Interplay: A Study of Pre-Service Drama Teachers and the Practicum – Experiences, Beliefs, Expectations and Managing

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M.Ed., B.Ed.

This thesis is presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Christina Gray
Abstract

The practicum is internationally recognised as a valuable component of teacher education. It is an opportunity for pre-service teachers to develop teaching skills in authentic ways, pursue professional inquiry into practice, and be mentored by experienced teachers. It is also fraught with challenges and the literature identifies the practicum to be overwhelming and stressful for pre-service teachers. While extensive research has been conducted into the practicum generally, little research focuses on the practicum experience for pre-service drama teachers. This research is key to better understanding the issues and challenges of the practicum so as to improve pre-service drama teachers’ experience, better induct them into the profession, and retain them in this demanding field.

The study was designed in three phases using a bricolage of qualitative methods. In Phase 1, the perceptions of 19 pre-service drama teachers were revealed through focus groups. Phase 2 involved field work and analysed multiple data sources (participant observation, formal and informal interviews, journals, lesson plans, lesson reflections, practicum evaluations) to investigate five participants’ lived experience of the practicum, providing depth to key issues and challenges. Phase 3 employed in-depth interviews capturing participants’ reflections on school drama as key to their beliefs and values. These data were then developed into a series of narrative portraits communicating key influences on these emergent teachers.

The research highlights the complexity and emotionality of practicum through intersections of experience, dynamics, beliefs and aspirations. A key finding is that pre-service drama teachers are vulnerable during practicum and a consequential lack of belonging and inadequate preparation causes considerable stress. Furthermore, the
interplay between beliefs about drama teaching and the practicum experience is significant. When beliefs and practicum experiences were in harmony, participants had a more positive practicum with improved self-efficacy; conversely, disharmony saw participants experience culture shock and stress. The study concludes with implications for pre-service drama teacher practice and suggestions for further research.
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Prologue – Past and Present Practicum

A practicum reflection by Christina Gray

September, 1989

Some of my most vivid memories of practicum took place at a prestigious boys’ school, with a most intimidating mentor teacher. I remember her watching me teach through the gaps of her fingers – clearly my teaching was too hideous to contemplate. I spent countless hours ironing costumes in a small dark costume room (actually more like a cupboard) and running errands all over town in preparation for an upcoming production. I would sit up all night trying to digest Brechtian Theatre and then try to teach it the next day, completely sleep deprived, and pretending I knew what I was talking about. Where on earth was Google back then? I remember not having the right clothes to wear and being reprimanded for walking across a patch of grass that was “not a thoroughfare”. I felt like a fifth wheel in the staffroom, not knowing where to sit or who to talk to. Add to that the fateful lesson where I stumbled over the pronunciation of “Lysistrata” several times before admitting defeat and turning to one of the students for help. The butterflies seemed to live permanently inside my stomach.

Nonetheless, a pivotal moment transpired where the heavens opened and the drama teaching gods looked down in sympathy. I was introducing ritual and symbolic movement to a class of year 8 boys. I remember this lesson particularly as it was the first lesson I had ever enjoyed teaching. The lesson began with a story about an ancient village, desperate for rain. The story told of the villagers’ existence and their quest for survival during the changing seasons. As the story unfolded, the interest and focus of the students seemed to grow, spurring me on to add more and more layers to this already outlandish tale. Once the story finished, the students closed their eyes and visualised the ritual taking place to the sounds of Enya booming through the speakers. Imaginations stimulated, the boys were soon on their feet, creating rituals that even the grumpiest of gods couldn’t resist. The boys were interested in the work; they were having fun. They asked for my assistance. They were focused, enthusiastic and produced some amazing work. For a while there, I think the butterflies turned into adrenalin and
elation as I watched the boys creating work that I had instigated. My mentor teacher even gave a small nod of approval. Or was it a sneeze? It was hard to tell in the darkened theatre!

That afternoon, when I was back in my cupboard ironing costumes, I couldn’t help feeling just a little bit proud. I’d had a taste of what it was like to teach a good drama lesson. To think that one day I would be teaching drama in a school with my own kids. I’d be Miss Gray!

I’d like to say that the next day was better and my mentor teacher became my new best friend. Not quite. You see, I had to teach circus skills and despite putting my heart and soul into writing a brilliant lesson plan the night before, things just didn’t go according to plan. What a debacle. The sports teacher had taken all the balls we were going to use for juggling; one boy fell awkwardly on his shoulder and was carted off to the nurse; we were told to “keep the noise down” by the music teacher in the next room, which somehow managed to make the students even noisier. The boys were literally climbing up walls and hanging off ropes, leading my mentor teacher to step in and regain order. Trying to learn how to teach in front of an audience of kids and a rather unsupportive mentor teacher was agony.

I somehow got through that prac and despite a few battle wounds, I was still keen to be a drama teacher. But I had lots to learn. How to pronounce “Lysistrata” for a start, and how to direct and produce a school production like the one I ironed costumes for. What to do with kids who missed out on outdoor education on the timetable and were forced to do drama against their will. How to get Rupert out from behind the curtains and join in with the other kids. How to conduct more than one inspiring lesson. How to operate all that sound and lighting gear. How to teach all day, assess work, direct productions, write reports, attend meetings and assemblies and parent teacher evenings, and everything else a drama teacher does.

Not everyone in my cohort survived that prac. I never got to hear their stories but I assume they involved year 9s and sleepless nights and dragon mentor teachers.
My reflection provides an insight into my practicum experience and induction into the teaching profession. The next reflection depicts a contemporary practicum experience of a pre-service drama teacher. Together, these past and present reflections serve to frame this dissertation.

**A practicum reflection by Frederik King [pseudonym]**

**October, 2015**

When I started my prac I wasn’t too sure what to expect. I hadn’t been given much information other than the name of the school, and that the lower-school classes would be undertaking a scripted task. I had heard that my mentor teacher wasn’t the easiest person to work with but I was determined to go in with an open mind.

Unfortunately, things didn’t really get off to a great start and my mentor teacher proved to be as unwelcoming as I’d heard! To say that I felt like a fish out of water is an understatement. My mentor teacher barely spoke to me the entire first day, and when she did, she didn’t make eye contact or even face my direction. She didn’t talk to me during her classes, didn’t tell me where she was going, didn’t introduce me to her students, and disliked being asked questions. I was hoping to arrange a teaching timetable so I could begin my planning, but I went home that day not knowing which classes I was expected to take or what I should be planning. I asked about the year 8 assessment task so I could at least plan lessons to cater for the assessment criteria, but was told I would get it later. I asked which text the year 9 class would be performing so I could read it and begin planning, but was told I would get it later. It was evident she was either very unprepared for her classes or that she just didn’t care about mentoring me. I’m inclined to believe both were true.

In every lesson I observed that first day, students were given scripts and instructed to memorise their lines. All the while my “mentor” sat at her desk and sent emails while I sat silently in the corner. I was bored out of my mind. That continued for the next few days. I sat in on every lesson but I didn’t actually
witness any teaching. During DOTT [duties other than teaching] periods, I would be left alone in the office to plan. What was I supposed to plan? It was depressing. I can clearly remember sitting in the office, alone and depressed, bouncing a ball to pass the time. This was not how I had envisioned my prac experience and definitely not how I envisioned a drama teacher to be! My expectations couldn’t have been more wrong, and to be honest, it made me anxious. Had I made a mistake?

Fortunately, things picked up when I finally started teaching; after all, that was what I was there for. Oh and it was so good to rediscover human interaction once more! I started with a warm-up activity to learn all the kids’ names. They responded really well; maybe because they were relieved to be doing something other than learning lines! Then, as I transitioned students into their groups for the scripted task, a few group dilemmas arose. I had to resolve issues ranging from students kicking other students out of their groups, to students without partners because their partners were either away sick or wagging. Once issues were settled, I moved between groups and assisted with rehearsals. I got a sense that the students liked having me help them, which is a great thing to feel in a first lesson.

The highlight of my day was when a year 8 student asked me how long I would be teaching at their school. When he found out I would be there for seven weeks, he told me I should stay and teach longer. Well, that comment was just what I needed. It put things into perspective and helped me focus on what really mattered: the kids. No matter how unsupportive my mentor teacher was and how many nights I spent suffering stress-induced headaches, what mattered most was that I was making a difference to some of those kids, and I was enjoying teaching drama. I don’t think I’ll ever forget that kid and how his comment managed to give me hope.
Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter Overview

The introductory chapter identifies the problem that instigated this investigation and presents a rationale for the study, confirming previous research that recognises the importance of quality practicum experiences for pre-service teachers and the influence of past experiences on beliefs about teaching. This is followed by a description of my identity as a researcher and the multiple perspectives I bring to this study. In order to provide context for this research, a background to the study is presented: first, a picture of drama education in Western Australian schools that highlights the diverse subject knowledge and responsibilities of drama teachers; second, an insight into pre-service drama education in Australia which draws on key research conducted by R. Pascoe (2002) and R. Pascoe and Sallis (2012). This chapter then discusses the significance of the study, outlines the research questions, and concludes with an overview of the thesis structure.

As a novice researcher, I embarked on this doctoral journey daunted by the task ahead. Not only was there a great deal to learn about the phenomenon I was investigating but I also needed to step into the complex world of educational research. Fortunately, I gained some comfort from O’Toole (2006), who explained “In one sense, every good teacher, drama educator or applied theatre practitioner is automatically a researcher, in the sense of being one who examines and enquires into what we do in order, for example, to improve our teaching technique” (p. 21). O’Toole’s words reminded me that I had been
examining this phenomenon for some time, 23 years in fact, and therefore had good reason to formally and deeply undertake this research. Let me explain.

**Problem**

Through my work as a drama teacher in high schools and as a teacher educator working with pre-service drama teachers, I became aware anecdotally that the practicum was a diverse experience where pre-service drama teachers faced many challenges, experienced considerable stress, had wonderful mentors or “dragon” mentors, and would often return from practicum telling inspirational stories or horror stories. I wondered why pre-service drama teachers had such varied experiences and how they managed when they felt stressed and overwhelmed. In thinking about these questions, I was reminded of my own practicum experiences, such as the one described in the prologue. Perhaps nothing much had changed over the years, despite the research into pre-service education. Perhaps the practicum was still a “baptism of fire” into the teaching profession. Furthermore, I reflected on my first few years of teaching and recognised that there was not only a period of “stumbling around in the dark” but that those years were particularly stressful and overwhelming, and that I had struggled to keep up with all the many tasks and roles expected of me. For example, in my first year of teaching, I taught drama, English and even a unit on farming practices. While that teaching load in itself was difficult to manage, there was also a considerable non-curricular drama load expected of me. This involved directing and choreographing the school musical, organising the school’s performance in the Rock Eisteddfod, running a host of performance evenings to showcase student work, and, just when I thought there was nothing more I could be expected to do, I was given the task of organising a year 12 graduation performance. This arduous mix of curricular and non-curricular work is not uncommon for drama teachers and research has confirmed that this heavy workload contributes to considerable stress and burn out (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Donelan, 1989; Haseman, 1989; Wales, 1999).
In those early years, I felt my teaching degree and the practicums I completed had done little to prepare me for the complex and demanding role of being a drama teacher. After four years of training and a considerable HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme) debt, I was understandably frustrated. How could I have been better prepared? How could practicum have been more productive so that I acquired key skills and knowledge that would have strengthened my induction into the profession? How could this induction have been less of a baptism of fire and more of a steady learning curve where I was transitioned, supported and mentored into my new role as a beginning drama teacher?

What about the next generation of drama teachers? While it is not my intent to imply that my practicum and beginning teaching experiences, over twenty years ago, are the same as those experienced today or even in the future, there is compelling evidence to suggest that practicum and beginning teachers’ induction into the profession are, indeed, fraught with challenges (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, 2014), and that beginning teachers lack sufficient practical skills and classroom readiness.

M. Anderson (2002, 2003) identified that there were significant problems and concerns with the relevance and effectiveness of pre-service education in preparing drama teachers for the profession. He stated, “A concerted effort is required by universities and schooling systems to make teacher pre-service training and induction effective to equip these teachers for the arduous journey that lies ahead” (M. Anderson, 2002, p. 92). M. Anderson (2002, 2003) cautioned that without due attention, teachers would continue to struggle and leave teaching, which would have ramifications for students.

The question then is, how can drama teachers be more adequately prepared during pre-service education to manage the inherent challenges and rigours of teaching drama? This research is a quest to help better understand these processes so that I can contribute
to knowledge in the field and improve pre-service drama teachers’ experience. I do this first by considering the role of the practicum in teacher education itself.

**Practicum as a key component in preparing teachers for the profession.** The practicum provides pre-service teachers with authentic classroom experiences so that they can apply previously studied theory to practice. Research has identified the practicum as integral to the development of effective teachers (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; de Leon-Carillo, 2007; Grudnoff, 2011; Segall, 2002; Wyckoff, Grossman, Boyd, Lankford & Loeb, 2009). It is where pre-service teachers are mentored by experienced teachers so that they may learn their pedagogical craft and develop important practical skills needed for teaching. Furthermore, an effective practicum component in pre-service education increases the likelihood of retaining beginning teachers in the profession (Twomey, 2007).

A key feature of a high-quality practicum experience is an effective mentor teacher (Appl & Spenciner, 2008; Lai, 2005; Murray-Harvey, 2001, Wyckoff et al., 2009) who offers professional and emotional support (Hayes, 2004; Moody, 2009; Ralf, Walker & Wimmer, 2008) and provides opportunities for pre-service teachers to experience success and self-efficacy (K. Anderson, Walker & Ralph, 2009; Edwards, 1993; Hrncir, 2007). Furthermore, an effective mentor can provide valuable insight into the realities and broad responsibilities of teaching and is therefore imperative in assisting pre-service teachers become classroom-ready.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL], 2011) stipulate that graduating teachers need to be classroom-ready and able to perform at least at a “graduate standard” (Appendix A). Few would argue that these standards are not complex. Indeed, they require pre-service teachers to be in classrooms gaining experience with real students in order to develop
these understandings. However, since time in real-school settings is limited, approximately 16 weeks out of a possible 160 weeks in a four-year course (Ministerial Council for Education and Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2011), it is important that the practicum provides the best opportunity for pre-service teachers to learn and gain personal and teaching efficacy.

The problem is, the quality of practicum experiences varies greatly for pre-service teachers (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Bloomfield, 2010; Ure, Gough & Newton, 2009) and research has identified that pre-service education programs fail to provide appropriate practicum experiences to adequately prepare beginning teachers for the realities of teaching (Grudnoff, 2011; Ralf et al., 2008). Additionally, research has identified the practicum to be a stressful experience (Badali, 2008; Caires, Almeida & Martins, 2010; Hastings, 2004; Murray-Harvey, 2001) where pre-service teachers struggle to manage the intense workload (Badali, 2008), are under pressure from being assessed (Cakir & Cesur, 2014; MacDonald, 1993), and lack a sense of belonging (Caires, Almeida & Vieira, 2012; Murray-Harvey, 2001; Sudeck, Doolittle & Rattigan, 2008). Indeed, practicum is a complex emotional and interpersonal experience for pre-service teachers and it has significant implications on teacher development (Bloomfield, 2010; Koerner, Rust & Baumgartner, 2002). Also significant to the practicum experience is the role of pre-service teachers’ beliefs.

**Pre-service teachers and their beliefs about teaching.** The complexity of the practicum experience is heightened by pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching. These beliefs are informed by prior experiences of school (Cheng, Cheng & Tang, 2010; Isikoglu, Basturk & Karaca, 2009; Mansour, 2009; Ng, Nicholas & Williams, 2010; Swainston & Jeanneret, 2013) and surface when pre-service teachers start teaching (Ginsburg & Newman, 1985; Lortie, 1975; C. Stuart & Thurlow, 2000; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Olsen (2008) suggested that pre-service teachers begin the process of learning to teach,
already possessing many powerful beliefs about teaching and, as they process new
teacher knowledge, combine it with their pre-existing personal knowledge. Research has
identified that often these beliefs are entrenched (Donmez, 2003; Duro, 2005), can be
idealistic (L. Thompson, 2007) and may be difficult to change (Swainston & Jeanneret,
2013). Furthermore, pre-service teachers’ preconceived ideas about teaching influence
their expectations of teaching.

Since practicum is often pre-service teachers’ first experience of school, since leaving
school themselves, their beliefs and expectations about teaching will most likely surface.
While research has identified that practicum is an opportunity for pre-service teachers to
examine their beliefs and instigate change (de Leon-Carillo, 2007; Yuan & Lee, 2014), it
is also the case that pre-service teachers experience a reality shock when their
expectations differ to the reality of the practicum (Pendergast, Garvis & Keogh, 2011).

The reflection in the prologue by Frederik, reveals his preconceived ideas about
practicum and his perception of what it is to be a drama teacher. Frederik stated, “This
was not how I had envisioned my prac experience and definitely not how I envisioned a
drama teacher to be!” While Frederik does not explain what his expectations are, it is
reasonable to assume, given the research mentioned previously, that his beliefs and
expectations are based on his prior experiences of drama and his drama teacher/s when he
was a student at school. It appears that Frederik endured “stress-induced headaches”
during the practicum, felt anxious about having to readjust his expectations, and even
questioned whether he had made a mistake embarking on a career in drama teaching.

