have higher status than the other? A little higher? A lot higher? What did the actors do that gave you that impression? As the students comment on the language of the body, I ask them to identify which elements in particular build this impression. They begin to note spatial elements such as proximity, levels and angles. They identify tone and volume, rhythm and intensity as well as the choice of wording. When I ask what the character is doing - they build a rich collection of verbs – she sneers, he defies, she insists, he demands, she dismisses. The action words give clues as to the relative status the character has assumed, and the status he or she attempts to confer on the other.

The focus is on the inter-play (what is going on between the characters), rather than on the psychological (what is going on within the character). In this the participants engage in an exercise of the self that positions the self as the co-created and co-creating member of the community, existing in a set of relations. Thus at least at a basic level the students step through the illusion that the individual is separate and begin to register “the complex conditions of our mutual formation” (Davies 2006: 435).

The Sense of In/Justice

As soon as we focus on a teacher/student interaction the students begin to talk about teachers they have had. They want to ventilate! Clearly some of them feel a strong sense of grievance over treatment they have received from certain teachers (past or current). I request that rather than speaking about specific people they talk in terms of the behaviours they either object to or endorse. Initially they speak with some anger about teachers who denigrate – they take a status that is too much higher than what they should and it makes us like dirt. They note that some teachers don’t take enough of a dominant role – some just let themselves get walked on like they are the door-mat – that’s bad too. They talk about how it ought to be.
It should be more like respect.
Like equal only not quite equal because they have to be the teacher.
But they can still treat you with respect!
Yehhh
Or at least have a joke and not get agro on you ...
The worst is when they yell and then that makes you like a nothing – like a worm they are going to stand on.

The conversation is rich with metaphors as the students find a way to talk about the effects of dominance. I ask the actors who have just played a lower status Teacher against a Student in the dominant role what they noticed from playing their interaction.

It’s hard for the teacher when the student won’t give status.
You just don’t know what to do ...
You would just want to quit your job or hit them!
The students are speaking now with compassion for the teacher.

Though the initial anger has been ventilated, it remains a bubbling force. This is a very real issue for the students – strongly present in the school context in which our enquiry is being conducted. No doubt it will press through into the fiction, layering the drama with reference to actual events. The real context is never entirely forgotten in the fictional context (O'Toole 1992). It can be convenient to assume a non-permeable boundary. However, the norms, expectations and storylines of the real context inform that which is created in the improvisation. As the students read each other’s work, they do so against the backdrop of their school experience and their current location as students.

‘The Director Game’ - Shifting Status
I ask for volunteers to take turns in the role of Director. The Director’s job is to coach the actors in such a way as to have them invert the status pattern shown in the initial version of the scene whilst maintaining the original dialogue. Thus the high status teacher with the submissive student must become the submissive teacher with the
dominant student. The Director is faced with the challenge of assisting the actors to reinterpret the text so as to represent a new set of relationships. Whilst playing in the Director role, some demonstrate, stepping into the scene to show what they mean. Others give detailed instructions: *Stand closer and draw up higher. Sneer while you say it really softly. Look straight in his face. Turn away. Refuse to look at him. Shrug.* Others again appeal to the actor’s imagination to produce the shift in the body or the voice. *Imagine that you are afraid of him.* When the job is complete the audience can see it. They begin to note the way in which status is both conferred and claimed. Status occurs *between* characters, not *within* a character. Power exists in relations.

In designing ‘The Director Game’ I draw from the well-recognised theatre practice in which the director assists the actor to interpret the character. Engaging with this activity as a ‘game’ requires that the players engage with what the characters are doing. Given that they are not allowed to change what they say, the focus must be on how to shift the dynamic through what they do. As the players observe this game they see that every shift makes a difference in the scene. A whole relationship is changed by the turn of the chin.

**Playing ‘The Truth Game’**

I ask for all those who played the *Student* to line up and progress in turn past one actor in role as ‘Teacher’. They are each to give the reason why they were late for class. We hear a cascade of ‘excuses’ rather than reasons. Most of them report on circumstances beyond their control. When I ask about the likely truth status of these excuses, they agree – most of these characters are spinning a line.

I ask for the scene to be played again but this time the actor must play ‘The Truth Game’. In this game they must tell the ‘truth’, regardless of what they think they could realistically say to a teacher. I ask them to choose a one-time true reason why they have been late as a basis for their ‘truth’.

I design ‘The Truth Game’ as an exercise that requires the actor to override the conventions or niceties of exchange in order to state the facts that would commonly be withheld, whether for fear of offence, to protect oneself from
embarrassment or shame, or simply through the desire to be appropriate. The tension between playing in the naturalistic style and following the instruction to ‘disclose’ produces a particular challenge.

Some can’t quite manage to speak their ‘truth’ and begin a long story, or lace their ‘true’ story with softening layers. It is harder than one would assume to play ‘The Truth Game’. I ask for repeat attempts. Eventually the responses come. They sound curiously blunt and foreign.

I couldn’t get my hair right this morning.

I was talking with this guy I like.

I slept in.

I had a fight at the lockers.

I know you’re a slack teacher and you won’t care.

Some of the text is transgressive enough to provoke laughter.

I ask why these reasons were not given before in the original improvisation. The students seem to know the answer to this but struggle to find words for it.

You just know what you shouldn’t say.

You don’t want to make it worse.

You don’t want them to think bad of you.

It’s because you think they can’t take the truth.

They don’t want the truth – they just want an excuse.

I ask the students why they think the ‘truth’ can still be so hard given that they are only acting in ‘The Truth Game’. They look at me as if the answer is so obvious that it is silly for me to ask. Then they find it curiously hard to explain. It just doesn’t seem natural.

When the actors struggle to complete ‘The Truth Game’, it becomes apparent that there are ‘invisible rules’ that dictate the nature of a student’s response to a teacher. In seeing this, the students can begin to reflect on what holds our behaviours in place – what are these ‘rules’ that intrude into the drama game? The students do not have the word ‘discourse’, but in playing ‘The Truth
Game’ they can begin to ‘see’ that ‘invisible rules’ are at play. Once having noted this they can begin to enquire into the phenomenon.

The actor’s task of speaking a ‘truth’ that would normally be withheld (whilst simultaneously maintaining the original naturalistic mode of the scene) generates a particular type of work upon the self. The actor must manage to both conform and transgress as they play the role. This dual work calls upon a heightened reading of the constituting discourses.

Commentary

The students have learnt a number of the enquiry ‘games’ that they will play with the teachers. Their familiarity with the game structures will facilitate their role as co-teachers. In beginning the enquiry ahead of the teachers, they also have time to generate their own insights and to develop some confidence in their own capacity to work as investigator/social commentator.

In this session they have engaged at both kinaesthetic and cognitive levels with mechanisms through which people seek to influence each other’s actions. Through ‘The Strategies Game’ and ‘The Director Game’ they have been invited to foreground their knowledge of power as existing in the interplay between people. Through ‘The Truth Game’ they have been introduced to the concept that there are norms and expectations which moderate the way in which we play ourselves (even in the fiction). As they play within the games and talk about these phenomena, the students engage in a form of discourse detection and they can begin to speculate about the shaping nature of the larger story sets which they have inherited and live within.

Workshop Two: Bridging Binaries

Overview

In the following story, I discuss the use of The Reality-Testing Game’ to assist players to deconstruct the mythology of school experience and to explore alternative
accounts. I note the way in which the positions and stories which are part of the real context press into the fictional play and in this argue that the divide between the fiction and reality is permeable. I chart the use of ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ to call forth poly-vocal interpretations of characters and to traverse the good/bad binary associated with tales about bullies and victims. I demonstrate how an enhanced form of forum theatre can be used to manage a problem-solving approach that generates compassion for the other, rather than fixing upon opposition between the parties. I argue that ‘The Reality-Testing’ and ‘Hidden Thoughts’ games provide a methodology for deconstruction.

Orienting: Investigating Exclusion

Today we are going to look at forms of discrimination and negative treatment that can happen in schools. You will make scenes that show the sorts of discriminatory practices you have observed at school. When you work with the teachers you will talk with them about what schools can do to prevent these problems, or to deal fairly and helpfully with them when they happen. First we will do a warm-up to get us thinking about the issue of inclusion and acceptance.

I organise them to play the Clumps Game. The players mingle. When a number is called, the aim is to get into a group of the declared size as quickly as possible. They play a number of rotations. Each time there is a mad grab for partners and some dashing from group to group. Inevitably some are in the remainder. After a few rotations I ask them to sit so as we can reflect on the game as a metaphor for our theme of the day.

I begin the conversation by asking What thoughts or feelings can come up when people are asked to find a group or a partner? The students note that you can have the nobody-wants-me thought and you do a bit of a panic to get a partner because you don’t want to be left out. I ask them to think of real life situations in which choosing/being chosen occur. They identify a number of situations - such as when invitations are issued, teams chosen, or social events or school task groups are organised. I ask
what sorts of conclusions people can come to about themself or about others when they are excluded.

They can think it’s because there is something wrong with them.

That they are no good

That no one likes them

That other people are horrible

Yehh – they are snobs

Prejudiced against them ...

I use this game as a metaphor from which to bridge to real life experiences. I want the class to talk from this shared experience, positioned as cultural reporters - rather than directly drawing upon personal narratives from whence they may report as victims or perpetrators. I assume that the class itself will not be ‘innocent’ of these behaviours. There will be some who feel marginalised within this group and others who are known to lead exclusionary practices. Through the framing of the questions they are positioned as investigators, bringing knowledge and experience to an enquiry, but with the focus being epistemological rather than therapeutic.

Generating the Material

I distribute playing cards and ask the students to form groups by finding those dealt the same number as them. Once in their groups of four or five I ask them to brainstorm situations that can occur at school which involve discrimination, exclusion or negative treatment. After completing their lists they are to choose one of them and prepare a short scene to show the audience what happens. I ask them to choose a common situation, one that might occur at a weekly to monthly level. The scene is to start with a picture, come to life, and then end with a freeze of the action at a suitable point.

I set the limitation relating to frequency as I want to deflect the tendency there can be in the drama-making process to choose the worst-case scenario on the assumption that this will be the most ‘theatrical’ or newsworthy. I request an artifice to manage the beginning and ending of the scenario to illustrate that
the scenario is a sample, edited out from life for the purposes of examination. In one sense they are doing a mini research exercise, which involves collecting data (via brainstorm) and then selecting a sample to share as a research text. The research text (in this case a short scene) will then be available for further inquiry.

In their scenes they present a broad sample of discriminatory practices. Some show the teacher as perpetrator, patronising the girls or demonising the boys. Most of the scenes show peers as perpetrators, illustrating various forms of bullying or rejection based on body image, ethnicity, sexual preference or ‘nerd’ status. The forms of harassment enacted include physical aggression, verbal baiting, and subtler forms of excluding, such as ignoring. Although I ask for the commonplace, many of the scenes show quite extreme forms of bullying. When I ask, the class agrees, they are more of a stereotype than the sort of thing you would usually see.

This exercise invites the students to show what they know that they know. Drama has a significant power in iconic mode as a form of problem-knowing or exposition (Cockett 1997). Knowledge however is created within and filtered through discourses through which we read and make meaning. Hence these scenes draw upon cultural stories about how things are, and have in them inherent explanatory models used to rationalise, justify, or condemn the behaviours displayed. These scenarios position the audience to sympathise or to judge.

**Reality-Testing**

I ask them to show their scenarios again, and this time to with the questions of ‘The Reality-testing Game’ in mind. These questions include: *Does it really happen like this? How often does this happen? Does this happen to everyone? Who is ‘safe’ from this? Who sees this happen? What do those who see usually do?*

In positioning them within ‘The Reality-testing Game’, I invite them to work as key informants, commenting on the scenes and considering the extent to which the ‘image of reality’ is a good reflection of their experience. I present
this exercise as a ‘game’ (rather than just a reflective discussion) in order to heighten the students’ perception that they are the constructing agents as well as the readers and reporters.

I ask for a re-play of some of the scenes they have identified as aberrant or extreme. People call out suggestions and the scenarios are jostled into new arrangements that show much subtler forms of exclusion. Yeh – that’s more like what you would see on an everyday basis. They agree.

These modified scenes show the commonplace experiences. However, there are still knowledges or certainties that have neither been exposed nor disrupted. These are the codas to the tales (e.g. the girl is mean and that’s why she behaves like that). Additional aesthetic tools are needed to reveal and contest these assumptions. To assist with this I employ the ‘Hidden Thoughts’ technique.

**Deepening via ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’**

I ask one of the groups to re-play their scene so we can use it as the basis for a deeper enquiry. I explain that after the re-play we need volunteers to play ‘the hidden thoughts game’. In this game the respondent will stand beside their source character and engage in an interview about what the character might have been thinking or feeling but not saying out aloud in the scene.

I conduct the interview, first asking the person who is to speak for the victim what she might be thinking / feeling / fearing / hoping, but not saying out aloud. *She thinks she must have done something, but she is not sure what*

*She wonders what she can do to change herself – so they will like her*

*She is scared she will never have any friends*

*She is scared it will be like this all her life*

*She is hoping just one person will stick with her*

*She is wishing she could disappear and come back as someone else*

*She is angry and wishes she could punch them in the face*
Then I interview one of the perpetrators: what might he be thinking/feeling/fearing/hoping, but not saying?

He is trying to be cool

He is glad this is not him

He is feeling slimy because he know he is being a creep

He is scared it will happen to him if he does not join in

He wishes they could just kick the footy like they used to at primary school

The observers also call out additional responses and we go on to work through the hidden thoughts of the bystanders and the key perpetrator.

‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ is a variant on the tradition of alter-ego exercises. In refining this exercise I build upon the Grotowskian notion that if we search we will find undercurrents of fear and desire which are integral to the human condition, but I frame the device in the Socratic tradition of question and answer. The player speaks about the character, rather than in role as the character, as occurs in the Shakespearian tradition of the aside or the monologue or in the ‘hot-seating’ convention (Neelands 1990). I play the role of interlocutor in order to hold open and to direct the line of questioning. I use the word ‘and’ to press for multiple responses to the same questions, and to seek a lateral line in the answers. It turn between the players and the observers to interweave their commentary into the evolving collection of responses.

Their answers reveal that each character is driven by multiple desires and fears, such as the desire to belong and to be safe, and the fear of rejection. Despite being so differently located in the story, the characters feel many of the same emotions. They each feel shame and guilt, and each is driven by the fear of exclusion. The victim feels shame to have attracted the negativity. The perpetrator feels shame to have enacted the bullying, and the bystanders feel the shame of having taken no action to stop it.

The foregrounding of the Hidden Thoughts assists the group to address the complexity of assumptions and desires steering these behaviours. The students
surface a ‘knowledge’ that they may not have known that they (or each other) know. The first rotation of the bullying scenes shown has carried the dominant knowledge or popular folklore – *people do bad things because they are bad or lacking* and *people to whom bad things are done are somehow to blame*. In the second rotation however, the Hidden Thoughts device has surfaced ‘other’ knowledge and thus the participants have demonstrated that they ‘know’ this too. This ‘other’ knowledge weaves its way into the original story. Some of these knowledges that have been expressed include that *people are afraid of rejection*, and that *opposing emotions and desires can be part of the one experience*.

‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ is a mechanism that calls upon the players to create a poly-vocal self. The players, with assistance from the observers, work to speak wide the possibilities of the self. They stretch the knowledge of the person beyond that created by the narrative. However, they do this in *association* with the narrative, using it as the springboard for their enquiry. Thus the practice of knowing the self via ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ is one that both responds to the narrative *and* straddles its confines. It begins on the humanist platform, and then leads the participants through a poststructuralist portal.

When the participants catch a glimpse of the constructed and en-cultured nature of identity, a scaffold is made available for further thinking. Abseiling from this structure, participants can traverse into a re-reading of the behaviours and motives of others.

**Problem-Solving**

I ask them to nominate which of the scenarios already created would be the most useful for the Teachers to engage with. We will use it as the basis for a forum theatre exercise. They select one in which the teacher is present. A ‘note’ is being passed around in the form of text on a mobile phone. The note is about someone in the class. Those who read it snigger and pass it on. The victim does not know what is in the note. The sniggers happen when the teacher is writing on the board. The teacher
misses the bullying but catches someone with the phone. Phones are not allowed in class.

*I ask the original players to act the scene out again, and then arrange for additional ‘extras’ to be located around the original five players to suggest the presence of a whole class.*

I ‘stretch’ the frame of the scene to add additional players, in part to create a naturalistic verisimilitude, but chiefly to ensure that the potential for intervention does not reside only with the original five players. I do not want the casting of the drama itself to compound the myth that the only way to solve the problem is by causing a change within the perpetrators or the victim. The narrative had positioned all peer characters in one of these two roles, thus leaving no one in bystander role and no one to represent the ‘rest of available humanity’. Thus the framing and casting of the drama would not easily enable problem-identification or problem-solving to occur at a *system* level. Rather it was likely to frame a psychologised approach to problem-solving. Much of the literature on bullying points to the tendency for victim-blaming to occur as a result of an unbalanced attention to enhancing the agency of the victim or the remorse of the bully whilst little is given to the attitudes and behaviours of the community which allows these actions to occur in their midst (Olweus 2001; Rigby 2004; Smith, Pepler et al. 2004). The narrative tradition of pivoting around a protagonist can accentuate this predisposition towards the blaming tale.

I then ask the observers to talk in pairs so as to generate ideas about how to shift the activity in the scene with the goal of averting or arresting the discriminatory behaviour. The question to be explored is How could one action lead to changes in the actions of others such that the direction of the narrative is changed? A number of suggestions and interventions follow. Some, in the tradition of forum theatre, are enacted, demonstrated by the spect-actor (observer) who conceived the strategy. Other interventions are requested by the observer but carried out by the original actor following the style used in playing ‘The Director Game’ in the previous session.
Some interventions illustrate subtle actions: a character withholding interest in the ‘baiting game’, another distracting others from the game, another attracting the teacher’s attention. Other interventions illustrate more overt or confrontational behaviours such as telling those involved to cut it out. Following each intervention I ask the students to assess the viability and likelihood of such interventions actually occurring. What would it take to do that? I ask, and Would you ever see that happen? What would people think it meant if they saw that happening?

In Boal’s (1985) Forum Theatre the tradition is to relate to one character as if they are the oppressed. My assumption is that each of the characters both endures their own oppression and participates in the oppression of others. Each adopts patterns or positions learnt from the dominant discourses about schools and peer relationships. The characters are oppressed by their internalised identification with certain categorisations and behavioural scripts. These are then manifest as felt needs, expectations and fears. These internalised ‘oppressions’ are identified in the Hidden Thoughts exercise.

I choose not to begin the interventions with a focus on the victim role. It is all too easy to send the hidden message that somehow the victim attracts or causes the behaviour: if only he was different it would stop. A focus on the cohort around the victim invites thinking about the social health of the group that would allow such behaviour in its midst. In this frame it is assumed that responsibility is shared. Our usual individualistic and legalistic mindset has us assume that all guilt resides within the perpetrator, except when the victim provokes or ‘invites’ the behaviour. In this case the guilt is ameliorated and the aggression justified. An alternative assumption is that all members of the group are responsible for the behaviour that occurs within the group. They are part of the collective creation and maintenance of group norms. A healthy group deals well with those who are different or difficult in some way. An unhealthy group tolerates negative treatment of those who are disadvantaged or different (Cox and Caldwell 2000).
It's Hard for the Teacher

I invite the next set of interventions to focus on what the teacher can do. Students take it in turns to try out their ideas about how the teacher could manage this situation. Some of them become quite frustrated by the amount of resistance they encounter from those in role as the students. It's really hard for the teacher. Yeh – you just feel like yelling or throwing them out. Heated discussion emerges as they consider the longer-term outcomes of an intervention as well as the immediate response. That won’t stop the bullying – they will just take more care not to get caught.

That’s as bad as what the kids are doing – that’s sarcasm – that will just make them hate you.

They should teach a more interesting lesson – then the kids wouldn’t have to muck up...

When a satisfying intervention is made that both respects the needs of the victim and re-directs the behaviours of the students into their work, the class appears satisfied. There is a level of agreement that a teacher who did this would be doing the job well. Not like some – I hear mention. The undercurrent of anger towards those teachers who do not treat the students and their learning with respect is never far from the surface in this session.

I acknowledge that they will have watched all sorts of teachers at work and remind them that one of our roles in working with the Teachers is to help them learn about what makes for good teaching.

I invite them to list some of the Teacher behaviours that they think contribute to bad teaching. We go around the circle, so as each person can add one thing: sarcasm, favoritising, yelling, losing their temper, being slack, not preparing good lessons, making you just copy out notes from the text book, not caring about what you learn, letting the class riot, blaming the whole class. Part way around the circle I shift the question to ask what sorts of Teacher behaviours contribute to good teaching: encouraging, respect, smiling, talking with you, setting interesting work, noticing your effort, giving helpful feedback. A large set of behaviours is developed. They have distinguished a number of things that they can talk to the new teachers about. I
point out that this has been an opportunity for them to practice in the coach and the key informant role that they will fulfil in their work with the teachers.

Commentary

The players have been teaching me (and each other) about possible actions that the peers or the teacher can take when dealing with discriminatory practices. In doing this, they create a discourse of possibility. This is important as there may previously have been a discourse of disregard and disconnection: *if it is not happening to me it is not happening. There is nothing you can do about it anyway.* There is a fine line between possibility and agency. Where there is no sense of hope or possibility, there is less likely to be a sense of agency. As Butler argues, through fantasy we create what is possible and once created we are more able to ‘bring the elsewhere home’ (Butler 2004: 29). In this the creation of possibility generates the potential for change.

Without hope or purpose then we are less likely to persist in the face of challenge (Seligman 1995). If there is no possibility for preventative, ameliorating or restorative action, then we have merely contributed to a discourse of hopelessness or powerlessness. It is therefore important to avoid the tendency for the drama to emphasise only the bleak side of a situation. My hope is that through this work the participants become both better able and more likely to engage in socially just action.

In the combination of problem-solving via the re-play and the diagnostic analysis conducted via the Hidden Thoughts exercise, the students have been invited to call upon different types of knowledge about why things happen the way they do. As hidden thoughts they have played a self that is bigger than the defining action. In this they have played beyond the category of the type and sought to locate broader defining characteristics of what it means to be human. In this they stretch the category represented by the character to encompass a broader definition, a re-categorisation. In the applied problem-solving they have focused on the self as the agent of change. Thus they have been positioned to understand the self to be shaped by others and as agent and shaper of the world around them.
Student Workshop Three: Wide Angle Lens

Overview
In the story of Workshop Three, I illustrate how the surrealist play within ‘The Anthropomorphic Game’ positions participants to work from a constructivist ontology. I examine how the framing of the questions inherent in the scenario can be used to prompt critical thinking and to call forth alternative explanatory models. In this I argue that the drama can be used to engage participants in the development of critical theory.

Orienting: Discriminatory Practices
Today we will use surrealist drama techniques to examine why sexist, racist or other discriminatory behaviours happen in schools. These are issues that the teachers are very concerned about, and it will be useful to stretch out own thinking before we work with them on this topic. The warm up will prepare us to work in a more physical form of theatre.

We play the Joints game. Players mingle, then form groups of three. As I call out the instructions, they must attach the appropriate joints or body parts, accumulating one point of adherence after the other, and finally playing their scene in the position they have ended up in. Put an elbow to a knee. Add a finger to a nape of the neck, a wrist to an ankle, a hip to a toe. Now, in that position, play the scene in which the three siblings argue as to whose turn it is to take out the rubbish. Assembled into their awkward sculptures, they begin their scenes. The game is played over a number of times with new groupings, new joints instructions and new scenarios. Each time the bizarre poses influence the interaction within the scene. Out of role I ask them to comment on what they observed while playing the scene in their joints formations. They note that the physical position determines the relative status of the player. When your head is under someone’s knee, you end up playing the grovelling character. It can also inform the personality adopted. In the crazy pose I was in I just knew I had to be a scatty character.
In this exercise the body is the first site of knowledge. The struggle for dominance is kinaesthetically led. The physical discomfort and proximity of the actors informs the characterisation, the relational struggle and the narrative that is invented.

**Analysis through the Absurd**

I explain that the teachers will be interested in their ideas about why bullying and other forms of discrimination such as sexism or racism happens in schools. In the next exercise they will be in role as objects, animals or aliens. The aim will be to raise some theories about (not necessarily their own views) about why these behaviours take place.

I allocate a scenario card to each group (see below) which provides the list of characters, the location, and the key question under discussion in their scene. I explain that they will each play a non-human role. The challenge is to find a point of view or some arguments for their character, and a way to embody the character. I remind them that they are to perform in a surrealist tradition, and therefore anything can be invented as possible. They can, for example, be inspired by the world of cartoons or the world of dreams when they create their scene.

Their scene is to be performed in a small space, so they must also choreograph where they put each body and how these bodies are to relate to each other. I give them time to play with ideas, invent text and shape their scene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario cards</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bin, Ball, Bench, Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stiletto, Sneaker, Work-Boot, Thong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fried Rice, Lasagne, Fish and Chips, Souvlaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Phone, Spray on Deodorant, Wallet, Chocolate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In designing “The Anthropomorphic Game’, I am influenced by the absurdist tradition in which meaning is something one makes rather than something which one discovers. In this genre the players understand that they are expected to disrupt the rules of everyday reality, and they are permitted to speak in different ways. Indeed, one of the criteria of success for the performer in this genre is that they take up this invitation to surprise the audience.

The groups show their work. The class laughs at the wit of the players. Housed within the humour and parody is some incisive social commentary. In one rendition of the scene, the students playing tree, rubbish bin, bench, and ball discuss schoolyard relationships. Tree offers the perspective that all this bullying is just nature playing out the law of the jungle – survival of the fittest. Rubbish bin argues that the problem occurs because some students are treated as trash and are ‘cast out’ with little real sense of their value. Bench believes that it is lack of space and opportunity that causes the problem, asserting that students are competing for attention and resources. Ball believes it is lack of fun and playful interaction that is at the heart of the problem, and points to the gendered pattern of schoolyard play.

Parody, irony, the surreal and the absurd, assist players to gain perspective and to work beyond the stereotype (O’Neill 1996). In this case the surrealist structure invites exaggeration, and parody. In addition, the task is framed (by the accompanying questions) in such a way as to require the players to cite or invent theory so as they can explain what is going on around them.

**Explanatory Models**

The strength of the surrealist technique may be that a bizarre question can hatch a new storyline simply because the solutions are in part born of the questions. However, when I pose a surrealist question I do not provide a discourse-free zone for the players to work in. For example, in the task in
which the Work-boot and the Stiletto must comment upon schoolyard relationships, it is almost inevitable that gender relations will emerge as a theme. This is because the metaphors are part of our gendered iconography. In this I am aware that I cannot allocate a task that provides an empty space within which to create. Footprints of meaning are all over the track, and I am better to acknowledge and harness this rather than struggle to resist. Rather, the function of “The Anthropomorphic Game” is to position the players as theorists, thinking about the patterned nature of human behaviour. My hope is that they will work from a sociological orientation rather than from the psychological and individualised orientation invited within the naturalistic tradition. Engaging with different explanatory models assists in the process of deconstruction. Unless we note the presence of our shaping theories and storylines we are unlikely to shift them.

**Commentary**

The framing to play as objects invites a shift towards critical theory building. When playing into the non-human (though anthropomorphised) roles, the players draw on a macro rather than a micro perspective of society. They deal with ideas than primarily with emotions or experiences. They are called upon to make readings and commentaries from a systems view about patterns of social behaviour. They must bring together different explanatory models about why people behave the way they do. Their enquiry is thus more in the tradition of critical theory as the focus tends towards the competing interests in society and the way they play out in the life of an individual (Kincheloe and McLaren 2003).

In applying their knowledge of patterns and explanatory theories to a surreal situation the players can begin to note that this is a knowledge and further, that the ‘knowledge’ about why things happen as they do in large part creates the responses to the phenomenon. The person who believes that schoolyard bullying is ‘natural’ is unlikely to see a need to intervene, whereas the person who believes that it arises due to deviance will seek corrective interventions. Foucault observes that "Knowledge and power are integrated with one another” (Foucault 1980:51). In this exercise, the players begin to focus on the interrelationship between ‘truth’, knowledge and power.
Summary

In this chapter I have used analysis of the three preparatory sessions to chart how the drama can be used to discover the mechanisms of power play in relational interactions. I have illustrated the use of aesthetic techniques to expose the ‘invisible rules’ that are at play in relationships and thus begin a process of discourse detection. I have argued that poly-vocal alter-ego devices (such the Hidden Thoughts exercise) can assist players to straddle the binary model of understanding human identity that is privileged in positivist traditions and in this provide a methodology for deconstruction. I discussed the way in which surrealist devices can be used to position players to work from a constructivist ontology and to engage in the development of critical theory. In this I have explored the use of the drama techniques to assist the players to ‘walk through the walls’ that confine our knowledge of reality, and to bridge the binaries that define the teacher/student story.

In these workshops the students learnt the game structures that they will use with the teachers, and engaged in their own exploration of the themes that they would address with the teachers. Some activities made use of the experiential learning mode in which the self and the other was learnt through naturalistic role-play. Other activities called for engagement with a constructivist ontology, and problematised the enquiry in such a way as raise awareness of the shaping discourses that influence behaviour. In this they evoked a compassion for the other, and a recognition that we are shaped by as well as shapers of our social and institutional roles. This philosophical engagement with the material, as well as the ethical and pragmatic consideration of how to ‘teach well’ forms an integral role in positioning the students for the subsequent partnership with the teachers.

What’s Next?

