Drama teacher education, partnerships for transforming the future: exploring the concept of building a Guild of Drama Educators

Laura A. McCammon | Debra McLauchlan | Robin Pascoe

IDEA 2010 Belem Brazil
Focus

* The concept of drama teacher education as catalyst for *creating communities of drama educators* – drama education as an induction into a community of drama educators.
Pedagogical content knowledge
(Shulman 1986)

How the content of drama is organised and represented for teaching, learning and meeting the specific needs of particular communities of learners

Formulating the subject of drama to make it comprehensible to others
Three perspectives
Three contexts

LAURA
LAURA MCCAMMON
ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

DEBRA
DEBRA MCLAUCHLAN
BROCK UNIVERSITY

ROBIN
ROBIN PASCOE
MURDOCH UNIVERSITY
Research on Drama Teachers

Laura A. McCammon,
Drama teacher education: teaching and learning through & from community

Robin Pascoe
Murdoch University, Perth Western Australia
r.pascoe@murdoch.edu.au
Focus

- Drama teacher education as catalyst for creating communities of drama educators
- Creating a shared learning community within a group of students
- Teaching from community - belonging to a drama education community and bringing that community into focus through the design and implementation of the drama teacher education program
Teaching Drama Educators Through Community

- Creating communities of drama educators
  - Teacher–learner partnerships - drama learning contract
  - Open and receptive minds in drama ensembles
  - From practice to theory - embodied learning
  - Collaborative performance projects as basis for learning to teach drama
  - Self incorporation and identity - agency as a drama teacher
  - Reflective and reflexive awareness of sources of pedagogical decisions:
    - values, beliefs and understandings
Creating communities

Thursday, 2 August 12
Creating communities

From practice

To theory

Thursday, 2 August 12
Creating communities through performance

The Prisoner of Time

Group devised drama project - from the Year 12 drama syllabus
Coming into this unit I didn’t really know what to expect. I just thought that I would teach drama because it would be a bit of fun and would complement my media teaching but I have learnt that drama teaching is so much more. The comradeship in a drama class is much stronger than in a media class. I want to pass this enthusiasm on to students and get them excited about the process of drama because I found the process almost as fascinating as the performance.

(Dylan)
Teaching through stories
- drawn from my own experiences
  - my own teaching of drama
  - my professional roles (as Chief Examiner/Curriculum Writer/etc.)
- connecting students to their own community
The Arts

Four outcomes

- Arts Ideas
- Arts Skills and Processes
- Arts Responses
- Arts in Society

Aesthetic Understanding
Arts Practice

The Western Australian Curriculum Framework: www.curriculum.wa.edu.au
Understanding The Arts in the Curriculum

- Aesthetic understanding
  - students appreciate and critically respond to arts experiences with enjoyment
  - students understand questions about the values and attitudes in the arts

- Arts practice
  - students explore and develop ideas and feelings through use of a range of skills and knowledge of arts techniques and processes in dance, drama, media, music and visual arts (and combinations of art forms)

These are integrated not separate modes

As audience, social and cultural commentator and critic

As creator, maker, performer, artist

Rationale for The Arts for All Students

- The arts and the life of the community
- The arts and communication
- The arts and values
- The arts, creativity and satisfaction
- The arts and life skills
Building models

Applied Aesthetic Understanding through Drama

Aesthetic Understanding
Drama Practice

Metaphor
Symbol
Design
Story
Play
Creativity
Imagination
DRAMA ELEMENTS

Role and character
Situation and human interaction
Voice
Facial Expression, Gesture & Movement
Space and Time
Language and texts
Symbol and metaphor
Audience
Dramatic tension

What it's all about...

The connections when students

Play Imagine Create

Thursday, 2 August 12
I have a sense that in this course we are in the drama classroom as much as we are in the university through the stories told. I have a sense of how important my networking with other drama teachers will be if I am to survive in this drama teaching game.

_Aliensui in her reflective journal_
I am happy to admit to feeling a bit worried... as scary as it is to admit for the first time I have doubts about my ability to meet the criteria for “successful teacher”. But I tell myself “Toughen up, girl” because I am going to be successful. I can see the way forward and it’s through my mates. I am not alone.

Aliensui in her reflective journal
**Drama Teacher Education is a Journey**

- What do drama teacher education students need for their journey?
  - What do they need for a sustainable and generative career in drama teaching?

- They need to create in their own classrooms a sense of community.

- They need a sense of belonging within a community - to not see themselves as “Lone Rangers” but as part of the whole.
Remember why we are here...

Robin Pascoe
Murdoch University, Perth Western Australia
r.pascoe@murdoch.edu.au
How drama teachers see themselves

Debra McLauchlan
Common Notion of Self-Identity
10 years plus

- All perceive themselves as teacher-artists. All label themselves both performers and directors.
- All view teaching and directing as two separate skill sets that they had to learn.
- All believe that drama teachers need to know about and be skillful in theatre techniques of performance and directing.
- All hold common attitudes: passionate about theatre, hold high expectations and believe that their students are capable of high-quality work, are immersed in theatre both in and out of school, “willing to sit on the floor in your bare feet” with the class, willing to take the same kind of risks you are asking your students to take.
- All view themselves as somewhat isolated within their schools.
Professional Supports

1. Mentors
2. Each Other
3. School Board Arts Consultant
4. Professional and Community Theatre Groups (drawing on the rich theatre culture in Niagara)
5. University
   - Research
   - Associate Teaching
6. Provincial Drama Teachers Organization
Challenges/Strains

1. High demands on time and energy leads to yearly sense of burn-out by end of term
2. Jenn gets so drained by the end of a major production that she feels resentful
3. Need ways to relax and get away from the job
4. Both men reported marriage strains, and Vince said he didn’t get to see his children much
5. Jenn reported a strain on marriage although husband remains supportive of her work
Rewards

- From students:
- From the arts community
- From the outside community
Drama teacher educators work from within their own communities, drawing on the rich, complex shared history of drama education. They also work through creating communities of learners that model practices and learning approaches we share an value as a drama education community.
Laura A. McCammon  
mccammon@email.arizona.edu  
Debra McLauchlan  
dmclauch@brocku.ca  
Robin Pascoe  
r.pascoe@murdoch.edu.au