Clearly, in order to understand the practicum experience, there is significant reason to
investigate participants’ prior experiences of drama and their beliefs about teaching
drama.
Rationale for the Study

This study acknowledges the importance of the practicum in preparing pre-service teachers for the demands of the profession; however, anecdotal evidence and research (e.g. Grudnoff, 2011; Ralf et al., 2008) has identified that inconsistencies with the quality of practicum negatively impact upon classroom readiness. Therefore, this study casts a critical eye and questions the “taken for granted” assumptions of practicum (van Manen, 2014), in order to gain a deep understanding of the drama practicum.

This study focuses on participants’ lived experience, “experience-as-we-live-through-it in our actions, relations and situations” (van Manen, 2007, p. 16). A specific focus on the lived experience of pre-service drama teachers, rather than that of pre-service teachers generally, responds to previous research which has identified a gap in pre-service education texts and research (McCammon, Norris & Miller, 1998; R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012) and a need to make pre-service training more effective to better prepare drama teachers for the profession (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003).

This study is designed to re-energise research on pre-service drama education, illuminating conditions most conducive to a quality practicum where pre-service drama teachers are able to develop important pedagogy and the self-efficacy necessary to be an effective drama teacher, and one who remains in the profession. Since “excellence in teaching is the single most powerful influence on [student] achievement” (Hattie, 2003, p. 4), this knowledge will have positive repercussions on the integrity and longevity of drama education in schools.

Significance of the Research

With high-quality research to lead the way, practitioners and researchers together, will be in a position to reveal what actually happens in the practice of drama/theatre education, to deliberate on the implications of this information and to effect changes that will improve our teaching and productions. We will be better prepared to inform policy decisions and to
validate our work in drama/theatre, educating administrators, policy makers
and parents about the demonstrable benefits of experience in this art form for
students of all ages. (O’Farrell, 1999, p. 118)

Research has indicated that a quality practicum prepares effective and resilient teachers
who are more likely to remain in the profession (Twomey, 2007), and a quality practicum
for pre-service drama teachers provides opportunities to develop complex pedagogy
needed to teach drama (Wales, 2009). The driving force behind this research is a
determination to gain a deep understanding of the practicum and all its complexities, so
that pre-service drama teachers’ induction into the profession is strengthened.

R. Pascoe (2002) affirmed that “Further work needs to be done on describing best practice
in providing teachers in training with meaningful and valuable experience in schools” (p.
83). The present study responds to this call by building onto existing knowledge of
pre-service education through an investigation of the practicum, and of the beliefs about
teaching held by pre-service drama teachers. Furthermore, this study is timely given the
lack of attention pre-service drama education has received in the literature (R. Pascoe &
Sallis, 2012).

In addition, this research responds to recommendations made by Schonmann and Kempe
(2010) who urged those working with pre-service drama teachers to listen to the voices
and stories of these emerging teachers. Stories are a natural and effective way of
providing the context, structure, meaning and overall understanding of complex topic
areas, and also of their relations to other knowledge and experience (Clandinin &
Connelly, 2000). Since stories create meaning in the telling, the richness of stories
relayed by the participants in this study allow insight into the complexity of layers that
construct the practicum experience.
Research Questions

This research explores three interrelated questions:

1. In what ways do pre-service drama teachers experience the practicum?

2. What are the key issues and challenges of the practicum for pre-service drama teachers?

3. In what ways do past school experiences of drama influence the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers?

By understanding the factors that aid and challenge pre-service drama teachers during practicum, it is anticipated that pre-service drama education programs will be better informed to provide quality practicum experiences. Furthermore, if stakeholders (teacher educators, pre-service teachers, mentor teachers) understand how past experiences of drama influences practicum, opportunities can be provided for pre-service drama teachers to interrogate their experiences and beliefs about teaching.

Identity of the Researcher

My position as researcher in this qualitative study is central, as my interpretations are based on experience and background (Lichtman, 2009). These experiences influence the questions I ask, the lenses through which I look, as well as the interpretations I make (Crotty, 1998). I have 10 years experience working with pre-service drama teachers, 13 years experience as a drama teacher in secondary schools, four years experience as a pre-service drama teacher, and nine years experience as a student studying drama at school. Therefore, together with my role of researcher, I bring multiple perspectives to this research. Furthermore, the choice of this research topic is grounded in my commitment to seeing pre-service drama teachers supported and prepared for a rewarding career in teaching so that they can continue the valuable work of this discipline. My
collective experiences have not only provided me with insight into some of the issues associated with practicum but also into the challenges and complexity of teaching drama.

**Background: A Picture of Drama in Western Australian Schools**

This section presents a picture of how drama exists in schools, with a focus on the Western Australian context in which this research is situated. The intent of this section is threefold. First, to highlight the diverse subject knowledge and specialised pedagogical content knowledge required to teach drama. Second, to emphasise the additional expectations on drama teachers to facilitate non-curricular drama activities. Third, to establish that Drama in Western Australian schools – and therefore the focus for pre-service drama teacher education – can be considered as: a) a teaching methodology; b) a school subject; and, c) a non-curricular activity. Within this framework, drama is broadly defined and described, and the place of drama in schools is supported by research.

**Drama as art form and process.** Drama has existed in different forms throughout the ages, in every known society and for a variety of different purposes such as religious worship, celebration and entertainment. For example, ancient communities performed rituals in honour of their gods, such as the festival of Dionysus in Athens, where plays and imitations of gods were performed. Haseman and O’Toole (1986) stated “Where ever there are people, there is drama” (p. 1), and, Ewing (2010) emphasised the central role drama plays in the “identities and cultural practices of all indigenous peoples” (p. 1).

Learning through dramatic play has been recognised as vital to a child’s development. Piaget (1962) and Vygotsky (1978) proposed play as a means by which children learn to make sense of their environment, both physical and social. Through play, children learn to problem solve and gain control of complex issues which affect their lives (Piaget, 1962). While Piaget emphasised the need for children to explore and experiment for
themselves, Vygotsky emphasised the role of social context in play, the construction of knowledge and language development. These early ideas or theories about play have shaped contemporary approaches to drama in education. Drama has the potential to captivate learners because it builds on the spontaneity and make-believe action of dramatic play (Poston-Anderson, 2008).

Practitioners and researchers have provided various definitions of drama. R. Pascoe and Pascoe (2014), for example, stated that drama is “the enactment of real and imagined events through roles and situations” (p. 25), and, “drama is experienced, physical and immediate. It is simultaneously embodied and cognitive” (p. 26). Neelands and Dobson (2000) used the metaphor of “drama as an umbrella”, which covers all the processes associated with the making, performing and responding to performance. Bolton (1979) claimed simply that “drama is doing”. Ozbek (2014) proposed that the essence of drama is “make believe play, in which the participant pretends that he or she is someone else, or something else, through role playing in an imaginary environment” (p. 47). What is clear from the definitions provided in drama text books, is that trying to reduce “drama” to a definition, risks missing the complexities and value of drama.

In recognising this predicament, Neelands (1984) summarised his view of drama as:

2. Concerned with the construction of imagined experience, where children try out and experiment with new ideas, concepts, values, roles and language in action.
3. Experiencing rather than performing.
4. Practical, immediate and engages the emotions and intellect.
5. Social and interactive way of creating and interpreting meanings.
6. An active process rather than a distinct curriculum area.
7. Not dependent on specialists or specialist venues, rather intended for all teachers in whatever space is available.

8. Utilises the child’s existing experience of play to the less familiar forms of theatre in order to deepen the learning experience for the child. (pp. 6–7)

It is important to note that in a Western Australian context, “theatre” and “drama” are two different but related concepts. In its simplest terms, drama is process orientated and does not focus primarily on a performance or a product for its outcome; by contrast, “theatre” can be thought of as product, a rehearsed and polished performance of sorts, presented to an audience. The two are interrelated and, as R. Pascoe and Pascoe (2014) explained, theatre is a subset of drama. They stated, “Drama draws on elements of play; it is also an example of performance, a broad category of activity where artistic works are presented to audiences” (R. Pascoe & Pascoe, 2014, p. 26). Grady (1996) stated that the process of drama “combines kinaesthetic, emotional and intellectual involvements in improvisational activities to promote a range of experiences. This process orientated nature implies that it is non-exhibitional and is done for the benefit of the participants rather than for an audience” (Grady, 1996, p.60). In other words, without the pressure for students and their teacher to create work for an audience, the focus of dramatic activities can be designed for the benefit of the participants and can therefore cater to the needs and interests of the students.

Participation in dramatic activities contributes to personal development and self-actualisation (Taylor, 1992). Ewing (2010) described that learning in drama can improve a student’s sense of enjoyment, purpose and identity, and can positively change the direction of a student’s life. Therefore, taking account of this research, the case for including drama in the education of young people seems to be robust.
Drama in schools. Somers (1995) posited that drama education is one of the most thrilling parts of school life, a notion shared by many drama teachers and students of drama. There is variation in the ways that drama is taught in Australian schools. Some schools offer drama as a discrete subject with a progression of learning over the years. Some schools deliver drama as an extra non-curricular activity that is not part of the regular school curriculum. Others integrate dramatic techniques such as improvisation or creative visualisation into different subject areas, and in this case, “Drama is not simply a subject, but also a method… a learning tool… [and] a key way in which children gain an understanding of themselves and others” (Neelands, 1992, p. 3).

For example, a history teacher may conduct a creative visualisation activity to help his or her students visualise what it might have been like to be a convict transported to Australia in 1790. The students may then take on the role of a convict and write a diary entry which describes the long days spent locked up below the ship’s deck. Staying in role, the “convicts” may then converse with fellow convicts on the harsh conditions they are subjected to. While the integration of dramatic techniques can be an effective means to transform learning and engage students (Ewing, 2010), R. Pascoe (2002) cautioned that this approach can be a “threat to the integrity of drama as a subject in its own right” (p. 83). The present research focuses on drama as a discrete curricular subject and as a non-curricular activity, in secondary schools.

Curricular drama in Western Australian schools

Pre-primary to year 10. Drama as a curricular subject is part of the Arts learning area along with dance, media arts, music and visual arts (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2015; Western Australian Government School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2015). R. Pascoe and Sallis (2012) affirmed the health of drama education in Australian schools stating that, “all states and territories
[are] offering opportunities to engage with drama from the early years through to senior secondary level where, by studying drama, students can gain credit towards university entrance” (p. 126).

Curricular documents provide a clear rationale for drama and the Arts that is supported by research. For example, it is widely recognised that successful learning in the Arts can facilitate success in schooling and life (Alter, 2010), improve problem-solving skills and social development (Deasy, Catterall, Hetland & Winner, 2002), and enhance students’ sensory interpretation of the world around them (Eisner, 2002). These essential skills are important as they assist individuals to navigate a technology-laden and globalised world (Ingalls Vanada, 2013). Furthermore, Arts subjects develop both intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences (H. Gardner, 2006), and contribute to the social development of students (Deasy et al., 2002). R. Pascoe (2015) suggested:

In learning to be an artist and an audience, our students develop creativity and critical thinking through an aesthetic perspective; they build capacity to express and communicate in ways that are more than words can say; and they connect with their personal, social and cultural identity. (p. 18)

Research from the United States of America, Canada, Europe and the United Kingdom confirmed that students whose learning is embedded in the Arts achieve better grades, are less likely to leave school early and have a more positive self-concept than those students who do not engage in arts experiences (Ewing, 2010).

Currently, Western Australian schools are transitioning from the Western Australian Curriculum Framework (Western Australian Government Curriculum Council, 1998), to the Western Australian P–10 Syllabus (Western Australian Government School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2015) due to be fully implemented by the start of 2018.
The Western Australian syllabus (Western Australian Government School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2015) based on the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA, 2015), presents a year-by-year syllabus for pre-primary students through to year 10. The rationale for the Arts echoes the research identified above:

The Arts have the capacity to engage, inspire and enrich all students, exciting the imagination and encouraging them to reach their creative and expressive potential. The term “creativity” plays a critical role in all Arts subjects.

Together they [Arts subjects] provide opportunities for students to learn how to create, design, represent, communicate and share their imagined and conceptual ideas, emotions, observations and experiences, as they discover and interpret the world.

The Arts entertain, inform, challenge, and encourage responses, and enrich our knowledge of self, communities, world cultures and histories. The Arts contribute to the development of confident and creative individuals, nurturing and challenging active and informed citizens. Learning in the Arts is based on cognitive, affective and sensory/kinaesthetic response to arts practices as students revisit increasingly complex content, skills and processes with developing confidence and sophistication through the years of schooling. (Western Australian Curriculum: P–10 Outline, 2015, p. 10)

It is mandated by this syllabus that all students will study at least two Arts subjects beginning in pre-primary through to the end of year 8, and must include a performance subject (dance, drama, music) and a visual subject (media arts, visual arts). However, in years 9 and 10, Arts subjects are optional.

While the curriculum involves the five Arts subjects sharing two interrelated strands – Making and Responding (Appendix B) – it also recognises that each art form is unique and therefore presents an individual rationale for each subject with defined aims and syllabus. In order to provide a clear picture of the nature of the work carried out by drama teachers, and indeed the participants in this study, a summary of the rationale and aims of drama is provided in Table 1.
Table 1
Rationale and Aims of Drama (Adapted from the Western Australian Curriculum: P–10 Outline)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale for Drama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drama is the expression and exploration of personal, emotional, social and cultural worlds, through role and situation, that engages, entertains and challenges. Students create meaning as drama makers, performers and audiences as they engage with and analyse their own and others’ stories and points of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In making and staging drama, they learn how to be focused, innovative and resourceful, collaborate and take on responsibilities for drama presentations. Students develop a sense of curiosity and empathy by exploring the diversity of drama in the contemporary world and in other times, traditions, places and cultures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Drama Aims: Drama knowledge and skills ensure that, individually and collaboratively, students develop: |
| Confidence, empathy and self-awareness to explore, depict and celebrate human experience, take risks and extend their own creativity through drama |
| Knowledge of how to analyse, apply and control the elements, skills, techniques, processes, conventions, forms and styles of drama in traditional and contemporary drama to engage and create meaning for audiences |
| Knowledge of the role of group processes and design and technology in the creative process of devising and interpreting drama to make meaning for audiences |
| Knowledge of traditional and contemporary drama through responding as critical and active participants and audience members. |

(Western Australian Government School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2015, p. 11)

This rationale broadly describes the knowledge and skills developed by students through drama, and highlights the interactive, explorative and expressive nature of this discipline.

The drama syllabus (Western Australian Government School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2015) provides more of an overview of learning for each year group (Appendix C). Since the participants in the present research are training to be secondary
drama teachers, a selective outline of the progression in learning in drama prescribed for years 7 to 10 students is provided (Table 2).

Table 2  
*Drama Syllabus (Adapted from the Western Australian Curriculum: P-10 Outline)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 7</th>
<th>Pre-19th century drama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>Opportunity to plan, develop and present drama to peers by safely using processes,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>techniques and conventions of drama. Drama will be improvised, or taken from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appropriate, published script excerpts, using selected drama forms and styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student work in devised and/or scripted drama is the focus of informal reflective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>processes using general drama terminology and language.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 8</th>
<th>19th-century drama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>Opportunities to plan, refine and present drama to peers by safely using processes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>techniques and conventions of drama. Drama will be based on extended improvisations,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or taken from appropriate, published script excerpts, using selected drama forms and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>styles. Student work in devised and/or scripted drama is the focus of informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reflective processes using more detailed drama terminology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>Non-realist drama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>Opportunities to refine knowledge and skills to present drama as an event, by safely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>using processes, techniques and conventions of drama. Students develop drama based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on devised drama processes and appropriate, published script excerpts using selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>drama forms and styles. Student work in devised and scripted drama is the focus of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reflective and responsive processes supported through scaffolded frameworks using</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>drama terminology and language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>20th-century drama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>Opportunities to develop knowledge and skills to present drama for purposes and wider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>external audiences, safely using processes, techniques and conventions of drama.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students develop drama based on devised drama processes and taken from appropriate,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>published script excerpts using selected drama forms and styles. Students will have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>opportunities to research devised drama and read in selected script excerpts in context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student work in devised and scripted drama is the focus of reflective and responsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>processes. Students are encouraged to develop their use of extended answer forms and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interviews, using drama terminology, language and different forms of communication,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>based on own drama and the drama of others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Western Australian Government School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2015, pp. 8, 10, 13, 15)
Table 2 illustrates the increasing complexity of learning in drama. Consequently, drama teachers need specific content knowledge. Ideally, by the end of year 10, students should have an adequate foundation in drama education to manage a senior secondary drama course (years 11 and 12). However, since there is currently no prerequisite for senior secondary drama, it is possible for students to have minimal or no prior experience of drama. This presents a challenge for drama teachers who may need to cater for a considerably wide range of student abilities.

**Senior secondary drama.** Senior secondary drama students graduate with a Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE). These courses are also in a state of transition and by 2016 all students will study Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) courses or General courses (non-tertiary admission subjects). Drama is a popular Arts subject with approximately 3000 students enrolled in a senior secondary drama course in 2015 (S. Sorenson, personal communication, November 8, 2015).

Senior secondary drama courses are organised in four units: (a) Year 11 General Drama; (b) Year 12 General Drama; (c) Year 11 ATAR Drama; and, (d) Year 12 ATAR Drama (Western Australian Government School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014). While the complete syllabus for Year 12 ATAR Drama is provided in Appendix D, the focus of each unit is outlined in Table 3.