In the next chapter I present the data story that analyses the three workshops that brought the students and teachers together to learn in partnership. I discuss the application of particular drama techniques to facilitate the investigatory dialogue and to generate new possibilities in the teacher/student relationship.
Chapter 8: Boundary Crossings

Introduction
In this chapter I present an analysis of the methodology employed in the three workshops in which the students participated with the teachers. Just as I did in the previous chapter, I use data stories to present my analysis. I take an epistemological focus, addressing the relationship between the design of the tasks and the ensuing activity. I use my lesson plans and reflective notes as a source of data, along with the video-taped recordings of the six workshops (three in 2003 and three in 2004).

The teachers are in their final semester of training to become secondary school teachers. They are aged from 23 to 45 years of age with the majority aged in their late twenties. Female students comprised a significant majority (approximately 75%). They represent the full range of disciplinary specialities including arts, sciences, commerce and languages. The majority have little experience in the use of drama as a methodology and they have not engaged in any preparatory drama tasks to introduce them to the techniques that will be used.

I am the tutor of a class group of approximately 30 pre-service teachers for a subject called Education Policy, Schools and Society (EPSS). The subject consists of a semester series of nine seminars of three hours duration. The subject addresses the role of schooling in society and explores issues of equity and inclusion. It is undertaken in the final semester of the teaching diploma. The course builds on a heritage of sociology of education. I conducted three Learning Partnerships workshops of 1.5 hours, commencing in the third week of the seminar series.

Developing Theory
In the first of the three workshops my aim is for the participants to discover that they can learn with and from each other, and that together they can work at diagnosing some of the barriers to effective relationships between teachers and students. I use the discussion of this workshop to analyse the techniques used to assist players to detect
the discourse of the teacher/student binary and to note how it casts the players to adopt certain attitudes as they assume and enact storylines and positions. In this I develop theory about how the methodology contributes to the re-cognition of the other.

In the second workshop I aim for the participants to deepen their analysis of the underlying scripts or discourses that may be directing behaviour in schools and to work on constructing alternative possibilities or solutions to common problems. In my analysis of this workshop I highlight the way in which the drama is used as a form of participatory action research in which the participants work together to define problems and invent possible solutions, in this engaging in a methodology for empowerment.

The final workshop focuses on developing the skills and capacities of the teachers to engage effectively in complex professional situations involving groups of students. Here I discuss the use of the drama and the positioning of client-as-coach as a means to engage in utilitarian, ethical and cultural questions about what works in professional communication. In this the theoretical focus is on the use of the drama to create new possibilities for action.

**Teacher Workshop One: Crossing the Divide**

**Overview**

In the story of the first of the workshops I chart the use of participatory activities to generate dialogue between the two groups. I discuss the use of parody in ‘The Complaints Game’ as a mechanism to generate a distancing humour and to know the self through distortion and comparison. I describe the use of ‘The Truth Game’ as a mechanism to detect the discourses regulating the teacher/student binary. I discuss the use of ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ to permit the participants to display a different knowledge of the self. I conclude that these techniques facilitate the development of the ‘communicative space’ within which the participants can consider the authenticity and viability of each other’s contributions and engage in a re-cognition of the other.
Orientation: Learning With and From

I arrive early to clear the room of tables and organise the chairs into a circle around the periphery of the room. It will be a tight squeeze to fit in the thirty teachers as well as over twenty drama students. As this is the university classroom, the teachers will be on territory and the students will be the visitors.

The students assemble en masse, filling one arc of the circle. As the teachers arrive they settle in the remaining chairs. The separation is pronounced. I acknowledge and welcome those attending.

I outline the purpose of the workshop as an opportunity to learn with and from instead of just about young people.

I invite them to participate in the first activity, which I explain is designed to get them to mix. I hear a few chuckles. They are all aware of the segregation and the current silence existing between the two groups. I ask the participants to mingle, and when they hear the honker, to form pairs or trios that include at least one player from each setting. They are to have a short conversation to find out two things that are not immediately obvious about each other. The exercise is repeated a few times to provide opportunity for a number of interactions.

This exercise contains the pattern inherent to the workshop series, that of ‘boundary-crossing’ interaction. This venture is about bringing two parties into dialogue about matters of shared concern. The game houses the pattern of the partnership in that it requires them to invent that it is possible to work together as co-investigators, and then to make this possibility come true.

The ‘Complaints Game’

I ask the players to remain with their final partner. They will work together in our first role-play exercise, which I call ‘The Complaints Game’. I ask them to play first in role as teachers. It is a Friday afternoon. You are two teachers, in the staffroom, complaining about the tough week you have had. Talk to each other about what was
going on to make it so tough for you. They begin. The room is filled with the sound of 50 complainants. I use the honker to stop the scenario after about a minute.

In this mode of play the players work as co-creators of a fiction that will then be used as a reference point against which to consider reality. Rather than learning by telling about themselves (as in the first exercise), they learn through enacting, and through pretending to be someone else.

I organise for a ‘channel surfing’, taking a quick look at each of their scenarios. A ten second glimpse at each of the pairs allows just enough time for the audience to encounter their complaints. The sweep around the room fulfils the role of a brainstorm. A listing and echoing of complaints is heard.

There is a laugh at this parody of teacher complaints. The teachers seem to find it particularly funny to hear the school students complaining in this mode, and the students seem to relish the opportunity to parody teachers, demonise student behaviour and comment bitterly about the working conditions provided for teachers.

The material is witnessed in the collective, and thus the players accumulate a shared experience. The humour associated with the inevitable parody provides not only a tension-release, but also a useful distancing device. To laugh at ourselves we must step back from our position and see it with some perspective. To allow others to laugh at us indicates a generous rather than defensive position has been adopted. Thus humour is a great leveller of the traditional power imbalance associated with teacher/student relationships. Through use of humour the participants can be transgressive without being aggressive. Much can be said within the protective frame of the parody that could not so easily be spoken without a layer of accusation or anger. Thus this device allows for the voicing of complaint without the personal barb (Onofrey 2006).

The parody invited via ‘The Complaints Game’ provides a practice of the self that entails learning through exaggeration and distortion. What is exaggerated
here is the opposition between students and teacher. Made to loom large the scenarios seem to be both true (teachers do feel aggrieved) and not-true (but not to this extent).

I ask the players to repeat the exercise with the variation that they are now to take the student role. *Now you are two Year 10 students. You have had a tough week at school. Compare notes about what has made this week so tough for you.* After a short time to create the scene, I again employ the channel surfing technique. Now the other side of the complaints ‘story’ is heard, with many of the teachers embracing the opportunity to complain about oppressive or inconsiderate teachers.

The second set of scenes reveals that there is a certain synchrony of complaint between the two groups. A chiming resonance can be heard in the desire for appreciation, the struggle for respect, the weight of boredom and fatigue, the lack of autonomy, and the constant threat of failure. Here the distorting mirror helps to reveal that teachers and students share some similar complaints. Both parties feel trapped in the institutional game. Both parties can feel like the losers.

**Positioning as Key Informants**

I ask the players to sit on the floor and form groups of four or five. I ask them to talk together about what they actually think teachers and students find hard, and reality-test what has been seen in the complaints game by comparing it to what they believe to be real life concerns.

The playful parody has broken the ice and brought the players into relationship. They have so far been positioned as co-creators *of* the fiction, and ‘fellow sufferers’ *within* the fiction. Now they are positioned outside the fiction, and under the mantle of an ethnographic task that requires them to report on their observations and experiences of school life. This constitutes a shift in the question or the problematisation underpinning the drama. Whilst the initial question was *What are the complaints?* The reality-testing question
asks **To what extent did those representations provide an accurate sense of the challenges for students and teachers?**

After a few minutes to talk, I ask for a few of the students to relate the key points from their group conversations. They talk now in a different voice about what teachers and students find hard. They talk as key informants and interpretive reporters.

There is a serious quality to this enquiry that sits upon the previous playfulness of ‘The Complaints Game’. Perhaps the initial humour has prepared the ground. This talk is not positional or angry as many of the students’ comments have been in the preparatory school sessions. Perhaps the re-positioning as co-teachers and key informants (which does not come to fruition until they are actually in this mode in the shared workshops) means that they are attending to the needs of their audience, rather than to their own needs as speakers. In this, the ‘listening’ of the teachers may be shaping their speaking. Positioned differently, they speak differently.

The revelatory tone creates an unusual atmosphere of intimacy. This exercise structures a practice of coming to know the self through consultation and sharing, through clarifying the experiences of one’s membership group, and through learning about one’s impact on the opposing group.

**Excuses or Reasons: the Fiction within the Fiction**

I ask the participants to mingle, and then to form a new pair or trio which has both student and teacher membership. I ask them to negotiate who will play **Student(s)** and who **Teacher** in a scene in which **Teacher** asks why an overdue assignment has not been submitted. Once allocated to roles, I set up for the scenes to be played simultaneously. After the scenes have been created I again organise for a snapshot sampling of the scenes. Excuses, excuses, excuses. Over two thirds of the respondents blame a breakdown with the computer or printer. Technology is clearly the shared scapegoat!
There is laughter at the dissembling within the dissembling. Within the fiction, *Teacher* reads the reasons as ‘excuses’ (as exaggerations or lies). The audience, looking into the fiction, read *Students’* responses this way too. What is yet to be questioned in the class is whether the drama (which we know to be a fiction) itself purports to be a ‘truth’ (or accurate representation of what happens in life). The genre of naturalism invites its audience to relate to the fiction as a truth. This is the positioning of the audience invited by the convention of the missing fourth wall. It is a performance tradition that invites the eye to read the content but not the form – to read the ‘truth’ (in the narrative) but miss the ‘artifice’ (it is theatre).

The participants have played the stereotype of teacher-student relationship – with *Teacher* lecturing, admonishing, warning, or accusing and *Student* dissembling or defending. However, these scenes have carried the prototype of the teacher-student relationship in that they have positioned the teacher in the right and the student in the wrong, and shown a power relationship in which the teacher uses assigned power and the student either employs resistance or strives to please. But I am concerned that both the content of the drama and the backgrounded pattern implicit in the drama purport to carry the ‘truth’ of the matter about teacher/student identities and relationships. I want the participants to peel into this assumed pattern to see what else maybe submerged within the student/teacher identities. Have we done them justice? Is there more to be considered? I turn to ‘The Truth Game’ to structure the examination of these questions.

I instigate a playing of ‘The Truth Game’. I invite one of the teachers to play in role as *Teacher* and eight of the students to play in role as the *Students* with the overdue assignments. I line the *Students* up next to the *Teacher*. Each is to be asked in turn why his or her work has not been submitted. Each is to reply with the ‘truth’. Their performance challenge is to engage only in direct reporting of what has happened, avoiding any editing or distorting of the story in order that they maybe excused. I ask the students to base their story on something that has really happened in the past. I ask
the player in role as Teacher to respond the way she thinks a teacher might to each of the stories.

As the interactions progress, there is quite a bit of laughter. Some times the direct speaking is heard as a transgression.

*I was watching my favourite TV show and forgot about it.*

*I think I am going to fail anyway so it didn’t seem worth the effort to try.*

*I was too tired and hung over to concentrate.*

*I had to work all weekend.*

*I didn’t think you would notice because you are such a slack teacher.*

It is clear that the Teacher struggles to know how to respond to these statements.

**Disrupting the Teacher/Student Game**

I ask the actor who had played Teacher in the scene what it was like to be told these ‘truths’. *It makes you really think. It was sort of like I didn’t want to know or be told.* *It is also sort of good – like you feel connected to the students more – but then it’s like you don’t want that connection because it sort of takes away your power. You don’t know what to say…*

‘The Truth Game’ disrupts the conventional teacher-student interaction. It is this disruption that I have been seeking through the exercise, because without the rupture we may not see that there is a ‘pattern’ in place. The pattern amounts to a set of norms or rules that prescribe speaking and help us to organise what can be said, and to whom. A student may speak in one way to a teacher, but play themselves differently to their friend, resisting the definition that the teachers places upon them and reclaiming their own power in resistance (Davies 2006). A student may speak in one way about the assignment to a friend, but will ‘know’ to speak differently to the teacher. The student may be as ‘bound’ talking to a friend as to the teacher, but bound by different norms. The norm with a friend may be to under-report effort and play up complaints about the task or the teacher (the look cool factor). The norm with the teacher may be for the student to over-report effort, and to exaggerate the impact of circumstances (the victim factor).
Thus there is a rule-play that governs the behaviour in the role-play. As a character, the actor must obey the implicit societal and cultural rules relating to the teacher/student relationship. In this the player is confined (as well as supported) by the genre rules (naturalism) and by the social rules. In this the rule-play runs the role-play, and the form has governance upon the way in which the self can be represented. In this it has a grip on the knowledge that can be represented. By brushing against this grip, as the players do when asked to fulfil ‘The Truth Game’ task, they may notice that it is there.

**Help-Seeking**

I ask the players to stand and mingle again, and form new partnerships or trios with both teacher and student membership. I ask them to organise who will role-play Teacher and who will role-play Student/s. Some cast themselves to represent their real positions and others choose to cross-cast. The Student is to approach the Teacher to seek help in relation to the bullying that he or she has been subjected to.

After a few minutes to improvise their scene I stop the play and ask one of the pairs if we can use their scenario as the focus for the next activity. The scene is replayed. In the performance we see the hesitancy in the Student and the tension in the Teacher. Neither wants this moment in their life. They are pinned into a story they do not want. The teacher is abrupt. The student assumes that she doesn’t really care.

I explain ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ and ask for volunteers. Two students come forward. I begin with the Student’s thoughts. *What is this person thinking or feeling but not saying out aloud? What is s/he hoping for? What is s/he afraid of?* She lays out the responses:

*He is thinking that he should be able to handle this by himself*

*he is weak if he can’t*

*He is feeling ashamed*

*like it is all his fault.*

*He is hoping the teacher will understand, hoping someone can stop this,*
He is afraid that telling will make it worse,

that people will talk about him and think there is something wrong with him,

afraid that the teacher won’t take him seriously,

that there will be nothing any one can do to help

and it will just go on and on ...

A rich text emerges. I hear a tone of tenderness as the actor thinking into the Hidden Thoughts questions finds words and a voice with which to speak the answers. The class is attentive, leaning forward to catch what is spoken, adding their own responses in a similar tone.

As the player trawls for the hidden thoughts of the character, layers of being are pulled like fairy floss from the discourse. The device hatches a poly-vocality. It layers multiplicities for inspection. It does not excuse or judge. Rather it appreciates. It invites the audience to become a connoisseur of the human being (Eisner 1985).

I ask for the Teacher’s Hidden Thoughts:

She thinks she hasn’t got time for this.

She is ashamed because she doesn’t know what to do.

She is afraid that she will mess this up,

that she will let the kid down,

that even if she tries to help she will be no use.

She is wishing she could help,

wishing someone could tell her what to do,

wishing the problem could just have a happy ending,

wishing that the student did not have to suffer

wishing that school could just be about learning,

wishing they had taught her how to deal with

t his when she was still at Uni ...
I ask the observers what it takes for a student to come and ask for help. *Guts. Courage.* The investigation has illustrated that contrary to folk understandings, help-seeking is an act of courage, not of weakness or betrayal.

The new text of the Hidden Thoughts both emerges from and disrupts the demonising stereotype of nervous victim and unsupportive teacher that we have just seen played. A tapestry of anger, fear, hope, love, regret, sadness, blame and shame is threaded into the original scenario. The teacher has now been richly woven and thus can be recognised differently. The collective re-imagining speaks a different teacher into being.

This becomes one of those ‘unexpected acts of recognition’ that Butler (2007) believes can create new norms through which to understand the self and the other. The paradox of both singularity and commonality that Butler describes as part of the yearning for recognition is at play here. The text of the Hidden Thoughts shows the teacher and the student to be similar in their humanity as well as separate and differently positioned.

There is an atmosphere of intimacy as the Hidden Thoughts speak. The speaking is a form of gift. The revelatory act is a form of (embodied) exposure. The ‘truth-speaker’ requires courage to speak that which is not normally spoken (Foucault 2001). There is always a risk in the giving, or in the exposure. The recipient (and the speaker) may be affected by *the act of giving* as well as by the story (Butler 2007). In this instance, both courage and generosity seems to be at play.

**Acknowledgment**

The students are due to leave. I ask the groups to give each person a chance to identify something that they valued about the session. After allowing a few minutes for this dialogue, I ask if any of them would like to pass on some of their comments to the whole class. The teachers are quick to respond and take the opportunity to thank the students for their wisdom and honesty.
The students leave and the teachers take a short break before returning to complete the final hour of their seminar. When they return from their break they are aglow with positive comments about the students and the value of working with them. You actually get to talk with them in a way that is just not possible when you are being the teacher on teaching rounds. You see it from their side. I didn’t know they knew so much about what we do.

Commentary

In this workshop the devices used have invited the participants re-teach each other how to read each other. In speaking as coaches, key informants and ‘hidden thoughts’, the students show up as wise, insightful, committed and helpful. Thus the devices used provide an opportunity for the students to show themselves differently and consequently for the teachers to re-consider who young people are. Through playing with the students in ‘The Complaints Game’, and through seeking knowledge from them in the consultant groups, the adults show themselves to be human and thus the students can re-read them. The teachers dismantle the dominant categorising knowledge about ‘youth’ as rude, rebellious, resistant or at-risk, and the students jostle their assumptions that teachers are confining, judgmental and distant. The key mechanism of learning across the boundaries has been that of re-cognition. It is in recognising each other that the players mutually create and affirm each other’s identities. In re-cognising each other, or in seeing new aspects of the other, the players dismantle the defining characteristics of the category into which they place the other, or the self, and re-assemble the category, allowing for new and more generous definition.

Teacher Workshop Two: Research Acts

Overview

In the story of the second workshop with the teachers and the students, I demonstrate the way in which the dramas constructed by the participants function as research texts in that the players gather, select and interpret data, and selectively fashion it to
represent their interpretations. The drama then becomes a form of participatory action research as the participants work together to define problems and create solutions. I discuss the use of dramatised scenarios and ‘The Alternative Futures Game’ to enact new models of interaction between students and teachers and in this to generate a discourse of possibility.

Orientation: Problem-Identification

The players assemble a week later for their second workshop together. We begin with the mingling exercise. Each time I sound the bell, I ask them to form pairs and I assign them a topic for a mini two-way interview. I organise for a few rotations. The topics covered include what did your best-ever teacher do that worked for you? and what helps you to stick at it when you find the ‘school’ work hard?

Through this dialogue the participants teach each other about what supports their learning, whilst at the same time re-inventing that it is possible for them to communicate about issues of shared concern.

I organise for them to form groups of 4-6 in size with a membership of both teachers and students. I ask them to sit on the floor in a talking circle and to brainstorm around the question: What are some of the things that you believe shouldn’t happen at school but do sometimes?

Both the students and the teachers work as key informants, engaged in the problem identification process.

After a short time to talk, I ask them to select one of the issues that they think is both important and common and to devise a ‘photograph’ that captures this problem. They will need to involve all their players and have their picture ready for a ‘reading’ by the class in three minutes. They set to work building their images.

I choose the ‘photograph’ convention as I want the players to distil the essential elements of their selected problem. The device requires them to focus
on the issues inherent in the image, rather than on details of narrative, personality or character. This task calls upon the players to select from their data (the brainstorm) and consider how to best represent their choice so as to communicate their meaning (interpretation) to their audience. To do this, they must first interpret and make their own meaning of their data. In this task then, they conduct a small piece of qualitative research that results in a performance text that can be read, interpreted, contested, defended and altered.

The groups show their images and the observers ‘read’ them. One shows the absolute boredom of the students as the teacher does lecture-style teaching. Another shows someone being harassed by their peers while the teacher ignores what is going on. Some show groups of students harassing a peer. Others show teachers embarrassing or shaming students in front of the class.

**Impact Statements**

I ask the players to make *impact statements* in which they comment on the effect such situations can have on a student’s sense of self and/or to their application to learning. Some poignant and insightful observations are made.

*When the teacher is not even interested how can you be interested?*

*When you think no one likes you it can be hard to even come to school.*

*You just want to give up if the teacher is sarcastic and makes you look like a failure in front of the class.*

The images provide a generic base around which to speak. They become a data set in their own right. In making the impact statements, the students interpret the data that has been put on display.

**Creating ‘Alternative Futures’**

I ask the participants to identify which are the problems shown in the images that they would most like to do further work on. By consensus they identify the boredom scenarios. When I ask what it is about the boredom issue that captures their attention, one of the students identifies – *Well at school we actually want to learn. I know we*
don’t show it – but still – we do. A teacher adds – and that is our struggle – how to teach well.

The choice surprises to me as I anticipate that they would choose to work with a social justice focus on one of the scenarios involving bullying. They have chosen however to address the core issue of ‘teaching well’. Perhaps teaching well is a justice issue in the eyes of the students. For the teachers it is certainly a foremost concern. Perhaps the students have attuned to this, sensing this is where they can make the best contribution to the teachers.

I invite one of the groups who had created a boredom scenario to show it again and then ask each of the groups to design a counter-picture to that stimulus – a picture that will show what an engaged class would look like. Each group works to designs an image, using their students as consultants.

‘The Alternative Futures Game’ is solution-focussed, rather than problem-focussed. Players are asked to create the image of possible and desirable alternative futures to sit against the ‘probable and common futures’ that have just been shown in the scenarios. The task calls for the creation of a sense of hope and possibility. Without it the risk is that the work will disempower rather than empower the new teachers. We can learn (and teach) the pessimistic patterns of thinking that lead to helplessness. Our explanatory models and our capacity to envisage alternative futures has an influence on our actions and on our persistence in the face of resistance (Seligman 1995).

In the dramatisation process it is quite easy to show the worst-case scenario, and to stop when one has revealed the problem. On an aesthetic level this can be quite satisfying. However, on political and ethical levels, this is not satisfying. When we engage in presenting only the ‘bad stories’ we reduce the possibility for action (Fine, Weiss et al. 2003). Change depends on the creation of “the conditions of possibility – the discourses which prescribe not only what is desirable, but what is recognisable as an acceptable form of
subjectivity” (Davies, Dormer et al 2001:172). Thus, I devise this exercise for us to reach the point of shaping and creating what is possible.

I organise for the groups to present their work to the class. The images variously show students taking a lead in class presentations; students engaged in collaborative exercises; and the teacher looking excited whilst engaged in an animated presentation. In between the reading of each picture, I ask a few students to comment on the difference such teaching makes to their experience of school and engagement in learning. They are quick to note

*All those teacher tricks they use just to keep you quiet but not to actually teach anything – you know – like putting videos on and giving you lots of worksheets – they just waste our time.*

*The teachers who are interested teach you the best. The ones who just do the text book are the worst.*

*It’s good when they get you involved in doing activities.*

To conclude the session I invite them to turn again to their group for interchange of questions and responses. I can see the rapidity with which the teachers fire questions at their students and the energy with which the responses are given. I am not privy to what is exchanged in this ‘consultants game’, but I can see that it is fully in play.

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**Commentary**

In this session the participants have worked as co-investigators. This class has been a small ‘research act’ following a particular logic of the enquiry. The ‘logic’ has unfolded as follows. The initial research question launches the enquiry: *What happens at school that shouldn’t happen?* The participants are gathered in small focus groups. They generate a list. This is the initial data set. The focus groups then select from their data set, considering: *Which of these items do you think is the most important to communicate to your audience?* This question positions the participants as researching within a change agenda. In this the ‘research act’ can be seen as a form of action research. The players work for a while as a small self-directed focus group engaging in work akin to consciousness-raising. In this aspect the small group task
resembles the use of focus groups in the traditions of participatory and feminist enquiry and the telling of story becomes a form of research with a social change agenda (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005).

In the subsequent task the players explore the problem of how to represent their data. They consider *How best can we use the genre of the image to communicate our understanding of this issue to our audience?* This process of making the image (the research text) involves them in discussing questions such as *What will we include/omit? What story/ies will our image tell? How will we construct this or that part of the picture so as to ensure that it carries our meaning?* These are the questions that the qualitative researcher engages with as she writes the research text (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Elliott 2005; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005).

The images (research texts) are presented to the audience for a ‘reading’. This triggers a second layer of consciousness raising and analysis as the audience interprets what they read. They consider the credibility, authenticity and transferability of what is presented, asking *How does this image help me to think about life? How is this story also my/your story?* and *What can be generalised from this?* The aesthetic product is read as a form of narrative data, which then itself becomes available for further interpretation. The criteria of credibility, trustworthiness and transferability, used to inform a reading of both the aesthetic (form) and the message or story (content), are those identified as relevant in the constructivist qualitative research paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln 2005).

The cycle is repeated as the participants respond to the selected image (in this case the picture of boredom) and make and then show their counter-image of an alternative future. To make the counter-image they must engage in imaginative dialogue in which they co-create and enact an emancipatory vision of a preferred future. In this the work resides in the tradition of emancipatory forms of research which position the participants to engage in transformative and liberatory praxis through participatory projects (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005).
The implicit understanding is that the solutions must be co-created. In this the players have been positioned (and in turn position each other) into a responsibility for their actions. The focus of ‘The Alternative Futures Game’ is on the telling of positive tales as a way to have players generate a sense of what is possible. The untold pieces of our stories can be used to evidence possibility and thus enable change (White and Epston 1990). Thus to focus on problems is useful in the diagnostic phase, but insufficient for the creation of solutions. For the solution to be more than the not-problem it requires first a creative hatching, a speaking into being. Change requires that we “expand our capacity to imagine the human” (Butler 2004: 228). Through the exchange of these stories, I believe that the capacity to re-imagine the teacher/student relationship is enhanced.

**Teacher Workshop Three: Applied Change-making**

**Overview**

In the story of the final workshop between the students and teachers I examine the use of dramatic play as mechanism to identify ethical and pragmatic challenges, to build applied skills and to rehearse for change. I argue that the combination of enactment, coaching and re-play, together with analysis conducted via the Hidden Thoughts device, enables participants to engage in a collective approach to change-making which interrupts the blaming scripts associated with dominant teacher/student binary. In this the approach provides a *collective pedagogy of applied change-making*.

**Orientation: Dealing with Difficult Moments**

Today we will focus on the challenge for the teacher of managing student misbehaviour. We will use some forum theatre techniques with the ‘spect-actors’ watching while the person in role as teacher leads the token class. The characters playing in the class will each receive a role card, which describes the behaviours and attitudes that their character is to show. We will role-rotate actors in and out of the student and teacher parts. When we are observers we will watch as if we are the coach for the teacher, and look to see how our advice can help the teacher play the game better.
**Framing the Simulated Class**

I set up a simulated class in the centre of the room with ten students allocated to play a range of roles defined by their character cards. Teacher volunteers will rotate through the role of *Teacher*, much in the style of forum theatre. The Teacher will deal with the student behaviour whilst teaching the introduction to a civics lesson in which the students are asked to develop a list questions that they would like to address to the Prime Minister at a press conference. The scene is framed to commence at the beginning of the day on a Monday.

The ten characters are assigned to roles ranging across a spectrum of receptivity. Four of them are enthusiastic learners; three are compliant but slow to start; one is preoccupied with distress in his/her private life; one is recovering from a weekend of partying; and one (*Tim/Tina*) exhibits aggressive attitudes to other students and to the teacher. Thus the simulated class consists of a core group of keen students, an additional few who will need some motivating and watching, two who will need quite a deal of motivating or some pastoral care, and one who will present as breaching rules, including anti-bullying rules. These role-cards are not revealed to the observers as their task is to ‘read’ the students in action as they would in a real teaching situation.

I choose to minimise the number of students manifesting ‘difficult’ behaviours. Most of the resistance, other than from *Tim/Tina*, would be low grade and involve behaviours such as talking, going off task, and playing with a mobile phone. I chose not to let the students select their own ‘type’ to play as I have found a tendency for actors to want to play transgressive student roles – acting out extremely resistant behaviour. This may simply be because these roles are fun to play. I wanted the teacher to have a reasonable chance of success and to allow for coaching in relation to specific behaviours.

*Tim/Tina* is instructed to arrive after the teacher has started the class, greet friends at the back of the class loudly, and try to join them on the back table even though there is no space there. He/she is to object if the teacher tries to seat him/her at the front table declaring that he/she won’t sit with *Leigh/Leah* as he/she is a ‘wog’.
Web of Compassion

The first volunteer playing Teacher initially tries to cajole Tim into sitting at the front, but ends up allowing Tim to drag a chair up to the back desk where he entertains his peers with tales of weekend exploits. The students around Tim go further off task and Teacher’s problem escalates. Unnoticed, Leigh has his hand up. Donna tells the class to quieten down, give the teacher a go, and get on with their work. She is ignored. The problems escalate.

I stop the scenario and ask the observers to speak the Hidden Thoughts of the teacher. Both teachers and students respond, calling out from where they sit in the observation circle.

*She is worried that by being too stern she will alienate the students.*

*She thinks if she is nice they will be nice.*

*She is afraid that if she confronts Tim she will lose, and her lack of power will be exposed.*

*She wants to be a really good teacher but she doesn’t know how.*

She thinks she should be strong but she feels weak.

Telling these thoughts creates a web of compassion for the teacher and a pointer to what she is missing in her reading of the class. She cannot see those who are in alignment with her, but only those who oppose her. She sees them as opposing her – and believes that the resistance is personal – whereas they are opposing ‘it’ (where ‘it’ is school/teacher/adult). She is struggling to build something worthwhile for the students, but she is feeling threatened and has no mental map to steer her through.

Commonly the discourse about teacher/student portrays the teacher as the one with the power. This analysis of the situation reveals that the teacher, whilst struggling to exert or maintain the power she (and the class) assumes she should have, is also a victim, and feels threatened by the power the group or certain individuals have over her.
Binary divisions are understood to “systematically disadvantage one half of each binary” (Davies 1996:12). Here it can be noted that the teacher/student binary disadvantages and confines both positions. The demonizing and subsequent confining of the relational possibilities between teacher and student can be a two-way game.