It should be noted that it is not unusual for school-based decision-making to timetable different drama units to operate in the same class. For example, a school may combine Year 12 ATAR Drama with Year 12 General Drama. While the units have been designed with this scenario in mind, drama teachers and pre-service drama teachers alike often express concern, frustration and dissatisfaction with this situation.
**Table 3**  
*Senior Secondary Drama Units (Adapted from the Year 11 and 12 General Drama and ATAR Syllabi)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 11 General Drama</th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dramatic storytelling</strong>&lt;br&gt;This unit engages students with the skills, techniques and conventions of dramatic storytelling.</td>
<td><strong>Drama performance events</strong>&lt;br&gt;This unit focuses on drama performance events for an audience other than their class members.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 12 General Drama</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
<th>Unit 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representational, realist drama</strong>&lt;br&gt;This unit focuses on representational, realistic drama. Students explore techniques of characterisation through different approaches to text interpretation, particularly those based on the work of Stanislavski and others.</td>
<td><strong>Presentational, non-realist drama</strong>&lt;br&gt;This unit focuses on presentational, non-realist drama. Students explore techniques of role and/or character through different approaches to text interpretation, particularly those based on the work of Brecht and others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 11 ATAR Drama</th>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Unit 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representational, realist drama</strong>&lt;br&gt;This unit focuses on representational, realistic drama forms and styles. Students explore techniques of characterisation through different approaches to text interpretation, particularly those based on the work of Stanislavski and other representational drama.</td>
<td><strong>Presentational, non-realist drama</strong>&lt;br&gt;This unit focuses on presentational, non-realist drama. Students explore techniques of role and/or character through different approaches to text interpretation, particularly those based on the work of Brecht and other presentational drama.</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 12 ATAR Drama</th>
<th>Unit 3</th>
<th>Unit 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reinterpretation of drama for contemporary audiences</strong>&lt;br&gt;This unit focuses on reinterpretation of dramatic text, context, forms and styles for contemporary audiences through applying theoretical and practitioner approaches.</td>
<td><strong>Contemporary and devised drama</strong>&lt;br&gt;This unit focuses on interpreting, manipulating and synthesising a range of practical and theoretical approaches to contemporary and devised drama.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Western Australian Government School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2014)
General Drama units have recommended texts for study, whereas ATAR Drama units have set texts. This means that teachers choose one Australian drama text and one world drama text from the list stipulated in the syllabus. The set text list for Year 12 ATAR Drama is located in Appendix D. A further challenge for pre-service drama teachers is that they should be familiar with most, if not all, of these texts (approximately 60 texts) since they will teach a number of these texts during practicum placements.

As part of the WACE requirements, students studying Year 12 ATAR Drama complete an external written and practical exam based on content from units three and four. Since ATAR results are often used to evaluate the quality of school programs (C. Johnson, 2010), drama teachers are under considerable pressure to ensure students are well prepared for these exams. During practicum, pre-service drama teachers assist students prepare for exams through one-on-one coaching, team teaching with the mentor teacher, conducting mock practical exams, facilitating workshops and marking written exams. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the exam components is essential to the pre-service drama teachers’ preparedness for practicum. The complete examination details are included in Appendix D.

This overview of the curriculum highlights the scope and depth of content knowledge required to teach drama. While it would be reasonable to assume that all subject specialists have demanding courses which require an in-depth and detailed knowledge of their discipline, drama teachers also need to manage a non-curricular component which is often extensive.

**Non-curricular drama.** Bolton (1985) highlighted the common perception of drama held by the general public and a fair proportion of the teaching profession that associates drama in schools with the school production or festivals, house drama competitions, or similar non-curricular activities. These activities are generally an additional component
of a drama teacher’s role and, anecdotally in Australian schools, this work receives little or no financial remuneration or time in lieu. As explained earlier in this chapter, non-curricular drama generally involves the drama teacher directing and/or producing and/or choreographing performances. While it is recognised within school communities that non-curricular drama activities contribute significantly to the life, culture and public perception of the school, it is also the case that for the drama teacher, this work is time consuming, exhausting, stressful and can lead to burnout (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Donelan, 1989; Haseman, 1989; Wales, 1999). It is important to note that while pre-service drama teachers undertake both curricular and non-curricular drama during practicum, non-curricular activities are not considered as part of their workload and therefore are undertaken as an additional component.

Clearly, for curricular and non-curricular drama to provide enriching and valuable experiences for students, high-quality teaching is necessary (R. Pascoe, 2015). Way (1967) contended “the most important single factor in the use of drama as a genuine part of education is the teacher. It would be preposterous to pretend that a teacher needs no preparation for doing drama” (p. 8). Drama teachers need the necessary skills, discipline and pedagogical content knowledge to deliver engaging drama programs (Lummis, Morris & Paolino, 2014) and, therefore, effective training of drama teachers is essential.

**Background: Pre-Service Drama Education**

**Paths to drama teaching: secondary.** In 2002, Drama Australia held the Drama Teacher Education Symposium, a roundtable discussion with drama educators from most states and territories. The focus of the discussion was to share and look for current trends in drama teacher education (R. Pascoe, 2002). One of the outcomes of the meeting was the identification of four main paths to becoming a drama teacher in Australia through tertiary education. The first path, “specialist-focused education delivered in a concurrent
course mode” (R. Pascoe, 2002, p. 81), involves tertiary students combining specialist studies in drama with education units over four years through, for example, a Bachelor of Education or a double degree. The second path, also the most common in England (Kempe, 2012), “specialist-focused education delivered in an end-on mode” (R. Pascoe, 2002, p. 82), involves students undertaking a Graduate Diploma in Education and specialising with a major or minor in drama. Students are eligible for this pathway providing they have successfully completed a Bachelor degree (or equivalent) with sufficient background in drama. For example, an Arts degree would be an appropriate prerequisite to a Graduate Diploma. The third pathway, “generalist teacher education courses that include elements of drama teacher education – both in concurrent and end-on modes” (R. Pascoe, 2002, p. 82), involves students enrolling in a generalist teacher education course and studying substantial or minimal drama teaching units. The fourth pathway, “actor and drama training that is subsequently supplemented by end-on courses” (R. Pascoe, 2002, p. 82), involves, for example, a student completing actor training at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) followed by a Graduate Diploma specialising in drama. R. Pascoe (2002) noted the separation of the training of drama teachers from the craft of actor training and/or drama education. Most of the participants in the present study, 16 out of 19 pre-service teachers, chose this first path to drama teaching, while three came to drama teaching through path two. It is interesting to note that while the forum was repeated again in 2003, a forum of this nature that specifically focuses on pre-service drama education has not occurred since (R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012).

**Paths to drama teaching: primary.** Generally, primary/early childhood drama teacher education involves one or two combined Arts units that incorporate a drama education component. This approach introduces generalist teachers to ways of facilitating Arts programs within their classes and/or schools. R. Pascoe and Sallis (2012) emphasised that
these combined Arts units do not prepare generalist teachers with everything they need to know about teaching the Arts. Instead, units provide pre-service primary teachers with an “introduction and springboard to lifelong professional learning in teaching the Arts” (R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012, p. 139). Conversely, secondary drama teacher education is geared more towards preparing drama specialists and therefore focuses on teaching drama as a discrete subject.

The following table (Table 4), developed by R. Pascoe and Sallis (2012), provides an overview of Australian universities that offer drama teacher education: primary and secondary.

Table 4

<table>
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<tr>
<th>State</th>
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<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>Edith Cowan University</td>
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<td>Murdoch University</td>
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(R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012, p. 129)
The participants in the present research are studying to be drama specialists in secondary schools. These pre-service drama teachers complete units designed to develop their drama content knowledge (e.g. theatre history, contemporary theatre practice) and drama teaching knowledge (pedagogical content knowledge). The challenge for pre-service teacher educators is to provide courses for these individuals that cover the broad range of curriculum in suitable depth (R. Pascoe, 2002), whilst attending to the specialised skills required to facilitate effective lessons (Wales, 2009). In other words, content knowledge needs to be complemented by pedagogical content knowledge.

**Learning drama pedagogical content knowledge.** Pedagogical content knowledge, developed through planning, preparing and teaching lessons, is “that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). Research has identified that pedagogical content knowledge is an important yet difficult part of learning to teach and therefore should be central to training (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). The relationship between learning drama content knowledge and drama pedagogical content knowledge is explained by R. Pascoe and Sallis (2012):

Learning drama – In drama we talk about actors and audiences entering into a drama contract. Audiences willingly suspend their disbelief. They accept that the actors in the drama are taking on roles—pretending to be someone other than themselves— and believing what is enacted and played out in front of them. Together actors and audience create dramatic experiences.

Teaching and learning drama – In drama teaching, teacher and students engage in a drama learning contract. The teacher creates an environment and activities that students agree to participate in. This contract involves using the conventions and strategies of drama learning – the art form itself and drama as a method of learning. Together teacher/workshop leader and students work collaboratively within the frame of drama to create drama learning experiences. (R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012, p. 143)

Shulman (1987) described the teacher’s ultimate goal, “the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are
organised, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction” (p. 8). For example, given the highly interactive nature of drama as a subject, facilitating a successful lesson depends greatly on students being able to cooperate and work together and the teacher’s ability to foster this positive interaction. Mandell and Wolf (2003) recognised the interactive and cooperative nature of drama and stated “Students don’t walk in the door willing to work with strangers or with people they resent, avoid or fear. To help classes work, teachers have to coach students on ways to be productive members of an ensemble” (p. 33). Correspondingly, drama teachers may need to engage students who do not want to do drama or have chosen the subject thinking it is an easy option (Norris, McCammon & Miller, 2000). The drama teacher’s ability to develop relationships of trust with his or her students (P. R. Wright & R. Pascoe, 2004) and maintain a positive class dynamic is integral to an effective drama lesson. Preparing pre-service drama teachers to manage complex issues such as these is essential pedagogy. Consequently, the case for providing pre-service drama teachers with quality experiences in real-school settings so that they may apply content and pedagogical content knowledge to practice is strong.

**Overview of the Thesis**

Chapter 1 has provided a rationale and background for the present study. The rationale highlighted the importance of quality practicum experiences for pre-service teachers and the need for pre-service teachers and educators to understand the influence of past experiences on beliefs about teaching. The chapter explained my identity as a researcher, and provided important background to the study through a picture of drama in Western Australian schools and pre-service drama education. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the significance of the research, and the research questions.
Chapter 2 provides an overview of the two main areas of research that inform this study: the practicum component of pre-service education and pre-service teacher beliefs. These two bodies of literature serve as the foundation to better understand the nature and complexity of the practicum and the way past experience and beliefs about teaching influence that experience.

Chapter 3 presents the research design used to explore the research questions. This includes the data collection methods of focus groups, field work and in-depth interviews. The rationale for using a constructivist philosophical framework and qualitative methodology is presented, as well as how Tracy’s (2010) key markers of quality qualitative research have been addressed in this study.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the results and discussions of phases 1, 2 and 3 of the research respectively. Phase 1 describes the findings from three focus-group interviews with 19 pre-service drama teachers, which investigated ways in which participants experienced the practicum, identifying key issues and challenges. Phase 2 involved field work and analysed multiple data sources (participant observation, formal and informal interviews, journals, lesson plans, lesson reflections, practicum evaluations) to investigate five participants’ lived experience of the practicum, providing depth and clarity to key issues and challenges. Phase 3 used in-depth interviews to capture participants’ reflections on school drama. These data were developed into narrative portraits which communicated the participants’ key influences.

Chapter 7 presents an overview of the research, and a synthesis and reflection of findings generated from phases 1, 2 and 3. The chapter provides a discussion of the implications of research to practice, outlines the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for future research.
Figure 1. Overview of Thesis Structure
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of two main bodies of literature influencing the research. This review provides a context from which to understand the study and a rationale as to why the study was needed. Furthermore, the literature review reveals what is known about the phenomenon and what is yet to be understood.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the phenomenon of the practicum experience for pre-service drama teachers, including the influence of beliefs formed by past experiences of school drama. Correspondingly, the review of literature is designed in two parts. First, an introduction to pre-service education is provided which highlights a need for pre-service education programs to create classroom-ready teachers, and, locates the practicum as a key component of this process. This is followed by an investigation of literature pertaining to the practicum and includes approaches to practicum, components of quality practicum experiences, and challenges of practicum. The second part of the literature review focuses on pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching. This section begins with an introduction to the literature on teacher beliefs followed by an exploration of research on the beliefs and orientations of drama teachers. The chapter then explores the literature about pre-service teachers’ beliefs with particular attention to the role of pre-service education and practicum. The literature relating to pre-service drama teachers is interwoven throughout the two sections.
M. Anderson and Donelan (2009) noted that research in drama education is a flourishing field, as evidenced by a number of key journals (e.g. The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, Applied Theatre Researcher, The National Journal of Drama Australia) and associations (e.g. International Drama, Theatre and Education Association). M. Anderson and Donelan (2009) explained:

> Taken together, these institutions have created infrastructure for drama education research and practice. There are now professors of drama education in several countries, supervising and co-ordinating large externally funded research projects into drama education and laying the foundations for the next generation of researchers into our field. (p. 167)

However, it should be noted here that little attention in the research has been given to pre-service drama teachers (R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012), and particularly their experiences of practicum. The present study addresses this deficit and will therefore contribute knowledge to this field.

**Pre-service education and creating classroom-ready teachers.** The process of preparing teachers for the profession is termed differently throughout the literature and includes “pre-service education”, “teacher preparation”, “teacher education” and “initial teacher training”. Despite difference in terms, the overarching goal of pre-service education is to prepare future teachers with an understanding of teaching and learning processes, and a realistic understanding of the broader responsibilities of teachers (Twomey, 2007). Ultimately, beginning teachers need to be classroom-ready when graduating from pre-service education (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, 2014).

Indeed, “classroom readiness” is a theme currently resonating throughout Australian education systems (both school and tertiary). For example, the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, established by the Australian government in 2014, conducted a review of pre-service education and provided recommendations on
improving the quality of teacher graduates. The report *Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers* identified concerns into the preparation of teachers, highlighting the considerable variation in the quality of pre-service education courses and called for significant improvement in both content and delivery. Recommendations from the report included rigorous selection for entry to pre-service education courses and more robust assessment of graduating pre-service teachers to ensure classroom readiness. A further recommendation from the report, and key to the present research, is the need for improved and structured practical experience (practicum) for pre-service teachers. Furthermore, the report identified that there was inconsistency in the quality of practicum experiences and emphasised the importance of quality mentor teachers who were prepared for the role of mentoring pre-service teachers. The report stated:

> To ensure new teachers are entering classrooms with sufficient practical skills, the Advisory Group recommends ensuring [practicum] experiences of appropriate timing, length and frequency are available to all teacher education students. Placements must be supported by highly skilled supervising teachers who are able to demonstrate and assess what is needed to be an effective teacher. (p. 7)

To clarify what “sufficient practical skills” look like, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011) provides a summary of the responsibilities of a classroom teacher, which consists of seven overarching standards with 37 sub-standards (see Appendix A). The standards cover aspects of a teacher’s work from creating and maintaining supportive and safe learning environments to knowing the content and how to teach it. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011) are organised into four career stages which reflect the continuum of a teacher’s professional development from a graduate teacher, to proficient teacher, to highly accomplished teacher, to lead teacher. Teacher graduates, having completed their pre-service education, must be able to perform at a graduate standard. This means that teacher education programs are accountable for equipping pre-service teachers with necessary pedagogical
skills, content and subject knowledge so that they are ready and able to thrive in the classroom (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group, 2014).

As noted in the previous chapter, for pre-service drama teachers to be classroom-ready and able to succeed, entails some highly complex pedagogical skills and understandings. While the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011) identify the need for graduate teachers to know the content and how to teach it, drama teachers need to know the art form of drama and the scope and practice of teaching drama. According to Wales (2009), this includes learning the subtleties of teaching an effective drama lesson which involves intuition and an ability to read the class, understanding the different personalities and dynamics of the class so that group work is productive, as well as confidence, and vocal and non-verbal communication skills to work effectively in an open space.

P. R. Wright and Gerber (2004) investigated the complex nature and “multi-faceted dimensions” (p. 55) of teaching drama as perceived by 33 Australian drama teachers. The findings identified six experientially based conceptions of competence which they suggested could be used to inform the content and methodology of pre-service drama education courses. These competencies are:

1. Competence in drama teaching as being “tuned in and turned on”.
2. Competence in drama teaching as risk-taking or experimenting in a creative environment.
3. Competence in drama teaching as empowering learners and adding value.
4. Competence in drama teaching as sharing skills and networking.
5. Competence in drama teaching as being a considerate reflective practitioner.
6. Competence in drama teaching through being an ambassador for drama and the Arts. (P. R. Wright & Gerber, 2004, p. 58)
While P. R. Wright and Gerber (2004) proposed that these competencies developed over time, it is reasonable to suggest that graduating drama teachers should have at least “graduate” competence in these areas. This is particularly challenging given that these competencies highlight the complex social dynamic of teaching drama (P. R. Wright & Gerber, 2004) and the insufficient time in pre-service education programs for pre-service teachers to develop the pedagogical skills and theoretical knowledge needed to teach drama (R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012; Warren, 1992). Therefore, producing classroom-ready drama teachers, and indeed teachers in general, is understandably a challenge for pre-service education programs and there is ongoing debate as to how this is best achieved.

**Integrating theory and practice.** A key quality of exemplary pre-service education programs is their capacity to provide coherence and integration between university-based learning and practical work in schools (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The university-based component focuses on educational learning theory, pedagogical content and subject knowledge, lesson planning and ethical matters. However, multiple studies (e.g. Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Hammerness, 2006) have revealed that while teacher educators are aware of the importance of integrating practicum with the university-based component, a considerable gap exists between theory and practice, which is a persisting core problem for teacher education. The disconnection between theory and practice is believed to be a key reason for graduating teachers failing to meet the needs of different learner groups in their classrooms (Ure, 2010).

The theory–practice gap is acerbated by the separation between pre-service education programs and practicum schools (Zeichner, 2010). This is explained by McCammon, Miller and Norris (1997), who stated:

> Theory is perceived to take place in teacher education institutions, while practice takes place in the schools. This separation, whether perceived or real,
can keep all stakeholders isolated. As a result, teacher educators, student teachers, and cooperating teachers do not always have the opportunity to reflect with and learn from one another. There is a strong need to provide greater opportunities for dialogue among all parties, especially if there is a desire to have a coherent teacher education program. (p. 103)

Coherence between course-based learning at university and practical experience in schools is believed to increase pre-service teachers’ confidence and future engagement in the Arts (R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012). R. Pascoe and Sallis (2012) proposed that by pre-service teachers developing Arts learning programs and resources during university-based course work and implementing them whilst on practicum, enabled pre-service teachers to “try out” what they had personally experienced in their classes at university. R. Pascoe & Sallis (2012) noted the confidence pre-service teachers developed during this process, often saw them re-teaching the program during their early years of teaching.

Genuine school–university partnerships with sustained and open communication is not only crucial to bridging the gap between theory and practice but increases the success of the practicum (Allen, Ambrosetti & Turner, 2013). Indeed, Grudnoff and Williams (2010) advocated that greater collaboration between universities and schools would lead to the creation of “powerful sites for student teacher learning” (p. 43). Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that the amount of time a pre-service teacher spends in a school setting, influences their confidence and ability to relate theory to practice (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

The Parliamentary Inquiry into the Suitability of Pre-service Teacher Training Courses (Victoria Parliament Education and Training Committee, 2005) identified that pre-service teachers should spend more time in schools, to help them become more classroom-ready and better able to address the learning needs of students. The report
concluded that the quality of teacher education would be strengthened by establishing closer partnerships with schools and increased time for pre-service teachers in schools.

**The Practicum Component of Pre-Service Education**

The practicum is referred to throughout the literature as “teaching practice”, “field experience” and “professional learning experience”. The “mentor teacher” is referred to throughout the literature as a “colleague teacher”, “supervising teacher”, “cooperating teacher” and “collaborating teacher”. I have elected to use the terms “practicum” and “mentor teacher” since they are the terms used at the university in which the present study is located.

The practicum has long been regarded as an integral component of preparing teachers for the profession. Designed and sequenced well, the practicum can provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to acquire professional knowledge, skills and values through observation, practice and reflection on experience (J. Stuart, Akyeampong & Croft, 2009). During practicum, a pre-service teacher is supported by a mentor teacher who offers modelling, coaching, feedback, opportunities for observation and practice (Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman & Stevens, 2009). Ideally, a pre-service teacher will use the knowledge gained from their practicum experience to develop their personal teaching style and identity. As Langdon, Alexander, Dinsmore and Ryde (2012) suggested, “It is only on the job that the intellectual and emotional complexity of teaching becomes a reality, and it is only in context that certain understandings and skills can be developed” (p. 400). Thus, it is reasonable to accept, that pre-service teachers regard the practicum as the most valuable component of their pre-service education (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Grudnoff, 2011; K. Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005; Townsend & Bates, 2007).

The implications of the practicum component of pre-service education for beginning teachers and schools is recognised in the research. For example, the Twomey Report,
published in 2007, found that “The more effective the practicum component of the pre-service program, the greater the likelihood of retaining new graduates in the profession” (Twomey, 2007, p. 63). Relatedly, the report *How the World’s Best Performing School Systems Come Out on Top* (Braun, 2008) identified that building practical skills during pre-service education and time in real-school settings were shared features of the best education systems.

While the literature highlights the importance of the practicum in preparing pre-service teachers for the profession (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; de Leon-Carillo, 2007; Grudnoff, 2011; Segall, 2002; Wyckoff et al., 2009), it also reveals debate about how the practicum is best approached.

**Approaches to practicum.** Le Cornu and Ewing (2008) described the traditional practicum experience of the 1970s and 1980s as a theory–practice dichotomy, whereby pre-service teachers learnt the theory at university and then practised teaching while on practicum. This practicum experience was structured around the classroom, and pre-service teachers were assessed on their teaching performance, such as classroom management and instructional skills. In the 1990s, pre-service education institutions moved to a more reflective model. Le Cornu and Ewing (2008) suggested, “With a focus on professional decision-making under the reflective orientation, student teachers go beyond a consideration of the technical skills of teaching to consider the moral and ethical issues involved in teaching and learning in a particular social context” (p. 1802).

More recently, a move towards a “learning community” view of the practicum, underpinned by a constructivist view of learning, is the approach favoured by teacher education programs. Sundli (2007) highlighted this move stating, “Recent decades have seen a change in focus on learning and knowledge, from cognitivist to constructivist, from neutral to context-dependent, from individual to group” (p. 211). The “learning
community” view sees pre-service teachers working together, supporting and informing each other’s learning, which is in keeping with the collaborative nature of teaching. Indeed, research has shown the benefits of placing pre-service teachers into schools in pairs or clusters, rather than isolating them from their peers, acknowledging that pre-service teachers face various issues in common and can benefit from immediate support and opportunities to share their concerns (Goodnough et al., 2009; Schonmann & Kempe, 2010). For pre-service drama teachers, experiencing school settings with collaborative communities of Arts educators is integral to their understanding of the work of a drama teacher, since as McCammon et al., (1998) highlighted, collaboration is at the heart of what theatre practitioners do in order to create work.

There is considerable diversity amongst pre-service education programs internationally, in terms of structure of the practicum. The structure most commonly found in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States of America is where an individual pre-service teacher is allocated to a particular school for a number of weeks and provided with a mentor teacher who offers modelling, coaching, feedback, opportunities for observation and practice (Goodnough et al., 2009). The pre-service teacher is assessed by either a teacher educator and/or the mentor teacher. Currently, the time pre-service teachers spend in schools varies according to each pre-service education program. Generally, in Australian universities, pre-service teachers completing an undergraduate teaching degree over four years will complete two or three shorter practicums ranging from two to five weeks and an extended practicum ranging from seven to 10 weeks. The Ministerial Council for Education and Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (2011) stipulates that pre-service teachers completing a four-year undergraduate teaching qualification needed to be in schools for at least 80 days. This equates to approximately 16 weeks out of a possible 160 weeks.
There is considerable evidence from researchers as to the benefits of an extended practicum component (Gestny & Stanley, 2005; Hagger & McIntyre, 2006; Levine, 2002) where more time is spent in schools rather than in classrooms in a university setting. Foxall (2014) for example, found that graduate teachers who had completed a year-long internship in their final year of pre-service training, were perceived by principals as being more classroom-ready than non-intern graduates and were therefore more employable. Gestny and Stanley (2005) revealed that a long-term practicum was a model preferred by mentor teachers as it provided pre-service teachers with a more realistic and authentic socialisation into the teaching profession. Furthermore, it provided mentor teachers with more opportunity to scaffold the learning for their pre-service teacher. Gestny and Stanley (2005) explained, “They [mentor teachers] took the time to understand their [pre-service teachers’] strengths and weaknesses, they gave them honest feedback, and they structured the learning environment to remove the scaffold gradually to give teacher candidates more responsibility and independence” (p. 198). However, other researchers, such as Haigh and Ward (2004), cautioned that the quality of the practicum be considered over quantity.

**Components of quality practicum.** Since time in schools alone is not enough to adequately prepare pre-service teachers for the rigours of teaching, the practicum must be organised so that it is a quality experience where pre-service teachers are challenged, enriched and able to thrive. Therefore, the components that contribute to a quality practicum experience for pre-service teachers have received attention by researchers. For example, Murray-Harvey (2001) found that the placement of two or more pre-service teachers in a practicum school was an important component as it prevented the social isolation so many pre-service teachers feel during the practicum. Furthermore, Murray-Harvey (2001) identified that a quality mentor teacher was an integral component of a positive practicum experience. Beck and Kosnik (2002) revealed that pre-service
teachers themselves had very clear ideas on the components of a quality practicum placement. These components included: (a) peer relationship and collaboration with the mentor teacher; (b) emotional support and feedback from the mentor teacher; (c) mentor with sound approach to teaching and learning; (d) flexibility in teaching content and method; and, (e) a heavy but not excessive workload during the practicum. Similarly, Moody (2009) identified that the four key elements in a positive practicum for pre-service primary teachers were: (a) emotional and professional support provided by the mentor teacher; (b) freedom to develop personal teaching style; (c) specific and constructive feedback; and, (d) an approach to assessment which focused less on the appraisal of teaching and more on the process of learning.

The following case study from New Zealand illustrates some of these components of a quality practicum experience for pre-service teachers. Grudnoff and Williams (2010) investigated an alternative design to a 10-week practicum undertaken by pre-service primary teachers that featured a collaborative approach between the university and the four schools involved in the study. The practicum was designed so that a group of pre-service teachers were assigned to a school rather than the more common procedure of assigning an individual pre-service teacher to one mentor teacher. Each school was given flexibility to shape the practicum to suit its own context, and in doing so, provided the pre-service teachers with the closest experience to the real world of teaching, including their role in the classroom, and that of the wider school. Grudnoff and Williams (2010) stated, “Particular attention was given to strategies that would expose final-year student teachers to school as well as classroom teacher demands with the aim of assisting them to become better prepared for the complexities and pressures of full-time teaching” (p. 36). Furthermore, professional development opportunities and free postgraduate study provided by the university were available to school staff. A key finding from this research
was that pre-service teachers felt this model provided opportunity to feel like fully participating members of the school. Grudnoff and Williams (2010) explained:

This sense of being treated as a full member of the school assisted the student teachers’ professional learning by helping them see connections between their course learning and how it applied in practice. In general, the students in the four participating schools were expected to be involved in school-wide activities and thus, they were exposed to professional development activities in the school. (p. 40)

Grudnoff and Williams (2010) suggested that by reconceptualising the practicum as a more collaborative approach between university and school staff, pre-service teachers were best supported to learn during the practicum. However, it should be noted that while the merits of this collaborative approach were most positive, the financial cost to the university and time demands on school and university staff were considerable.

The importance of self-efficacy during practicum. Experiences where pre-service teachers experience success and self-efficacy are understandably highly valued components of practicum. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organise and execute the course of actuation required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). Furthermore, research has revealed that teachers with high self-efficacy are more resilient and more motivated to assist students reach their potential (Pendergast et al., 2011). Self-efficacy is associated with the mastery of skills and knowledge (Bandura, 2001) and therefore, experiences that contribute to high self-efficacy are important to pre-service teachers’ developing pedagogy. These experiences can often be transformative moments where pre-service teachers take control of their own development (Meijer, de Graaf & Meirink, 2011). Experiences such as these not only lead to improved self-efficacy but provide pre-service teachers with more positive aspects to focus on, and help them cope with practicum difficulties (Bloomfield, 2010; Edwards, 1993; Hrncir, 2007). A study conducted by A. Brown, Lee and Collins (2015) investigated how pre-service teachers’ practicum experiences impacted their
sense of teaching efficacy and feelings of preparedness. In this case, preparedness referred to how well prepared the pre-service teachers felt about meeting the challenges of teaching. The study was conducted with 71 pre-service teachers who completed a survey before and after their practicum. The findings revealed that pre-service teachers benefitted from practicum experiences in terms of preparedness and teaching efficacy but lacked confidence in pedagogical content knowledge. A. Brown et al., stated, “This is an important finding since pre-service teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge is closely associated with their teaching practice and further associated with student achievement” (2015, p. 87). Furthermore, participants felt most efficacious about their classroom management skills after the teaching practicum, which is surprising since pre-service teachers often find classroom management the most challenging part of practicum (A. Brown et al., 2015).

K. Anderson et al. (2009) found that mentor teachers played an integral role in building self-efficacy in pre-service teachers and recommended that mentors adjust their level of support so that it was in harmony with pre-service teachers’ confidence and competence to meet challenges. These findings reveal the integral role of the mentor teacher in fostering a quality practicum experience for pre-service teachers.

The quality mentor teacher. It is widely accepted that effective mentoring is a critical component in developing quality teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Moody, 2009; M. Morgan, Ludlow, Kitching, O’Leary & Clarke, 2009). The use of the term “mentoring” has become more prominent in teacher education, replacing “supervision” (Hudson, 2004; Walkington, 2005; Zeegers, 2005). Mentoring, in a pre-service teacher context, occurs during practicum because pre-service teachers are placed with in-service teachers to learn, develop, and practise pedagogical skills. Fairbanks, Freedman and Kahn (2000) defined mentoring in teacher education as “complex social interactions that mentor teachers and student teachers construct and negotiate for a variety of professional
purposes and in response to the contextual factors they encounter” (p. 103). Collaborative teaching experiences with quality mentors provide pre-service teachers with valuable insights into the way in which teachers cognitively engage in teaching and learning (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006). Caires et al. (2012) suggested that quality mentors can provide a sense of belonging for pre-service teachers and that quality mentoring not only assists pre-service teachers with their professional development but also with their socialisation into the profession. Caires et al. (2012) state that in some cases “these affective-relational components can act as ‘buffers’, diminishing the levels of tension and distress which are frequently experienced [by pre-service teachers]” (p. 165).

Effective mentor teachers are those who give appropriate and plentiful feedback, collaborate with pre-service teachers both in planning and teaching, and provide moral support (Ganser, 2002; Hayes, 2004; Ralf et al., 2008). Indeed, constructive feedback that contains positive comments, identifies problem areas, and provides specific suggestions for improvement is key to the development of pre-service teachers’ confidence, self-efficacy and teaching practice (Moody, 2009).

Given the significant role the mentor teacher plays in the practicum experience (Appl & Spenciner, 2008; Lai, 2005; Roehrig, Bohn, Turner & Pressley, 2008; Wyckoff et al., 2009) it is critical for quality mentors to be sought for pre-service teachers in order to maximise the practicum experience (Beijaard, Verloop, & Rajuan, 2007). M. Anderson (2003) highlighted the impact of an effective mentor for pre-service drama teachers. Tom, a beginning drama teacher who was one of the participants in M. Anderson’s study, reflected on a particularly effective mentor during a practicum experience:

My main supervisor [mentor teacher] on my first prac was brilliant. She was what I imagined teachers were like. She taught effectively and intelligently and provided good feedback for me. She was dedicated and spent a lot of time at school, making sure she was well prepared. (p. 49)
While there is consensus amongst researchers that practicum is vitally important for pre-service teacher development, there is also consensus amongst researchers that practicum has many inherent challenges for key stakeholders, particularly pre-service teachers and mentor teachers (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Grudnoff, 2011; Wyckoff et al., 2009; Ralf et al., 2008; S. Tang, 2004). Therefore, an investigation of literature which examines the challenges of practicum is presented.

**Challenges of practicum.** Research literature has highlighted deficiencies in pre-service education programs in providing pre-service teachers with appropriate practicum experiences to prepare them for the challenging settings in which they will one day teach (Ralf et al., 2008). For example, Grudnoff (2011) conducted a study into the role the practicum played in the transition to teaching. The study comprised 12 beginning teachers who had recently graduated with a Bachelor of Education and who had been appointed to full-time positions in primary schools. Data was gathered over a 15-month period, through five individual interviews conducted at the end of the participants’ pre-service education and throughout their first year of teaching. The study revealed that, while all participants viewed practicum as an important part of their preparation, it did not prepare them adequately for the culture shock experienced, particularly in the first month of teaching. Grudnoff (2011) suggested that the practicum did not provide pre-service teachers with a realistic understanding of the extent of a teacher’s work, highlighting the need for further opportunities to gain experience in real-school settings. Grudnoff (2011) stated, “By providing student teachers with opportunities to gain practical understandings of the myriad of things that teachers do to establish their classrooms from day one, the difficulties acutely experienced at the beginning of the year might be reduced” (p. 230).

M. Anderson (2003) revealed that for the pre-service drama teachers in his study, practicum was deemed as a beneficial component of their pre-service education in terms of developing their knowledge and teaching skills; however, participants experienced
inconsistent mentoring and lacked adequate preparation. Tom, once again, reflected on a practicum experience:

It also would have helped if I had not been thrown straight in at the deep end. The practicum was very sudden and intense to begin with. There was very little chance to reflect on what we were involved in or what we were about to do. I was on a five-week block, I had two days of observation and the third day I was expected to teach and that to me was not enough time to prepare for effective teaching. You had to work hard to prepare yourself for the practicums. I was not prepared enough to cope with classroom strategies. (p. 49)

The problems experienced by the pre-service drama teachers in M. Anderson’s (2003) research are similarly recognised in past and recent reviews of pre-service education. For example, the Australian National Inquiry into Teacher Education (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2007) identified that there were ongoing concerns about the quality of teacher preparation and the practicum was a key and persistent problem:

The problems with practicum have been outlined in nearly every report addressing teacher education in the last decade. The fact that these problems have still drawn so much attention in this inquiry indicates the need for major reform in this area, involving all major players and all members of the system. (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2007, p. 73)

Similarly, a report commissioned by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council into improving the practical elements of teacher education, identified a number of issues facing pre-service teachers. The report stated:

The study confirms that the experience of pre-service teachers in placements varies considerably, and that their personal attributes and those of the supervising teachers contribute to these differences. The length of the placement, the quality of integration with the academic subjects and the quality of preparation of the pre-service teachers and their supervisors also strongly influence the quality of professional learning on placements. These effects appear to be stronger when the placement is short and not well integrated with the academic elements of the program. (Ure et al., 2009, p. 34)

While this report illustrates the complexity of factors that influence the quality of the practicum experience, it also highlights a need for adequate training and preparation of mentor teachers.
Problematic mentoring. An effective teacher does not necessarily equate to an effective mentor teacher. Indeed, the literature affirms the adverse effects on practicum outcomes when the relationship between the pre-service teacher and the mentor teacher is unsuccessful or personalities do not complement each other (Hastings, 2004; Moody, 2009; Ralph, 2000). Moody (2009) identified that when pre-service teachers lacked the emotional and professional support of their mentor teacher, the pre-service teacher’s self-confidence and attitude to the practicum was affected negatively. Similarly, Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger (2005) asserted that if a mentor/pre-service teacher relationship did not foster openness, pre-service teachers felt defensive and learning was brought to a standstill.