When I ask what the thoughts of the students are, various voices respond.

_The kids think it is her job to make them behave._

_Some of them are feeling invisible and unappreciated because they are actually trying to do the right thing but no one notices._

_Some of them are so wrapped up in impressing each other that they hardly notice the teacher._

_They are just stuck in their own issues and they can’t get out of that bubble._

When the students speak hidden thoughts for these various characters, they assist the teachers to read differences between students. They engage in a particular form of connoisseurship: noting and describing fine differences. The nervous teacher has operated as if the class has one amassed identity, sharing the disposition of one particularly visible student. Here the use of ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ helps to fracture the tendency in standpoint research for all members of a group to be ascribed the same characteristics (Thomson and Gunter 2007). Here it is noted that the students share both a collective identity and individual identities. In fact, each has their own story and different experience of being in the same class.

**Rehearsing the Self**

In a variant of the Director Game, students coach the teachers to trial different options. Some students give suggestions.

_You are talking too loud and standing right into their personal space._

_That will make the students think you don’t like them._

_It’s like you think they are criminals._

_Step back a bit and speak a bit softer on the volume._

Others step into the scene to show their ideas.
When a particularly effective interaction is modelled, I ask each of those who role-played the students to identify what difference was made to them in this variant of the scene, or why they responded differently. They name the teacher’s behaviours.

*It’s good when he has some spice in his lesson.*

He makes them feel like people in the way he talks with them not at them.

*The main thing is his respect – this teacher talks with respect!*

He gives good instructions to them started on the work.

The students name the teacher behaviours that have contributed to the security and engagement of the members of the simulated class. They focus on what the teacher has been doing, not just on what was said.

**The Advice Game**

I ask each of those who have played the part of the teacher to re-enter the performance space, in order to give advice to the teacher. I ask them to draw from their experience of having experimented in the role, from having observed the interplay of the simulated class with others who have played the teacher role, and from the insights they have gained from the hidden thoughts contributions. We hear a collection of considered and considerate advice.

Speaking about one’s self in the third person invites a distancing between identity and behaviour (as well as between player and character). It dislodges outcomes from intentions. I am not a bad teacher. I am a teacher who means to teach well but was not able to accomplish this. Through ‘The Advice Game’ we see that it can be hard to act in alignment with one’s intentions. The discrepancy between desired effect or intended action and what actually transpires is the gap between vision and practice. It is in acknowledging this gap that we create the opportunity for change.

**Advice to a Teacher**

It is time to bring this session and the Learning Partnership between these two groups to a close. I ask the students to stand across the front of the room, and in turn to give
one piece of advice each for the teachers to take away with them. The teachers sit on the floor looking attentively up at the students. The students stand in the position at the front traditionally reserved for the teacher. A ripple of advice issues from the line:

- Be friendly – but not too friendly
- Know where to draw the line or they will walk all over you
- Make the work interesting
- Treat the students with respect
- Show an interest in them
  - Be interested in what you are teaching or they won’t be

Each word offered drops into a deep pond of attention. The room is a container of listening. Each of the students speaks, this time in their ‘own’ voice, unframed by fictional play, framed rather by the expectant listening of the adults, by their attendant gaze, and by the question that invites them to contribute.

Our assessment of our listener shapes our speaking (Elliott 2005). Here, the teachers give a powerful listening. This can be seen in the still attention of their bodies, and the direction of their gaze. It can be heard in the resonant silence held open to catch each voice. The listening cradles the speaking.

- Smile and be friendly
- Be fair
- Never use sarcasm – they will hate you for that
- Don’t be shy to apologise if you make a mistake
- Don’t compare students to each other because they know they are all different
- Encourage them to have a go and believe in their future
- Praise effort more than grades
- Don’t have favourites
  - Listen to them – and then they will listen to you

The giving (and receiving) of advice constitutes an ethical game of the self. Each of the participants stands on the brink of the possibility that they will make a difference to others, just through their speaking, or through their attending. The students’ focus is on contributing to the teachers, in order that
they in turn might contribute to their future students. The teachers are alert to how best they can become the type of teacher they desire to be. Shaping the ‘conditions of possibility’ is deeply ethical work (Davies 2007), for it is within these conditions that teachers and students get to play out themselves in schools.

I thank the students and the teachers for the way in which they have worked to contribute both to their own and each other’s learning. One of the teachers gives a comprehensive speech of thanks.

There is a celebratory feel to this last exercise. The interaction has been an accomplishment against the tide of the norm. The students and teachers have been partners in the business of education. There has been some knowledge created between these people, some construction of new truths, which may become a new power.

The students leave, smiling, shaking hands, accepting thanks, offering good wishes.

This is not the usual manner in which they exit from their classrooms. They have contributed and this has a different look. They have been heralded, and it has a different sound. Perhaps they carry a new story of the possibility of partnership between teachers and students. Possibly they have a story that will provide its own substantiating memory.

Commentary
The story of this workshop illustrates the way in which the positioning of the students as coach calls forth a deeply ethical engagement with the challenge of teaching. As both teachers and students circle the problem of the ‘difficult’ or resistant class, they observe the ‘games’ that are played. With the use of role-rotation through the teacher role, players examine how the teacher’s stance affects the students’ sense of themselves and their willingness to persist in the classroom. Because they work through enactment, the players create both an embodied and cerebral knowledge of
the characters. Because they interchange through the roles, the challenges can be recognised as both specific and general, individual and shared.

I demonstrate how the Hidden Thoughts device enables the players to articulate a deeper knowledge and make compassionate and multifarious readings of the desires and fears that inform each of the character’s behaviours. Through this game they can articulate both that which is usually spoken and that which is withheld, and find ways to speak about both the conscious and subliminal knowledge of the character.

I draw upon Davies understanding of the importance of the ‘conditions of possibility’ and of ‘speaking new models into existence’ as essential in enabling change. I argue that this collective approach to problem-solving and solution creation shows promise because it interrupts the blaming scripts associated with dominant teacher/student binary. In this the process provides a collective pedagogy of applied change-making.

Summary

In the story of these three workshops I have illustrated how various drama techniques called upon the participants to play themselves in particular ways. Naturalistic scenarios called forth the dominant stories of the teacher and student types. Additional anti-naturalistic devices were used to reveal and disrupt these norms. This occurred through parody, through the rupturing practices of ‘The Truth Game’, and through the poly-vocal practices of ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’. Outside the fictional domain the participants also engaged in some role-reversal. At times the students became the coaches and the adults became the pupils. At other times the participants were positioned as co-investigators of the issues, engaging in two-way interviews and reading, reality-testing and re-reading the dramatised stories of their own experience. They also engaged together as co-creators of the dramatic texts, responding to the problematization inherent in the tasks, and applying thought in relation to the questions. Each of these different techniques called upon the players to represent the self and the other in particular ways, and hence they provided an opportunity to develop different sorts of knowledge. Together the participants engaged in detecting discourses, deconstructing stories, developing critical theory, contesting explanatory
models, re-imagining the future, rehearsing for change, and generating a more generous typology for both student and teacher.

I drew upon the poststructuralist theory as a frame through which to analyse the function of these techniques. I used the discussion of discourse and positioning provided by Foucault and Davies to identify the way in which the role-play should be understood as a form of rule-play in which will be replicated the social and cultural norms of the dominant discourse, and the positions and storylines learnt as part of these norms. I argued that if the drama is to more than replicate the dominant understanding of reality, additional modes of play must be sought through which to reveal these shaping scripts.

I drew upon Butler’s theory that giving an account of one’s self entails the risk of ‘exposure’, but that this gift can produce the ‘unexpected acts of recognition’ that she believes can create new norms through which to understand the self and the other. I argue that the Hidden Thoughts device calls for the players to take this risk, and invites them to re-imagine and thus to re-recognise the other. I employ Foucault’s work on parrhessia (or the courage of the one who performs a civic duty in their truth-speaking) to conceptualise the use of devices such as the Truth Game, the Reality-Testing Game and the Hidden Thoughts Game as technologies of the self which are ethical, aesthetic and pragmatic in orientation, concerned as they are with enabling the players to live in accordance with their beliefs. I build on the concept of parrhessia to demonstrate that the courage of the truth-speaker can also be called forth by the integrity and generosity of the listener, in this building upon the listener-response theory of theorists such as Elliot (2005) who points to the way in which our assessment of the listener governs the tales we will tell.

I draw upon theorists of the methodology of participatory action research to discuss the way in which the dramas function as a form of shared data collection and analysis which is oriented towards producing change (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). I highlight the way in which the dramas became the research texts of the participatory action research process and provide an opportunity for participants to build the relational environment, which produces the sense of empowerment crucial to change.
I demonstrate how the players can use the drama to create and enact new possibilities that interrupt or overlay the dominant storyline, discourse or positioning of student/teacher, in this creating *new possibilities for action*. Here I draw upon the discussion of identity, housed in Chapter Four. In particular I note that Butler and Davies distinguish the importance of hope and possibility in creating change. I argue that the work in the imaginary domain creates new possibilities when it assists players to dismantle defining boundaries and to dislodge dominant binaries.

**What’s Next?**

In the next chapter I engage in a comparative analysis of the methodology as applied in the context of the medical partnerships. I argue that the methodology produces similar epistemological results in different circumstances, and in this has validity as a method through which to conduct participatory and enabling enquiry.
Chapter Nine: Positioning and Pedagogy

Introduction
In this chapter I provide a comparative analysis of the workshops run in the Medical program. Due to the constraints of this thesis I do not provide the same level of detail as with Education case-stories. Rather I focus on the validity and versatility of the methodology as a form of participatory enquiry; on the epistemological value of positioning young people as coaches as well as actors; and upon the use of drama as a pedagogical tool for applied learning.

There is good basis for comparison between the Education and the Medical programs as I led them with the same class of drama students, and used the same teaching methodology. The key differences relate to the curriculum focus - serving the tightly defined needs of the medical curriculum - and the different character of the target group: medical students, henceforth referred to as ‘medics’.

In making the comparison I highlight six key similarities in the function of the methodology. These relate to:

1. the use of the drama pedagogy as a tool for applied learning. Both sets of workshops provide opportunities for reflection-in-action during the simulation, and reflection-on-action supported by the diagnostic critique and coaching following the exercises.

2. the positioning of the stakeholders in a form of participatory action research. Both sets of participants work together to diagnose their challenges and to fashion and trial solutions.

3. the ethical orientation of the enquiry. The purpose of the workshops is to contribute to the betterment of the community and to the development of the participants.

4. the focus on catching the discourses at play in shaping the relational patterns of the school or clinic. The workshops lead the participants through a process of discourse detection.
5. the identity work that the participants engage in via a set of ‘technologies of the self’. The participants engage in rehearsal, role-reversal and critical analysis as a means through which to work upon the self.

6. the meta-messages that are transmitted about the possibility of working in partnership.

Data Sources

Just as it did with the Education case-story, my analysis of the Medical workshops is based on the experience of leading the work with a number of different cohorts during the active data collection phase of my research. This involved three cohorts of students and eighteen cohorts of medics in 2003-4. I use my reflective notes and session plans as a source of data, as well as a sample of 6 video-tapes of the workshops. My analysis is also informed by the experience of continuing to lead this work as the project expanded into four of the ten Learning Partnerships schools in 2005-7. During this time I worked with an additional nine classes of drama students, delivering the program to twenty-four cohorts of medics. This has provided a rich opportunity to continue to observe the effects of the same methodology used with an expanding target population.

Just as it did with the Education program, the involvement of the students in the workshops takes place as part of the their drama curriculum. Each cohort of medics attends just one 100 minute workshop with the students, whereas, the drama class works with three cohorts of medics across the school term, with typically a two to four week interval between sessions. The Medical workshops take place in the school drama classroom, not the University, to give the medics a chance to reacquaint themselves with the world of school and to re-consider its importance in the lives of young people.

Curriculum Focus of the Medical program

The Learning Partnerships program serves the section of the medical curriculum in which the medics are taking a unit on adolescent health in the final year of their university training. A key learning in adolescent health is that young people are
relatively free of disease, and are most likely to need medical help in relation to issues such as sexuality, substance use and mental health.

The objective of the workshop is for the medics to develop their skills in using a framework for conducting a psychosocial screening of a young person. The framework directs them to talk with their patient about Home, Education, Activities, Drugs, Sex and Self-harm (HEADSS) (Goldenring and Cohen 1988), thereby to gain a sense of the risk and protective factors at play in the young person’s world. To be effective in using this screening tool doctors must be highly skilled at asking suitably framed questions, and be able to offer a listening that is free of judgment or moralising advice (Sanci and Young 1995; Bonomo and Sawyer 2001). So the medics need to learn how to question in such a way as to support the patient in telling their story.

The use of role-play with ‘simulated patients’ is well-documented in medical training, where the opportunity for rehearsal and feedback has been demonstrated to improve the clinicians’ technical and relational skills (Denholm and Wilkinson 1997; Eagles, Calder et al. 2001; Henderson and Johnson 2002; Sanci, Day et al. 2002; Brown, Doonana et al. 2005; Schultz and Marks 2007). However, the discussion of this learning is generally focused on the acquisition of communication skills, as if it is the presence of skills alone that will facilitate the desired professional behaviour. A poststructuralist perspective raises the possibility that attention will also need to be given to the way in which professional behaviour is moderated by the shaping discourses which both influence perception and pattern behaviour. In this program, I aim not only to provide an opportunity for the medics to develop their interviewing skills, but also to invite them to re-frame the categories of ‘adolescent’, ‘patient’ and ‘doctor’.

The Case Character

The school students prepare ‘Jo’, the character that the medics will engage with in the role-play. I designed Jo’s case-story to meet the requirements of the medical curriculum and to account for the comfort and vulnerabilities of the school students. This case story was developed during an earlier phase of my work with doctors and
incorporated consultations with the medical teaching staff and with school students.

\begin{boxedtext}
Jo

(Jo is played as male or female, depending on the sex of the actor.)

Jo is 16. S/he gets average grades at school. S/he likes school because friends are there. S/he is keen to be at parties or out with friends whenever possible because home is not so good since dad left (when s/he was 12).

S/he smokes cigarettes regularly (4 per day) and occasionally cannabis. Smoking affects his/her asthma, which has been around since s/he was a baby. S/he knows it is stupid (and swears to Mum that it is only his/her friends that smoke). S/he does it because s/he is sick of being clucked over by Mum and it makes him/her feel older.

Drinking also helps to get confidence up, especially at parties. S/he usually just gets a bit tipsy but has been really drunk twice (a few months ago). The first time it made Jo sick. The second time s/he had unprotected sex. Afterwards s/he regretted it happened and got very stressed about it. It was with someone s/he hardly knew. This person had a reputation for sleeping around with a different partner on any given weekend. In the back of his/her mind is an anxiety about Sexually Transmitted Infections – could s/he have caught something? (Female Jo knows she is not pregnant but had a few days of worrying which was very stressful.)

A serious asthma attack happened at a party last week. Jo had not been drinking but was smoking more than usual, including a joint, and the room was small and very smoky. It was very scary as friends just thought s/he was drunk and it was sometime before someone called an ambulance. Now mum wants his/her asthma medication reviewed, and Jo is trying to cover up the smoking and the fact that s/he had not been taking her preventer medication regularly.
\end{boxedtext}

**Preparing the Drama Students**

To prepare the students for the work with the medics, I lead four 100 minute preparatory sessions. One key difference between this preparatory curriculum and that of the Education program is that the students must learn to play the character ‘Jo’ and develop the skills of dropping in and out of role, shifting from actor to coach in order
to give formative feedback to the medic. They must also develop their capacity to play Jo differently in response to the way the Doctor is played. The aim is for the actor playing Jo to become a sensitive register to the efficacy and trustworthiness of the Doctor. This entails playing Jo in a more open and responsive manner when the Doctor is doing well, and maintaining a more closed or defensive response if the Doctor is read to be judgmental or patronising. In this the actor must attune to the developing relations between the characters as well as to the experiences arising from Jo’s history. To do this they must engage in a form of critical analysis, attending to patterns of power associated with the positions that the different characters occupy.

Control and Compassion

In the first of the four workshops I use mixing games to build a sense of ensemble, and to develop the sense of control associated with the stop/start mode of moving in and out of play. I then use ‘The Strategies Game’ as a means through which Jo can explore different ways in which s/he might interact with parents, peers and the doctor. By experimenting with pursuing their wants via different strategies - for example wheedling, whinging, demanding or imploring - the players attune to the way in which the approach of one character calls forth re-actions from the other. In the Education program this game alerted the players to the power play that occurs between teachers and students. Here it assists the players to become a sensitive register to the mode of play delivered by the Doctor.

Role-Reversal and Re-cognition of the Other

I use the ‘The Role-Reversal Game’ to ensure that each of the players rotates through the roles of Doctor, Patient and Parent, and encounters the challenges associated with each position. It is through playing the role of the Doctor that the students discover how hard it is to put their own good advice into practice. You know you should be giving this kid respect and not judging him, then before you can help it you just end up sounding preachy. It is really hard to actually BE a good doctor! Just as the experience of role-rotation alerted the students to the challenge of being an effective teacher, here it attunes them to the challenges associated with effective communication between doctor and patient. In both cases the experience of playing in
the professional role assists the students to relinquish their initial accusatory standpoint and develop a degree of compassion for the professional.

**Role-Reversal and Reflective Distancing**

The ‘Role-Reversal Game’ also assists the actor to work in a more distanced way with each of the characters, first experiencing, in role, their needs and constraints, and then working out of role to recount and discuss them. This entails a shift from the experiential to the cognitive domain. Once in this reflective mode, the students shift fluidly between different sorts of thinking. There are questions about the **pragmatic**: ‘What can the Doctor do to get the Mother out of the room?’ and the **ethical**: ‘If the Doctor lies to the Mother, how will Jo know whether to trust him?’ This evolves at times into a more **political** commentary about the doctor/patient relationship. ‘The Doctor doesn’t have all the power. Jo can just choose to lie or to shut down.’ The students’ comments are also interspersed with readings of the **embodied** and the **aesthetic**: ‘It makes a difference how the Doctor sits and even how he looks at Jo’. These lines of observation become part of the students’ broader **epistemological** engagement with the material. ‘If Jo sort of gives a bit of the story now, won’t that help the doctor to learn that he is on the right track with his questions?’ The work also inevitably involves the students in making **ontological** readings of the situation. ‘If you just feel he is being a patronising creep, you will never tell him what you have been up to, even if he does do the confidentiality statement on you’. Thus stepping in and out of the roles stimulates a range of different types of thinking.

**From Critic to Coach**

In the second preparatory workshop, I organise for the student who has just played Jo to practice giving their peer, who has just played the Doctor, some feedback on what **helped to get Jo talking?** and What else could the doctor do to help Jo to open up? Having struggled to play the role of the Doctor, they have a sense of what s/he might want help with. **It’s hard to find the right words, and be sort of professional and safe, but also friendly.** Like, if you can’t talk about sex without getting all embarrassed, **then your patient is just going to shut down.** Now they practice the coach role and deal with the challenge of delivering formative feedback. Through this exercise they
build a shared repository of ‘advice’ about what constitutes effective practice on the part of the doctor. This is a parallel activity to that of developing advice for the teacher.

Their positioning as future coach invites them to become investigators of the doctor/patient relationship. It means they must keep their eye upon the learning, both their own, and that which they hope to produce in the medics, and upon the difference that might be made in the ‘real’ world through their work. To be positioned to contribute is empowering. However, to avoid disempowering those we aim to serve it is necessary to also locate oneself as a learner (Clark 2002). Here, the purposeful positioning as learner/coach invites an ethical, political, and pragmatic engagement as well as an aesthetic engagement with the material.

Deepening and Deconstruction

In the third preparatory workshop I aim for the students to develop a deeper reading of the characters. They must become more than just token types to practice upon. To do this, I employ ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’. Here, just as in the Education program, the device invites the players to knit a complexity into their characters.

I use ‘The Truth Game’ as a way to examine what it would take for Jo to reveal his/her story to the Doctor. Just as in the Education program, the game is useful in assisting the students to articulate what it is that they feel the need to withhold. They identify fear of judgment or disapproval and the desire to be appropriate as the forces that moderate their accounts. In this, playing ‘The Truth Game’ helps players to note that the character is not entirely a free agent, but is somehow shaped and scripted. In the struggle to play the game they begin to catch the discourse at play.

Critical Perspectives

In the final preparatory workshop I use absurdist techniques to involve the students in exploring some of the psychological and social issues at play in Jo’s life, in this aiming to deepen their critical engagement with the material. I set the students to work in groups to depict ‘Jo’s Nightmare’. Working within the heightened form of
physical theatre, they depict psychologised interpretations of Jo’s situation. They portray Jo’s desire for acceptance; for independence and release from the suffocating care of the mother; resentment at the parental separation; fear of death and frustration at the asthmatic condition that singles him/her out from peers. I ask the players to observe each other’s scenes from the perspective of the Dream Therapist. In ‘reading’ the dreams, they are required to articulate a range of interpretations about what might be causing Jo’s behaviour.

In order to invite a more sociological, rather than psychologised perspective, I use ‘The Anthropomorphic Game’. In role as objects - Jo’s Mobile Phone, Text Book, Ventolin Puffer and Cigarette Pack - they argue about who is the most significant influence in Jo’s life. Cast as Jo’s Lungs, Brain and Ears, they discuss whether Jo should give up smoking. In role as Jo’s Family Photo, Basketball Trophy, School Report, and Teddy, they put forward competing views about the aspect of life that Jo finds it hardest to deal with.

Just as when working through the absurdist mode in the Education program, the students find alternative explanatory models through which to read Jo’s situation. Through the non-human characters, they speak in a more sociological way about issues such as the transition from childhood to adulthood, and about the influence of media, business, schooling, family and peers upon the actions of the young.

Detecting the way in which the personal is also the political or the patterned is essential in critical theorising (Kincheloe and McLaren 2005). However, reasoned critique is not of itself transformative. One can detect patterns without losing the orienting desires and fears through which one is held in play within these patterns (Janks 2003). Here, rather than relying simply on rational analysis, the students are invited to use parody, satire, and humour to generate critical perspectives. This mode of play allows for consideration of the affective nature of our attachment to certain illogical positions and invites a transgressive debunking of the norms that have a grip on our behaviour.
The Shared Workshops

When the time comes for the shared workshops the medics seem less at ease than the teachers, perhaps because they are off territory - at the school - and have not had the exposure to large groups of students that the teachers have had. Despite this initial challenge, the meet and greet exercise works to mix participants and soon an energised atmosphere of connection pervades the room.

Assigned to work in pairs, the medics, playing the role of the General Practitioner, begin the task of trying out a ‘HEADSS’ style screening with their patient ‘Jo’. This gives the medics an opportunity to discover where their own discomfort might lie in conducting such an interview, and where they might meet resistance from their patient. After some time in role, the play is stopped. Out of role, the students take up the coaching task and give the medics some feedback.

As the screening progresses, the Doctor works through the increasingly sensitive layers of the consultation. At various intervals we work in the plenary mode, using a forum theatre approach to coach those in the Doctor role, and the ‘hidden thoughts’ device to locate the needs and concerns of the characters. Thus we move between applied problem-solving, deconstruction and critical analysis.

Re-Framing the Adolescent

The forthright and diverse nature of the students’ comments when operating as coaches is a contrast to the withheld and semi-articulate mode of being displayed when in role as Jo. When coaching, the students demonstrate that people their age should not be confined within the limiting and problematised teen stereotype. If the medics were simply to encounter the adolescents as ‘simulated patients’ they would get to improve their skills (Luck and Peabody 2002), but may not stretch their thinking about the capacity of young people. The overt curriculum would teach that adolescents are needy and the hidden curriculum would reinforce this because the students would not show up as the coach. The hidden curriculum for the students would similarly maintain their lesser position. Whilst they could take pride in being the actor, they would not get to additionally discover themselves as the co-teacher.
The simulation would replicate the dominant role of the doctor over the patient, one seeking help whilst the other provides. Under the ‘medical gaze’ the ‘patient’ is likely to show up as unwell, at-risk, or in need of specialised assistance (Lupton 2002). At the very least the patient will be assessed and thus categorised against normative standards, for this is the purpose of screening. As Foucault has argued, these mechanisms of classification and segregation shape the ways in which we understand and play out ourselves, as well as the way we perceive others. Were the doctors and the teenagers only to play from these defining positions, and not to also engage in critical dialogue and shared problem-solving, there would be no opportunity for them to re-frame each other and to re-cognise each other as existing beyond these limiting categories.

So the boundary crossing in which young people are re-positioned as coaches and co-investigators is integral in creating the understanding that young people are already citizens who are capable of sharing responsibility for learning and wellbeing with their fellow community members (Giroux 1992). In this the re-positioning of the young people from recipient to co-provider is integral to the architecture of both the Medical and the Education program.

**Beyond a Skills Focus**

The process of trial, coaching and replay makes transparent the effect one character is having on the other. If Jo feels judged s/he will not reveal that s/he needs help. If the doctor feels inadequate or embarrassed s/he will tend to avoid or skate over the more sensitive issues and thus diminish the possibility that s/he can be of any use. Thus it is not sufficient to focus solely on developing the knowledge and skill of the doctor. It is also necessary to attend to the ‘invisible rules’ or discourses that will influence one’s sense of what is appropriate. To attain a greater degree of agency, we must recognize the constitutive power of discourses, catch them at play in shaping our thoughts and actions, and engage in collective processes of re-writing and re-positioning ourselves (Davies 1993). Thus an effective education activity will expose these pressures, and provide the opportunity for participants to find ways to traverse the limiting norms and to create scripts that will permit more authentic communication.
**Similarities in Function**

Despite the quite different curriculum goals in the Medical and Education programs the drama methodologies perform a similar epistemological function. In the following section I discuss six key similarities in function. These include the use of drama as a tool for applied learning; the conduct of a form of participatory action research; the ethical nature of the enquiry; the attempt to catch the discourses at play; the identity work conducted via the ‘technologies of the self’; and the meta-messages transmitted about the capacity of young people.

**A Tool for Applied Learning**

The most obvious similarity between the two programs relates to the use of the drama as a *tool for applied learning*. The role-plays provide a mechanism for rehearsal and reflexive skill development. During the simulation, the learning occurs both through rehearsal - taking the action - and through the immediate feedback loop provided by the reaction of the other - the in-role, real time responses to one’s actions. This ‘feedback’ occurs in the first person and in the present tense, providing the opportunity for what Schön (1987) would call ‘reflection-in-action’.

An additional layer of feedback is made available via the location of the ‘client’ as the coach. The student, as coach, appraises what was working well in the simulation and makes recommendations about what else may assist. This feedback shifts between past and future tense, shifting between ‘that was good *when…*’ and ‘*it would be good if…*’. This invites what Schön would term reflection-on-action, or a thinking back on what happened in order to inform oneself for future action.

Thus, in both the Education program and the Medical program the applied nature of the learning entails a combination of reflection-in-action, a form of experiment in real time as players hypothesis-as-they-go and trial their interventions moment by moment, and a form of recursive reflection-on-action, as the players are given coaching, reflect back upon what was learnt in the experiment, and imagine forward into future scenarios.
A Form of Participatory Action Research

A second similarity with the Education program is that the work functions as *a form of participatory action research*. In communicating together, the medics and ‘patients’ (or teachers and students) develop an understanding of their shared problems and explore the possibility of certain responses or solutions. The positioning of students as coaches and key informants as well as actors, and the use of experiment and reflection as a learning strategy, invites both adults and young people to work as co-investigators. The collective mode of play provides opportunity for sharing and recognition to occur *within* the membership groups as well as *between* them. The collective approach promotes a sense of responsibility and accountability.

An Inherently Ethical Enquiry

A third similarity in the function of the methodology relates to the *ethical nature of the questions* that the players are invited to engage with. The work focuses on how the actions of one character will affect another, or upon how broader institutionalised practices affect those who work within the clinic or the school. Each question or scenario explored contributes a thread in the ethical web that is woven across the enquiry. Further, the participants engage in the work in order that those about to become teachers and doctors might be able to better serve the needs of their future students and patients. So the work is done in order that others might benefit. The transformative goals are social as well as personal.

Tools for Catching the Discourses at Play

A fourth similarity in the function of the methodology relates to its use as *a tool through which to catch the discourses at play*. In both the Medical and the Education programs, a poststructuralist perspective is invited through use of activities such as ‘The Truth Game’ and ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’. These devices invite the players to articulate the morass of desires, assumptions, beliefs, norms and fears that influence the characters, and it can be distinguished that there is such a phenomena as a set of discourses that shape thinking and behaviour. Once the given is noted it can be more readily questioned, and the questioning itself can carve out a space in which new possibilities can emerge.
Technologies of the Self

A fifth similarity in the function of the methodology resides in the identity work that the participants are called upon to do. The enquiry practices conducted through and about the drama comprise a series of "technologies of the self". They amount to a set of practices through which to imagine the other and to question, to know, to rehearse, and to shape the self. These practices include overt consideration of how coherence and integrity can be maintained between the personal and the professional.

Meta-Messages

A sixth similarity in the function of the methodology resides in the meta-messages that are transmitted as part of the cumulative effect of engaging in the applied learning, the participatory enquiry, the shaping of the self, and the attempt to catch the discourses at play. The meta-messages transmitted are about the possibility of partnership between adults and youth, the capacity of young people to contribute, and the humanity of the other.