The issue of a mentor teacher expecting their pre-service teacher to mirror them in the classroom is a concerning reality in some placements (Moody, 2009; Ralph, 2000). This is particularly problematic when pre-service teachers are placed in practicum settings that are inconsistent with their beliefs about how a classroom or mentor teacher should function. Ultimately, this may influence how pre-service teachers perceive the practicum and level of satisfaction with the practicum as a learning opportunity (Appl & Spenciner, 2008). There is also some contention over the merits of aligning a pre-service teacher to a single mentor teacher for the duration of a practicum. Lovat and McLeod (2006) cautioned:

Indenturing a trainee teacher to one ‘master’ in one context may produce a range of skills pertinent to the particular class in question relative to the strengths and weaknesses of the master teacher but, on its own, it would do little to prepare the teacher for the complex array of differences that characterise the various contexts of learning and the many and varied dimensions of learning to be found within them. (p. 295)

Undertaking a mentoring role places extra pressures on the mentor teacher’s time and emotions; therefore, finding willing teachers to mentor pre-service students during the practicum is often problematic for pre-service education programs (Le Cornu & Ewing,
Hastings (2004) found in her study into the perceptions of mentor teachers as they supported pre-service teachers during practicum that “much of the negative emotions associated with practicum are related to limited time for cooperating teachers to provide effective support to the student-teacher” (p. 144). Yet the literature suggests that although mentoring is complex, time consuming and emotional, it can be mutually beneficial for mentors and mentees (Hall, Draper, Smith & Bullough Jr, 2008; Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh & Wilss, 2008).

**Stress and practicum.** There is much in the literature which reveals practicum to be an overwhelming and stressful experience for pre-service teachers (Badali, 2008; Caires et al., 2010; Murray-Harvey, 2001), leading Hastings (2004) to assert that all stakeholders must recognise that practicum is a highly emotional period which takes place in a complex social setting, dealing with challenging tasks of learning and teaching. Caires et al. (2012) highlighted the complexity of the practicum experience by explaining that pre-service teachers “make continuous attempts to acknowledge, interpret and give meaning to rules, values, resources and communication patterns in order to gradually integrate into the school ethos” (p. 164). Shifts in sleeping and eating habits, distress and higher levels of vulnerability are experienced by pre-service teachers during practicum (Caires et al., 2010). Black-Branch and Lamont (1998) contended “Teaching is considered to be among the professions in which employees are subject to high levels of stress...and is capable of exposing student teachers to situations that are similarly, if not more stressful than those experienced by practising teachers” (p. 183).

Fontana and Abouerie (1993) defined stress as the “demand made upon the adaptive capacities of the mind and body, a demand which, if continue beyond the ability of these capacities to respond, leads to physical and psychological exhaustion and possibly ultimate collapse…” (p. 261). Kyriacou (2001) defined teacher stress as “the experience
by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher” (p. 28).

The sources of stress experienced by pre-service teachers during practicum have received some attention in the literature. For example, MacDonald (1993) identified that sources of stress were mainly generated by inconsistencies in the way students were evaluated by teachers, varying expectations of student performance, and marked variations in the quality of feedback given to students by their supervising teachers. Ramanaidu, Wellington, Chew & Hassan (2014) revealed that pre-service music teachers were stressed about having inadequate content and pedagogical knowledge required to facilitate effective music lessons. Cakir and Cesur (2014) found that pre-service teachers were significantly stressed about being evaluated and dealing with classroom management. Of particular relevance to the present research, are findings from a study conducted by Badali (2008) who identified that the greatest sources of stress experienced by pre-service teachers is caused by their high expectations of their teaching performance, difficulty in obtaining a balance between practicum and personal commitments, managing time, and coping with workload. The issue of workload has particular implications for pre-service drama teachers.

Research has identified the demanding workload of drama teachers (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Donelan, 1989; Haseman, 1989; Wales, 1999). While M. Anderson (2002, 2003) did not specifically address the workload of pre-service drama teachers, his research revealed the implications of a heavy workload for beginning drama teachers, who struggle to manage both curricular and non-curricular responsibilities. Mel, one of the participants in M. Andersons study, recalled her first year as a beginning drama teacher:

There are some days…when I’ve got a six-period day, and I’ve got lunch time rehearsals for the musical and we’ve got an after school rehearsal for the musical and a meeting in the morning before school. It is very tiring and in those few weeks, I had a few naps in the afternoon after I got home. I am
exhausted and I never thought teaching such hours would wear me out so much. (M. Anderson, 2002, p. 92)

Furthermore, M. Anderson (2002) highlighted that the demanding workload endured by drama teachers impacted adversely upon the time they had available to effectively mentor a pre-service drama teacher.

It is not surprising that pre-service teachers find practicum to be the most stressful part of pre-service education and are therefore in need of both practical and emotional support during this time. Murray-Harvey (2001) cautioned:

> The significance of the need to respond to the problem of student teacher stress lies in the evidence that stress affects teacher behaviour, and this in turn reduces classroom effectiveness, particularly in relation to effects of lower pupil/teacher rapport, reduced pupil achievement, and increased levels of pupil anxiety. (p. 25)

Additionally, while research affirms the stressfulness of the practicum for pre-service teachers, there is also evidence that pre-service teachers have limited coping strategies for dealing with stress (Fives, Hamman & Olivarez, 2007) and may not recognise its symptoms; therefore their stress is often left untreated (S. Gardner, 2010).

**Isolation and a lack of belonging during practicum.** Feelings of loneliness, isolation and a lack of belonging amongst pre-service teachers whilst on practicum are common (Bloomfield, 2010), and finding ways to create supportive learning communities is imperative (Sudeck et al., 2008). Isolation is often a result of the pre-service teacher being the only pre-service teacher placed at the practicum school (Murray-Harvey, 2001) and is exacerbated in country school placements where the pre-service teacher is without direct support from family and friends.

Indeed, belongingness is viewed as a fundamental need (Brendtro, 2008; Brendtro & Brokenleg, 2005; Maslow, 1962). Maslow (1962) argued that the need to belong to or be part of a social network is universal and operates only after lower-order needs such as
food and security are met. Educational researchers such as Anderman and Freeman (2004) and Osterman (2000) linked belonging to positive academic and social outcomes in students and Rinehart and Blum (1997) revealed that students who felt connected to their school were less likely to truant school and engage in behaviours such as drinking and smoking. Correspondingly, the lack of belonging pre-service teachers feel during the practicum, contributes to feelings of pressure, stress and vulnerability (Caires et al., 2012) and often goes unnoticed by mentor teachers and teacher educators. Grudnoff (2011) contended, “When you are a student teacher you feel that you are on the outer. When you are on the staff, you belong. You are not the outsider who is just there for a little time” (p. 227). Furthermore, McCammon et al. (1998) suggested that isolation and a lack of belonging is often experienced by drama teachers who may be in an auditorium that is separated from the main school and, in some cases, the only drama teacher in the school. Belongingness is clearly an important “need” for students, pre-service teachers and, indeed, in-service teachers in-order to thrive.

**Fears of practicum.** Foreman (1998) identified a number of personal fears held by pre-service drama teachers which limited their pedagogical choices, including “fear of the unknown, the unexpected, fear of risk and loss of control, fear of embarrassment and fear of failure” (p. 53). Foreman (1998) recognised the need for those working in pre-service education, to help pre-service teachers recognise, identify and manage their personal fears. Foreman asserted that the application of improvisation techniques enhanced the pre-service drama teacher’s classroom practice and was therefore, a useful survival tool. He stated, “Training in spontaneous improvisation offers emerging drama educators the skills and understanding with which to face the unpredictable and their fears of loss of control, failure and change” (Foreman, 1998, p. 56).

**Summary.** Essentially, the review of the literature pertaining to the practicum highlights four key points. First, a quality practicum plays an integral role in preparing pre-service
teachers for the profession. Second, the practicum is complex, challenging and stressful for pre-service teachers and they, therefore, require support and adequate preparation. Third, the mentor teacher is key to the development of a pre-service teacher’s confidence, self-efficacy and teaching practice. Fourth, pre-service education, including practicum, is inadequate in preparing beginning drama teachers for the multifaceted and complex nature of teaching drama.

To conclude this section of the literature review, I refer to M. Anderson’s (2003) recommendation that the practicum be integrated more effectively into pre-service education so that beginning teachers are better prepared to manage the realities of classrooms:

It [pre-service education] must provide a solid theoretical basis and be underpinned by substantial professional practice placements in varied schools. If tertiary education fails to engage with this problem teacher preparation will continue to suffer the irrelevance and ineffectiveness that characterised the pre-service experiences of these teachers. (M. Anderson, 2003, p. 52)

**Beliefs about Teaching**

The second focus of this literature review is on the connection between pre-service teachers and their belief systems. Terms used to describe teacher beliefs throughout the literature include “teaching conceptions”, “teaching values”, “teaching images”, “teaching perspectives” and “teaching approaches”. Since the present study investigates how past experience influences beliefs and expectations of practicum, I have chosen to use the term “beliefs about teaching” which encompasses the ideas and preconceptions about teaching that pre-service teachers bring with them to their journey of becoming a teacher.

Beliefs are the basic structures that guide our thoughts, actions, preferences, perceptions, decisions, and judgments (Cunningham, Schreiber & Moss, 2005). Research into beliefs
has interested disciplines as diverse as anthropology, medicine, law, business, psychology and education (Eisenhart, Shrum, Harding & Cuthbert, 1988; Pajares, 1992; A. Thompson, 1992). In the field of education, research into teacher beliefs, has a long history and includes a focus on attitudes and values, self-efficacy, self-concept and self-esteem, attribution beliefs and locus of control, subject-specific beliefs, and beliefs about knowledge and motivation (Pajares, 1992).

Pajares (1992) defined teacher beliefs as the ideas that influence how teachers conceptualise teaching, including notions of what it takes to be an effective teacher and how students should behave. More specifically, Calderhead (1996) summarised five main areas in which teachers have been found to hold significant beliefs: (a) beliefs about students and how they learn; (b) beliefs about teaching; (c) beliefs about the subject; (d) beliefs about learning to teach; and, (e) beliefs about self and the teaching role. Indeed, teachers’ beliefs play a powerful role in their work in and out of the classroom, including the vision and operation of the schools in which they teach. Research has shown how teachers’ beliefs can stimulate change processes in schools (Fluck & Dowden, 2010), or cause resistance to change (Slater & Nelson, 2013; Westwood, Knight, & Redden, 2005).

Lortie’s (1975) salient research, “Schoolteacher,” investigated teachers’ socialisation process into the teaching profession, revealing that one of the major limitations for teachers’ professional socialisation was their experience in formal schooling as a student. Lortie (1975) described these experiences as the “apprenticeship of observation” (p. 6). Researchers since have repeatedly found strong relationships between teachers’ educational beliefs and their actions in classroom practice (Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992; Slater & Nelson, 2013; M. Smith & Shepherd, 1988; Westwood et al., 2005). Furthermore, the literature affirms that teachers’ conceptions of teaching and learning are affected by their beliefs, which stem from their own educational experiences (Chan &
Beliefs and orientations of drama teachers. Teachers orient themselves toward subject matter based on their beliefs and ideas about which subject matter is important to teach (Grossman, Wilson & Shulman, 1989). For example, orientations towards drama teaching, determine to a large extent, which topics and texts are taught, which processes will be used, and how work will be assessed (Schiro, 2012). Some teachers believe learning about the dramatic form is the most important focus in teaching drama; whereas other teachers prioritise personal development. Way (1967) suggested that drama teachers should be “concerned with the development of people, not with the development of drama” (p. 2). In this sense, drama teachers may prioritise the value of drama in building students’ self-confidence or the social merits of drama and its ability to improve a student’s capacity to work effectively in a group. Bolton (1985) recognised that while these perceptions are valid, he favoured the view of J. Norman, cited in Bolton (1985, p. 155), who asserted, “The core concept of drama in education – making personal meaning and sense of universal, abstract, social, moral, and ethical concepts through the concrete experience of the drama.” Furthermore, Bolton (1985) cautioned that drama teachers who only focused on training their students to be performers underestimated the capacity for important learning to take place.

Neelands and Goode (2000, p.112) recognised that drama in schools is used for a wide range of purposes and they provide a valuable model to illustrate this range, (see Figure 2).
The model includes both long- and short-term educational objectives, which include:

1. **Instrumental objectives**: Specific, measurable goals relating to skill development, conceptual development and knowledge.
2. **Expressive objectives**: Unspecific, indeterminate goals relating to the student’s development of attitudes and values which may, or may not, occur through involvement in the dramatic action.
3. **Aesthetic learning**: Skills, concepts and knowledge relating to the art form.
4. **Personal and social learning**: Skills, concepts and knowledge relating to self and the “self/others” areas of learning provided in both the symbolic and real dimensions of the drama. (p. 112)
Figure 2. Intentions of the Work (Neelands & Goode, 2000, p.112)

This model helps to clarify a drama teacher’s orientations towards teaching drama. For example, the drama teacher who sees his or her role as mainly teaching students about the art form, is orientated towards drama for “aesthetic learning” whereas the teacher who focuses more on building students’ self-confidence and ability to work as part of a team, is orientated more to drama for “personal and social learning”. Of course, a drama teacher may orient to more than just one foci depending on the age of his or her students, their
skill level, school context and curriculum requirements. V. Johnson (2002) reminded her readers that:

Teachers are employed to carry out such a curriculum and, in order to do this, the beliefs, both of individual teachers and of their students, must be reconciled with the value systems of the society which commissions that curriculum. Teaching practice is shaped just as much by conditions of employment, school/community expectations and externally moderated requirements for achievement, as it is by personal orientation and pedagogy, and drama teaching is no exception. (p. 7)

Expanding on beliefs and orientations towards teaching, Schiro (2012) identified four ideological conceptions of teaching: (a) scholar academic; (b) social efficiency; (c) learner centred; and, (d) social reconstruction. In terms of drama teaching, the first conception, “scholar academic”, would entail a drama teacher viewing his or her dominant responsibility as imparting knowledge to students. This drama teacher has a deep understanding of the discipline and endeavours for students to acquire knowledge and appreciation of theatre and drama practice. The second conception, “social efficiency”, entails a drama teacher viewing the role of schooling, and therefore drama classes, to equip students with the values and skills to become functioning and productive members of society. Whereas, “learner centred”, the third conception, involves a drama teacher personalising the learning program in order to meet the needs of the students themselves. This drama teacher, therefore, strives to maintain a flexible, adaptive learning environment so that students are supported and empowered to navigate problems and experience success (Schiro, 2012). In other words, learning is socially mediated and focuses on students building positive capacities to realise personal goals (D. Wright, 2007). The fourth conception, “social reconstruction”, entails a drama teacher challenging prevailing social values that disadvantage society. This drama teacher constructs learning whereby the students are empowered to confront and challenge disadvantage, and therefore activate change.
Clearly, personal style and orientation are powerful influences on the work a teacher decides to do in the drama space. This is recognised by Errington (1992) who stated:

As a teacher I will only select particular kinds of drama if they agree with my beliefs about teaching and education. That is, providing the drama can be used to put my educational beliefs into practice, I will use it. (p. 1)

Teaching then, can be seen to be subjective and personally situated. Research conducted by Wales (2006, 2009) into the subjectivities of female drama teachers and the influence on their teaching practices is most pertinent to the present study. To begin with, the findings revealed that for some of the participants, their commitment to “doing good” and “making a difference” was a motivating reason for becoming a drama teacher. Secondly, participants had some collective subjectivities as to important aspects of teaching drama. Wales explained, “They [drama teachers] regarded the value and practice of dramatic form, storytelling, inclusiveness, engagement and collaborative processes as important” (2009, p. 275). However, while the participants were conscious of some of their subjectivities, they did not all contemplate how their beliefs impacted on their students. Furthermore, the influence of past experience on orientations to drama teaching was a significant finding in this research by Wales (2009). For example one participant revealed her sense of social justice and therefore her drama teaching encompassed aspects of voice and social justice such as encouraging students to “have their day in the sun” (Wales, 2009, p. 274). Another participant described moments of isolation and being “on the outer” (p. 272) when she was a student at school. Wales (2009) summarised this participant’s experience:

She confessed that since she has a tendency to never assume she is part of a group, always supposing she is on the outer, it is no accident that much of her work is based around the notion of bringing people together and “the round table” is a symbol of her working practices. (p. 272)

The focus for this drama teacher in creating a sense of belonging for students in her drama classes is recognised by drama teachers as integral to the work of drama education.
Developing social relationships and supportive communities creates a safe and trusting environment for students to explore their creativity and take risks. Haseman and O’Toole (1986) explained,

Drama works best when all members of a group trust each other and feel at ease together. Then everyone will be prepared to listen, to speak out, and to offer and accept criticism of ideas and work. Giving criticism without putting others down, and accepting criticism without becoming upset, are essential for effective group work. All members should be unafraid to express opinions, but at the same time be sensitive to the others in the group. (p. 2)

Furthermore, drama teachers play a key role in fostering belongingness for students. McKean (2002) argued, “Belonging and community occurs when teachers purposely set it out as one of the many learning goals” (p. 27). Wales (2009) highlighted the propensity for drama teachers to engage with and include students, particularly those who may be vulnerable and isolated, through carefully organised groupings. Creating a positive dynamic within the drama class is complex as it takes time, and requires the participants to trust and respect each other’s physical, emotional and intellectual well-being (Nicholson, 2002).