Summary

In this chapter I have compared the Medical and the Education programs and analysed the similarities in the epistemological function of the teaching methodology. I have suggested that the methodology performs a similar function in engaging the participants in a form of ethically oriented participatory enquiry, which in turn supports a collective exploration of those discourses which shape relations in the school and the clinic. Engaging in this enquiry also constitutes a form of work upon the self as the participants experiment with playing themselves differently, and re-learn who each other are. The cumulative effect of engaging in this work together engenders a new possibility in partnership between adults and youth, and invites a re-conceptualisation of the doctor/patient and teacher/student relationship.
What’s Next?
In the next chapter I theorise what it is about particular drama conventions that engenders a critical enquiry. I analyse the use of a range of the conventions to assist in deconstruction through the drama. I provide a theorised discussion of how these conventions ‘work’ as tools through which to enable a shift from a humanist reading of reality to a poststructuralist engagement with the discourses that shape behaviour.
Chapter 10: Deconstruction through the Drama

Introduction
In this chapter I build upon the case-stories of the previous three chapters to theorise the use of drama conventions as tools through which to engage in poststructuralist enquiry into the discourses that shape thinking and behaviour. I discuss the specific drama conventions that I modified to facilitate deconstruction through the drama, using as a basis the experience of applying them within the Learning Partnerships program.

I draw on theory developed by those using narrative as a poststructuralist mode of enquiry, drawing parallels between the task of the writer in selecting modes, frames and genres within which to represent their research and my work using the drama as a tool for change-oriented enquiry. This theory, together with analysis of my practical experience informs my discussion of the use of these conventions to facilitate a poststructuralist approach to understanding and working upon the self.

My analysis of these conventions sits upon the theoretical discussion conducted in the earlier chapters. Here I addressed the importance of considering the ontology underpinning the methodological approach (chapter 2) and the orienting questions through which the individual engages in the ‘project of the self’ (chapter 3). I argued that the way in which we understand identity moderates our epistemological choices about how to work towards personal and social change (chapter 4) and noted that different assumptions are made about how theatre and drama can be used as a ‘technology of the self’ (chapters 5 and 6).

In this chapter I build upon this discussion, providing a more theorised approach to the selection of form when problematising the self through the drama. In this I consider how the medium might influence the nature of the questions asked and the knowledge that can be created.
On the basis of the practice stories (chapters 7-9), I argue that certain ‘games’ are particularly useful in assisting players to note the patterning power of the discourse, and to observe the way to which identity is co-created between the characters. These techniques enable a traverse of the self/other, subject/object, and internal/external binaries and facilitate a re-reading of behaviour and a re-imagining of what is possible in relationships.

**Theorising the Form**

The dramatic conventions used in process drama can be thought of as the devices that the dramatist uses to control, shape and focus the enquiry (Fleming 1997). They incorporate decisions relating to genre and style and provide structures through which to manage play and interplay. Conventions in theatre have evolved in response to the events and thinking of the culture within which they reside (Neelands and Dobson 2000). Some conventions are drawn from the tradition of naturalistic theatre whereas others are informed by styles used in anti-naturalistic theatre traditions.

Leading theorist/practitioners present the conventions used in drama as a part of a rich methodological palette (Heathcote 1984; O'Neill 1985; Fleming 1997; Neelands and Goode 2000). Neelands presents 47 conventions, including those that build the context and narrative, those that create poetic or symbolic action, and those that invite reflective action within the fiction. Fleming(1997) describes 25 different conventions. Some of these are conventions that pertain to the narrative such as time shifts, narration, beginnings and endings. Others are devices that manage shifts in style and genre, including mime, ritual, analogy, externalised thoughts, and disembodied voices. Other conventions chiefly attend to establishing the dramatic focus and include framing of the action, and making attention shifts to minor characters. In her list of 33 conventions, Heathcote (1984) focuses on devices that invite reports on the action; the use of objects such as costumes and props to evoke a sense mystery about the character; image-based devices designed to build the narrative, and the use of role-play.

Neelands offers advice to guide the employ of these conventions, recommending that teachers consider “matching of convention to content in order to depict and transform
personal and social meanings” (Neelands 1990:62). He describes the narrative conventions as more likely to bring forth superficial interpretations, and argues that the context-building and the reflective action conventions tend to produce more considered responses. Fleming (1997) also urges the dramatist to avoid the tendency to simply use the drama to replicate life, as in the naturalistic tradition, but rather "to be aware of its potential to explore and examine experience in ways which would be otherwise denied to us in real life" (4). Heathcote (1984) sees the key function of the conventions as to slow down time and give players a chance to generate a sense of relationship with the action, and sense of responsibility in relation to the other characters.

Consistent in the advice these dramatists give is that one’s selection of the drama convention assists in establishing rigour in the enquiry as well as a level of control and artistry in the aesthetics of representation. Also consistent is the suggestion that the non-naturalistic conventions provide a sharper blade with which to cut into the superficial. These conventions provide a level of control in the framing of the enquiry that cannot be so readily offered via naturalistic role-play.

A reading of these handbooks of the conventions however, is not the best way to approach an understanding of how they might function in practice. In order to capture a sense of the artistry with which they might be employed, they are better read about in those texts in which the drama leader or the observer both narrates and analyses how the practice unfolds in particular contexts. In reading these accounts one is better able to encounter the way in which leading dramatists interweave their use of these conventions. They work the narrative, interrupt it, thread in additional constraints, play with dramatic tension, stretch the imagination by re-orienting the play and deepen the thinking through their use of questions (O'Neill 1985; Edmiston and Wilhelm 1998; Taylor 1998; Winston 1998; Gallagher 2000; Grady 2000; O'Connor 2003; Nicholson 2005; Neelands 2006) (Wagner 1999; Bolton 2003).

The challenge of discussing the conventions outside of the context of their application is a little like the challenge of discussing the colours, shapes and perspectives the painter could use rather than the art work itself in which they combine and become
part of the one entity. Nonetheless, for purposes of analysis, there is sometimes a need to shred the fabric in order that its constitution can be better understood.

Despite the fact that use of the conventions is well-charted in a range of practice stories, the conventions themselves remain under-theorised. Ackroyd (2004) argues that the drama in education field could pay more attention to the value positions and assumptions that underpin choices about how to work. Additional theoretical attention is needed to consider how the conventions employed might

• invite certain types of thinking,
• position the players in particular ways in relation to the material they are engaged with, and
• invite them to assume a certain ontology as they work through the drama.

In this chapter I explore how the conventions employed in the Learning Partnerships project house ontological questions and thus transmit assumptions about the sorts of knowledge that can be represented in the play. I consider how the framing of the question, the selection of form and the reading of the social context might moderate the approach to meaning making in the drama.

To do this I draw upon theory that guides the methodological practice of poststructuralist qualitative research. I then apply this theory to my analysis of the workshops in the Learning Partnerships project asking how does the choice of form moderate the knowledge that can be represented through the drama?

**Tools for Enquiry: Considering Framing, Context and Medium**

Qualitative researchers argue that to conduct a robust enquiry one has to consider how the question may shape (enable and/or limit) the responses that are given; how the medium through which the response is to be expressed may influence the message; and how the respondent’s readings of the context, listener-expectation, and social and cultural norms will influence the response (Elliott 2005). Thus consideration must be given in three interconnected arenas: the framing of the question; the context and relationships that surround and inform the questioning/responding act; and the confines and possibilities of the medium through which the response will be relayed.
This is also true of the enquiry conducted through the drama. Here consideration must be given to how the scenario frames certain material for attention; how the social context of the workshop may influence the knowledge that can be shared; and how the way in which the dramatic convention or medium influences the knowledge that can be represented.

In this chapter I address the three elements of framing, context and medium as I theorise about the role of the dramatic form in moderating the construction of knowledge. I begin with a focus on the way in which the selection and framing of the content of the drama influences meaning making, considering how the story template houses certain assumptions about what is tellable, and about what can be concluded from the tale. In doing this I argue that the selection of story can never be ‘innocent’ for all stories are both political and social, and that the responses created through the drama are also always inherently social, whether played for the real or imagined gaze of others. Thus for enquiry to proceed through the drama, there is a need for techniques which assist us to interrupt the story and to question the conclusions that we derive from it.

**The Story Template and the Twist of Meaning**

The narrative structure or story template influences the meaning that is derived from the tale. Elliott (2005) provides a robust discussion of the effect of narrative structures on the creation of meaning. She points out that we learn patterns in story within our culture, and then use these internalised patterns in our own storytelling. She describes narrative as chronological, meaningful and social. The chronology contributes to the meaning that is assumed. The recounting of events in a sequence suggests a causal relationship between events in temporal succession, even when the storyteller does not specifically state causality. Thus the location of the beginning, middle and end of the story influences the meaning that is constructed. In particular, the choice of ending suggests a point of closure that retrospectively casts meaning upon the tale.

Thus the linear narrative is a form that implicitly ‘teaches’ the inevitability of cause and effect. For example, if you are beautiful the prince will find you, or if you are ugly, then you are undoubtedly bad, and will remain unloved. Thus the story structure
as well as the story content becomes part of our discourse or part of our shared storying that teaches us how to read or make sense of the world. In this, choices relating to narrative, framing and focus are political choices. They create a version of reality. The discourses we live in will shape our framing whether we notice this or not. As Davies (1993) has shown, children are likely to perpetuate binaries and gendered patterns in their fictions, even when they set out to over-ride them. If this is so in the writing of fiction, it is likely also to be so in the creation of improvised drama.

By extrapolation, the story template that underpins the drama will shape the meta-messages transmitted through the tale. In examining my practice, I can see that the choice to use realism, parody, or surrealism made an imprint on meaning simply because these techniques invited both players and audience to view the ‘reality’ of the narrative in a certain mode. The epistemological invitation implicit when engaged in the realistic play (for example in the simulated class exercise) was ‘empathise with this’ and ‘learn what it is like’. The coda transmitted was take heed. In contrast, the use of parody (in ‘The Complaints Game’) invited the participants to ‘see the ridiculous nature of this pattern of behaviour’. The coda implicit in the parody is things need to be changed. Use of the surrealist form (in ‘The Anthropomorphic Game’ exploring school bullying) tells the audience to ‘question what you thought you knew’. The coda is all is not what it seems. Thus the stylistic template informs the epistemology that the player/reader is invited to engage with, and the coda or resolution that they are expected to transmit or accept.

Given the inevitability that the story template places a twist upon meaning, there will be a need to find ways to interrogate the closure of the narrative and the bite of the coda.

Despite that the drama is a meaning-making machine, I found that there were many ways that the drama could be used to subvert the closure upon meaning. Chief amongst these was to interrupt the play at a moment of tension and take a lateral departure through ‘The What If…? Game’
Used as a means to subvert the closure of the ending, the ‘What If Game’ can be employed to interrogate the linearity and implicit inevitability of the narrative. Then, rather than settling with one ending, which then becomes a blanket of meaning to draw up over the tale, the lateral exploration frays at the edges of the story, stretches open the weave of the fabric, and allows new meanings to be threaded in. Thus, through interrupting the narrative, I found I could preserve occupation of the question, and thereby maintain rather than settle the enquiry.

With the play suspended, I found I could select from a range of conventions to structure further exploration. These devices included depicting alternative versions of the story via ‘The Reality-testing Game’; examining the inner dialogue of the characters in ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’; and considering alternative explanatory models via ‘The Anthropomorphic Game’. I discuss the function of these (and other) conventions in this chapter, considering the mechanisms through which they invite a form of deconstruction through the drama.

**Narrative as Selective and Social**

When we story, we actively shape and edit, selecting what we tell out of the continuous stream of events that comprise life. Certain material is given attention, whilst other material is left aside. We do this with a sense of meaning, audience, context and convention in mind, shaping the tale for the recipients (Elliott 2005). Thus when using the story as the basis for enquiry, it is not only the story template that requires disruption. Attention must also be given to the selected nature of the content of the tale. Whilst interruption is one means through which to rupture the certainty established through the linear progress of the story, additional techniques are needed through which to detect the inevitable bias inherent in the selection of the story itself.

**Selecting the Tell-able Tale**

It is useful to be aware of where our bias might lie, and how this might affect story selection. Fine notes that as researchers our bias can be towards selection of the worst-case stories because we assume these will be of most interest to our audiences
Thus our efforts to construct a ‘good’ story lead to us representing the aberrant as the norm. I found this tendency to be operative in the Learning Partnerships workshops. Often the participants defaulted to the selection of worst-case stories, even when specifically asked to select from the commonplace. This was apparent when I asked the students to construct a scene about bullying. Despite that I asked them to show a common form of bullying, many of the groups showed the more extreme practices. Indeed, whenever in a naturalistic role, the players tended to create a stereotypical scene in which youth and adults, males and females were assigned predictable roles. The teacher, for example, was commonly played to be oppressive, eccentric or powerless (bad, mad or weak), and the student commonly played to be defiant, cool or a nerd (bad, sexy or weak). Thus the collective storying through the improvised drama more readily produced material that belonged in the shared typology than the shared experience.

The social nature of the storying process inevitably influences the selection and fashioning of the tale. St. Pierre (1999) notes that the ‘imagined response’ of our audiences influences our data collection, interpretation, and representation. That is, how we imagine others will respond affects what we will look for, the data we select, and the way in which we represent this data for others. The notion that narrative is select and social is particularly relevant in the drama arena as the improvisations are co-created stories, and thus are social in both the devising and delivery phases. Thus the players will be engaged in a doubled loop of anticipation as they consider the readings their fellow players will make as they fashion the material as well as the readings their audience will make as they witness it.

**Embodied under the Imagined Gaze**

A particular form of social pressure may influence the storying within the drama workshop - that associated with the embodied and immediate nature of the medium. In the drama we work in real time and in an embodied form, hence not only our words but also our bodies will be read. Thus we not only play to the imagined gaze of the audience, we also encounter the flux of its breath in response. This adds an additional social pressure, which may in turn mean we are particularly sensitive to the way in which our work will be read.
When storying through the improvised drama, we will be read quite personally as players or the persons who are making the drama, as well as the characters who have particular motives or actions within the drama. In this we will be read within:

- a performance discourse, entailing a reading of the aesthetic with its associated norms and quality criteria;
- a content discourse, which includes a reading for narrative, causality, meaning and motive;
- a context discourse, which in this case incorporates the schooling discourse pertaining to the scripts which define certain modes of behaviour as acceptable for students or teachers;
- a societal discourse which assigns certain positions and storylines according to sex, class, age, race and culture;
- a historical discourse which places us as creatures within the sequence of political and global events; and
- an ecological discourse which places us as a species in relation to the planet.

Given the complexity of the filters through which we anticipate how we ought to play ourselves, and through which we anticipate how others will read our offerings, it is not useful to assume that the material we create during improvisation can be free of societal influence. Rather, we should assume that stories are always shaped and read within a larger set of cultural stories. If we are to use the drama for enquiry into human behaviour, or for the purposes of working upon the self, then we need devices which assist us to reveal these filters and to detect their shaping influence.

**Storying Ourselves into Existence**

There may be an additional ontological pressure operative during the process of story selection. As discussed earlier (see chapter three) we live in an age in which we are increasingly defined by the stories we have to tell. Thus we may feel a particular need to find tell-able tales, tales that will cast us as central characters. Without stories that rescue us from the margins, and give us visibility, meaning, potency and status, we risk invisibility. We risk losing our identity.
If this be so, and if the ongoing need in this era is to engage in the ‘project of the self’ (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002), then the existential backdrop will inform both the need to make meaning and the assumptions about how one can acquire a meaningful status. It is difficult to play the mundane when one is driven to find defining moments. I should assume then that this need for the tell-able story would influence the way the participants select the tales of the self that they will tell within the drama workshop.

Applying poststructural theory, it can be seen that the shaping discourses will moderate the way in which the participants represent their experience. Thus, despite the fact that the performance space is often described as ‘protected’, it may in fact be a site of considerable challenge as players select their material and moderate their responses in relation to the expectations transmitted within these discourses.

I have found the poststructuralist understanding of story as selective and social to be very useful in orienting my approach in the drama. I now read the presentation of the stereotype not simply as a deficiency in acting skills or as the lack of a critical disposition, but also as evidence of the constricting nature of the discourse. This then means it is logical for me to seek critical exercises to draw attention to the tendency for the prevailing myth of ‘how things are’ to stifle other possible stories.

**Re-Reading the Assumed: ‘The Reality-Testing Game’**

One method I found useful in assisting with the challenge of ‘detecting the distortions’ is the technique that I fashioned as ‘The Reality-Testing Game’. (This was the game in which the participants were asked to re-read the events in the scene with their everyday experience in mind, and to show alternative variations of the story in subsequent scenes.) This game requires the participants to work as critical readers. It is a form of member-checking, but one which operates within the assumption that there are multiple versions of ‘reality’ depending on who tells it, who it is to be told to, and what purpose the telling is seen to fulfil.

‘The Reality-testing Game’ is based on layering rather than upon negating. New versions of the scene are layered atop the memory of the first and are ‘tried on’ to see
if they fit better with the participants’ experience. In this a form of deconstruction takes place as the original scene is placed under a temporary erasure and new versions of ‘reality’ are layered atop so as they too can be placed under scrutiny. The questions invite a continuing re-reading of the given, and the uncertainty makes space for new renditions. The question itself alerts the participants to the possibility that there are many versions of the story. In this, playing ‘The Reality-Testing Game’ helps to engage the participants in the assumption that our interpretation of reality is a just a reading, and that ‘reality’ is constructed differently by the people who play in it together.

‘The Reality-Testing Game’ swings upon the hook of possibility. The players suspend certainty and replace it with speculation. Thus the practice through which one works on understanding the world and the self within this game is one of suspension and replacement. The coda associated with the playing across the collection of stories assembled in game may be something like: Suspect the ‘truth’ of the tale. This because the investigatory process reveals that a story has many variations and there is not one truth to be told.

**Genre and the Creation of Knowledge**

It can be see from this discussion that the story template influences the wrap of meaning, that the storying process is social and selective, and that the stories we choose to engage with may serve ontological as well as epistemological purposes. There is thus a need for the dramatist to have mechanisms through which to interrupt the narrative, to enquire about the version of the tale that has been told, and to explore other possible variants on the tale. Through such endeavours the participants can deconstruct the content of the story and the conclusions derived from the events.

However, it is not only the content that influences the knowledge that can be created from the drama. The medium also influences the message. A shift in framing can capture different perspectives upon the story, but these perspectives may simply provide multiple views within the dominant set of storylines and associated positions. If this is so then the juxtaposition of multiple angles upon the story may serve to consolidate rather than interrogate a point of view. We may replicate the dominant
knowledge, rather than fish for those other knowledges that skitter beneath the surface.

To engage in critical enquiry we may also need to make a genre shift. This may increase the likelihood that we achieve a paradigmatic shift and are able to critically interrogate the assumed. In the following section I discuss the way in which the selection of genre may influence the creation of meaning. This discussion prepares the ground for analysis of the way in which specific conventions might be used as tools to assist in deconstruction through the drama and as mechanisms through which to re-learn the self.

Medium Moderating Messages
A number of writers in the poststructuralist research tradition have focused in a technical way on how the genre of the writing can influence the way in which research can be conducted and represented (Fine 1994; Kamlar 2001; Fine, Weiss et al. 2003; Gergen and Gergen 2003; Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Richardson advocates that the research writer employ genre shifts, such as the creation of poetry, reader’s theatre and news reports on the same material, in order to develop different ‘knowledges’ about the material. She argues that what you ‘do’ as a writer, or the way in which you manipulate the medium, affects the type of knowledge that you can create (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). If this is true in the dramatic as well as the written medium, then it can be expected that different modes of dramatic play will enable different types of knowledge to be created and represented, and that shifting between modes of play may contribute to the rigour of the enquiry.

In the Learning Partnerships workshops many different conventions were used to prompt exploration of the teacher/student relationship. The differences in responses created within these exercises demonstrated that the mode of play influenced the nature of the material produced. In the section below I review a range of these conventions, noting how they permitted the creation and representation of different sorts of knowledge and in this facilitated different work upon the self.
The Photograph Game
At times I asked the players to portray a scene via the convention of a dramatised ‘photographic’ image. In these instances (for example when showing their scenes about what can happen at schools) the players made a representative snapshot, seeking to create an image that could easily be recognised. Some did this with subtlety and skill, capturing in one image the flailing teacher with the disengaged class, or the jeering students with the cowering peer. Regardless of their skill however, they drew upon types. They did so in order that their image be recognised and thus become a ‘successful’ product. In this they responded to the aesthetic requirements inherent in the design of the task.

The Sculpture Game
In ‘The Sculpture Game’ the players engaged in different work. Whilst working with similar constraints (no movement and no words), they were called upon to provide a symbolic interpretation. The actors became figures (rather than characters) and the body was used to suggest elements of status and emotion within the relational dynamic. The players moved away from capturing a sense of a narrative or a key moment in time as was seen in the (naturalistic) photograph game, to a symbolic representation of certain threads or themes within the narrative.

Whilst both the sculpture and the photograph used the same physical constraints, the shift in genre from naturalistic to anti-naturalistic meant that the players were called upon to provide and represent a different form of knowledge of the self.

The Dance Game
When the students were asked to represent the teacher/student interaction through movement but without using words, they constructed a form of ‘dance’. This mode permitted them to show the shifting and interconnected nature of the relationships in a way not possible within the sculpture or photograph. The still images, due to their static design, were more likely to transmit a notion of authorial certainty (about the relationships) and fixedness (regarding the nature of the relationships). Because the movement form can include change and fluidity, it can more readily allow players to
explore and show complex and changing interrelationships between causes and effects. Thus when representing the self through this game, a different knowledge could be represented. This included knowledge about the inter-relationship or the constantly changing space between the characters.

The Role-Play Game
The ‘photograph’, ‘sculpture’ and ‘dance’ are all non-verbal conventions, however I more commonly asked the players to represent their scenes through naturalistic role-play. In these portrayals it is assumed that the players will represent reality in a believable way. Verisimilitude is a marker of aesthetic quality in this mode of play. In these exercises the players had great scope to establish characters and to spin a narrative. What I noted however was that use of this device led to the employ of common types, with predictable statements and counter-statements being made by easily recognisable characters (types). In addition, the role-play inevitably housed a form of ‘rule-play’, which prescribed people’s behaviour. The ‘rules’ were those informed by the norms, positions and storylines of the discourse.

The Anthropomorphic Game
Play can be framed within any imaginable reality. I found that when I drew upon the surrealist tradition, and players were cast as objects, they were more likely to comment on the pattern of events, and changes observed over time, taking a historical, anthropological or ecological perspective. With the shift in the rules of reality, the signal is sent that the players need not adhere tightly to a personal and psychologised narrative or to a particular subject position within a well-known storyline. The surrealist framing re-sets the rules around what is thinkable and sayable and it becomes appropriate to comment from a less personalized perspective and to draw from or invent alternative explanatory models.

Governance of the Form
What can be noted from these examples is that with each shift in mode, the representational task alters, and different rules come into play about what will be
made visible and what will be left ‘invisible’. The performance tradition influences the nature of the knowledge that is explored and portrayed. Thus human beings are understood differently through different modes of play. Thereby, when responding through the drama, the players are both supported and confined by the governance of the form and the ‘performance discourse’ that they inhabit. Not only does genre inform the way in which we understand fictional worlds, and the coherence criteria that we apply to them (Maitre 1983), it also informs the way in which we represent ourselves and our experiences.

In this, the dramatic form, with its assumed language and rules of play, operates as a form of ‘governmentality’ via the performance discourse. Foucault conceptualises governmentality as the interaction between the ‘technologies of power’ (or domination of others) and the ‘technologies of the self’ (1988:19). In the drama the equivalent is the interaction between

- the **dramatic form** with its associated ‘technology of sign systems’, semiotics and conventions;
- the **framing** and the associated problematization of the self and the world,
- the **social context** of the drama, incorporating the power relations that occur between players, and between players and audience, and which function as ‘technologies of power’; and
- the interaction between the epistemological and the aesthetic exercises, or the ‘technologies of the self’ employed to understand or shape the self.

Thus the form, the question and the context are of paramount importance in shaping the enquiry through the drama.

**Engineering the Enquiry**

In seeking to use the drama for enquiry, I sought to employ mechanisms that assisted players to detect the influence of dominant discourses or to straddle binaries which confined understanding of the self and the other.

Richardson (2005) uses the metaphor of crystallization to address the challenge of rigour in research. She uses the multi-faceted nature of the crystal to conjure the
notion that there is not one truth to be discovered, but that rather that there is a need to evoke a multiplicity of ‘truths’. She recommends certain writing practices to evoke multiplicity of view, including layering and threading, genre shifts and using the perspectives of different characters. St. Pierre (1997) notes the confining nature of binary terms and recommends the use of metaphors to construct new categories in which to think and write. Davies (1993) points to the importance of catching the discourses at play and recommends collective approaches to re-writing and re-positioning.

Using the direction set by these theorists, I fashioned drama conventions as enquiry tools, and employed them in the Learning Partnerships workshops. I discuss these ‘games’ in the following section, focusing on the way in which they functioned to

- generate multiplicity of view;
- illustrate the interconnectedness of identity;
- bridge binaries and confining categories;
- reveal the presence and shaping influence of norms and expectations; and
- call forth poly-vocal interpretations of the desires and fears directing the behaviour of the character.

**Seeking Multiplicity of View**

Richardson recommends using shifts in character perspective to generate multiplicity of view. In the writing this can be done by eliciting the accounts of different stakeholders or characters. In the drama players can be rotated through a range of different roles. Ideally this accomplishes not only an empathetic engagement with the view of different stakeholders, but also an engagement with the positions and storylines that inform the roles.

**Finding Patterns in the Play: ‘The Role-Swap Game’**

I found ‘The Role-Swap Game’ to be particularly useful for inviting multiple perspectives. In this game, the scenario is interrupted and the actors are asked to swap roles and resume play. For example, the person playing ‘teacher’ swaps roles with the person playing ‘student’. An enhanced form of this game has audience members role-
rotate into the play, taking over and continuing the roles established by other actors, or has the actors swap in and out of each others’ roles multiple times, thus shifting from teacher to student to teacher to student.

Traditionally, role-swapping has been understood as a way to invite a shift in perspective, and as a means to encourage players to empathise with their characters. This is the learning through ‘standing in the shoes of the other’ that is so commonly described in the drama literature. This learning is valuable in its own right. It is however, a form of learning that belongs in the humanist tradition of understanding the world. It encourages us to establish and relate to the ‘inner essence’ of the person.

To deepen our critical engagement we need also to become aware of the patterns in the play, and move from an empathetic and psychologised mode of learning to engage additionally with a more sociologically inspired systems-level view. This can happen when questions re-direct attention from the unfolding relationships and events within the narrative line, to a reading of the pattern of the relationship and a focus on the gamed nature of the play that the characters engage in.

I found that swapping actors between roles demonstrated that the position survives the candidate and that there is a game that plays out between the characters. For example, it could be seen that the teacher questions and the student answers. The question/answer game may come in different flavours (for example, interrogate/defend, ask/explain, quiz/quip, hint/deflect, demand/defy), however it is still basically the same game. Further, the moves can be seen as belonging to the game rather than to the player.

When it is revealed that the ‘game’ seems to exist independently of the particularity of character, and to be re-playable regardless of the individual characteristics of the actor or character, then the play is in large part de-personalised. In observing the patterns one can begin to see that positions and storylines are at play. This device can then be understood to contribute to a drama of discourse analysis. It contributes to the work that Davies (1993) identifies to be crucial in deconstruction, catching the discourses at play in shaping desire, perception and behaviour.
Investigating the Interconnectedness of Identity

Poststructuralist thinkers argue that identity is co-created. The knowledge that we have about how the world works informs the assumptions we make about who others are and about how we ought to be. We adopt patterns of behaviour and in doing so contribute to their ongoing operation. It is important to be able to recognise the mechanisms through which the patterning takes place. Without this recognition we can neither know nor change these aspects of ourselves. The process of co-creating a character within the improvisation can provide a mirror to the mechanism of construction.

Reading Power Relations: ‘The Strategies Game’ and ‘The Director Game’

I found that the ‘The Director Game’ was particularly useful in drawing the players’ attention to the shaping nature of these mutually constitutive practices. Used in combination with ‘The Strategies Game’ in which the actors played the scene over many times, each time using a different strategy to pursue their wants, the players were able to engage with what the character was doing to create their mode of being. When the Director took on the challenge of shifting the nature of the relations between the characters, this was done through issuing instructions pertaining to what the actor was doing. The Director gave the actor specific physical instructions: stand closer, sneer when you speak, or attempted to conjure these actions via appeal to the imagination: imagine she is afraid of you. By playing with the ‘moving parts’ of the interaction, the Director, as well as observers and players, get to discover from first principles that relationship is co-created, and that identity is both assumed and conferred.

Bridging Binaries

If the intention is to use the drama to deconstruct the assumptions that we hold, then we need techniques that heighten our capacity to see that which is has slipped out of focus and that which confines or categorises reality.

The production of our sense of who we are involves the learning of key categories that include and exclude (Davies 1989). Language forbids something to be both one
thing and its opposite. Good is not bad, male is not female, old is not young, pride is not shame, nor is anger remorse. These are held as binaries. To see beyond the logic of these binaries requires attention to the way in which language confines as well as creates meaning.

To engage in deconstruction we must be able to identify the binaries and create more fluid terms, which transcend binary logic "by simultaneously being both and neither of the binary terms" (Davies 1994:3).