Pertinent to the present study is the work of McKea (2002) who highlighted that the theatre space was recognised by both faculty members and drama students as the most comfortable place in a large and overwhelming school. He recalled:

I saw some students like Michelle, who at the beginning of the drama/theatre experience were not doing well in school, had a hard time following through on projects and seemed to feel isolated from the usual school and out-of-school activities. And for some of these students, theatre proved to be a place where they could develop that sense of belonging and individual identity. (p. 25)

Kempe (2012) revealed interesting insights into how pre-service drama teachers identified their role as a drama teacher. 41% of participants described themselves as “teachers whose art is drama” (p. 530) and 36% described themselves as “teachers whose
art is teaching drama” (p. 530), while 23% saw themselves as “dramatic artists who taught” (p. 530). Kempe (2012) stated:

This may suggest that their [pre-service drama teachers] identity as drama teachers had become more fixed with the recognition that teaching could afford satisfying artistic rewards just as well as a career in the industry and perhaps on a more regular and even-keeled basis, while fulfilling their interest and commitment to the education of young people. (p. 530)

Furthermore, the participants were of the belief that drama teachers needed to be able to model particular skills and techniques for their students and therefore viewed that performance was an essential component of teaching drama.

The relationship between performing and teaching features in earlier research such as that of Whatman (1996), who investigated the different roles that performing arts pre-service teachers adopted and how they were able to internalise and manage the role of the teacher. Whatman (1996) claimed that in pre-service education courses, pre-service teachers experienced different teacher roles both at university and during the teaching practicum, leading to the development of a personal philosophy of teaching. Whatman (1996) suggested:

People with experience in performing will readily adopt the roles required of teachers because their experiences of performance have taught them the processes of role taking. Likewise, they will readily transfer the art of reflection which is integral to successful performance, to the context of teaching. (p. 46)

Regardless of whether a drama teacher believes performance in integral to their work in the classroom, a drama teacher, like all teachers, has the capacity to impose their own thoughts, feelings and ideas (Wales, 2009). This was similarly noted by O’Toole (2004) who cautioned against the propensity for drama teachers to push their own beliefs on students. While the subjectivities revealed in the research of Wales (2009) seem positive and harmless, Wales questioned how teachers decide what is positive. Wales (2009) stated, “How do we know our own values are the right ones? Are we teaching our values
or allowing students to consider and determine their own?” (p. 276). Considering the position of power teachers are in, it is essential that pre-service teachers are aware of their subjectivities and beliefs about teaching, how they are formed, and how they operate in the classroom. Teaching drama requires a teacher who can understand their own beliefs, orientations, and internal journey, and interact with students authentically.

**Beliefs and the Role of Pre-Service Education**

There is considerable literature which acknowledges that pre-service teachers bring with them a set of beliefs about teaching and learning, shaped by their own educational experiences (Cheng et al., 2010; Isikoglu et al., 2009; Joseph, 2010; Kagan, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Mahlios, 2002; Mansour, 2009; Pajares, 1992; Prosser & Trigwell, 1999; Swainston & Jeanneret, 2013; L. Thompson, 2007), which surface when they start teaching and have classes of their own (Ginsburg & Newman, 1985; Lortie, 1975; C. Stuart & Thurlow, 2000; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Furthermore, the literature acknowledges that pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching are fundamental to their learning in pre-service education programs as well as their professional development (Greene & Zimmerman, 2000; Holt-Reynolds, 2000; Lortie, 1975).

Maxon and Sindelar’s (1998) study into the entering beliefs of pre-service teachers, revealed two basic types of pre-service teachers: those with clearly surfaced beliefs about teaching, and those without focused beliefs. This finding has been referred to in later studies, revealing the importance of teacher educators knowing their students’ beliefs about teaching, and how these beliefs impact upon learning, pedagogical understanding and teaching practices (Bryan, 2003; Uzuntiryaki & Boz, 2007). Similarly, Ng et al. (2010) highlighted the necessity of teacher educators understanding the beliefs of pre-service teachers in order to “help them develop as self-regulated, critically reflective professionals” (p. 1). Schonmann and Kempe (2010) argued that “listening to the voices
of those entering the profession, may contribute to the way courses are tailored to help individuals meet their personal potential as teachers rather than simply satisfying government edict” (p. 312).

Pajares (1992) suggested that “Unexplored entering beliefs may be responsible for the perpetuation of antiquated and ineffectual teaching practices” (p. 38). Accordingly, teacher educators have a responsibility to dedicate time for pre-service teachers to understand and examine their own positioning about themselves and others (Allard & Santoro, 2006). One such method, proposed by Pratt (1998), is through the exploration of five teaching perspectives. The perspectives provide a way of examining the different beliefs that inform what teachers do and how they think about their teaching. The five perspectives are: (a) apprenticeship – modelling ways of being; (b) transmission – effective delivery of content; (c) developmental – cultivating ways of thinking; (d) nurturing – facilitating self-efficacy; and, (e) social reform – seeking a better society. (Pratt, 1998, p 32)

This means that a teacher with a “transmission” perspective will believe that effective teaching depends on the content expertise of the teacher, whereas a teacher with a “nurturing” perspective believes effective teaching is about helping students become more confident and self-sufficient learners. Pratt (1998) asserted that these perspectives can be thought of as lenses through which teachers view teaching and learning and that often, they may not be aware of having a particular perspective. Pratt (1998) explained:

If we know only one perspective on teaching, it will dominate our perceptions and interpretations of all that goes on, yet remain hidden from view. Thus if we are to understand our personal perspectives on teaching, we must consider other ways of thinking and believing about teaching, alternative ways of constructing learning, knowledge or skill, and multiple roles for instructors. (p. 34)

Fung and Chow (2002) utilised the work of Pratt (1998) in their study into the pre-existing beliefs of pre-service teachers. The study revealed that the most common
teaching perspective held by participants was that of the “nurturer” but then in practice, the pre-service teachers’ approach was a mixture of the “apprenticeship” and “transmission” approaches to teaching. In other words, the participants saw themselves as having a child-centred approach but in reality, their approach was more teacher-centred.

There is little research which has explored the development of teacher self-efficacy formed during pre-service training; however, existing research suggests that teacher self-efficacy tends to increase during pre-service training (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990; Wenner, 2001) but decreases after graduation and in the first year of teaching (Moseley, Reinke & Bookour, 2003). There is consensus amongst researchers that teacher educators must actively engage with pre-service teachers’ beliefs in order to increase the pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Pendergast et al., 2011). However, how best for teacher educators to engage with these beliefs and, if necessary, instigate change, is where opinions diverge.

The literature highlights the complexity of working to change pre-service teachers’ beliefs. This in part can be attributed to pre-service teachers’ high resistance to change (C. Stuart & Thurlow, 2000) as well as their entrenched traditional understandings of education (Donmez, 2003; Duro, 2005). Pajares (1992) noted that “the earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter” (p. 325). Bransford, Brown and Cocking (2000) advised that it is more difficult to unlearn existing beliefs than it is to learn new beliefs. Pajares (1992) proposed that beliefs stem from both emotion packed experiences and cultural transmission. For example, a child repeatedly belittled by a teacher for his weak spelling, may form a belief that he is academically inadequate. Cultural transmission can be thought of as the hidden curricula of our everyday lives and can often take the form of assumptions and stereotypes. Therefore, a student may steer away from studying drama as he thinks it is “only for girls”. Ambrose (2004) stated, “These implicit beliefs may guide behaviour in ways that could be characterised as habits,
with individuals doing things in particular ways, the reasons for which they are hardly
cognisant” (p. 93).

There is evidence to suggest, that the coursework component of pre-service education, is
ineffective in changing entrenched beliefs amongst pre-service teachers and engenders a
propensity for pre-service teachers to mouth concepts, while lacking the ability to make
connections to their own beliefs and understandings (Maxon & Sindelar, 1998). In other
words, pre-service teachers say what they think their pre-service educators want to hear.

In the field of inclusive education, for example, the impact of stand-alone units aimed to
address issues of inclusivity and diversity have been shown to have had little impact on
changing the beliefs of pre-service teachers (E. Brown, 2004; Garmon, 2004; Mills &
Ballantyne, 2010). Pohan’s (1996) research found that students with strong biases and
negative stereotypes were less likely to change their beliefs about diverse groups.

Garmon (2004) suggested that “if students are not dispositionally ready to receive the
instruction and experiences presented to them, even the best-designed teacher preparation
program may be ineffective in developing appropriate multicultural awareness and
sensitivity” (p. 212).

These sentiments are similarly illustrated in the findings of Lim and Chan (2007) who
employed qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the propensity for pre-service
teachers to change their pedagogical beliefs as they participated in a five-week
constructivist learning experience. A pre- and post-survey was given to 19 participants, to
examine how the learning experience affected their preference for a constructivist
instructional style and pedagogical beliefs. Three pre-service teachers were then selected
for interviews, which provided a more in-depth understanding of the experience. The
study revealed that most of the participants had attended schools where direct instruction
dominated the learning environment and that exposure to a constructivist style of
teaching through the five-week learning experience was not enough to change their pedagogical beliefs.

**Pre-service teacher beliefs – Arts focus.** Pre-service teachers’ beliefs about the Arts, prior experience of the Arts, and their self-efficacy in teaching the Arts have received some attention in the literature (Joseph, 2010; Lummis et al., 2014; R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012). For example, R. Pascoe and Sallis (2012) highlighted that prior experiences of drama are influential to pre-service teachers’ “understanding of what drama is, its relevance in the curriculum and its pedagogical potential” (p. 148). Research into the origins of pre-service music teachers’ beliefs about teaching claims that beliefs were informed by family influences, music learning experiences, trusted models such as previous teachers, performance experiences and early teaching experiences (Cox, 2002; Ferguson, 2003; Haston & Leon-Guerrero, 2008; Joseph, 2010; Schmidt, 1998).

A study conducted by Joseph (2010) identified what pre-service music teachers believed were the traits of a good teacher. Participants revealed that, along with good interpersonal skills, music teachers needed to have proficient musical skills and knowledge. Participants also revealed that past experience of music teachers was integral to their formation of identity and that they would adopt and adapt from those experiences.

L. Thompson (2007) suggested, however, that pre-service music teacher beliefs were often “highly idealistic, loosely formulated, deeply seated, and traditional” (p. 32). Furthermore, she noted that pedagogies previously learned in schools, or in private tuition, created a belief amongst pre-service music teachers that this was the way all students learn. For example, pre-service teachers who have experienced a very traditional high-school music education may reject more constructivist, student-centred approaches. Pre-service music teachers’ resistance to change given their entrenched beliefs is recognised by Swainston and Jeanneret (2013). They suggested:
Most pre-service music teachers have undergone years of instrumental [music] training through individual or very small group studio lessons. A large number are well-established performing musicians and the majority of our cohort has a teaching studio practice. Some see music education as being primarily about learning an instrument… (p. 18)

While research specifically into the beliefs of pre-service drama teachers is limited, Kempe’s (2012) research is most significant to the present study. Kempe (2012) conducted an investigation into the sort of pre-service teachers who were attracted to becoming drama teachers, what they brought with them to the profession and what influenced their career choice. Data was generated through a questionnaire and in total, 104 participants were involved in the research. 95% of the participants stated they became conscious of their aptitude and affinity for drama before the age of 16 and of these, 86% responded that this had been recognised by others. Further to this, the research revealed that while family members had been supportive of the participant’s involvement and interest in drama, it was ultimately their drama teacher who had most influence on the development of their commitment to the subject. Kempe (2012) stated:

What these findings suggest is that those questioned in this survey are most likely to have embarked on a career as a drama teacher with an understanding of performance derived from their personal involvement in and studies of the art form rather than parental pressure or family tradition. (p.528)

While most of the participants in Kempe’s (2012) study decided to choose drama teaching as a profession during their drama studies at university, only around 20% had any industry experience prior to embarking on pre-service education. This implies that participants were more inclined to learn about their discipline before training as a drama teacher or beginning in the industry (Kempe, 2012). Furthermore, Kempe (2012) suggested that the participants had come to drama teaching as a conscious decision to work with young people and engage in a discipline they were passionate about rather than because they had not made it as an actor or industry professional.
A final study of particular pertinence to the present research is that of Pendergast et al. (2010) who conducted a longitudinal study with pre-service teachers seeking to examine their evolving self-efficacy beliefs. 175 participants completed a questionnaire at the beginning of the first semester of pre-service training, prior to the practicum. 76 of the participants completed the survey during their second semester of study after several practicum placements. The Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007) was used to measure the participants’ self-efficacy levels and revealed that these levels declined from the first semester to the second. Pendergast et al. (2010) believed that the decline in self-efficacy was a result of the reality shock the participants had experienced after time spent in practicum placements, as well as a somewhat naïve or idealistic perceptions of the teaching profession when first entering pre-service education. Pendergast et al. (2010) reported:

These findings suggest that teacher educators need to…realise the influence of emotional arousal and vicarious experience on initial beliefs on entry into teacher education. If beliefs are too high, participants will encounter a significant reality shock when they enter into practical experience where mastery experience and verbal persuasion act as sources for efficacy. (p. 55)

This statement by Pendergast et al. (2010) is pertinent to the present research as it highlights the reality shock that can occur during the practicum when the beliefs held by pre-service teachers are too high and/or unrealistic.

**Beliefs and practicum.** While research has revealed that changing pre-service teachers’ beliefs is complex, there is evidence (Borg, 2003; Brownlee, Purdie & Boulton-Lewis, 2001; Ng et al., 2010; So & Watkins, 2005; C. Stuart & Thurlow, 2000; E. Tang, Lee & Chun, 2012) affirming that changing teacher beliefs can occur during pre-service education. Muijs and Reynolds (2002) contended that belief systems are dynamic mental structures, which are susceptible to change by practical experiences. Thus, it is logical that the practicum component of pre-service training plays a considerable role in
informing and changing the beliefs of pre-service teachers. This connection is affirmed by de Leon-Carillo (2007) who stated, “The teacher-education program, particularly its clinical or practical component, continues to play a significant role in changing student teachers’ beliefs in a positive way” (p. 37).

In tracking 37 pre-service teachers’ evolving beliefs about the characteristics of a good teacher, Ng et al. (2010) found that some pre-service teachers’ beliefs were amenable to change and, furthermore, were challenged during each practicum placement. For example, participants’ belief that a good teacher was one who was “in control” changed considerably after their first teaching practicum. Given this, Ng et al., stated “It may be possible for teacher education programs to actively engage with their students’ beliefs and to increase their students’ efficacy by such engagement” (2010, p. 10).

Yuan and Lee (2014) investigated the process of belief change among pre-service language teachers during the teaching practicum and the sociocultural forces which may have impacted upon this change. The study was conducted during the participants’ 10-week teaching practicum and used interviews, classroom observations and weekly journals to collect data. The study confirmed the different processes of change, pre-service teachers experienced during the practicum, previously identified by Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000), which are: (a) confirmation, where prior beliefs are strengthened by a perceived consistency between prior beliefs and newly presented information; (b) realisation, where a new belief is acquired; (c) disagreement, where previously held beliefs are rejected; and, (d) elaboration, where previously held beliefs are unpacked and deepened.

Further to the findings revealed by Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000), Yuan and Lee (2014) identified two further processes of belief change: (a) integration – refining and reorganising prior beliefs into a comprehensive and integrated system; and, (b)
modification – new beliefs are modified and refined. Yuan and Lee (2014) contended that “Despite the short duration of the teaching practicum, the participants’ prior beliefs interacted with the new input and experiences through participation, practice, and reflection, as a result, their beliefs were both transformed and developed” (p. 10).

A study conducted by de Leon-Carillo (2007) investigated pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching before and after their practicum. The study comprised 89 pre-service teachers, who completed a 47-item questionnaire on their perspectives about teaching before enrolling in the teacher education program and after their practicum. The researcher was able to identify that pre-service teachers were drawn to a career in teaching by both their high regard for the teaching profession and their desire to serve both societal and personal needs. De Leon-Carillo (2007) explained “its [teaching’s] strongest attraction remains to be its very nature: service through human formation and empowerment of others” (p. 37). The research also confirmed that the practicum contributed to belief change in pre-service teachers; however, participants did not feel their mentor teachers contributed to their belief change. These findings contradict research conducted by Stevens, Cliff Hodges, Gibbons, Hunt and Turvey (2006) who found that pre-service teachers developed new ways of thinking about the subject and students by engaging in collaborative work with their mentor teachers during the practicum.