St. Pierre recommends the use of metaphors and figurations to provide categories which straddle defining boundaries learnt within the dominant humanist tradition (St. Pierre 1997; St. Pierre 1997; St. Pierre 1997; St. Pierre 1997). She uses the metaphor of the ‘fold’ to assist with conceptualising how the interior can also be the exterior, and that of the ‘aside’ to provide a space to help her to “think against the prescribed narratives of humanist science” (1997:280) and speak outside the flow of the main text. The metaphors of the aside and the fold provide a holding form for a complexity of meaning. In the following section I draw upon St. Pierre’s (1997a, 1997b, 1997c) analysis of her use of metaphors to create new meaning-spaces to bridge traditional binaries to assist me to conceptualise the way in which certain of the drama conventions work to straddle boundaries in thinking or participation. Her work provides an equivalent in the literary domain of the work I am conducting in the performative domain.

Each of the games I have modified to facilitate enquiry through the drama are metaphoric in nature and function to ‘bridge’ binaries by defining a space in which different rules of representation may be called in to play. ‘The Reality-testing Game’ evokes the metaphor of the laboratory and the experiment, and invents the possibility of multiple truths. ‘The Advice Game’ uses the metaphor of the expert employing an external eye and looking from a distant view and thus conjures the possibility of looking from outside the system. ‘The Strategies Game’ employs the metaphor of tactics and invents a collective category called ‘ways to go about getting what you want’. This category draws attention to what happens between rather than within the characters. ‘The Director Game’ calls upon the metaphor of player as puppet and in so
doing illustrates that pulling on one puppet’s strings causes moves in the others. It invents a connective space that could be called ‘interconnected strings’. ‘The Role-Swap Game’ uses the metaphor of the script, illustrating that the parts exist independently of the players. ‘The Truth Game’ calls upon the image of the confessional and provides a permissive space in which to speak, and ‘The Hidden Thoughts’ device conjures an archaeological image with associated expectations relating to uncovering and revelation.

To understand the shaping influence of discourses, we must be able to contest binaries. To re-shape relational patterns, we must be able to work across the self/other binary that is dominant in Western culture. Drama is a medium that requires us to cross the self/other binary. Indeed it may be that one of our fascinations with dramatic play is that it permits us to traverse this fundamental binary. The self/other divide is crossed every time we pretend to be ‘not-me’. The fact that as the player I am both me and not-me means that I bridge the binary as I play.

The drama can also be used to straddle the subject/object binary. This can happen when object of the audience’s study (the player as character) steps out of role and the player then becomes the studier (or the researcher) of the object (the character). Mackey calls this the first to third person shift. When you move out of the fictional frame you refer to the character you created in the third person, and thus objectify the self that you created (Mackey 2003).

‘The Advice Game’ was particularly useful as a mechanism through which to cross the subject/object binary. It operated by calling forth from the players a knowledge that was wider than the confined view available to their character.

**Straddling the Subject/Object Divide: ‘The Advice Game’**

In ‘The Advice Game’ the player steps out of their role to give their character a piece of advice. This shift in frame from character to advisor has the player relate to the character as other and separate, whilst continuing to imagine into the needs of the character. In the drama tradition this shift is called a ‘distancing’ device (O’Toole 1992). In the training tradition this is often called a de-briefing device (van Ments
I find that the ‘Advice Game’ offers more than a distancing of the player from the character. It offers a bridge between researched and researcher, between subject and object. One moves from being governed by the play to considering what is governing the character, and further, what would be a more useful self-governance for the character to adopt.

Despite that ‘The Advice Game’ may appear similar to the popularly used ‘hot-seating’ device (Neelands 1990), it is different in one critical way. In the hot-seat convention the character is interviewed in role and the actor responds in first person as the character. In ‘The Advice Game’ the actor is interviewed on role, speaking in the third person about the character. This entails a first person to third person shift. It brings an associated shift in the type of talk that is permissible. When in role the players are ‘doing’ or being the character. When they speak out of role about what it was like to ‘be’ the character they report upon their experiential learning. In role they are bound by the norms associated with the discourses that their character inhabits and must pretend that their knowledge is limited to that available to their character. When the players operate in the Advice mode, they can draw upon a knowledge that exists beyond the character’s knowledge. They draw both upon their experience of being the character, and upon their broader knowledge of other positions and other possibilities. They are thus invited to work from a more externalised/analytical and critical perspective. Contained within the role, as in the ‘Hot Seat’ convention, they may be more likely to speak in a confessional or biographical manner.

Given that they are re-positioned and can adopt a more critical distance, it is not surprising that the players often generate advice for their character that operates outside of the power struggle that the character has been caught up in. Rather than advising the student to ‘make sure your excuse is water tight’, they might advise the character to ask the teacher for help instead of pretending you know what you are doing, or to face up to the reality that whether you learn or not is your responsibility. In role the player may be engaged in a power struggle: working to resist or to please the teacher, to defend a claim, or to impress an audience. The advice quite commonly cuts across this game and offers other possibilities. This is perhaps because it is easier
from the position of advisor to address the game itself rather than simply the moves available within it.

When the players move from the naturalistic scenario to ‘The Advice Game’ they are required to make a shift from the experiential mode, which is phenomenological in nature, to the reflective mode, which is more critical in nature. Advice is future oriented and hence is also unavoidably ethical in nature. It concerns that which ‘should’ be done. However, for the thinking to also entail work at a deconstructive level, the players’ attention must be drawn to the constructed and shaping nature of the assumed. This requires additional interrogative work and attention to the mechanisms that shape our desires and assumptions.

**Noticing Norms**
The agent/vehicle binary is particularly hard to note in our humanist tradition. We know ourselves as the agent and therefore by definition we cannot be vehicles. The actor, whilst in role, experiences himself as the agent. He is the one who is doing, willing and making things happen. This sense of agency is augmented by the deliberate nature of the fictional play as the player is aware of the self as the one who is making the character happen. However, it can be seen that the player is also the vehicle through which is transmitted or re-played the storylines and positions of the discourses they inhabit. Thus the player and their character are subjected by, as well as the subject of, the drama. This paradox of mastery and submission is described by Davies in her work on subjectification (Davies, Dormer et al. 2001; Davies 2006). The challenge is to find ways to have the player see themselves as vehicle as well as agent. To do this they must notice the norms and assumptions that govern their responses.

**Speaking against the Grain: ‘The Truth Game’**
The convention I found most useful to assist players to notice the norms was ‘The Truth Game’. This game helped players to discover the ‘invisible rules’ that govern social interactions. It did this by setting a task which required that they transgression of the norms. In the effort to transgress, or to speak against the grain, they discover that the rules are there. They catch the discourses at play. Once the participants note
the existence of these rules, the next step is to wonder where these rules come from and what keeps them in place.

**Pursuing Poly-vocality**
Poly-vocality entails the issuing of multiple responses from the one character. There is a need for research methods which will permit poly-vocality. The concept of the self as coherent, singular and rational tends to foreclose on multiplicity and the practices of survey and interview tend to call forth unitary responses (Gergen and Gergen 2003). Many of the characterisation devices used in the drama are not suitable to generate a sense of poly-vocality because they stay within the naturalistic paradigm which favours the unitary sense of the individual. Switching from one convention to another, as is common in the process drama, can evoke a multiplicity of views, but this is commonly done between characters rather than within a character. Additional binary crossing work is done when a way is found to disrupt the accepted logical incompatibility of the co-location of ‘opposite’ emotions within the one person. This can be done through the use of anti-naturalist alter-ego devices such as ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’.

*Re-threading the Self: ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’*
The time at which I find there is the greatest need to invite a poly-vocal interpretation of a character is when I want to engage participants in a compassionate rather than judgemental exploration of what it is that keeps people trapped in behaviours that are a betrayal of their values. The ‘trap’ is more profound and disabling than the ‘dilemma’. The dilemma is a point of balance, a moment of conflicted choice. The trap is a pit. When we scrabble to get out, we deepen the hole. The experience of the trap is most poignant when it occurs in relation to who we want to be in relation to those we care about. It happens when the actions associated with certain subject positions cut across the deeper orienting values of that position.

Consider the ‘trapped’ nature of the teacher caught in a power struggle with a student. The teacher, believing her self to be caring, inspiring and generous, finds that she is belittling a student, shaming him into submission. The more she is aware that she is caught in this pattern of (mis)behaviour, the more she tries to put herself in the right
and thus correct the wrongness of her stance. This leads her to justify her behaviour, pointing to the provocation the student has provided, and arguing him down. She climbs higher into her tree of moral rightness and becomes even more distant and harsh. She is inaccessible to the student, and she has fallen out of the net of her self. She has become the thing that she believes is not-her, the one she does not want to be. Her systems role is in profound dislocation with her lifeworld beliefs. She has betrayed herself whilst playing hard at being who she thinks she ought to be.

I found the ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ to be a powerful tool through which to explore situations of this nature. The first (naturalistic) playing of the scene illustrates the behaviours associated with the trap. The Hidden Thoughts device then structures poly-vocal responses as the players speak the multiple and conflicting feelings, thoughts needs, hopes, fears and desires of their character.

‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ proceeds through the Socratic structure of question and answers. The player strives to speak ‘truths’, takes a risk to do so, and does this in a spirit of civic generosity that the work might contribute to others. The players speak thoughts that are usually left silent because they are too delicate or intimate to be spoken, or because they transgress the expected and approved. It takes courage to speak the self in this way. There is risk to the speaker in revealing both negative and positive emotions. In the ‘negative’ domain, the player takes a confessional risk when she speaks thoughts that contravene social norms of polite or professional discourse, such as expressions of intolerance, rage, petulance, jealousy, and racism. The risk faced here is one of moral condemnation as these are the statements that are politically or socially ‘incorrect’. Even to ‘see’ that these answers might be possible can invite guilt by association. These are the thoughts that are ‘policed’, the ones we ‘ought’ not to have in professional contexts. Thus in revealing these thoughts the speaker takes the risk of social shame, and associated social exclusion.

In the ‘positive’ domain, the speaker also takes a risk: that associated with revealing the more intimate thoughts of regard, such as when the respondent reveals that she wants to be cherished or loved by the other character. This is the risk associated with intimacy and vulnerability. To reveal one’s deep feeling of regard is to make oneself
vulnerable to rejection, and here too to face the risk of exclusion. Thus there is a dual risk of social exclusion faced as the player speaks against the social norms. In this ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ operates as a parrhessiastic device.

Structurally, the Hidden Thoughts device operates outside of the narrative. It is framed as a speculation and as a form of detective work. The players hunt for possibilities, drawing upon their knowledge of human being to help them do so. The player is successful in this game if he or she finds many things to say. In the prior naturalistic role-play, the actor is successful if he or she has the character behave according to the dominant norms.

At an embodied level, the actors stand in the space of the drama, but answer questions about the characters and as the characters. The original reality is thus held in view whilst it is also replaced. This then is not a negation of one story via the other. It is a coagulation of multiple realities, which, paradoxically, are both opposed and complementary. The device does not advance the plot, but rather re-interprets it. Once re-interpreted however, the story is forever changed. Hidden Thoughts is a kaleidoscopic device, as responses shift with every tilt of the question.

‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ is also an exercise in the crystalline in that it brings forth multiple answers. It straddles the me/we boundary as it is co-created by a collective of players. It traverses the audience/player divide as those who have watched step in to take the play deeper. It straddles the internal/external boundary as the hidden is revealed and is known as both inner and outer.

**Technologies of the Self**

The different drama ‘games’ described here can be understood as ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault 1988), or practices through which to develop knowledge of the self and to work upon the self. As the mode of play is shifted, the self is learnt in different ways. Naturalism invites a learning of the self through empathetic and experiential engagement. It invites immersion in a narrative, and readily provides opportunities for telling, showing and rehearsing. Parody invites a learning of the self through distortion, exaggeration and contrast. Surrealism works through disruption and
surprise, and through the illogic of subversion. It promotes a knowing of the self through analogy and through the application of alternative explanatory models.

Some games work through juxtaposition, or through suspension and replacement. This happens in ‘The Reality-testing Game’, ‘The Strategies Game’ and ‘The Director Game’. In these games the naturalistic form is questioned while also remaining in use. Through this process the naturalistic play becomes a form of language that is used while it questions itself. In this it belongs in the tradition of différence as described by Derrida (1978). The process of suspending one image, whilst considering another, is a ‘technology of the self’ that involves lateral rather than linear exploration. It involves a gathering of multiple possibilities and a knowing of the self and the world as multifaceted, uncertain and constructed.

Other ‘technologies of the self’ are brought into play through the absurdist games. They invite a practice of knowing via contesting the explanatory model. First we must see that we use explanatory models to interpret reality. Surrealist play assists with this by bringing them to our attention. Then we can begin to question the way our orienting assumptions shape the way we make sense of our experiences. We can re-theorise what has happened to us. Thus the student can re-story the teacher’s question about the overdue homework as an indicator that she cares, rather than as an indication that she has no compassion. The shift in the explanatory model can leave us with a different coda upon our tales of the self.

This discussion establishes that a rich array of ‘technologies of the self’ is available through the drama. Whilst the epistemology of learning through fictional play may appear to be common, different conventions invite different ontologies, and lead to different practices through which to represent (and thus to teach or to learn) the self.

Heathcote calls drama the study of ‘man-in-a-mess’ (Bolton 2003). From the discussion in this chapter it can be seen that working from a poststructuralist perspective requires an additional study – that of our ‘enmeshing’. It requires exploration of the multiple, entangling and contradictory forces and desires which direct human action. When we work to illustrate and embody these enmeshing
mechanisms, we are studying a metaphysics, an advanced physics of relationships. In this we are engaged in a ‘technology of the self’, investigating ourselves as shapers and as the shaped.

**Summary**

Richardson argues that the writing process and the writing product are integral to each other. “The product can not be separated from the process, the mode of production, or the method of knowing” (Richardson 2005: 962). Similarly, in the drama, the form is integral to the production of knowledge, and the mode influences the construction of meaning.

Just as St. Pierre’s figurations or metaphors set up a frame that allows her to think and write differently, the drama conventions I have refined invite the participants to think differently about the material. For St. Pierre, the new categories and figurations help to straddle the confining forms or traditions of writing that assume a humanist approach to understanding or representing one’s research. Similarly, the manipulations in the use of dramatic form assist players to step in and out of the humanist understanding of the world, engaging in a critical reading of their own assumptions about how we come to be who we are, and who else it is possible to be. Each of the devices call upon the players to ‘do’ the self differently, and thus they call for the creation or representation of different types of knowledge. In this they amount to different ‘technologies of the self’, or different mechanisms through which to approach knowing and working upon the self.

I have discussed the need for a theoretical relationship to one’s tools in order to attune them to differing purposes. I have analysed the function of particular conventions that I have fashioned or modified so as to enable a deconstructive approach through the drama. ‘The What If…? Game can be used to make lateral departures and to rupture the certainty associated with the linear narrative. ‘The Reality-testing Game’ challenges players to interrupt the myth of reality and to re-read the given through a process of suspension and replacement. ‘The Director Game’ provides an opportunity to play with the mechanisms of characterisation and power as it exists in relations and thus to explore the mechanisms of subjectification from first principles. ‘The Truth
Game’ reveals that the individual is bound by rules and norms that affect both thinking and speaking. ‘The Advice Game’ invites a straddling of the subject/object divide and assists with establishing critical distance. ‘The Role-Swap Game’ and ‘The Strategies Game’ can be used to promote awareness of the patterned nature of relations between people. ‘The Anthropomorphic Game’ invites different explanatory models and thus can foreground the grip of those commonly in place. ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ invites a poly-vocal exploration of the subject and facilitates a compassionate re-reading of motive and desire, and a stretching and re-sketching of the defining boundaries we use to categorise each other.

Thus it can be seen that the selection of the ‘game’ or convention influences the knowledge that we create about the self and the practices through which we recognise, rehearse, re-learn or re-shape the self.

**What’s Next?**

In the following chapter, I present my analysis of the participants’ commentary on their experience of the Learning Partnership workshops. I discuss their interpretation of the value of the participatory approach, and the function of the drama techniques in supporting their learning.

Thus far my key attention has been upon how the task (incorporating the question and the medium) engages the player in particular forms of identity work. However, the participants comment as much upon how the social context affects their learning, in this highlighting the epistemological interplay between the social and relational context within which they work, and the tasks which structure their interaction.
Chapter 11: Learning With and From

Introduction
In this chapter I analyse the data collected from participants in the form of interviews and surveys. The analysis is presented in two sections. The first section presents a discussion of the survey data that illustrates that the workshops were rated very highly and that the teaching strategies most valued by both medics and teachers were those involving feedback from the students and role-playing with the students. The second section draws upon the interviews conducted with teachers and students. Within this section I analyse what the participants think they learnt and how they think this learning took place.

Participants identify that this was a humanising pedagogy in which they learnt to appraise themselves and each other differently whilst also improving their personal and professional communication skills. They found that the drama techniques housing their participation promoted a deeper re-thinking of each other. Participants noted the importance of an enquiry-based approach (drama as research), which allowed them to learn in an embodied and experiential way (drama as applied learning). They valued the use of devices that compelled a rigorous questioning of the influences shaping behaviour (theatre of discourse analysis), and a critical thinking about the connection between the personal and the systemic (drama for critical thinking). Through working with each other in this mode they were able to invent new explanatory stories and see new possibilities in their future relationships (drama as a pedagogy for hope).

Multiple Methods
The use of surveys, reflective notes, video-recordings and interviews amounts to a mixed methods approach to collecting data. My chief goal in taking a mixed methods approach was to seek views from multiple perspectives in order to create a research story informed by multiple angles and standpoints (Tashakkori and Teddie 2003).
I used the surveys to gain a sense of the range and consistency of responses amongst the participants. The surveys included questions about how the processes used in the workshop assisted participants to work towards their course-related goals. Respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of a range of the drama-based activities employed in the course. An open-ended section was provided seeking unsolicited comment. (See Appendices 1-2.)

In the interviews I took a phenomenological approach, seeking participants’ perspectives on the experience. I used a semi-structured approach in which I directed a series of questions and followed with probes in response to the participants’ responses. I sought participants’ views on the contribution the workshops had made to their own and to others’ learning, and asked them about the activities or processes that they felt had contributed most effectively to their engagement, thinking and skill development. (See Appendices 3-4). The interviews were taped and transcribed.

The Data Set
The interviews reflect the views of the three student cohorts of 2003-2004. I interviewed a total of 28 drama students (16 F and 12M). This includes 9 (5F and 4M) from the 2003 cohort; 7 (4F and 3M) from cohort A in 2004; and 12 (7F and 5M) from cohort B of 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003: Semester 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004: Semester 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004: Semester 2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I interviewed 19 pre-service teachers (14 F and 5 M). Of these, 9 (8F and 1M) were from the 2003 cohort and 10 (6F and 4 M) were from the 2004 cohort. I administered surveys in 2003 and 2004 to the teachers in their final class. I received 41 responses.
Interviews with teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003: Semester 2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004: Semester 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
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Surveys with teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surveys were collected from the first six cohorts of medical students (2003-2004). This gave a total of 147 responses with a close to 100% return from each of the class groups. They were completed as the medics exited the workshop. Due to constraints in accessing the medical students I did not conduct interviews with them.

Surveys with Medics

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td><strong>147</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I ceased collecting survey, interview and video data from the participants at the end of 2004 as data saturation seemed to have occurred with a consistent pattern of responses emerging across cohorts. The new schools and new cohorts participating in the Learning Partnerships project did so as part of their educational institution’s curriculum offering rather than as part of a research study.

The Survey Data

The survey data collected is useful in providing a broad sketch of what the participants’ valued and provides a reference point against which to consider the analysis of the interview data. It shows the consistency of the highly appreciative responses from both medics and teachers. Both groups identify role-playing with the students and receiving feedback from them as the most valued activities.
The Teacher Surveys

The teachers were asked questions about the learning strategies used across their course and the learning outcomes that were attained. They were asked to give each item a score from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating a very low level of engagement and 10 indicating an extremely high level of engagement. The scores were totalled and averaged (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Teachers (n=41) rate the learning strategies
Survey data expressed as averaged score given out of a possible ten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Learning Strategy</th>
<th>How useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from the students</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-playing with the students</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching the role-plays</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer feedback</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying out techniques</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from the lectures</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning through written assignments</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading the course literature</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Outcomes</th>
<th>How Useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding how social issues can impact learning &amp; wellbeing</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspiration about how I would like to contribute as a teacher</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism about capacity of young people</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of professional purpose</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate more effectively with young people</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest rating given in the section on the learning strategies was *listening to the students* (9.3) and *role-playing with the students* (9.2). Thus the teachers rated the core methodology of the Learning Partnerships workshops to be the most engaging in their course. The teachers also appraised *participating in discussion* (8.75) and *watching the role-plays* very highly (8.7). In comparison, the teachers rated *learning from the lectures* and *learning through the written assignments* at 6.8. In this it is clear that they found the interactive and participatory nature of learning through the drama techniques to be far more engaging than the more traditional aspects of their course.

The second set of questions asked teachers about their learning outcomes. Again they were asked to make ratings from one to ten. The highest rating in this section was
given to understanding of how social issues can impact on the learning and wellbeing of young people (9.3). This rating suggests that the process engages the participants in systemic and social thinking. The second highest rating in the skills and understandings section was given to aspiration about how they would like to contribute as a teacher (9.1). Associated items included sense of purpose as a professional (8.6), and sense of optimism about the capacity of young people (9). Also rated high was ability to communicate effectively with young people (8.2). In this the survey data identifies the role of the work in developing a sense of professional purpose and optimism, or a ‘pedagogy hope’ (Freire 1994) that shifts thinking about what is possible in the teacher/student relationship.

The survey also contained an open-ended section. Responses here included a range of positive evaluative messages and captured a sense of the excitement that the work produced. It is extremely useful getting students' insights into how various issues impact them. Hearing the honesty of the students is 'gold' for us teacher-trainees. Role-play is a fantastic way to get to the heart of the issue (Teacher 1). Some indicated that it was the most relevant work that they had encountered in their course of study: Best subject this year - only because of the way it was run in the seminars. Drama role-play was EXCELLENT and took theory into the realm of the practical reality of classroom teaching (Teacher 2). Others indicated the importance of a process that aligned teachers and students and acknowledged that they have shared goals: This is the only class which examines the interactions between teacher and student by actually getting teachers and students to work together towards common goals (Teacher 3).

There was consensus that the process made available a deep learning: There was profound learning in this subject mostly thanks to the innovative approach to teaching and the inclusion of the student (Teacher 4). It was common to find expressions of gratitude: Such an integral part of any education course as it deals with PEOPLE. Very interesting - thankyou very much! (Teacher 5).
The Medical Surveys

Surveys were collected from the first six cohorts of medical students. This gave a total of 147 responses. They were completed as the medics exited the workshop. Respondents were asked to rate out of ten how useful they found the different learning strategies used, including trying out the techniques, receiving feedback from the students, watching others role-play, the feedback of peers, and engaging in discussion. They were also asked to report on their learning outcomes, commenting on the curriculum-related goals such as using the HEADSS screening tool, providing confidentiality statements and communicating with young people about sensitive issues. All the scores were high (between a range of 7.1 and 9.8) indicating that the medics found the workshop very useful (see Table 2 below). The open-ended comments also indicated that the workshop was highly valued.

Table 2: Medics (n146) rate the learning strategies
Survey data expressed as averaged score given out of a possible ten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The strategy</th>
<th>How useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from the students</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying out the techniques</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback of peers</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in discussion</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching and re-play</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching others role-play</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
<th>How Useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to communicate with young people about sensitive issues</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of optimism or faith in the capacity of young people</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of how to apply the HEADSS tool</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of informing young people about confidentiality</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to empathise with a young patient</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of purpose about contributing to care of young people</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to respond effectively to others</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of interplay of physical, social &amp; mental health issues</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The learning outcome given the highest rating was ability to communicate effectively with young people about sensitive issues which was scored 9 out of a possible 10, indicating that the medics found the process to be highly useful in serving the key curriculum goal which resided around effective professional communication. The second highest outcome score was given to enhanced sense of optimism or faith in the capacity of young people which scored 8.4. This indicates that the medics learnt something from the experience of having the young people positioned as their
coaches and co-investigators. High ratings were also given to the learning outcomes associated with the sub-objectives of the medical curriculum as knowledge of how to apply the HEADSS tool and understanding the importance of informing young people about confidentiality were both scored at 8.3. In this it can be seen that medics perceived that the workshop was well-attuned to their learning needs.

Of particular interest in this study is the different ratings given to the learning strategies employed in the workshops. Just as with the teachers’ responses, the two learning strategies found to be most useful were receiving feedback from the teenagers (9.75) and trying out the techniques (9.7). This indicates that the combination of working in role and receiving formative feedback is a very significant pedagogical tool, validating the choice to position the young people as both coaches and actors.

Receiving feedback from peers (9.1) and engaging in discussion (9) were also rated very highly. The discussion mode was entirely employed around the students in key informant role. As such, the coaching (firstly from the teenagers and then from peers) and the more general input from students were highly valued.

Neither the coaching and re-play activity (7.6) nor watching others role-play (7.4) were given ratings in the same league. This indicates that the more observational forms of learning, though valued, were not found to be as useful as the one-on-one applied experience and associated formative feedback. This feedback also justifies the choice to employ a significant amount of simultaneous play, rather to primarily take a demonstration or forum theatre approach.

The medics also added very positive responses in the open-ended section of the survey. Comments such as really good exercise, had forgotten how articulate and mature 15 year olds are. It's a good session, thanks! (Medic 1) and excellent session, should go longer, great high school student feedback (Medic 2), although brief, indicate that the medics value the student input. Others choose to comment on the enjoyable nature of the learning experience best part was to experience how young people think nowadays. It was great fun! (Medic 3), or to note that it was helpful very
good class! I found it extremely helpful and would recommend it to future students (Medic 4). Some note that the session was valuable because it deals with a challenging aspect of their work. Thus the appreciation is expressed in the context of challenge: FANTASTIC. Really highlights your theoretical knowledge that it is difficult to talk to teenagers/young people (Medic 5).

These comments provide an echo to the high scores given through the quantitative data, and are similar to those comments made by the teachers. Though it is a limitation not to have collected qualitative data from the medics, the survey data establishes that this was a highly useful learning experience for them, and it may be that the factors identified in the interviews with students and teachers also apply to the medics. Further qualitative research would be needed to establish if this was so and could legitimately be the focus of future research.

The Interview Data

Whilst the survey data is useful in providing an overview of the way in which the participants appraised the experience, the interview data provides a deeper understanding of the participants’ experience of their learning. In the following section I discuss three key themes that I distinguished within the data collected from the students and teachers. I arrived at these themes via a multi-phased coding process common in the analysis of qualitative data (Neuman 1997). Initially my task was to consider what to do with the overwhelmingly positive nature of the comments and I set out to break the category ‘the workshops were great’ into sub themes. To do this I completed an initial open coding phase in response to the question: *What was named to be of value?* This phase enabled me to establish the three major themes of *Boundary Crossing* (the humanising effect of being positioning as equals), *Mechanisms of the Learning* (the function of the dialogic and participatory methodology in scaffolding their enquiry), and *The Aesthetic Tasks as ‘Technologies of the Self’* (the role of the dramatic tasks in enabling personal learning and insight). Within each of these three themes I completed a second phase of selective coding, grouping responses into sub-themes. Within the theme of *Boundary Crossing* I applied the question *What did they say about the experience of working together?* Within the theme of *Mechanisms of the Learning* I sorted the data in response to the
question What did they say about the function of the participatory tasks in orchestrating their enquiry? Within the third theme of The Aesthetic Tasks as ‘Technologies of the Self’ I categorised the data in response to the question What did they say about the function of the dramatic tasks in engaging them in work upon the self? I then grouped and further categorised the responses that fitted within these questions. I named the sub-categories and selected for discussion the responses that most clearly exemplified the range and nature of the views expressed by the participants. These sub-themes allow a quite technical access to the participants’ perspectives on what it was that enabled their learning. In this their responses provided me an additional lens through which to reflect upon the methodology that I employed and to consider the explanatory models that I used to make sense of what happened as I led the workshops.

Boundary Crossing

In this project the participants are invited to straddle a number of defining boundaries. In working as co-investigators and co-creators, the participants cross the youth/adult and associated teacher/student and doctor/patient binaries. Additional boundary crossings are made within the fiction as players take on a range of roles.

The students and the teachers identify the opportunity to work as equals as one of the most valued characteristics of the Learning Partnerships project. Learning with and from each other is described as an end in its own right, providing an experience of connectedness, purpose and hope. It is also described as one of the mechanisms that supported a deeper learning through the fictional play with the collective nature of the process making possible a learning that would not be available through a more individualised approach. They describe learning together as enabling them to change their understanding of themselves and of each other, and as assisting them to re-appraise what might be possible in future relationships.

In the following section I analyse the respondents’ descriptions of the way the re-positioning enabled them to re-learn the self, re-cognise each other, re-story the teacher/student and doctor/patient relationship, and re-invent the possibility of future relationships.
Re-Positioning as Equals

Both teachers and students report that they are mutually restricted by the segregated and hierarchical roles that they play in their institutional settings. In the workshops however, they experience a temporary relief from this divide. Julia points out that the levelling experience allows participants to work together outside the usual power relationship.

*It is a great leveler, because it is not a power relationship that is set up ... It kind of humanised both the role of the teacher and the role of the student. And that can tend to be de-humanised in institutions because you are so busy with your agenda.* (Julia, teacher)

Exchanges between students and teachers are bound by the norms and expectations associated with institutional roles. These workshops provide a different sort of exchange. Julia experiences this as a humanising experience. Applying a Habermasian perspective, it can be understood that when the systems world dominates, as occurs when students and teachers primarily know each other through their institutional roles, there are consequent de-personalising effects. There is no space for the sharing of lifeworld experience because everyone is so busy with their own agenda.

Once on an equal footing, a more authentic form of communication becomes available. Freed from her confining role as disciplinarian, Liz finds that a more honest exchange is possible.