**Summary.** The review of the literature pertaining to the beliefs of pre-service teachers acknowledges four main concepts. First, pre-service teachers bring a set of beliefs about teaching and learning, informed from a range of influences including their own educational experiences. These beliefs can be idealistic, entrenched and often pre-service teachers are unaware of their own beliefs. Second, the literature highlights the propensity for those working in pre-service education to have some influence on pre-service teachers’ beliefs; however, this is challenging and often met with resistance. Third,
practicum experience has been shown to make a considerable difference to pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs and beliefs on teaching and learning. However, it is unclear how pre-service teachers manage the practicum when their beliefs about teaching are significantly challenged. Fourth, there is evidence in the research to show that drama teachers have beliefs about teaching that are shaped well before and during pre-service education and that influence their orientations in the classroom. This review informs us that it is critically important to understand what pre-service drama teachers believe before entering the profession and how these beliefs can be transformed into effective pedagogy. In concluding this section of the review, I refer to poignant words of Wales (2009):

I propose that teachers have a moral and ethical obligation to understand how their own subjectivities can be imposed upon and influence their students. Only by comprehending how their personal, social and political beliefs enter their classrooms can they begin to recognise how their work can concurrently educate and inhibit, free and constrict, empower and disempower their students. (p. 277)

Chapter 3 discusses the philosophical framework and methodology chosen to investigate the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers and their beliefs about teaching drama.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

Chapter 3 places this study within a theoretical context in relation to its philosophy and methodology. Epistemological beliefs inform the way researchers conduct research, therefore, it is important that these beliefs are made explicit to confirm that philosophies and actions align (Figure 3). Further, this chapter explores this research against six key markers of high-quality qualitative methodological research, proposed by Tracy (2010). The chapter then provides an outline of the methods and procedures used within the three phases of the research. These include the methods used to recruit participants and gain informed consent, methods for collecting and analysing data, as well as procedures for discussing and presenting data. Discussion begins with the constructivist paradigm, which provides an epistemological umbrella for the interpretive research methodologies used.

Figure 3. Philosophical Framework and Methodology
Philosophical and Research Paradigm

Two theoretical perspectives dominate educational research: positivism and constructivism (Hittleman & Simon, 2006). While a positivist perspective suggests that any understanding about human behaviour must be demonstrable and tangible, a constructivist perspective sees human behaviour as more dynamic and shifting (O’Toole, 2006). Framing this research is a commitment to constructivism. The ontological assumption underpinning a constructivist epistemology is that reality can be defined in terms of the meaning that is created from experiences within a specific context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) or as Crotty (1998) suggested, “meaning is not discovered but constructed” (p. 42). It was important given the nature of what was being investigated – the human experience of practicum – that an alternative stance to the positivist paradigm was taken. Guba and Lincoln (1989) proposed that the “constructivist paradigm provides the best ‘fit’ whenever it is human inquiry that is being considered” (p. 82). This research rejects the idea that there is one fixed reality or truth to be discovered through neutral methods of investigation (Crotty, 1998). As a researcher, I subscribe to a constructivist philosophy, believing that humans construct their understanding of reality and scaffold their learning as they go along (O’Toole, 2006). This study is constructivist in that it sought to construct a new understanding of how pre-service drama teachers experience practicum by exploring the meanings and contexts in which these experiences take place.

This study has two primary aims: first, to understand the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers in order to identify the key issues and challenges; second, to reflect and analyse how past school experiences of drama may influence the practicum experience. This study seeks to understand the experience as it exists now, a relativistic view of human behaviour shared by most drama researchers (O’Toole, 2006).
The interpretive and descriptive nature of this work falls under an interpretive paradigm known as phenomenology, a theoretical perspective that attempts to generate knowledge about the lived experience of individuals (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; van Manen, 2009). The aim of phenomenology is to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of lived experience through asking what the experience is like pre-reflectively, before the individual has attempted to explain it themselves (van Manen, 1990). Van Manen (2007) explained, “Phenomenology is a project of sober reflection on the lived experience of human existence - sober, in the sense that reflecting on experience must be thoughtful, and as much as possible, free from theoretical, prejudicial and suppositional intoxications” (p. 11).

O’Toole (2006), when describing the work of drama researchers, stated, “As researchers, our descriptions and interpretations of any phenomenon depend on how that phenomenon forms part of the reality that we have constructed for ourselves: a reality that is largely social and shared with all our community” (p. 27). What this approach does, is to understand and describe the participants’ experiences of their everyday world as they see it (Daly, 2007).

**Choosing a Qualitative Methodology to Support Chosen Epistemology**

Lichtman (2009) explained, “The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and understand human phenomena, human interaction, or human discourse” (p. 12).

Similarly, Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) stated “Qualitative researchers are interested not in prediction and control but in understanding” (p. 4). As the essence of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers, employing a qualitative approach allowed for a greater depth of analysis less obtainable by using quantitative methodologies, which preclude individual experience.
Markers of high-quality qualitative research. Tracy (2010) proposed that high-quality qualitative methodological research is marked by eight key features: (a) worthy topic; (b) rich rigour; (c) sincerity; (d) credibility; (e) resonance; (f) significant contribution; (g) ethics; and, (h) meaningful coherence (p. 840). Each of these markers is now explored against this research.

Worthy topic. The first marker highlights the research topic as being highly relevant, timely, significant and interesting (Tracy, 2010). The present research is highly relevant, significant and timely, both personally and in wider contexts. First and foremost, my experience and concern for the pre-service drama teachers with whom I teach sparked this research. For example, I observed pre-service drama teachers struggling with stress during practicum and not coping with challenging classroom behaviours. I was also frequently contacted by pre-service drama teachers and/or their mentor teachers to mediate when communication problems occurred between them, or when the practicum was not progressing as expected. Second, recent reviews have called for further research into the practicum component of pre-service education in order to understand how to structure the experience to better prepare teachers for the profession (e.g. Action Now: Classroom Ready Teachers, 2014; Top of the Class: Report on the Inquiry into Teacher Education, 2007). Furthermore, there was little previous research conducted around the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers, prompting an investigation primarily focusing on this phenomenon. While existing research (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Kempe, 2012; McCammon et al., 1998; Norris et al., 2000; R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012) offers useful insight into the pre-service drama teacher’s experience during his or her pre-service education, with some attention to practicum, a more thorough and contemporary understanding of the experience is necessary.

Rich rigour. In addressing the need for richness and rigour, this study used appropriate theoretical constructs, data and time in the field, sample(s), and data collection and
analysis processes. Tracy stated, “A researcher with a head full of theories, and a case full of abundant data, is best prepared to see nuance and complexity.” (p. 841). Fusch and Ness (2015) explained that, “rich data is many layered, intricate, detailed, nuanced, and more” (p. 1409) and in order to reach saturation point in qualitative research, the researcher should aim for both rich data (quality) and thick data (quantity). Fusch and Ness (2015) stated:

Rich and thick data descriptions obtained through relevant data collection methods can go a long way towards assisting with this process [data saturation] when coupled with an appropriate research study design that has the best opportunity to answer the research questions. (p. 1413)

In the case of this research, “richness” and “thickness” were constructed by using a variety of data sources (focus-group interviews, field work, practicum journals, lesson plans, lesson reflections, in-depth interviews and practicum evaluation reports), and by canvassing a range of perspectives (pre-service drama teachers and mentor teachers). Data sources and perspectives were purposely chosen so that the descriptions and explanations generated would provide a strong platform from which to understand the practicum experience.

Due rigour was maintained during the data collection process through collecting data over a nine-month period, which allowed sufficient opportunity to understand the environment (Padgett, 2008). Further, keeping diligent recording processes of fieldnotes and employing considered interviewing practices and analysis procedures as prescribed by Denzin & Lincoln (1998), Liampittong (2013), Lichtman (2009) and O’Toole (2006), contributed further to the rigour of this research. Data collection and analysis processes will be discussed in the next section which examines the three distinct phases of the research.

**Sincerity.** The third marker suggests that the study is characterised by “Self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s) and transparency
about the methods and challenges” (p. 840). Notions of authenticity and genuineness are also key. To ensure I remained transparent about my own biases and goals, I spent time prior and during the study (data collection, analysis and presentation) practising self-reflexivity. Liamputtong (2013) claimed that reflexivity is an essential characteristic in qualitative research as it supports the integrity that qualitative researchers claim and the nature of the knowledge. R. Johnson and Waterfield (2004) asserted that researchers must acknowledge their experiences, beliefs and personal history. Therefore, in order to make clear my own experiences and knowledge of particular findings, I have used my voice throughout the research, beginning with the prologue which depicts my own practicum and induction to teaching. Further, in Chapter 1, I have outlined my experience, position and identity as the researcher, disclosing my relationship to the participants and reasons for pursuing this enquiry. My influence on the research is also made explicit in the final chapter where I address the strengths and limitations of the research (Malterud, 2001).

It was particularly important for me to consider my impact on the pre-service drama teachers who were participants in this study since I was also one of their teachers and, therefore, partly responsible for assessing them in their coursework. While ethical practices are detailed later in this chapter, the deliberate measures to remain transparent and honest about the research process (Tracy, 2010) can be seen in the following examples. First, I detailed the participants’ reactions to me both in interviews and during field visits when I observed their teaching. Second, the fieldnotes taken during these observations included my own self-reflective commentary about my feelings. Third, I kept detailed notes about research decisions and activities, including emails, phone calls and meetings, throughout the research process. Fourth, all interviews were transcribed verbatim and transcripts were emailed to participants for verification (member reflections). Fifth, dialogue was maintained with participants and supervisors of the study throughout all stages of the research. Finally, transparency has been marked by disclosing
the challenges throughout the process, such as when participants opted out of the study. These self-reflexive practices and transparency measures taken have assisted in achieving sincerity in this research.

**Credibility.** Tracy (2010) proposed that the fourth marker of high-quality qualitative research is the credibility or trustworthiness of the findings, achieved through thick description, triangulation, multivocality and member reflections. The “thick description” and “multivocality” characterising this research provide an in-depth picture of the practicum experience of pre-service drama teachers. Rich or thick description is crucial in the presentation of qualitative research. I have provided enough detail to capture the meaning and complexity of the practicum experience, whilst taking care not to “tell” the reader what to think or to divulge too much information about the participants so as to break the participants’ confidentiality (Liamp puttong, 2013). Furthermore, being mindful of viewpoints that differed or converged with mine, I provided opportunity throughout the research process for member reflections which sought to gain input and validation from the participants on the findings (O’Toole, 2006).

Accurately representing the views and stories of the participants in this research was an important focus for me as a researcher. This was particularly important in Phase 3 of the research where participants trusted me with their stories of what drama was like for them when they were students at school. Therefore, I emailed the portraits to participants for verification and provided opportunity for further elaboration. Conducting member reflections was a critical technique in establishing credibility in this research (Lincoln & Guba, 1999).

In a further effort to attend to the credibility of this research, the practice of triangulation has been utilised. Triangulation in qualitative research assumes that a conclusion is more credible if two or more data sources or researchers reach the same conclusion (Fusch &
Ness, 2015; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). While notions of triangulation are not generally in keeping with an interpretive paradigm, there is considerable advocacy for its merits in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Denzin (1978, as cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 1998) distinguished four categories of triangulation:

1) Data triangulation, where the researcher gathers data using several strategies that correlate people, time and space.

2) Investigator triangulation which involves multiple researchers gathering and interpreting data.

3) Theoretical triangulation, which involves using multiple theoretical strategies.

4) Methodological triangulation, which involves using multiple methods for gathering data. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.46)

The present study used data and methodological triangulation involving multiple data sources which encouraged “different facets of problems to be explored, increases scope, deepens understanding, and encourages consistent interpretation” (Tracy, 2010, p. 843). In other words, the range of data sources and perspectives across the three phases of the research revealed and confirmed findings which enhanced the strength of the research results (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). For example, the focus groups provided an overview of the practicum experience for pre-service drama teachers (Phase 1) and revealed a number of significant challenges, whilst individual interviews held with mentor teachers (Phase 2) confirmed these challenges and revealed a deeper understanding of how mentor teachers can support pre-service drama teachers to navigate these challenges. Furthermore, triangulation provided a method to get to data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015).
**Resonance.** The fifth marker, resonance, aims to influence and affect the reader through “aesthetic, evocative representations, naturalistic generalisations and transferable findings” (Tracy, 2010, p. 840). I have used the voices of the participants to present vivid accounts of their experiences which in turn reveals much about their practicum experiences. For example, in Phase 3, I created narrative portraits depicting the participants’ experiences of drama when they were students at school. The portraits reveal moments when participants experienced vulnerability and sadness as well as resilience and moments of triumph. Consequently, these portraits enrich our understanding of the lived experience of the participants (van Manen, 2014), and promote empathy in readers who may, or may not, have prior experience of the topic.

Furthermore, Tracy (2010) emphasised the need for transferability and naturalistic generalisations to enhance the resonance of the research. The knowledge generated through this research, while situated in the field of pre-service education, is useful in other settings. For example, the lack of belonging participants experienced during the teaching practicum is a theme that resonates across other contexts, such as research into the links between loneliness or social isolation and the increased risk of mental and physical health problems (Choenarom, Williams & Hagerty, 2005; Coyle & Dugan, 2012; Hagerty & Williams, 1999; Kitchen, Williams & Chowhan, 2012; Qualter, Brown, Rotenberg, Vanhalst, Harris, Goossens & Munn, 2013; Shields, 2008).

**Significant contribution.** The sixth marker emphasises the capacity for the research to provide a significant contribution by extending knowledge, improving practice, generating further research, liberating or empowering (Tracy, 2010). This research will extend disciplinary knowledge by building on past research into practicum (Badali, 2008; Caires et al., 2010; Grudnoff, 2011; Wyckoff et al., 2009; Ure et al., 2009) as well as research pertaining to practicum for pre-service drama teachers (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Norris et al., 2000). Further, this research will develop new conceptual
understandings and provide “heuristic significance” that will inspire future research in this area (see final chapter).

At its very core, this research aims to be “practically significant” since the research has grown out of my practice and the desire to see improved outcomes for my students during practicum and beyond. Specifically, the research aims to shed light on the significant challenges pre-service drama teachers experience during practicum, and in doing so, lead to informed change.

**Ethics.** The seventh marker emphasises the importance of qualitative researchers attending to ethical practices, including procedural, situational, relational and exiting ethics (Tracy, 2010). As Miles and Huberman (1994) noted, “We must consider the rightness or wrongness of our actions as qualitative researchers in relation to the people whose lives we are studying, to our colleagues, and to those who sponsor our work” (p. 288). Ensuring that this research is ethical has been an important consideration throughout the research process, due to the close interaction and relationship between myself, as researcher, and participants who are both my students and colleagues (Liamputtong, 2013).

To begin with the “procedural” requirements, I gained ethics approval from the institution in which I study (ethics approval number – 2010/048) and the institution in which this study was conducted (ethics approval number – 5174). Furthermore, as the research was conducted in schools around the Perth metropolitan area, I gained ethics approval from the Department of Education of Western Australia (ethics approval number – D10/0258018).

Prior to conducting the research, I gave detailed information about the research project to participants so that they were aware of what the research involved and understood that they were able to withdraw from the study if they so choose (Liamputtong, 2013). I
gained informed consent from all participants in the study, which, as Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) proposed, is the chief means of protecting participants from being harmed or exploited.

Next, attending to “situational” and “relational” ethical matters entailed careful reflection and questioning of my ethical decisions. Liamputtong (2013) stated, “When participants reveal their private world to the researchers, they must make sure that this private world is protected as much as possible” (p. 41). However, as maintaining anonymity can be difficult when the research involves a relatively small number of participants and from a specific group (Liamputtong, 2013), it was important to implement “systematic practical procedures” (O’Toole, 2006). This involved securely storing all data in password-protected files on my computer (Liamputtong, 2013), removing the names and identifying details from the data as early as possible (Israel & Hay, 2006), and assigning fictitious names (pseudonyms) to each of the participants (Liamputtong, 2013).

I also carefully chose what personal identifying details would remain in the research and verified this with participants during the research process (O’Toole, 2006). It should be noted here that in Phase 3 of the research, after careful consideration and collaboration with one of the participants, I decided to omit her portrait in order to protect her identity. This was a difficult decision to make but was made necessary due to the ethical obligations I undertook in conducting this research. Liamputtong (2013) puts it more strongly when she says, “The most disturbing and unethical harm in research is when the participants are damaged by the disclosure of their private world” (p. 41). Finally, in terms of “exiting” ethics, findings from this research was summarised and shared with the participants and the Department of Education of Western Australia.

**Meaningful coherence.** The final component of this conceptualisation of high-quality qualitative research is what Tracy (2010) terms “meaningful coherence”. Studies that are
“meaningfully coherent, eloquently interconnect their research design, data collection, and analysis with their theoretical framework and situational goals” (Tracy, 2010, p. 848). While the proof of obtaining “meaningful coherence” lies in the ease with which this work “hangs together”, the measured steps I have taken to attend to this marker is illustrated in the philosophical framework and methodology (figure 3) as well as the conceptual framework developed for this research (figure 4). Miles and Huberman (1984) described a conceptual framework as “the current version of the researcher’s map of the territory being investigated” (p. 33) or as Punch (2001) described, “a representation…of the main concepts or variables, and their presumed relationship with each other” (p. 56).