*I thought it was really the best thing I did all year. I thought it was fantastic. I think because I was just really conscious of the fact that every interaction that you have with students you are in this role as the teacher and to some degree or another you’re a disciplinarian, and then to be able to meet and interact with them as people instead. ... I got a lot out of it in terms of being able to talk to them on equal footing and find out what their point of view was in that kind of perspective. I think it’s a much more honest forum than talking to students that you’ve taught or that you are teaching so yeah ... And it was fun. That was the other thing, you know, you’d really look forward to it and it just kind of, it was a nice little bright spot in the week.* (Liz, teacher)
Liz is disciplined and confined by her role as the one who must discipline others. It is a pleasurable experience to be free of her role as disciplinarian. It makes it possible for her to find out what their point of view was. Honest talk becomes possible when the power dynamic associated with institutionalised roles is dislodged.

Re-Learning the Self

The students also note this phenomenon of being equal. They describe their release from confining hierarchical roles as generating a shift in the sense of self and as enabling their contribution. Clare finds that the listening that is given helps to create her response as coach.

_I found it was like, each other being equal… You didn’t feel like the teacher, you didn’t feel like a student, you felt like everything was equal. (What helps us to talk like this is) people listening - actually wanting to hear what you have to say about a more important issue._ (Clare, student)

The listening that is provided shapes Clare as a speaker. Similarly, Simon finds that he moderates his response according to his assessment of the listener. He finds that when the listener is really interested, he can give more.

_If they’re not interested then you are not as willing to give advice because you don’t think they’re listening … I had one who looked really interested in what I had to say, and that gave me more confidence to give more advice._ (Simon, student)

Simon’s confidence as a speaker is predicated upon his reading of the listener’s interest in him. Thus his confidence is not an attribute contained within himself, as it is commonly regarded to be in the humanist tradition of understanding the self, but rather is something that is co-created between him and others. His reading of the regard the other person has for him informs his sense of his own capacity. His perception of the listener influences the tale he tells (Elliott 2005).

To give an account of the self entails an act of exposure which is not the story itself, but the act of giving the story to the other (Butler 2007). Here it seems that the extent to which the students engage in this ‘exposure’ is determined in large part by the regard that they perceive that the adults have for them. The listening is a magnet for their speaking. Foucault describes the phenomenon of parrhessia as generated through
the courage and civic contribution of the speaker. Here it seems that the honesty is also made possible by the generosity, respect, and receptivity of the listener. In this, who the players conceptualise each other to be is fundamental in shaping the learning exchange. Positioning is therefore a fundamental concept to consider in the design of the learning program.

Recognition and Re-Construction

Thus far it can be noted that the learning exchange is enabled by two inter-connected factors: the positioning as equals, and the quality of the listening given. To be regarded as an equal permits honest exchange.

As well as defining the conditions that permit them to contribute, the students comment about the effects of this contribution. They note that they are transformed when they become contributors. Peter explains that, under an appreciative gaze, his thinking changes and he matures.

*When you feel as if you’re being appreciated, I guess that does make you think and then you mature. As time goes on your ideas go deeper, that is – you know – your ideas change, and everything changes about you.* (Peter, student)

Inside of the appreciative space Peter can think more deeply. His ideas emerge, change and deepen. Peter perceives that the way in which he is ‘listened’ moderates the way in which he can think. He believes this changes who he is - *everything changes about you.* He struggles to find the abstract language with which to speak about this, but goes on to explain this phenomenon through use of an example.

*Sometimes you have to feel that teenagers are not appreciated, for example – if you walk into a supermarket, there might be a guy watching you – like they don’t trust you or they don’t appreciate you. It annoys you and makes you feel bad – makes you feel like you’re not good enough for them. And that changes your personality and makes you feel less confident about who you are, and what to say, just in case people like that are judging you.* (Peter, student)

Here Peter describes the impact of negative constructions on his sense of identity. When he is demonised his personality is changed. In the face of negative judgement he becomes less able. These statements help to explain why Peter values this
experience as co-teacher. Through this experience he is re-constructed – both by others and by himself.

Peter also believes that he has seen his peers change as a result of participating in the project.

*Look at this class - I haven’t seen one person not improve…. For example, Sunni and May-Lin, they were so shy, and they still are a little shy, but they’ve improved so much. They go up to people, they speak with them, they say their own opinions and they don’t care anymore.* (Peter, student)

He sees the shy students gain the confidence to interact and the ones who *muck around* becoming serious.

*You get to see a more serious side of things in the person – like- yeah … in classes you do muck around … but when we have the doctors there and we’re doing something with them that we know is important, yeah, you see the more serious side of everyone.* (Peter, student)

This suggests that Peter has come to know his classmates in a different way because they have *become* different. They have created a new set of evidence about who they are. Thus as well as shifting his sense of his self, the Learning Partnerships workshops enable Peter to construct a more ‘generous’ identity for his peers. In this the work of becomes part of a process of re-classification in which the students re-categorise each other (I and We) as well as the adults (Them).

**Re-Imagining the Other**

In re-imagining the other one also re-conceptualises the self. When Katrina re-imagines who young people are, she re-constructs the category of ‘student’. Because ‘teacher’ is defined in relation to ‘student’, she also reconstructs her professional self.

*I saw a whole different side to students and I was amazed by their maturity. I think if anything out of that class I’ve got a real appreciation for the individual student.* (Katrina, teacher)

In re-constructing ‘student’, Katrina becomes an *appreciating* teacher. That means she too is changed.
Similarly, Jane describes the restorative effect of the one on one contact in the workshops. The contact enables her to see the person where previously she saw the scary mob.

_I liked the speaking to the students because it gave you a chance to meet them as a person, and see them, not this scary group of students. ... On rounds I used to go in and they were just this mob of people who I was scared of basically, and to speak one on one with the students was great because I saw they’ve got expectations of teachers and they can tell you what those expectations are, and they can tell you what makes for them a bad teacher and what makes a good teacher or what will happen in their life that would make them angry and make them lash out._ (Jane, teacher)

Seeing the personhood of the students confers her own personhood. If they are human, she too can be human. Thus Jane achieves a better fit between her sense of personal self and her professional persona. In modernity the systems world increasingly encroaches upon the lifeworld (Habermas 1987). Here Jane describes a retaliatory sortie whereby the lifeworld re-captures some of the lost territory.

Not only do the teachers find that the workshop helped them see the students as more fully human, they also assume that the students gain an insight into what it is like for them to be the teacher, and in this they too feel humanised by the students.

_I think they also understood from this experience that we (as teachers) are real human beings, and not some terrible being come just to make them do work._ (Jacinta, teacher)

Jacinta perceives that when the students ‘re-classify’, the teachers are released from a limiting professional identity as terrible beings and can become more fully human.

The process of classification is integral to the formation of identity (Foucault 1980). A process of re-classification is thereby necessary if we are to create a new position or a new storyline. Inside of an appreciative story we can see effort, regard and persistence, whereas inside a story about victims and perpetrators, we are more likely to see betrayal, suffering, blame or justification. The re-classification of the other facilitated by the Learning Partnerships process is thus integral to the value of the experience.
As can be heard above, both the students (Peter, Simon and Clare), and the teachers (Liz, Julia, Katrina and Jane), find that the interaction in the participatory space enables them to re-invent each other and themselves. Having accepted the invitation to work as partners, the players co-create who it is possible to be, and what it is possible to say. Thus the partnership teaches its own possibility in retrospect. The participants look back at what has been made and see that it is possible to work together as equals. This re-classification is potentially the source of a change in behaviour as a new possibility must be imagined before new actions can be taken (Davies, Dormer et al. 2001; Butler 2004).

**Re-Storying**

The storylines and positions that we absorb as part of the discourse that we live within operate to delimit what we think is appropriate in relationships. The participants note that the opportunity to learn with and from each other assists them to create new interpretive ‘stories’ through which to explain what happens around them. Krissy notes a shift in the assumptions that students use to interpret teacher behaviour.

*You see kind of the teachers whinging, and the student just thinks that the teacher doesn’t care, you know... whereas the teacher is worrying about it on the other side.* (Krissy, student)

Krissy suggests that an explanatory default is made whereby students ascribe negative motive to teachers. This default is informed by the cultural storyline about who teachers and students are. The assumption that the teacher is whinging, rather than worried, arises from a discourse that demonises teachers. Given this assumption, the behaviours the teacher exhibits are likely to be interpreted as evidence of that which is already assumed to be so. A teacher complaining about overdue work will be read as not caring rather than as worrying.

Natalie creates a new explanatory model as she re-stories from teacher as the enemy to teacher as tolerant.

*I guess in a school environment you don’t normally think about, you know, the teachers’ perspectives, it is just they’re the enemy and I’m right. And, you know, it is kind of teaching you to see the other side of the story in a way.* (We
Thus Natalie re-frames and re-interprets teacher behaviours. Her previous story about teachers and students as enemies had prevented her from seeing the **tolerance** of teachers. Inside of a new explanatory story, new evidence can be seen.

The re-thinking of the teacher done by the students operates in parallel with the re-thinking of the student done by the teachers. To re-think the other is also to re-think the self. When a different definition is given to the opposite category in the binary, there is a concomitant shift in the understanding of one’s own membership category.

It is particularly relevant that this re-working of the explanatory story is achieved on both sides. It can be noted here that the confining assumptions made about young people by adults interlock with those made about adults by the young people. This data shows that the young people understand adults primarily in terms of their systems roles. This is a form of dehumanisation of adults, which exists in parallel with the patronising scripts that adults have about teenagers. What is also illustrated here is that the young people tend to subscribe to the assumptions about themselves that the adults make. This can be seen because they too are surprised when they and their peers show up to be insightful, useful and compassionate. Thus the typology associated with the systems roles (student, teacher, youth or adult) confines the thinking of both parties.

In doing the self differently a new piece of ‘evidence’ is created. In the experience of doing, and being done to, differently, the participants become different, even if only temporarily. They can then take back this piece of first hand experience as a counter-story to sit in opposition to the dominant story. According to the participants, the most valuable aspect of the Learning Partnerships process has involved the development of this counter-story about the self and the other. In this re-working of the story of each other, the participants move beyond the stereotypical concepts about who young people ‘are’ that permeate the culture (Morch 2003, Dwyer and Wyn 2001).
Re-Inventing Hope for the Future

Alienation, meaninglessness and depersonalisation produce depression or despair (Giddens 1991; Seligman 1995; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). The students report that making a contribution has an uplifting effect. To be useful produces a sense meaning and purpose. Susie finds it fulfilling to be helping others through her work.

*Oh normal drama is just like playing games and kind of boosting confidence. But this, is like it’s intended to help people and, it just goes on a whole different kind of track and it’s kind of like fulfilling and stuff. ... It’s just the experience, it’s like there’s no other class like this one, so I really like that.*

(Susie, student)

It is morale boosting to be able to make a contribution to the community.

*It’s a lot more like satisfying because it’s like – yes - I’m being listened to, my opinions are being heard you know, and you feel really important – like - this is something that’s really good for the community, it’s going to benefit everybody so it’s more satisfying than just mucking around in drama. It’s really good, it’s really morale boosting - like I’m doing something good for the community and I’m learning stuff at the same time and I think it’s just something that everyone should get a chance to do.*

(Susie, student)

Often we conceptualise young people as in need of contribution. Here it can be seen that they are in need of the opportunity to contribute, for it is through this experience that they gain a sense of agency, purpose and connection.

The ethical purpose of the work is integrally connected to the experience of giving value and being of value. This can be heard in Susie’s statements about doing something good for the community, helping people, and benefiting everyone. However, it is not only the purpose that is ethical, it is also the process. The stakeholders interact together. This heightens their sense of accountability and inter-dependence. Dan finds that *you don’t have to worry about your heart being into it, because there’s kids here* (Dan Teacher).

Thus from the participants’ responses it can be heard that working collectively generates a sense of hope, commitment and the energy for change. Through working together on this project the participants come to see themselves and each other
differently, conferring an integrative dignity upon the self and the other, and by
default upon the teacher-student or doctor-patient relationship. The binaries of the
type are over-woven with connective threads and a new tapestry of meaning is
threaded into one’s story of the other.

Hope is both an ontological and an epistemological need (Freire 1994). The process is
restorative because it builds hope, or the possibility of a different mode of being in the
future. The sense that one can be seen as human, whilst also fulfilling one’s system
role, creates a possible world in which the systems and personal selves are not in a
binary, nor in opposition, but rather are integrated with a coherent and ethically
positioned dignity. In this the dialogue within the space of equals creates a ‘pedagogy
of hope’ (Freire 1994).

The logic of effect is as follows:

- To work collaboratively is to be positioned as equals.
- To be positioned as equals enables contribution.
- To contribute is uplifting.

**Mechanisms of the Learning**

The participants describe certain *mechanisms* as critical in enabling the dialogue that
occurs. As described in the section above, the relational platform makes it possible for
a certain sort of learning to occur. However, this platform is created by learning tasks
as well as by the gathering of the stakeholders. Had they been simply gathered and
left to talk, the dialogue may not have occurred. Thus the participation and subsequent
learning does not arise simply as a result of co-location. It is orchestrated via
mechanisms that require the participants to collaborate, consult and critique. In the
following section I analyse the participants’ commentary about the inter-related nature
of the social space and the thinking space.

**Orchestrated Collaboration**

Marcus believes the communication between students and teachers is made possible
by the orchestrated nature of the interaction.
What helped interaction was that the sessions did not resemble a classroom in that there wasn’t a front of class and a back of class. We were all in circles. It was equal input to each other. And I think your process of getting people up and just mixing around and forcing that social integration upon us helped to break down any preconceptions of who these kids were, and in their case, who these adults were. ... So that prompted a social interaction as well as the fact that we were interacting with students that we wouldn’t normally walk up to.

(Marcus, teacher)

There is an embodied aspect to participation that is brought into play through kinaesthetic tasks. Marcus notes the use of circles and getting people up and just mixing around. A compelling participatory design is needed in order to override customary dividing practices. The segregation is in part overcome via the participatory nature of the tasks.

Marcus also refers to the need both students and teachers have to break down any preconceptions. The collaborative learning tasks assist with this because as well as organising a new geography of communication, they house a certain explanatory model about the world. Implicit in the invitation to participate is the assumption that it is both possible and desirable for the participants to do so. When high expectations are transmitted via the design of the activity, then a covert message is transmitted about who human beings are. Here Marcus notes that it is the design of the activity that enables the communication. The compulsion that he refers to as inherent in the task may incorporate both a geographic enabler (they are mixed) and a theoretical enabler (they read the expectation that it is possible and desirable to communicate). Thus there is both a covert message (you can do this and it will be useful), and an overt message (now talk about what students can find hard about school). The covert message transmits a sense of possibility about who people are and what they are capable of. The overt message orients a much more specific task focus. Potentially the participants learn as much from the covert as from the overt curriculum. Here they learn that it is possible for them to work collaboratively.
Inventing the Possibility
If the task invents the possibility of the interaction and then calls it forth, then trust is not so much a precondition of the interaction, but rather invented by the invitation. The task calls for the performance or enactment of trust, having invented or assumed that it is in fact possible. The participatory ‘trusting’ act then happens and becomes the evidence of its own possibility.

To conceptualise trust in this way is quite different from the more common assumption that trust is the pre-existing state that then enables interaction. Here, following Butler, trust is theorised to be a product of the interaction. Butler discusses the way in which the performance of identity then becomes used as a naturalising set of evidence relating to the inherent nature of identity. In a similar manner we tend to assume that if one acts in a trusting manner, one must have first trusted. An alternative assumption, fitting with a Butlerian philosophy, is that a person could imagine that it is possible to act in a trusting manner, and then act (trustingly) in alignment with this assumption, and go on to produce retrospectively the evidence that people can be trusted.

This notion of trust as an invention or construct has particular implications for those leading work in the drama. It highlights the need to attend to the covert expectations and assumptions transmitted via the design of the task and to the positioning allocated to the participants.

Investigative
Whilst the participatory tasks transmit assumptions about how the players will interact, they also house the enquiry. That is, they problematise or transmit the questions. In this the interactive process is integrally associated with the critical or enquiry-based approach. Luke observes that the interactive design of the activity provides the platform for the ensuing enquiry.

*It provides a platform for an ongoing enquiry - we ask the students, we asked them, we just didn’t make it up out of our heads or read books. We actually heard their voices or had the opportunity to.* (Luke, teacher)
Luke sees his learning as supported by the enquiry and he values the work conducted with students in key informant role. The dialogue gives him access to an authentic piece of data against which he could consider his ‘book’ learning or personal theories. In this the dialogic process generates both the relational and the critical aspects of the work.

Habermas argues that the listener’s perception of the sincerity and trustworthiness of the speech act is an important element of the validity work that is integral to the creation of the ‘communicative space’. Here the participants read a combination of truthfulness, authenticity, sincerity and ethical ‘rightness’ in each others’ talk. In this, the positioning as equals enables the building of the communicative space, which in turn supports learning through the exchange of ‘valid’ data.

**Critical**

Dan points out that it is through the collective process of role-playing that the situations can be recognised to be systemic and cultural as well as personal. He describes how a sense of joint ownership of the material is generated via techniques such as role-rotation and the re-playing of scenes.

*What I like is that someone puts forward a scenario, but then they could be replaced from the situation. What I liked about it is that their ownership in that situation is gone and it’s really important I think to teach both students and future teachers that the situation doesn’t belong to them, it’s common property of all teaching situations... People have to learn to realize that... you know these situations happen everyday in schools, everywhere in different ways, and it’s the issues not the people involved that are really important.*

(Dan, teacher)

The methodology assists participants to work in a hermeneutic way between the personal and the political, and to see both the systemic as well as the individual nature of the problems. There is a shift from mine to ours. This then is a collective pedagogy which opens a critical scrutiny of the relationship between the macro and the micro. In this the collective and the critical operate together to fuel and ignite the enquiry.
The hermeneutic cycle of enquiry helps participants to note and dislodge the assumptions that hold their worldview in place. Dan notes the way in which the dramatic exercises assist them to foreground these assumptions. Once brought from the background, they can be interrogated and changed.

*When it’s personal, people have this whole background of assumptions going into it, which they haven’t communicated to anyone else. They can go through a whole experience and might not have even bumped any of those assumptions, so none of those assumptions have been disturbed. They could seem to have learnt a heap, but really all they’ve done is changed one little belief and the rest of their assumptions are safe and sound, untouched.* (Dan, teacher)

Thus the collective nature of the work supports exploration of the personal assumptions that one may avoid *bumping into* if left to work alone.

**Rigorous**

There is then a form of rigour available through working in a collective mode - that associated with rupture, revelation and disruption. Criteria associated with resistance or rupture are amongst those considered to contribute to the validity of qualitative research. They assist in the problematizing of reality and the uncovering of hidden assumptions (Lincoln and Guba 2003).

This then is a *dislodging methodology*, reliant upon techniques that shake stories from the *safe and sound* state of the everyday certainty and tumble them out for scrutiny. In this the process supports a form of deconstruction. The participants interrogate and interrupt dominant stories, and re-cast themselves and each other as caring, connected, struggling and human. In this it is deeply ethical work. Further, there is a sense that the ethic and the aesthetic are closely interwoven. The collaborative and creative learning tasks function as mechanisms that compel and enable the dialogue. Thus the social ‘shape’ of the tasks is integral to the knowledge that is co-created and exchanged within them.

In summarising the participants’ experience of the relational process it can be seen that to work *collaboratively* is to be positioned as *equals*. To be positioned as equals
enables contribution, and to contribute is uplifting. Further, it is the orchestrated nature of the enquiry that compels the interaction, and the collective nature of the work that enables players to de-personalise the challenges and to take a critical and systemic view. In this the political, ethical, critical and collaborative domains integrate to enable their learning.

The Aesthetic Tasks as ‘Technologies of the Self’

I have argued in earlier chapters that the drama conventions used in the workshops exert a form of ‘governance’ upon the type of knowledge that is generated within the fictional frame, and that different conventions invite different ways of representing and knowing the self.

Many of the respondents commented about how they learnt, talking specifically about the way in which participating in the drama tasks enabled their learning. This enables me to consider their perspectives on the way in which the form influences the enquiry. In this section I analyse their commentary about the way in which the drama practices required them to empathise, embody, experiment, express, extract and explicate. In this I reflect on the drama as contributing to the ‘technologies of the self’, or practices and disciplines through which to know and change the self.

Empathise and Re-Cognise

Participation in the drama calls for engagement in the practice of empathetic imagining. Through pretending to be the other, one becomes familiar with them, in this generating a type of knowledge about them. Stuart notes that to be in the character of the teacher helps him to appreciate and become familiar with the teacher.

We considered the ideas of what the teacher was feeling when we were acting as the teacher. You could kind of appreciate how teachers think more and why they are getting angry because a student isn’t handing in work and that kind of stuff. Like it kind of helped us to be in the character of the teacher, which has helped us to be familiar with the teacher. (Stuart P, student)
Patricia finds that the technique of role-reversal generates perspective for both sets of players. She links this opportunity to get perspective to a new capacity to actually see real people. The teacher or doctor can be seen as human and therefore must be respected.

*The whole role-reversal where the student will play the doctor and the doctor will play the patient – It’s just, like, you sort of step into the other person’s shoes and you get a feel for what is going on …. It was sort of good to get perspective, like, to actually see real people and that teachers are sort of being human and we should maybe have a little bit of respect for them as well.*

(Patricia, student)

Patricia can see the other differently as a result of this work. She sees real people and that teachers are sort of being human. Thus the work is about more than empathy. It is also about re-appraisal. To empathise is to feel for a person and imagine into their situation. To be able to see the person, where perhaps one previously saw only a role, is also to be able to see one’s self differently in relation to that person. To see the person differently is to step beyond the defining binaries generated in the dominant discourse. It is to imagine an interconnectedness and a shared humanity. It is to imagine ‘We’ where previously one saw ‘Them and Us’. Thus, potentially the empathetic engagement is valuable not just because it invites an emotional response, but because it facilitates subsequent re-cognition.

**Embody and Enact**

The enactment of the self entails bodily acts as well as speech acts (Butler 2004). In the role-play the participants work with their bodies as well as with their minds and there is a spatial and corporeal dimension to their interaction. They work in pairs, sit on the floor in small talking circles, and jostle up against each other as they mingle in the mixing games. When in role, they obey the rules about proximity and touch which are pertinent to their fictional relationships.

Many of the respondents note that the embodied nature of their interaction makes for an integrated, personalized and applied form of learning. Jacinta comments on the
way in which the role-plays provide her a freedom to experiment and to learn in an applied way.

*I am not the most actor type in the class, however I felt that this section of the classes contributed highly to my learning. It enabled me to put myself into another’s shoes, or act without fear of ridicule a position I had not ‘tried out’ before. It gave me the access to try out different roles, and to find out how another might respond to that.* (Jacinta, teacher)

This is an embodied and experiential form of learning. Jane too appreciates the located and kinaesthetic nature of the work, making a distinction between theory (talk) and practice (doing), and between the verbal forms of knowing and an embodied form of knowing.

*I think you needed to do the role-play because a lot of times you can talk and talk about something but until you actually see it or feel yourself in that situation you don’t have an understanding of it.* (Jane, teacher)

Jane and Jacinta value an embodied, experiential and experimental form of learning. They find that the self can be learnt and shaped through trying on possible ways of being and learning them through the body whilst located within situated contexts.

What is implicit here is that learning through the role-play makes it possible for them to learn themselves through responsive action. When you see it or feel yourself in that situation, or when you try out different roles, you learn yourself in the doing. Part of the doing is to be in responsive interplay with those others you are improvising with. It is also to be in speculative relationship with particular narratives and predicaments, thus learning one self in relation to potential events. The technology of the self at work here is an en-acted, embodied practice of learning the self in (re-)action. It is an embodied learning with others.

**Experiment and Analogise**

Both teachers and students found that the role-play provided an opportunity for them to learn through experiment. Justin uses the metaphor of the laboratory to describe the way in which the teachers and medics learn via experimentation (working in role) and asking questions (engaging in dialogue). Both activities are conducted within the spirit of enquiry.
They get to experiment with things sort of on us, like they get to try out different things and they get to ask questions. It builds confidence ... they are a lot more confident at the end – like you can tell by the way they talk. (Justin, student)

Justin assesses this experimental play and the associated dialogue as something that is supported by the embodied nature of the ‘teaching’ he can do in role.

When you chat with people you can’t really express it completely ... so if you were saying how you hate it when teachers don’t listen to you ... you can’t really describe it, so you have to almost show them rather than just talk about it...you can show them in a few movements and a few words. (Justin, student)

Thus the drama enables a showing of ideas that might be difficult to tell and an approach to abstraction through the particular. In this it supports learning through induction. The term induction can be called upon here to carry its multiple meanings, including the notion of the shift from the particular to the general, the inculcation of a feeling or an idea, and the process of orientation or initiation. By trying on a role, the player is initiated into a certain position, experiences the ideas and emotions associated with that role, and then makes inductive generalisations from that specific experience. The player approaches abstraction via the knowledge gained through the specific, kinaesthetic, affective and imaginative modes. Much of the experimental learning occurs through analogy as there is an ongoing implicit assumption that there must be points of similarity between the fiction and reality.

Expression and Exegesis

As illustrated in Justin’s comments about showing through role, the drama techniques used enable the player to work simultaneously as actor and teacher. Romy notes that she works as a teacher both through her responses as an actor (sending signals through the role) and as a coach (interpreting those signals and providing advice).

In role we could kind of like give them the signals and out of role we could explain what they kind of meant. I think (they’ve learnt also from) the talk out of role. They got more feedback on how to do it better. So if they're in the role and they haven’t learnt how to communicate I reckon they learn then when you talk about it. (Romy, student)
Romy’s assessment of the epistemological process is that signals are the methodology that the actor uses and explanations are the methodology the coach uses. Sending the signals requires an embodied and expressive form of communication, whereas the explanations entail a verbalised and theorised form of feedback. Sending the signals is a responsive and reciprocal form of ‘instruction’, which operates in the present tense. In this, sending signals in role is a form of ‘instruction’ that entails shaping the behaviour at the moment that it is exhibited. It operates through inter-play. When Romy, playing the role of ‘Jo’, responds to a judgemental question by closing down, she signals that the doctor should change course, whereas when she responds to a permission-giving question by opening-up, she signals that the doctor is doing well and should continue to proceed in that direction.

In contrast, when the player gives feedback on how their partner has performed in the scenario, the instruction operates in the past tense. It is a commentary on the efficacy of what transpired. Thus when the students tell the doctors or teachers what they did that worked well, they appraise the past. Coaching, on the other hand, is future-referential. It constitutes advice about how one should play in the future.

Role-play is commonly understood as a device through which to learn. It is here also described as a technique through which to teach. The accuracy and immediacy of the response that the actor gives in role provides an instant feedback loop through which the co-player can gauge the efficacy of their actions. Thus the participants can learn through the experience of cause and effect, or through an experiential learning in which they respond to the signals of the other. Further, the commentary given about the fictional play provides an exegetic learning that invites adults (and the young people) to shift their explanatory models and definitional binaries.

The combination of playing in role, giving feedback and generating coaching involves an expressive and multi-modal teaching on the part of the students. Performance, coaching and feedback are each a form of exegesis. As coach, the young person explains how the doctor or teacher should read the future, as critic they explain how they should have read the past, and as actors they involve them in reading the present.
Excavate and Explicate

Many of the participants value the deconstructive thinking work that they accomplish within the aesthetic tasks. They particularly note the use of the Hidden Thoughts Game as a device to compel thought, to prompt deep thinking, and to surface material that would otherwise have been missed. Gillian refers to the techniques as enabling a form of excavation. She chooses the metaphors of *digging deeper*, and *fleshing out*.

The Hidden Thoughts and the Coaching and Re-play techniques were especially useful. They really enabled you to dig deeper, to flesh out and deconstruct the complexities of the issues at hand. The Coaching and Re-play technique was especially useful – it provided a real life, visual display for how to deal with difficult situations in a constructive way. (Gillian, teacher)

Gina finds that the Hidden Thoughts Game *makes* the person go on a deeper level. The questions inherent in the form not only position, but also *require* the players to think in a certain way and to extract a different sort of knowledge.

*I really liked the hidden fears. So making not only fears come out, but also making the person go on a deeper level because you really have to think and go “Ohh, what is beneath that for me?” and that kind of process was beneficial not only for the individual, but for the people watching. Because you don’t always think about what is actually causing your behaviour and what is actually underneath it.* (Gina, teacher)

Gina refers to the way in which this device provides access to *what is actually causing your behaviour*, or the discourses that inform our expectations and desires.

Marcus also uses terms relating to compulsion in describing the Hidden Thoughts device. He sees it as *forcing* people to take a step back and unpack.

*I think (what was useful was) the thought tracking and asking what are they actually thinking as opposed to what they are actually saying. And forcing people to take a step back and unpack what is happening inside the head. It was very, very important for me to understand why certain things are said or done in schools and things I didn’t realise... And also getting an insight as to how to best remedy or rectify the situation.* (Marcus, teacher)

Thus the form is experienced as exerting a compulsion or governmentality. The problematization inherent in the framing both requires and enables a certain type of
thinking work on the part of the players. They find that when they are asked to do different sorts of thinking, they engage in different sorts of learning. The game defines the territory of knowledge in which they will work.

The function of making the private public is discussed by Richard. He describes the Hidden Thoughts Game as inviting people to put into language that which usually remains unnamed. It is this speaking that helps him to understand people’s desires and to identify the connection between desire and behaviour.

*I found that you don’t often talk about your inner thinking and you don’t talk about the process of thinking, so to actually make it verbal was really helpful because it then kind of made people realise... what’s the teacher’s needs and desires in this situation or what’s the student’s desires in this situation, how are they influencing their outward actual behaviour.* (Richard, teacher)

In this it can be seen that the participants experience the Hidden Thoughts device as one that assists them to bridge inner and outer, and public and private. Via this connection, the device enables players to sketch out the connection between needs, desires and behaviour, overlaying more common stories about teacher-student behaviour with new interpretations.

Joanna points to the Hidden Thoughts device as one of the tools that helps people to face a knowledge that is commonly bypassed.

*I think they (the teachers) would most likely get a lot out of (Hidden Thoughts) ... because ... you do something and you don’t really know what they are thinking and it’s very useful. Because, you know, you can you sort of tiptoe around some sorts of things, like that.* (Joanna, student)

In this the Hidden Thoughts exercise permits the speaking of that which is usually withheld. It is a revelatory and a parrhessiastic device. It invites player to take the risk to speak the ‘truths’ that may ordinarily be tiptoed around for fear of the consequences of their speaking, or simply because it is not customary to include reference to them in everyday transactions of the school or the clinic.

Thus, in the experience of the participants, ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ compels the players to unpack, dig deeper, flesh out, get at what is beneath, make verbal, show
what they think, go on a deeper level, get an insight, speak desires, and deconstruct complexities. They engage in a theatre of questions.

**Positioning Plus Pedagogy**

In the previous chapter I argued that the selection of the genre influences the knowledge that we create about the self and the practices through which we recognise, re-learn and re-shape the self. Thus the form has an influence on the construction of meaning. It both shapes the medium of representation and influences the problematization of the self through the drama. In addition, as storying is an inherently social act, both the fashioning of the drama and the responses to it are filtered through the discourse of expectations that the actors have of their real or imagined audiences.

In this chapter, analysis of the participants’ views provides a perspective on these assertions. Here it can be heard that they find their positioning as equals to be integral to the contribution that they can make. The listening shapes their speaking and the nature of the encounter that is possible between them. They note that to work within the collective makes possible a deconstruction of the relationship between the personal and the political. Thus, somewhat paradoxically, to be positioned as equals is *humanising*, whilst to explore collectively *de-personalises* problematic situations. This is perhaps because the participatory tasks provide an opportunity for authentic exchange of lifeworlds experiences as well as critical enquiry into systems roles.

The participants provide a commentary on the function of the aesthetic tasks, and in this their views also throw light upon my own theorised discussion of the use of the drama to shape the enquiry. They describe the aesthetic techniques as *housing* the questions, *orchestrating* their participation, and *compelling* the enquiry. They note that techniques such as the Hidden Thoughts Game assist them to *dig deeper*, whilst role-rotation and re-play games enable them to see that *the situation doesn’t belong to them, it’s common property of all*. In this they engage in a detection of the discourses. They report that generating material through these aesthetic enquiry techniques involves a process of knowledge creation and insight not readily available to them. It also entails taking the risk of contribution associated with sharing these insights, and
this sharing further contributes to building an atmosphere of appreciative regard for self and other. In this the rigour of the aesthetically driven enquiry functions to strengthen the relational platform.

This analysis of the participants’ responses indicates that the drama techniques were successful in engaging them in a critical, ethical and enabling enquiry. Their description of the value of engaging though the various enquiry ‘games’ dovetails with my understanding of the facility of these exercises in calling forth dialogic engagement with fellow players and critical engagement with the stories explored through the drama. The aesthetic tasks provide a social architecture, which shapes the interactions, and an intellectual architecture, which invites certain types of thinking. These tasks however are conducted within a relational context, which is also informed by the positioning of the participants in relation to each other, and the broader social, educational and personal goals which orient their endeavours.

**Summary**

The discoveries that the participants make through engaging in the Learning Partnerships process enables them to create a new story with which to overwrite an existing knowledge about the world of teachers and students. Kristy finds a new explanatory model, re-framing from teacher as whingeing to teacher as caring. Natalie dislodges the war story of teachers as enemies. Jane re-frames the students as people rather than some scary mob. Jacinta is no longer just some terrible being. Peter finds that your ideas go deeper and everything changes about you. As a result of this process the participants seem to be able to see differently. The same signs can be interpreted differently. The shift enables viewing not just from a different angle but into a different story. The students create a new storyline about who teachers are, and the teachers created a new story about who the students are.

The new stories disrupt the discourse in which teacher/student or doctor/patient are located as binaries and cast in opposition to each other. In the new stories the characters are re-located to share a common humanity. The new storyline the teacher complains because she cares requires a re-classification and re-ascription of identity. When the other is understood differently, the self is also differently understood. This
is in part because the binary of student/teacher or doctor/patient configures the identity, and if the binary is dislocated, then both categories are re-defined as they are referent to each other.

Both parties locate the experience as an island in a sea of need. The students cite a lack of purpose, value and agency. The teachers express an unmet need in relation to feeling equipped for their professional roles. Through the experience of mutual contribution, each of the parties gains a sense of value and purpose. They re-frame their understandings of each other and come to see themselves differently. Both interview and survey data shows that the process generates a sense of purpose and optimism. In this the process builds the sense of possibility understood to be a fundamental enabler of change.

The participants value their positioning as equals, the function of the participatory methodology in orchestrating the enquiry, the purposeful and ethical nature of the endeavour, and the mechanisms through which the aesthetic tasks assist them to learn and collectively work upon the self. They found that the methodology provided a compelling design, which moderated and enabled their enquiry. The collaborative mode and the critical and practical orientation of the enquiry enabled a shift in perspective, a de-personalising of the issues, development of applied skills, and a humanising of the other.

What's Next?
In the final chapter I draw together my analysis of the use of drama-based techniques as a method in participatory enquiry. I identify five key principles to inform a framework for poststructuralist enquiry through drama. I make recommendations about the use of this framework in professional training or in school drama education. I identify the specific and located nature of the point of view through which this study has been conducted, and the consequent limitations in the knowledge that has been created. I outline the potential for further research into the use of drama as a mode for enquiry-based learning.
Chapter 12: The Question is the Answer

Introduction
In this final chapter I draw together what I have learnt by investigating the use of poststructuralist theory to analyse the use of drama techniques in personal and professional learning. I highlight the way in which the ethical, political, technical and ontological foundations of the work inform the learning that takes place.

I return to the initial questions framed in my introduction and note the degree to which my research has informed my thinking about them. I make recommendations about the use of drama techniques in professional learning, and about the use of drama as a method of participatory enquiry. I recommend that education programs for those working in the human services professions focus on discourse analysis as well as on the acquisition of knowledge and skills. I argue that if behaviour is to change, we must have access to those norms and assumptions that influence the actions that we find available to us.

I acknowledge the limitations of this study as residing in the particular orientation and standpoint of myself as researcher, and the location of the investigation in specific communities, for specific purposes. I point to the need for further research into the use of drama as a method in participatory enquiry, and as a tool for personal and political empowerment.

I return to the third person voice to narrate what has been accomplished in this study. Just as in the first chapter, I use this shift in voice to denote how the individual nature of my voice also occupies a space within broader traditions of education research, in this re-locating from the personal to the cultural (Kamler 2001).

I then drop back to the first person to discuss the limitations of the claims I make, and to make recommendations about additional research. I conclude with a summary of the more immediate and personal nature of my interpretations and to highlight the principles that I recommend as a guide in the practice of drama-based enquiry.
The Research Story
The research text is a story. This text tells the story of an investigation conducted by a teacher-researcher into the use of drama as a methodology for participatory enquiry.

From the standpoint of the reflective practitioner, she pursued the research questions that had emerged from her classroom practice, and had continued to resonate in her work in research and program development. These four questions included the following.

1. Is there something about collective enquiry that enables us to see things we would ordinarily miss – the patterns that exist beyond the personal?
2. Is the fiction separate from reality? If so, then how does it influence reality? And how does reality moderate what can be said or done in the fiction?
3. What is the association between the enquiry tools and the responses given? Does the selection of dramatic form govern the meanings that we create?
4. Where are the theoretical frameworks through which to conceptualise the complex interplay of the social, the critical and the aesthetic? Could a more theorised perspective provide new leverage in the use of drama for enquiry?

Her research enabled her to address each of these inter-connected questions. This story summarises her research journey and illustrates how she developed a theorised set of answers to each of these questions.

Investigating the Social Nature of the Enquiry
She conducted her research into the application of drama methods within the context of the Learning Partnerships project. This was a project she had devised to have teachers (or doctors) learn with and from young people (year 9/10 students) about how to communicate authentically with their young clients. It involved the parties in a curriculum of shared drama workshops. The Learning Partnerships project was conceptualised around four key principles, including positioning participants as co-investigators of issues of shared concern; learning through reciprocal partnerships; a purposeful orientation serving the curriculum goals of each of the parties; and the employment of a drama-based pedagogy to house the critical investigation.
The learning was to be an enquiry, rather than simply a skills development exercise. It was to incorporate an inclusive problem-identification phase, as well as a focus on problem-solving. She hoped that through enquiry the participants would gain insight into each others’ needs, and access to those discourses that shape ideas about what is possible in their relationships.

**Positioning**

As part of her quest for theory to inform practice, she turned first to the youth literature. Here she noted that the dominant understanding of youth as being ‘at-risk’ conjures notions that young people are in need of protection, moderation and guidance (Wyn and White 1997; Dwyer and Wyn 2001). This way of conceptualising young people, along with traditional school and clinic practices, tends to foreclose the possibility that they will be understood as a resource, or will be positioned as partners in their own affairs.

She concluded that the positioning of young people as recipients of education and health interventions transmits a covert message about their function and current value in society. Their status as contributors is signalled to be pending. They will not come to full value until they ‘come of age’ or join the economy. Curriculum theory showed that covert messages about one’s status, learned in part through the way in which one is positioned, could inadvertently subvert the overt curriculum objectives of an education program (Eisner 1985). Thus, the way that students are positioned can influence the learning that takes place.

She positioned young people as coaches and co-investigators within the Learning Partnership project because she believed that they had something to offer. In collecting data from the participants, she found that it was the opportunity to work in *the space of equals* that they were most likely to remark upon. The students found that to be the contributors generated an uplifting sense of purpose and value. Provided with a different listening, they spoke differently, and they became different. Thus the de-segregation associated with the re-positioning became a form of boundary crossing in which the teacher/student binary was traversed.
The Existential Backdrop

Her reading of the youth literature also offered theories about the way in which the larger ontological challenges of the era form an ever-present backdrop in young people’s lives (Giddens 1991; Giroux 2000; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). This tipped her attention to the way in which both personal and professional learning might be located within the ongoing quest to shape one’s life.

Young people nowadays perceive that they are free to make choices about how to live their lives, but this means they are under increasing pressure to ‘construct’ a life, rather than to follow a culturally predetermined path. This trend towards individualization brings associated problems of anxiety, alienation, and loneliness. Young people find themselves engaged in the ‘project of the self’ in an increasingly isolated and de-personalised world in which the individual becomes the site of blame if they fail to construct an ideal life. By this theory, the meta-question operative in the backdrop of their lives would be how do I construct a life that has meaning and purpose? Thus, behind the effort to construct one’s professional and personal identity is the ongoing ‘project of the self’, and a need for connection and meaning.

The notion that the metaphysical imperative might influence the epistemological process provided another lens through which to analyse the possible functions of the participatory process of the drama, and the needs of the participants in the Learning Partnerships project. As the participants are students in either tertiary or secondary education institutions, they are necessarily occupied with the project of ‘becoming’. Teachers (and doctors), preparing to enter the profession, must fashion a new identity. This makes them vulnerable. They are in transition. They do not want to become some terrible being. This may be why they particularly relish the notion that they have been humanised through the processes of the workshops. They also do not want to fail in their new roles, and thus appreciate the pragmatic nature of the coaching given by the students who represent their future clients.

The school students are also in transition. They experience being institutionalised into recipient roles, and are hungry for a sense of purpose. They relish the opportunity to give value and make a contribution. Their experience of the project provides a sense
of agency, power, meaning and worth, and re-frames their identity as adult and citizen.

Taking an existential perspective on responses to the Learning Partnerships workshop helped the teacher-researcher to make sense of why the participants were so appreciative of the opportunity to work together. It gave them an opportunity to work collectively upon the ‘project of the self’, and in doing so to gather a needed sense of connectedness, value and meaning. Further, in contributing to each other’s learning, and in doing so in service of a broader civic ideal (youth-friendly clinics and schools), they generated a greater sense of ethical purpose. In this the project provided an opportunity for them to be at work in service of broader social goals as well as upon specific curriculum objectives and the ‘project of the self’.

**Understanding Empowerment**

As the overt focus of the project was to contribute to personal, social, professional, and aesthetic learning of the participants, the teacher-researcher found that she had to deal with concepts of empowerment and agency. To understand the process of empowerment she turned to the literature on participatory action research where she found use of Habermasian theory to make sense of how working collectively enables change (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Here it is argued that the readings that people make of the authenticity, credibility and ethical status of the statements of others influences the quality of the communicative space and the associated capacity for action. That is, people learn from honest exchange in which they can share their ‘lifeworld’ or personal experience. This process of exchange provides the necessary connective coherence for players living in the increasingly dissociated systems world (Habermas 1984). A sense of solidarity and hope is generated through the sharing of stories and the combined effort to find solutions.

Using this theory, she noted that participatory nature of the drama methodology enabled participants to build knowledge of the self as a member of the collective, rather than as a discrete and independent individual. Thus inter-connectedness can be learnt. She deduced that the collaborative and exploratory nature of the drama workshops provided a counter-point to the individualising trend of our age, providing
an opportunity for people to examine the co-constructed rather than the singular nature of their identity, and to engage collectively in making meaning.

She found in this aspect of her research a working answer to her research question: *Was there something about the collective nature of the enquiry that assisted us to see things we would ordinarily miss – the patterns that exist beyond the personal?* She found that the collective mode of enquiry made available a type of credible data generated within the personal exchanges. The use of shared scenarios meant that the enquiry could address both the personal and the political. The interrogation of the specific led to interest in the systemic. Collective engagement in the critical question enabled access to the patterns as well as to the particular. Through sharing experiences, participants were able to generate new perspectives on their own situations, developing different explanatory stories through which to interpret what was occurring. Beyond the empathetic imagining that is often claimed to be the outcome of working through drama, she found additionally a shift in the explanatory stories. Teachers and students could be re-interpreted as people who *care*.

Along with her awareness of the humanising potential of the process came a concern about the propensity of the form to replicate dominant stories and to demonise certain positions within them. Potentially the drama could reinforce rather than rupture the hegemonic view. The stereotype could emerge as readily as the critical insight. She realised that the drama does not of necessity open a line of enquiry. Whilst it can be a net with which one trawls the deep, what it catches will depend on how it is fashioned and where it is cast. To fashion a critical enquiry, she must find ways to hold open the humanist closure around meaning, and create the sense of possibility which houses change.

**The Influence of the Question**

Having focussed on the social context of the enquiry and the importance of positioning, she now turned her attention to the influence of the question in shaping the enquiry, and the way in which the drama tasks could be seen as housing certain questions.
She turned to the qualitative research literature to shed light on the use of drama for enquiry. Here she noted the fundamental importance of the paradigm of the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln 2003; Lincoln and Guba 2003). This because our beliefs about the nature of reality not only inform the way we understand who we and others are, they also inform assumptions about how we learn and how we can change ourselves. If we understand identity to be inherent, we will search for it within the individual. This assumption arises from the humanist tradition of thought. If we understand identity to be constructed, we will turn attention to the process whereby we take up or resist certain ways of being that are already scripted within our discourses and cultural stories (Schwandt 2003). This is the assumption that arises in the poststructuralist tradition of thought.

She could see that her philosophical orientation would influence her approach as a teacher-researcher. If drama were to be used as a method of enquiry, she would need to attend to assumptions as to whether knowledge was ‘discovered’ or ‘constructed’ through the drama.

Reading poststructuralist theory, she encountered use of the concepts of discourse, subjectification, and positioning to discuss identity and agency. In this tradition, it is argued that identity is shaped when we adopt positions that are already part of the discourse. Practices of segregation and classification become mechanisms through which we define ourselves and each other (Foucault 1980). We moderate ourselves in relation to established norms and self-monitor in our effort to enact the categories that pertain to ourselves and others. As we adopt certain positions from those available to us, we internalise certain desires associated with those positions, and learn to behave according to the concomitant ‘rules’ or norms (Davies, Dormer et al. 2001). In playing one’s self as a member of a category, the performance itself becomes evidence of the naturalness of one’s way of being, in this contributing to the survival of the story and the belief that its occurrence is natural (Butler 2004).

Recognition of the process of subjectification is fundamental to its interruption, and interruption is necessary if change is to take place. For the drama to contribute to this ‘interruption’, it must facilitate recognition of the constructed nature of identity, and
of the constructing nature of dominant storylines. It must make visible the storying or shaping mechanisms, rather than simply the story.

In applying poststructuralist theory it became clear to the teacher-researcher that the ‘material’ of the drama would always already be coming from somewhere. The storylines and positions would pre-exist the characters. It would be part of her job to find ways to reveal this through the drama.

**The Permeable Boundary**
The application of these concepts to the use of the drama as a tool for enquiry necessitated a questioning of the supposed divide between the fiction and reality. In considering this divide, the teacher-researcher found she was addressing her second question: *Is the fiction separate from reality? If so, then how does it influence reality? And how does reality moderate what can be said or done in the fiction?* She concluded that to think of fictional play as separate from reality obscured the intrusion of the discourses into the fiction. Further, the reality/fiction binary permitted one to assume that the players left reality to join the fiction and then returned. This presumed that fiction and reality were separate states.

She saw the need for a metaphor that would permit a re-conceptualising of the nature of the boundary. Metaphors can assist us to cross the binaries which confine meaning and thus provide us with new categories in which to think (St. Pierre 1997).

She chose the metaphor of the semi-permeable membrane as one that would more readily permit her to conceptualise the way in which the storylines and discourses of the real context seep into and shape the fictional play. Using fluid rather than grounded metaphors facilitated a re-conceptualisation of the way in which identity relates to play. If the rules are the container, and the play is fluid, the fluid will take the shape of the container. If the story is a liquid, holding the positions, norms and assumptions (the discourses) in suspension, then the fluid will both take the shape of the container, and carry the flavours of the dominant discourses. If the fictional play is conceptualised as one story suspended in the sea of stories, then the dramatic play can be seen as made up of the same (liquid) material as reality.
She found that the associated assumption that immersion (belief) and detachment (distancing) existed as a binary (or as mutually exclusive states) also confined understanding of the way in which learning occurred through drama. The notion that the fiction and reality exist in a binary dominates in the field of drama education (Allern 2001). Many dramatists assume that one enters the fiction through the portal of ‘belief’, and take effort to groom the quality of this transition through the portal. However, other dramatists draw attention to the rule-bound nature of dramatic play (O'Neill 1985; Dunn 2001).

Immersion/detachment could, however, be conceptualised as a duality, rather than a binary (Mackey 2003). If dramatic play was re-conceptualised as being enabled by facility in managing the operative rules rather than created by the state of belief, then it would be easier to imagine how immersion and detachment could function in a mutually enhancing pas-de-deux. The players would engage in rule-play rather than just role-play, following both the rules of the relevant performance discourse and those of the societal discourses. Using this concept, the phenomena of engagement, usually termed ‘belief’, could understood to describe the quality of commitment, concentration, compliance, facility and creativity exhibited in manipulating the rules that bind and enable the dramatic play.

**Responsibility and the Critical**

She found that to conceive of the fiction as porous pressed forward a heightened responsibility to consider just what it was that was being learnt within the fictional play. If the fiction was to be used as an enquiry tool, then some standards of rigour were needed. A critical lens was needed through which to reveal the adhesive nature of the discourses, and the way in which meanings and patterns might stick and come to be perpetuated amongst the conclusions of the enquiry. If the same old stories about teachers, students and doctors passed as ‘givens’, change would not be possible.

She turned again to poststructuralist theory about identity and subjectification, seeking to understand better how the drama might facilitate a critical engagement. She heard the argument that the mere playing out of the norms (for example those
associated with ‘youth’, ‘teacher’ or ‘doctor’) leads to their persistence, and to the (mis)understanding that they represent a ‘natural’ expression of reality. One’s identity can be understood to be a form of performance (Butler 2004). This is because people make an effort to play themselves ‘appropriately’ to the real or imagined gaze of others. Therefore, to simply play these norms in the drama (without question) may reinforce a limited reading of the other, and lead to a constricted enactment of the self as member of the confining category.

She concluded then, that for change to occur, the drama must produce the possibility of ‘doing’ ourselves differently. To accomplish this space for change there would be a need to disrupt the assumptions that hold behaviours in place, and to generate the possibility that things could be done differently. Fantasy, and the associated sense of possibility, is essential in creation of change (Butler 2004). Potentially, the creative mode of the drama could provide a context within which to re-imagine the limiting categories provided in the dominant discourses relating to teacher/student and doctor/patient.

This led to her interest in how the framing of the question related to the subsequent enquiry. Possibility is in part created when a question dislodges the given and tumbles it into the field of our attention. We can then apply thought, as we problematise what had previously been assumed (Foucault 1984) and thus create room for new possibilities. In the drama, the framing of the scene amounts to a form of problematization. It distinguishes what will be given attention from that which will be left out of focus.

The way in which the question is framed will not only determine the focus of the enquiry, but also the practices through which one pursues the answers. The ontological assumptions held within the question will influence the means through which one seeks to find and represent ‘truth’. If one assumes identity is inherent, one will seek to find the ‘true’ motivation delineating someone’s behaviour. However, if one assumes that identity is responsively co-created, then one will look to the mechanisms of construction to understand how people come to behave the way that they do.
The Medium of Enquiry
This concern with the assumptions transmitted via the question shepherded in the teacher’s third question: *What was the association between the enquiry tools and the responses given? Did the selection of form influence the meanings that could be created?* To conceptualise the relationship between the medium and the knowledge, she turned to those who had explored the use of writing as a medium of enquiry (Davies 1993; St. Pierre 1997; Elliott 2005; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). Thus began a quite technical focus upon the use of the drama conventions or ‘games’ that she had refined for use as enquiry tools. Here she investigated the influence of techniques such as making shifts in genre, shifts in perspective, and the use of metaphors or games through which to bridge the binaries set in language.

Bridging Binaries
Detection of the binaries is an essential phase in discourse analysis (Davies 1994). Teacher/student and doctor/patient are amongst these binaries. The teacher-researcher found that certain of the ‘games’ that she had refined were particularly useful in assisting players to note the patterning power of the discourse and to observe the way in which identity was co-created between the characters. She found that the use of parody, role-reversal, and ‘The Strategies Game’ assisted the players to detect the mechanisms of power-play, and to reveal and disrupt the binary categories to which characters were assigned. In playing ‘The Truth Game’ they bumped into the invisible rules of the discourse and thus came to notice that they existed. ‘The Hidden Thoughts Game’ enabled them to disassemble the stereotypes and weave a more richly variegated humanity. Use of ‘The Anthropomorphic Game’ assisted them to take a longer-range systemic view and to engage with the explanatory stories used to make sense of why things happen the way they do. ‘The Reality-testing Game’ had them suspend closure of meaning and begin to see that reality is storied, and that one’s perspective influences one’s reading of the world.
Deconstruction through the Drama

Through conducting this work she noted that the design of the convention helps to make the world visible in different ways and influences the knowledge that can be represented through the drama. Manipulations in the use of dramatic form assisted players to step in and out of the humanist understanding of the world. Naturalism tended to invite a humanist reading of reality. Anti-naturalistic techniques offered a greater facility through which to invite a constructivist view. Thus shifts in form could be used to privilege certain ontological assumptions and to provide a portal through which to depart the positivist platform. In this, she understood that the form could exert governance upon the meaning that would be created through the drama.

Her interviews with the participants taught her that they found the deconstructive and participatory activities provided a humanising process in which they learnt to appraise themselves and each other differently. They valued the opportunity to dismantle labels such as defiant adolescent, judgmental teacher and patronizing doctor, and to dig deeper and find the underlay of thoughts and feelings and expectations driving behaviour. In this the work facilitated a form of de-categorisation as well as a de-segregation.

They found that this was accomplished both via the partnership in the context of the workshops (drama as participatory enquiry), as well as via the mechanisms which orchestrated their interaction. Role-playing provided an embodied and experiential learning (drama as applied learning). Anti-naturalistic devices compelled a rigorous questioning of the influences shaping behaviour (theatre of discourse analysis), and a critical thinking about the connection between the personal and the systemic (drama for critical thinking). Through working with each other in this mode they were able to invent new explanatory stories and new possibilities for action in their future relationships (drama as a pedagogy for hope).

Epistemological Functions of the Drama Methodology

Using the same methodology in both the Medical and Education programs allowed her to consider the validity and transferability of her practice. She noted that six features distinguished the epistemological function of the approach. The first related
to the political nature of the enquiry, which was distinguished by the positioning of the stakeholders as co-investigators working together to diagnose their challenges and to fashion solutions. The second related to the ethical purpose of the enquiry. Placing the civic and social purpose of the work at the forefront of the program generated an energy and sense of relevance. The third related to opportunities for applied learning, and the engagement in both reflection-in-action during the role-play, and reflection-on-action supported by the diagnostic coaching following the exercises. The fourth feature related to the focus on catching the discourses at play in shaping the relational patterns of the school or clinic. The fifth feature related to the metaphysical nature of the enquiry. The work enabled a form of identity work as the participants applied the learning within the ‘project of the self’. The sixth feature of the approach related to the way in which the interaction of these functions generated a set of meta-messages about the possibility of working in partnership within and beyond the workshops.

Theory in Practice
In considering the impact of the methodology, she found that she was also addressing the question of theory encapsulated in her fourth question: Where are the theoretical frameworks I need to help me to understand this complex interplay of the social, the critical and the aesthetic? Could I gain a new leverage in my investigation of practice through engagement with theory? Looking back she noted that each question she had investigated was also an engagement with theory. Further, through engagement in practice, she had been exploring theory in action.

She had worked as somewhat of a theoretical bricoleur (Denzin and Lincoln 2005), weaving together explanatory concepts from the youth literature, the qualitative research literature, the poststructuralist literature, and the drama and theatre literature. Her reading of the youth literature had pointed to the importance of considering positioning, and the metaphysical nature of the search for identity, meaning and purpose. The poststructuralist literature pointed to the importance of interrogating the mechanisms of construction, and keeping an eye to the shaping nature of the discourse. The participatory action research literature highlighted the importance of understanding empowerment in individual, social and political terms, and of noting the communicative processes that generate solidarity and hope. The drama literature
charted the traditions of practice and the attention to artistry in the use of the form to engage students in deep learning. In the theatre literature was the history of artists making different paradigmatic assumptions and using different performance practices in their pursuit of ‘truth’ through the theatre.

This heritage of thinking informed her interrogation of practice and inspired her refinement of techniques and conventions. In this she found that to engage theoretically with practice, and to engage with the challenge of truing practice to align with ideology, provided her a heightened engagement and facility in her work using drama as a method in participatory enquiry.

**Recommendations**

Having told the story of the research journey, I return to the first person voice to make recommendations, and to discuss the limitations of my research. My recommendations are presented in the form of a framework to guide the use of drama as a method in participatory enquiry, and as a summary of the conventions found to be most useful in generating deconstruction through the drama. I also offer some additional pointers relating to the use of drama as a method in professional training. I then discuss some of the key limitations in this research and point to potential areas for additional research. I finish with a personal reflection on what I have learnt.

**A Framework for the use of Drama as a Tool in Participatory Enquiry**

In drawing together my analysis of the use of drama as a method within participatory enquiry, I have devised a framework that charts the mechanisms that scaffold the enquiry (see table 1 below). I found that activity in the five domains of the ethical, political, pedagogical, aesthetic and ontological intersected to generate the learning. Positioning the participants as co-investigators meant that the learning was framed as an enquiry. In order that the enquiry reach beyond the technical to the transformative, it was necessary to generate engagement in poststructuralist deconstruction of the discourses that shaped behaviour. In turn, the challenge of catching the discourses at play was enabled by the use of particular drama methodologies and the refinement of tools to help the participants to convert the invisible to the embodied, and to engage in
critical readings of the patterned nature of the scenarios under investigation. The declared civic and social purpose set an ethical context to the work. Additionally, the political, pedagogical and ontological strands contributed to an inclusive and ethically oriented way of working.

Whilst this is a framework devised to orient my own practice, it may also be of use to others using drama as a method in participatory enquiry. It is not a recipe, but rather a checklist to assist in review of the mechanisms through which the enquiry might progress.
Table 1: Using Drama as a Tool for Participatory Enquiry

The Epistemological
is informed by the political, the ontological, the ethical, the pedagogical and the aesthetic
Read across the horizontal, vertical and diagonal axes to track the mechanisms of the enquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Political</th>
<th>The Ontological</th>
<th>The Pedagogical</th>
<th>The Aesthetic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>positioning of participants influences their learning</td>
<td>using a poststructuralist lens deepens the learning</td>
<td>selection of the tasks influences the knowledge that can be explored</td>
<td>the medium influences the knowledge that can be represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory enquiry positions the learners as co-investigators.</td>
<td>To shift the paradigm is to understand reality differently.</td>
<td>The framing of the scene sets the focus of the enquiry.</td>
<td>The selection of genre suggests the paradigm through which to relate to the material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work as co-investigators is to engage as equals.</td>
<td>To shift the methodology permits us to take up new questions.</td>
<td>The medium of representation influences the knowledge that can be accessed.</td>
<td>Anti-naturalistic conventions draw attention to the constructed nature of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To re-position is to dismantle binary models through which we come to know each other.</td>
<td>New questions invite different practices through which to seek knowledge.</td>
<td>Power relations become visible when we attend to way in which characters co-create each other.</td>
<td>The embodied and symbolic can draw attention to the implicit and covert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismantling binaries provides the space to construct new categories within which to re-imagine the self.</td>
<td>New knowledge becomes available when we catch the discourses at play.</td>
<td>Discourses are detected when we reveal dominant binaries, positions and storylines.</td>
<td>Metaphors can assist to bridge definitional binaries and permit the synthesis of paradoxical knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To re-learn the other is to have the possibility of relating differently to them.</td>
<td>To share in the generation of new possibilities is to create hope.</td>
<td>Explanatory stories are contested when we invent new possibilities.</td>
<td>To distance and to distort can assist to make clear what is assumed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In relating differently is the possibility of a building a better world.</td>
<td>Hope fuels the courage to make change.</td>
<td>To invent new possibilities is to sketch the space for change.</td>
<td>In playing out new possibilities we rehearse for change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ethical

an ethical line threads through these interconnecting domains and assists to propel the enquiry

The collective approach is predicated upon a regard for the contribution of the other. It enables us to learn the inter-connection between ‘We’ and ‘I’.

To shift our reading of reality in order to better understand how things come to be the way they are generates more compassionate readings of the self and the other.

To seek multiplicity and poly-vocality within the dramatic play makes possible more generous readings of others, and permits a more authentic account of the self.

In enacting our dramas we add to the bank of stories that tell who we have been and who we can be. We live out of and into these stories, hence the telling of the tale is an ethical act.
Tools to Structure Poststructuralist Enquiry through the Drama

This table provides a summary of the aesthetic techniques that were useful in guiding a poststructuralist approach to enquiry through the drama.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aesthetic Game</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What If…? Game</td>
<td>Suspend the linear narrative and move the enquiry in lateral directions</td>
<td>Avert narrative closure and preserve occupation of the question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role-Rotation Game</td>
<td>Rotate the players between the roles</td>
<td>Observe the patterned nature of play and note how game and position survives the candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director Game</td>
<td>Change what the actor is doing whilst retaining what he is saying</td>
<td>Observe the co-created nature of identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies Game</td>
<td>Play many variations of the scene each time using a different strategy to pursue objectives</td>
<td>See that relationships are co-created and that power and status is conferred as well as assumed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth Game</td>
<td>Attempt to say what would normally be withheld</td>
<td>Note the governing norms or the rule-play within the role-play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality-Testing Game</td>
<td>Question the original story and provide alternative renditions and interpretations</td>
<td>Note that one’s reading of reality is influenced by one’s perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Thoughts Game</td>
<td>Speak what the character may have been thinking or feeling but not saying aloud in the scene</td>
<td>Reveal the multiple desires and fears that direct behaviour Note the operative power of the discourses we dwell within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropomorphic Game</td>
<td>Playing as objects or states, construct explanatory stories about how things come to be the way they are</td>
<td>Highlight the presence of the explanatory stories that we use to interpret our lives and inform our actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightmare Game</td>
<td>Depict fears and desires in a symbolic form</td>
<td>Through distortion and exaggeration name what is commonly left in the subliminal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Futures Game</td>
<td>Disrupt the linear narrative by inventing alternative futures</td>
<td>Create the possibility of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaints Game</td>
<td>Exaggerate or parody complaints or challenges</td>
<td>Depersonalise complaints Highlight the systemic as well as the personal nature of problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice Game</td>
<td>Step out of role to give a character advice about how to deal with their situation</td>
<td>Objectify the self by giving advice to the self as if to another</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Aesthetic Tools to Structure Poststructuralist Enquiry through the Drama
Use of the Methodology in Professional Training

I suggest a set of seven pointers that may be useful for those using role-play as a technique in professional training. This advice is chiefly informed by my analysis of the participants’ assessment of what they valued in their own learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Using Role-Play In Professional Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>position participants as co-investigators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This provides:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• space for more authentic exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• shared involvement in problem-identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• pooling of perspectives in problem-solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sense of solidarity and interconnectedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• respect and goodwill between the parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• positions of dignity and purpose for the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• dismantling of de-personalising boundaries which lead to de-humanising practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lead participatory processes which orchestrate interaction and structure enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This provides:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• structures to assist people to mix across divides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• questions and tasks to structure the dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• tasks which house relevant challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• questions and activities to hold open the enquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rehearsal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engage in role-play of relevant workplace scenarios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This provides:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• opportunities to practise professional skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• opportunities to learn from the immediacy of client response within the role-play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coaching</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use the client as coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This provides:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• client perspective on effective practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• insight into impact of one’s actions on others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perspective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use role-reversal techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This generates:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• awareness of challenges faced by those in different positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• awareness of obstacles in transferring coaching to action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insight</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use anti-naturalistic techniques to detect the governing discourses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This develops:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• insight into the constraints associated with both the client’s and professional’s expectations of what is appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understanding of the needs, hopes and assumptions directing behaviour of both professional and client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Systems view</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use observation and role-rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This generates:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• critical perspectives on practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognition of connections between the particular and the systemic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understanding of the way in which policy and practices influence individuals, and in which particular situations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Limitations and Further Research

The research methodology I have used has provided a specific and situated knowledge. This affects the claims that can be made from the research. Whilst it is internally valid for this research to inform my ongoing practice, the degree to which the findings are relevant to others is necessarily the subject of further research. Of potential merit is research in four different domains, encompassing the transferability of the methodology to different contexts and purposes; the validity of the method in participatory action research; the utilisation of the client perspective within in different professional training contexts; and further theoretical analysis of the relationship between use of the aesthetic form and meaning-making.

- **Transferability to different contexts, populations and purposes:** Further research into the use of similar methodological approaches with different groups and for different purposes would shine greater light on the transferability and validity of the methodologies as a mode of transformative participatory enquiry.

- **Utilisation of the client perspective within professional training:** The positioning of young people as co-investigators and coaches was of particular value to both adults and youth. This would suggest the merit of further research that investigates approaches to incorporating the client perspective within the training of those working in the human services professions.

- **Use of drama as a method in participatory enquiry:** Participatory action research is often conducted in workplace or community development settings where the emphasis is upon organisational practices or community action rather than upon the development of professional skills. It would therefore be of interest to conduct further research into the use of drama as a method to support action-based enquiry in these contexts.

- **Theoretical analysis of the form:** The drama field is increasingly turning to theory to provide a lens upon practice. This research was informed by the application of poststructuralist theory. The field would benefit from the application of different theoretical frameworks to the analysis of similar projects, as well as from employ of the same theoretical tradition in analysis of
different projects. In either case, what could be made available is an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the influence of ideology upon practice, and a greater technical understanding of how to ensure that one’s practice coheres with one’s theoretical intent.

**Personal Coda: For the Road Beyond**

Reseaching my practice is a personal as well as an intellectual endeavour. As such, the learning I take from the experience informs the principles that orient my ongoing work.

Assume for a moment that these insights can be added as additional spokes to the existing wheel of practice. For reasons of portability, they must be succinct. To beg returning attention, they must also be somewhat cryptic, or at least metaphoric. I summarise them below.

*The question houses the enquiry*

> It shapes that which will be framed for attention and that which will be left aside.

*The question begs a relationship with ‘reality’.*

> It is ontological as well as epistemological. In this it will invite a way of reading reality, and of representing reality.

*The question is only a seed*

> It grows in a relational soil. It will be read, and answered, socially. Thus to nurture the seed, I must tend the soil.

*We is a way to learn I*

> The collective allows us to re-learn the self though re-cognising the other.

*Categories create*

> New categories are needed within which to imagine who we are.

*To know the fish learn the sea*

> To know ourselves, we must see how we swim in our sea of stories, and how our stories swim within us.

*Seek the paradox as the compass for direction*
To know the self one must work in lateral directions, seeking complexity, contradiction, and irresolution.

Possibility is the muse to change

New realities can be hatched in the imagination, and jostled into the world through fictional play.

Art can be a Science to life

Drama provides a domain within which to invent the possibility, frame the hypothesis, and engage in experiment.

Stretch the enquiry

Find a question in the answer to the question

Shiny spokes to add to the wheel of practice. With each in spin I hear a song for the road.

To burnish them here permits me to suspend this story, which starts in the middle, and does not quite reach

the end.
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Appendices
Appendix 1: Survey For EPSS Students

AGE: __________  GENDER: M / F

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Level of Engagement when</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rate your level of engagement from 1 = not at all interested to 10 = highly interested and actively engaged</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>1. Role-playing with the school students (eg. playing parts as student, teacher)</td>
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<td>2. Watching others as they played a role in scenarios</td>
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<td>3. Making contributions to group discussion about scenarios under study</td>
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<td>4. Participating in paired sharing activities about scenarios under study</td>
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<td>5. Listening to school students in class discussion</td>
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<td>6. Listening to my peers in class discussion</td>
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<td>8. Listening to the EPSS lectures</td>
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<td>9. Competing the two written assignments</td>
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<td>10. Reading the course literature</td>
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<td>11. Conducting my enquiry in a school about a school policy</td>
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### B. Skills and understandings:
To what extent did participating in this class enhance your:

*From 1 = not at all interested to 10 = highly interested and actively engaged*

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<td>3. Capacity to empathise with others</td>
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<td>4. Ability to communicate effectively with young people and adults</td>
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<td>5. Capacity to employ your sense of humour or perspective on a particular situation</td>
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<td>6. Capacity to understand different cultural perspectives</td>
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<td>7. Critical and creative thinking as a component of problem-solving</td>
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<td>8. Skills in generating options and predicting and thinking through consequences</td>
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<td>9. Preparedness to seek help when confronted by difficult circumstances</td>
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<td>10. Awareness of your self and your own reactions</td>
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<td>11. Your confidence in your own abilities</td>
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<td>12. Ability to not take personally the negative conditions that may occur around you</td>
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<td>13. Sense of purpose as a professional</td>
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<td>14. Aspiration about how you would like to contribute as a teacher</td>
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<td>15. Sense of optimism or faith in the capacity of young people</td>
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<td>16. Sense of connectedness to others</td>
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<td>17. Understanding how social issues impact learning and wellbeing</td>
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<td>18. Capacity to communicate effectively with students about social issues</td>
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<td>19. Interest in becoming a “policy actor”</td>
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<td>20. Skills in advocacy, critique or design of policy</td>
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C. Class learning environment:
To what extent did participating in this class:
*From 1 = not at all interested to 10 = highly interested and actively engaged*
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<td>1. Generate positive relationships</td>
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<td>2. Provide high expectation messages of your own learning and contribution</td>
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<td>3. Provide opportunities for participation and contribution</td>
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D. Value of the subject:
*From 1 = not at all useful to 10 = extremely useful*

What is the overall score you would give this subject in terms of its value in contributing to your learning?

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E. Comparative value
Comparing it to the value you gained from other subject completed as part of Dip Ed/ BTeach do you rate it as (tick one)
- [ ] amongst the bottom third
- [ ] amongst the mid-range
- [ ] amongst the top-third of subjects

F. Open Feedback
Other comments you would like to make:
Appendix 2: Survey for Medical Students
Date: ______ Age: _____ Gender: M / F

### A. Skills and understandings:
To what extent did participating in this session enhance your:

*Scale from 1 = not at all useful--- to 10 = extremely useful*

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<td>2. Capacity to empathise with a young patient</td>
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<td>3. Ability to communicate effectively with young people about sensitive issues</td>
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<td>4. Sense of purpose or aspiration about contributing to the care of young people</td>
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<td>5. Awareness of the interplay of physical, &amp; social and mental health issues</td>
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<td>6. Sense of optimism or faith in the capacity of young people</td>
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<td>7. Knowledge of how to apply the HEADSS psycho-social screening tool</td>
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<td>8. Understanding of the importance of informing young people about confidentially</td>
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### B. What helped you learn:
To what extend did the following activities help you learn

*Scale from 1 = not at all useful to 10 = extremely useful*

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<tr>
<td>1. Trying out techniques in role-play</td>
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<td>2. Watching others role-play.</td>
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<td>3. The coaching and replay in fishbowl activity conducted by facilitator</td>
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<td>4. Comments and feedback of the teenagers.</td>
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<td>5. Comments and feedback from peers</td>
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<td>6. Role-based enquiry techniques such as Hidden Thoughts, Coaching and Re-Play.</td>
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<td>7. Discussion following the activity.</td>
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### C. Your recommendation as to whether this exercise should be undertaken by future medical students. (Please circle)

- Don’t offer it
- Low value
- Moderately Useful
- Highly Useful
- Extremely Useful

### D. Other comments you would like to make:
Appendix 3: Interview Questions For School Students

1. What did you get out of doing workshops with the trainee doctors and teachers?
2. What do you think your classmates gained from this experience?
3. What do you think the doctors, teachers and other professionals gained from working with your class?
4. How does working in this class compare to other subjects?
5. How did improvising roles (such as teacher, parent or student or principal, patient, doctor) contribute to you or your learning?
6. How did enquiring into a scenario though techniques such as Hidden Thought, the Truth Game and the Coaching and Re-play techniques contribute to you or your learning?
7. What did you find you gain when you are just watching the role-play activities?
8. To what extent has participating in this subject improved your skills and abilities to communicate more effectively with people?
9. What supported your participation in the activities?
10. What do you think helped others to participate?
11. What recommendations do you have about how to make this subject valuable for future students?
12. Do you find that you transfer learning or understanding from this class into your life?
14. Did you experience any negative impacts from these activities?
15. If you could single out one aspect or experience that was of greatest value to you in relation to this course – what would it be?
Appendix 4: Interview Questions for EPSS students

1. How did playing a role (such as teacher, parent or student or principal) in a fictitious scenario contribute to your learning?
2. How did enquiring into a scenario though role-play techniques such as Hidden Thoughts, the Truth Game and the Coaching and Re-play techniques contribute to your learning?
3. What did you gain from just watching the role-play activities?
4. How has being part of the discussion about the various scenarios contributed to your learning?
5. To what extent has participating in this subject improved your skills and abilities to communicate more effectively with young people?
6. What contribution did it make to you to have the school students participating in some of the classes?
7. What do you think your peers gained from this experience?
8. What do you think the school students gained from this experience?
9. How does it compare to other classes you have taken to prepare you to become a teacher?
10. What recommendations do you have about how to make this subject valuable for future students of EPSS?
11. Do you find/anticipate that you are/will be able to transfer learning from this class into your personal or professional life?
12. To what extent did participating in this subject shift your understanding of your self? - of young people? - of school organisations?
13. Did you experience any negative impacts from the class activities?
14. If you could single out one aspect or experience that was of greatest value to you – what would it be
Appendix 5: Informed consent for Medical students and Education students

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
YOUTH RESEARCH CENTRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Consent form for persons participating in “Role and Learning” research project.

Name of participant:

Project title:                        ROLE AND LEARNING

Name of investigator(s): Professor Johanna Wyn, Helen Cahill

1. I consent to participate in the “Role and Learning” research project. I have been informed of this project, and have received print materials explaining this project to me, including details explaining the nature of the participation requested of me.

2. I authorize the investigator to investigate my responses to the “Role and Learning” workshops which I have participated in.

3. I acknowledge that:
   (a) the process of my involvement has been explained to me to my satisfaction;
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data (such as taped interviews) previously supplied; and that my withdrawal will not affect in any way the assessment I may receive for my study in related areas;
   (c) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching and not for treatment;
   (d) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.

Signature:

Date:
Appendix 6: Parent Consent Form For Participation In Role And Learning Research Project

Name of investigator: Professor J.Wyn, Ms H Cahill,
Institution: Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne
Title: Role and Learning

I understand that my consent is sought for my child, as a student in the Community Drama elective at Princes Hill Secondary College, to participate in a research project conducted by Helen Cahill as part of a Doctorate degree at Melbourne University.

1. I understand that students in this class will perform and discuss fictitious scenarios exploring social issues such as bullying, stress and partying. I understand that they will also participate in drama workshops with trainee doctors and teachers from the University of Melbourne, assisting them to communicate effectively with young people.
2. I understand that the research will include written and interview feedback from the students on what happens in their classes and in shared workshops with trainee doctors and trainee teachers.
3. I understand that some class activities and performances will be video-taped.
4. I understand that if I consent, my son/daughter/ward’s written and spoken comments will be used as a source of information to the researcher.
5. I understand that if I consent, my son/daughter/ward may be interviewed as part of the project and that the interview will be audio-taped.
6. I understand that the researcher will use a false name when writing about the students and the school to protect their privacy.
7. I understand that my son/daughter/ward will not be disadvantaged in their class work or in their marks if I do not give my consent for him/her to participate in the research aspects of the project.
8. I understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time as can my son/daughter/ward.
9. I understand that this work will happen in class as part of the drama curriculum and with approval from the Principal and the Drama teacher.

I give/do not give permission for my son / daughter / ward to participate in the drama research project “Role and Learning”

Signature of parent/guardian: ___________________________ Date: ______

Name (please print) of parent/ guardian: ________________________________

Name of student: __________________________________

If you have any questions, now or in the future, about the research, you can contact Professor Johanna Wyn by post at the Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3010 or by phone on 83449641 or by email on j.wyn@unimelb.edu.au. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, you may contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, ph: 83447507; fax 93476739.
Appendix 7: Student Consent Form For Participation In Role And Learning Research Project

Name of investigators: Professor J. Wyn. Ms H Cahill,  
Institution: Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne  
Title: Role and Learning.

Name of student: _______________________________        DATE: _____________

1. I understand that as part of the Community Drama class I have been invited to participate in a research project conducted by Helen Cahill as part of a Doctorate degree at Melbourne University.
2. I understand that the research project aims to help educators to understand better how to use drama to develop skills of communication and problem-solving.
3. I understand that I will be asked to role-play and to discuss fictional scenarios with classmates, medical students and education students from Melbourne University.
4. I understand that the research will be done by collecting interview feedback on what happens in the workshops.
5. I understand that some class activities and performances will be video-taped.
6. I understand that if I agree, my work will be used as a source of information to the researcher.
7. I understand that if I volunteer, I may be interviewed as part of the project and that the interview will be audio-taped.
8. I understand that the researcher will use a false name when writing about me and my school to protect my privacy.
9. I understand that I will not be disadvantaged in my class work or in my marks or grades if I do not want my work to be used for research purposes.
10. I understand that I can withdraw from providing my work to the researcher at any time.
11. I understand that this work will happen in class as part of normal drama activities and with approval from the Principal and the Drama teacher.

I give my consent/do not give my consent to participating in the research side of this project.  
Signature of student:  
Date: ”

Please return this form to Helen Cahill, Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Level 2, 234 Queensberry St, Parkville, 3010.

If you have any questions, now or in the future, about the research, you can contact Professor Johanna Wyn by post at the Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3010 or by phone on 83449641 or by email on j.wyn@unimelb.edu.au. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, you may contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, ph: 83447507; fax 93476739.
Appendix 8: Plain Language Statement for Community Drama students

About the Community Drama Class:
In the Community Drama class students will use games, role-play techniques, discussion and performance to explore how social and emotional issues affect young people’s health, happiness and learning. Issues explored will include friendships, peer pressure, bullying, stress, substance use, help-seeking, racism, and achievement at school. Students will not be asked to use their own personal stories, but will work on fictional scenarios and characters.

Working with the Community:
Across the semester the class will participate in three workshops with Medical Students and three workshops with Education students from the University of Melbourne.

Medical Students (trainee doctors)
The workshops with 5th Year Medical students will take place at school during drama time. Each of the workshops will be with a new group of Medical students. In these workshops the drama class will role-play patients so as the trainee doctors can practice talking to teenage patients about issues involving home and school life, friendships, parties and drugs, sexuality and mental health concerns. The doctors practice these sorts of conversations to help them learn how to work with teenagers who may be at risk of physical or mental health problems due to stresses in their life. The community drama students will have a particular character and story to act out. These characters will be prepared in advance. No one will be asked to take on a character that they are not comfortable with. Playing these characters will give students a chance to develop their acting skills as well as their knowledge and understanding of health issues.

Education Students (trainee teachers):
Three workshops will take place with a class of Diploma of Education students. In these workshops the drama students will play a range of roles such as student, teacher or parent. They will investigate how problems such as bullying, racism and stress can affect students’ learning. They will discuss what schools and teachers can do to provide a safe, supportive and stimulating environment for students. These workshops will take place at Melbourne University, partly during class time and partly using some periods from non-drama time. Other teachers will be informed that this project has the school’s support and students will be asked to make sure they can catch up on work missed at these times. Some students may elect to stay at school and not participate in the excursion workshops so as not to miss these classes. They are free to make this choice.

The Research Project:
The drama techniques and the learning partnership between the Community Drama class and the Education Faculty and the Medical Faculty are the subject of a PhD research study by Helen Cahill. Helen will lead some of the workshops with the drama class, and the workshops with the tertiary students as will the Drama teacher, who will be with the class during all workshops.
Your consent (and your parent/ care-giver’s consent) is sought to be part of the research study that aims to find out more about how working with young people through drama techniques can help people to get better at understanding and communicating with others. You can be part of the Community Drama class and choose not to be part of the study. This won’t affect your assessment or opportunities in any way.

If you do choose to be part of the research study you are asked for your consent to:

• the video-taping of some of the classes at school and all of the classes with the Diploma of Education students,

• play a role you are comfortable to play in the workshops with the University students (you will have a choice of roles),

• volunteer to participate in an audio-taped small group or individual interview about your learning in this class,

If you choose not to be part of the research study, you may still be in the class. You will not be asked to complete any of the research tasks described above. The choice you make will not affect your assessment for this subject and you can still join in all of the other class activities.

If you do choose to be part of the research study, your privacy will be protected through the use of pseudonym (false name) and you will not have to put your name on surveys and written responses. Video and audio-tape footage will be used only for the purpose of the research and will be kept in a locked cupboard for five years and then destroyed by the researcher.

You can withdraw your consent to participate in the research at any time. Information collected from you will not then be used in the research. Withdrawal from the research aspects of the project will not affect your assessment for this subject and will not affect your opportunities to perform or be part of the class.

If you have any questions, now or in the future, about the research, you can contact Professor Johanna Wyn by post at the Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3010 or by phone on 83449641 or by email on j.wyn@unimelb.edu.au.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, you may contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, ph: 83447507; fax 93476739.
Appendix 9: Plain Language Statement for Parents of Students in Community Drama Class

About the Community Drama Class:
Your son/daughter/ward has elected to take the Community Drama in semester 2. In this class students will use games, role-play techniques, discussion and performance to explore and portray how social and emotional issues affect young people’s health, happiness and learning. Issues explored will include friendships, peer pressure, bullying, stress, substance use, help-seeking, racism, and achievement at school.
Students will not be asked to use their own personal stories, but will work on fictional scenarios and characters.

Working with the Community:
Across the semester the class will participate in four workshops with Medical Students and eight workshops with Education students from the University of Melbourne.

Medical Students (trainee doctors)
The workshops with 5th Year Medical students will take place at school during drama time. Each of the workshops will be with a new group of Medical students. In these workshops the Community Drama students will role-play patients so as the trainee doctors can practice talking to teenage patients about issues involving home and school life, friendships, parties and drugs, sexuality and mental health concerns. The doctors practice these sorts of conversations to help them learn how to work with teenagers who may be at risk of physical or mental health problems due to stresses in their life.
The Community Drama students will have a particular character and story to act out. There will be a choice of characters so as all students can find a part they are comfortable to play. These characters will be prepared in advance. No one will be asked to take on a character that they are not comfortable with. Playing these characters will give students a chance to develop their acting skills as well as their knowledge and understanding of health issues.

Education Students (trainee teachers):
Three workshops will take place with a class of Diploma of Education students. In these workshops Community Drama students will play a range of roles such as student, teacher or parent. They will investigate how problems such as bullying, racism and stress can affect students’ learning. They will discuss what schools and teachers can do to provide a safe, supportive and stimulating environment for students.

These workshops with the Diploma of Education students will take place at Melbourne University, partly during class time and partly using some periods from non-drama time. (In line with regular school practice, a separate Parent Consent will be sought prior to students going on these excursions.) Other teachers will be informed that this project has the school’s support and students will be asked to make sure they can catch up on work missed at these times. Some students may elect to stay at school and not participate in the excursion workshops so as not to miss these classes. They are free to make this choice and are encouraged to discuss this matter with both parents/guardians and teachers.
The Research Project:
The drama techniques and the learning partnership between the Community Drama class and the Education Faculty and the Medical Faculty are the subject of a PhD research study by Helen Cahill. Helen will lead some of the workshops with the drama class, and the workshops with the tertiary students as will the Drama teacher, Prue Wales. Prue will be with the class during all workshops. Helen is an experienced drama teacher and health educator who currently Deputy-Director of the Youth Research Centre within the Education Faculty of Melbourne University.

Your consent is sought for your son/daughter/ward to be part of the research study that aims to find out more about how working with young people through drama techniques can help people to get better at understanding and communicating with others. Students can be part of the Community Drama class and not to be part of the research study. This won’t affect their assessment or opportunities in any way.

If you do choose give your consent for your son/daughter/ward to be part of the research study, and they also give their consent, you are asked for your consent to:

- the video-taping of some of the classes at school and all of the classes with the Diploma of Education students,
- your son/daughter/ward playing a role they are comfortable to play in the workshops with the University students (He/she will have a choice of roles),
- your son/daughter/ward participating in an audio-taped small group or individual interview about their learning in the class,

If your son/daughter/ward does not participate in the research study, he/she may still be in the class. He/she will not be asked to complete any of the research tasks described above. The choice you or your son/daughter/ward makes will not affect their assessment for this subject.

The privacy of those who take part in the research study will be protected through the use of pseudonym. Written response will be anonymous. Video and audio-tape footage will be used only for the purpose of the research and will be kept in a locked cupboard for five years and then destroyed by the researcher.

You can withdraw your consent for your son/daughter/ward’s participation in the research at any time. Information collected from him/her will not then be used in the research. Withdrawal from the research aspects of the project will not affect his/her assessment for this subject and will not affect opportunities to perform or be part of the class.

If you have any questions, now or in the future, about the research, you can contact Professor Johanna Wyn by post at the Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3010 or by phone on 83449641 or by email on j.wyn@unimelb.edu.au.
Appendix 10: Plain language statement for students of Education, Policy, Schools and Society.

About the Role and Learning Research Project
Students in this class will use role-play techniques as well as discussion and student presentations to guide exploration of how social and policy issues impact on student learning and wellbeing. The scenarios used to provide the focus of role-play and discussion will be the same as those used in other seminar groups in the EPSS subject. Students in this seminar group will complete the same assessment tasks as those in other seminar groups. On three separate occasions across the nine seminars, a year 9/10 class from a local high school will participate with the class in an examination of how school policies and practices impact on student learning and wellbeing. The school students will be in attendance for 1.5 hours within the three hour seminar. The interactive enquiry-based drama processes will be used to facilitate interaction, research and discussion about policy and social issues.

It is anticipated that the use of highly interactive pedagogies and the opportunity to learn with young people will:

• enhance conceptual and practical understandings of the impact of culture, policy and practice on students’ and teachers’ participation in school life; and
• enhance those professional skills and understandings essential to effective relationship and communication between educators and students.

The learning partnership between the Community Drama class and the Education Faculty is the subject of a PhD research study by the tutor, Helen Cahill. You are asked to give your consent to being a participant in the research study. This will entail your consent to:

• the video-taping of the classes,
• completing an evaluation survey at the end of the seminar series (about 10 minutes),
• volunteer to be one of the 6 participants in an audio-taped group interview about what facilitated your learning in this class (about 30 minutes);

Should you elect to participate in the research, your privacy will be protected through the use of pseudonym. Video and audio-tape footage will be used only for the purpose of the research and will be kept in a locked facility for five years and then destroyed by the researcher. Written responses will be anonymous. Should you consent to participate in the research, you may withdraw your consent at any time. Data collected from you will not then be used in the research. Withdrawal from the research aspects of the project will have no bearing on any assessment for this subject.

Should you elect not to participate in the research study, you may still join the class. You will not be required to complete any of the research tasks described above. The choice made will have no bearing on any form of assessment for this subject. Others who elect not to participate in the study may elect to transfer to a different seminar group (there are other concurrent classes).

If you have any questions, now or in the future, about the research, you can contact Professor Johanna Wyn, by post at the Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3010 or by phone on 83449641 or by email on j.wyn@unimelb.edu.au. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project,
you may contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, ph: 83447507; fax 93476739.
Appendix 11: Information Statement for Medical Students

About the Role and Learning Research Project
The role-play pedagogy used in this class and the learning partnership between the School Drama class and the Medical Faculty are the subject of a PhD research study by the tutor, Helen Cahill.

You are asked to give your consent to being a participant in the research study. This will entail your consent to:

• the video-taping of the workshop,
• completing an evaluation survey and written response at the end of the workshop (about 5 minutes),

Should you elect to participate in the research, your privacy will be protected through the use of pseudonym. Video footage will be used only for the purpose of the research and will be kept in a locked facility. Written responses will be anonymous. Should you consent to participate in the research, you may withdraw your consent at any time. Data collected from you will not then be used in the research. Withdrawal from the research aspects of the project will have no bearing on any assessment for this subject.

Should you elect not to participate in the research study, you may still join the class. You will not be required to complete any of the research tasks described above. The choice made will have no bearing on any form of assessment for this subject.

If you have any questions, now or in the future, about the research, you can contact Professor Johanna Wyn, by post at the Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, 3010 or by phone on 83449633 or by email on j.wyn@unimelb.edu.au.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, you may contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne, ph: 83447507; fax 93476739.
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