The study’s conceptual framework shows how the impetus for research is supported by the research design and literature that situates the findings and attends to the research questions of the study. Each of these concepts is illustrated in the conceptual framework (Figure 4).
Figure 4. Conceptual Framework
Research Design and Procedures

Bricolage. Multi-methods were used in this research, which involved an interpretive, naturalistic approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the practicum experience of pre-service drama teachers. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) stated, “The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth, and depth to any investigation” (p. 4).

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) referred to the multiple methodologies of qualitative research as a “bricolage” and the qualitative researcher a “bricoleur”. The bricoleur pieces together different representations of the phenomenon being studied from the data collected. The bricolage changes depending on the tools, methods and techniques employed. This approach assists the bricoleur to manage the complexity of meaning-making processes and the contradictions of the lived world. Rogers (2012) explained that bricolage research pushes the borders of traditional multi-methods qualitative research and is a “critical, multi-perspectival, multi-theoretical and multi-methodological approach to inquiry” (p. 1). Further, methodological practices are “based on notions of eclecticism, emergent design, flexibility and plurality” (Rogers, 2012, p. 1).

In conceptualising the concept of bricolage research as an eclectic approach to social inquiry, Denzin and Lincoln were influenced by the work of anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss. Levi-Strauss proposed the merits of approaching research with processes that are flexible and fluid as opposed to rigid plans and methods. In the case of this research, flexibility and fluidity were key, allowing me to choose research strategies from a variety of scholarly disciplines as the research unfolded (Steinberg, 2006). More specifically, while initial plans were to use individual and focus-group interviews as the main data sources, it became apparent that the findings would be richer if the research
took me into the field, where I could capture the lived experience of the participants’ final practicum – the Assistant Teacher Program (ATP).

While some critics believe bricolage research is “superficial” due to the researcher moving across different perspectives, Denzin and Lincoln (1999) considered bricolage to be an approach that enables researchers to respect the complexity of the meaning-making and inquiry process. Furthermore, Kincheloe (2001) argued that bricolage moves qualitative research into the future and that the multiple perspectives employed by the bricolage researcher lead to greater understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

Drawing on Denzin and Lincoln, Rogers (2012) explained that:

> Bricoleurs allow for dynamics and contexts to dictate which questions get asked, which methods to employ and which interpretive perspectives to use. This means bricoleurs have an aptness for creativity – they know how to artistically combine theories, techniques, and methods. (p. 4)

In exploring the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers and searching for meaning in their stories and lived experiences, the process of bricolage has provided a rich and complex analysis from which I have been able to gain a deep and wide understanding of the experience (Steinberg, 2006).

**Research questions.** Consideration of the research questions guiding this study was instrumental in the research design so as to yield the most relevant, credible and authentic evidence. I will now discuss the three phases of the research and explain how each phase is designed to investigate the research questions of this study.
Three phases of the research.

Figure 5. Phases of Data Collection

As Figure 5 depicts, three phases were designed to address the research questions of this study. While each phase contributes understanding to each of the questions (illustrated by the grey arrows) it is intended that each phase targets a specific question (illustrated by the matching colours). For example, Phase 1 investigates Question 1; however phases 2 and 3 add further insight to this question (question 1). D. Morgan (1997) stated, “In these combined uses of qualitative methods, the goal is to use each method so that it contributes something unique to the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon under study” (p. 3). The iterative nature of the three phases in this research adds depth and understanding to the practicum experience.

Phase 1 of the study is entitled “The Collective Voice”, and involved three focus-group interviews with pre-service drama teachers to gain their initial perceptions of the teaching practicum. Phase 2, entitled “Practice in Action”, was conducted with five pre-service drama teachers selected from Phase 1 and focused on participants’ lived experience of their ATP. The same group of pre-service drama teachers were used in Phase 3 of the study, “Reflections on School Drama”, which involved individual interviews with each
participant as he or she reflected on their experiences of drama when they were students at school. These interviews were later developed into narrative portraits.

A description of the participant selection processes and setting, methods for collecting and analysing data as well as procedures for discussing and presenting data is provided for each of the separate phases of this research.

**Phase 1: The collective voice.**

Phase 1 of the research involved three focus-group interviews with 19 pre-service drama teachers from a Western Australian university with the purpose of scoping the project. This scoping was grounded in the participants’ experience and provided insights, views and perceptions about practicum, enabling key issues and emerging themes to be identified. Focus groups proved to be a valuable means of collecting data and the opportunity for interaction amongst participants led to rich insights and observations for the researcher (O’Toole, 2006).

**Participants and setting.** The number of participants chosen for this phase of the research was informed by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) who suggested that saturation point in data collection can be reached with 12 to 20 participants: saturation point occurs when new data collected becomes redundant and repetitive. The gender composition included fifteen female and four male pre-service drama teachers. This ratio is consistent with the
gender ratio of teachers in Western Australia, reported to be 26% of male teachers to 74% of female teachers (Western Australian Government Department of Education, 2015).

Liamputtong (2013) suggested that a focus-group interview would typically involve around six to 10 participants who, with the help of a moderator, feel comfortable enough to discuss a particular issue. Accordingly, the first focus group comprised seven pre-service drama teachers in their fourth and final year of a double degree Bachelor of Arts (Education)/Bachelor of Creative Arts program. The gender composition included five females and two males and the age of the participants ranged between 20 years and 26 years of age. The second focus group comprised seven pre-service drama teachers also in their fourth and final year of a double degree Bachelor of Arts (Education)/Bachelor of Creative Arts program. The gender composition included six females and one male and the age of the participants ranged between 20 years and 22 years of age.

Students in this program combine education studies with specialist content studies in two teaching areas such as drama and English as well as a practicum component in schools. At the time of the focus-group interviews, participants had completed one practicum of three weeks in their second year of study, one practicum of five weeks in their third year of study, and were about to complete their final practicum of 11 weeks.

The third focus group comprised pre-service drama teachers in the Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary) course at the university. This is a one-year full-time, or equivalent part-time course for students who have successfully completed a Bachelor Degree and includes an on-campus program of study as well as a practicum component in schools. At the time of the focus-group interview, participants had completed one practicum of two weeks, one practicum of three weeks, and were yet to complete their final practicum of seven weeks. The gender composition comprised two females and one male and the age of the participants ranged between 22 years and 25 years of age.
At the request of the participants, focus-group interviews took place in a small room free from extraneous distractions and familiar to the students on the university campus at which they studied. In an effort to encourage the participants’ freedom to discuss what interested or concerned them regarding practicum and to invite expansion or the ability to explore a response further (O’Toole, 2006), I chose a semi-structured interview format where I asked several questions (reproduced in Appendix G) to stimulate discussion. The questions focused on the participants’ experience of the teaching practicum and included: What is it like to be a pre-service drama teacher during a teaching practicum? What kinds of things contribute to the challenges of being a pre-service drama teacher during a teaching practicum?

Procedure. The initial method for recruiting participants was through the Head of Drama Education at the university, who agreed to forward all potential participants (approximately 48 pre-service drama teachers) an Information Letter and Consent Form outlining the proposed study and what participation would involve. Participants were invited to email me directly if they were interested in taking part in a focus-group interview. Both the Information Letter and Consent Form are reproduced in Appendix H and Appendix I respectively.

At the commencement of each interview, I verbally delivered the aims of the research and the procedure of the interview. I encouraged questions from participants to confirm or answer any queries they had in regards to the interview, information given, and my role as researcher. I explained to participants that all information obtained would be confidential, securely stored, and would not be released to any other sources. I then collected each participant’s written consent.

Each interview followed the same procedure. I initiated discussions by asking the first guiding question. In some cases, when topics generated lengthy discussions, I allowed the
participants to elaborate on their responses as much as possible and then used the next guiding question to re-focus discussion. Participants were eager to contribute their stories and ideas and seemed to enjoy listening to the views and stories shared by their peers. I noted during focus groups that the dynamic in each group was both lively and vibrant.

At times I needed to prompt the “silent voices” (O’Toole, 2006) of individual participants who experienced difficulty contributing their ideas due to so many participants wishing to be heard and have their say. Each focus group ran between 45 and 60 minutes and at the conclusion, participants expressed their enjoyment at being involved in the process and the opportunity provided to talk about their practicum experiences.

Data analyses. As researcher, I took on the roles of moderating, facilitating, monitoring and recording the group’s interactions, as suggested by Lichtman (2009). An audio recording was taken of each focus group and, at the completion of each interview, the audio-recordings generated were transcribed using electronic program NVivo 8. I interpreted the interview data using analytic procedures described by Miles and Huberman (1994). The components of these procedures are illustrated in Figure 6.
As such, the sequence of activities for the analysis of each interview data was:

1. Data was collected through the focus-group interview and the transcript of this generated.

2. Data was reviewed through a process of selecting, sorting and sifting through the transcriptions which identified similar phrases and ideas.

3. The identified commonalities were grouped to form categories of generalised information. This was represented in a data matrix of categories and their supporting phrases.

4. The process was repeated for the remaining two focus-group interviews and the analysis assisted in identifying emerging themes as well as generating ideas and questions for phases 2 and 3 of the study.
Discussing and presenting data. In deciding how to present this research, I considered the metaphor “raising the curtain”. My aim is to fully “raise the curtain” on the practicum experience of pre-service drama teachers by the end of the thesis, and each phase will lead to that point. Specifically, the first phase of the research is intended to introduce the reader to the practicum experience for the participants, through verbatim narrative vignettes and discussion, with sign posts to areas investigated further in phases 2 and 3 of the research. Reference to previous research in the field is mainly deferred to phases 2 and 3. The intent is to not “tell” the reader what to think but instead, to provide enough detail so that the reader can form their own conclusion about the scene (Tracy, 2010).

Phase 2: Practice in action.

Phase 2 of the research was a field study, which focused on the lived experience of the participants during their ATP. This phase of the study yielded valuable data to further unpack the practicum experience, revise the themes developed in Phase 1, and to uncover new themes. As mentioned previously, this phase was necessary when it became apparent that further data was needed in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Steinberg, 2006).

Participants. Initially, six participants embarking on their ATP were selected from the focus-group interviews to take part in this phase of the research. However, one participant
withdrew from the study in her first week of practicum as she felt overwhelmed with practicum workload and worried that this study would add extra work and pressure. Therefore, five pre-service drama teachers and their mentor teachers were the participants in this phase of the study. A profile of each of the pre-service drama teachers is provided in Chapter 4.

Setting. The setting for Phase 2 of the study is the participants’ Assistant Teacher Program (ATP), an extended practicum of 11 weeks. This practicum is the culmination of four years of study and a key factor in gaining future employment in the teaching profession.

It is important to note here that participants in this research followed the same guidelines for placement as other pre-service teachers at the university. Like their peers, the Professional Practice Department placed each of the participants at an appropriate school, taking into consideration the pre-service drama teacher’s school preferences, religious denomination, availability of transport, past practicum placements, and placement availability.

Once placed at a practicum school, participants were allocated a mentor teacher or, in some cases, two or three mentor teachers. Details of the practicum school each participant was allocated is provided in Chapter 4. During the ATP, participants “shadowed” their mentor teachers in order to develop their teaching practice, and to learn about the responsibilities of a teacher and aspects of school life. Participants were also allocated a university supervisor who provided the link between the university and practicum school. Practicum guidelines (Appendix E) stipulate that during the ATP, the university supervisor will visit the pre-service teacher and observe them teach three times.

Participants in this study undertook all the requirements of the ATP as per other pre-service teachers at the university. This included: written programs, daily lesson plans
and evaluations, as well as assessment of student work. Teaching requirements ranged between 3/5 and 5/5 of their mentor teacher’s load, which is approximately 16 to 20 hours of teaching per week. Additionally, participants undertook a non-curricular component, which mainly involved school production rehearsals. While this component differed each week, participants spent between three and 10 hours a week engaged in non-curricular activities. It is important to emphasise that the additional non-curricular component was on top of the participants’ teaching load.

At the conclusion of the ATP, the mentor teacher completed an evaluation form, which provided information on the achievements of the pre-service drama teacher, a copy of which is required by the Department of Education of Western Australia for graduates applying for a teaching position. Like their peers, the participants were assessed against the following criteria: (a) planning; b) using knowledge; (c) relationships; (d) communication skills; (e) managing the learning environment; (f) instructional skills; (g) evaluation; and, (h) professionalism. A pre-service teacher who receives “not met requirements” for any of the eight categories is graded as not having met the overall requirements of the practicum. Pre-service teachers are awarded “outstanding”, “highly competent”, “competent” or “fail” for both their teaching skills and professional development. A copy of the ATP evaluation form is provided in Appendix E. It is important to emphasise that I did not evaluate the participants or have any input into their final result.

It is worth noting that the current evaluation of pre-service teachers completing their ATP has changed considerably since this phase of the research was conducted in 2010. Currently, pre-service teachers at this university are evaluated against the National Standards for graduate teachers (AITSL, 2011) – see Appendix A. A copy of the 2015 ATP Guidelines is provided in Appendix F.
Procedure. The method for recruiting participants was through the focus-group interviews conducted in Phase 1 of the study where participants were briefed on phases 2 and 3 of the research and given an Information Letter and Consent Form. Participants were then invited to email me directly if they were willing to participate. Both the Information Letter and Consent Form are reproduced in Appendix J and Appendix K respectively.

Only participants embarking on their ATP were eligible to take part in this phase of the research. Therefore, out of the 19 pre-service teachers who participated in the focus-group interviews, only nine participants were eligible. Out of the nine eligible participants, six volunteered and were therefore selected based on their willingness to be involved in the research. Once the participants had been selected, I made contact with each mentor teacher and his or her respective principal to gain permission and support in conducting the research. I then followed up with sending (via email) an Information Letter and Consent Form to mentor teachers to participate in the study (Appendix L and Appendix M). Once consent forms were returned and collated, I emailed the pre-service drama teacher participants, asking them to begin reflecting in their practicum journal as well as to send me a copy of their timetable.

Data collection methods. While the first phase of the research involved pre-service drama teachers reflecting on their practicum experiences within focus groups, Phase 2 used a range of qualitative methods to capture the lived experience of the participants in an authentic way. The data collection methods were: fieldnotes, lesson observations, pre-service drama teacher interviews, mentor interviews, practicum journals, lesson plans, lesson reflections and practicum evaluations.

Fieldnotes. Clear and descriptive fieldnotes were taken throughout the research process, particularly when observing participants and capturing my own thoughts and feelings.
towards the data. Fieldnotes were either typed and kept in a file on my computer, or recorded in my research journal. Fieldnotes recorded in my journal were transcribed within 24 hours of taking them to ensure my observations were authentically reconstructed (O’Toole, 2006).

**Lesson observations.** Observations of participants teaching drama lessons occurred two times during the 11-week practicum. The first lesson observation took place during week three of the practicum and was followed by a meeting with the participant to discuss their initial experiences. The second observation took place in week eight or nine and was followed by a meeting with the pre-service drama teacher to discuss how their practicum was progressing. Lessons ranged in duration of between 50 and 65 minutes. Each lesson was designed and led by the pre-service drama teacher, with occasional contribution from the mentor teacher. Observations were made on the lesson experience, including how the pre-service drama teacher appeared, the reactions and engagement of the students, and the physical setting.

**Pre-service drama teacher interviews.** Short semi-structured interviews were conducted with each pre-service drama teacher prior to beginning their ATP and immediately following each of their lessons. Interviews ran between 10 – 20 minutes and gained their perception of the lesson as well as any issues or highlights they had experienced. Once interviews were transcribed, I emailed the transcript to participants for validation (member reflection).

**Mentor teacher interviews.** Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with each mentor teacher to gain their insights into practicum, their role as a mentor, as well as perceptions of how their pre-service drama teacher was progressing or any issues they were experiencing. These interviews also enabled the mentor teacher to share their stories about their work and how they viewed the unique challenges of being a drama teacher.
and/or pre-service drama teacher. The interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and were conducted without the pre-service drama teacher present. Interviews were transcribed verbatim within 24 hours of the interview taking place and transcripts were emailed to the mentor teacher for validation.

**Practicum journals.** Pre-service drama teachers were asked to reflect upon their practicum experiences on a regular basis in the form of an electronic journal. These journals would then be emailed to me at the conclusion of the ATP. In order to not impinge too heavily on the pre-service drama teachers’ time, participants were asked to spend fifteen minutes at the end of each week, or a few minutes at the end of each day, to reflect in their practicum journal. Participants were asked to focus on describing their thoughts and feelings experienced during practicum. Four participants (Simone, Claire, Cindy and Nella) maintained their practicum journal; however, Kyle felt too overwhelmed with personal commitments and practicum workload to maintain a journal.

**Lesson plans and reflections.** During the ATP, it is stipulated that pre-service teachers develop a lesson plan for every lesson they teach, even lessons they team-teach with their mentor teacher. These lesson plans proved a useful source of data as they detailed areas participants targeted in their drama lessons, such as team-work and concentration skills, as well as their pedagogical skills such as vocal communication and questioning. At the conclusion of each lesson, participants completed a formal reflection on their pedagogical skills and to what extent learning objectives had been achieved. During observational visits, I would have access to the participants’ lesson plan files and would take notes on particular areas of interest.

**Practicum evaluations.** Participants were encouraged to provide copies of past practicum evaluations completed by previous mentor teachers. This information was useful in revealing areas of strength and weakness of the participants.
For example, an evaluation which reported the pre-service drama teacher as “unorganised” would be useful when considering the participant’s experience of practicum stress. A copy of each participant’s ATP evaluation was also provided by the participants at the end of the practicum.

Data Analyses. Considering the range of data sources, it was important to manage the quantity of data generated efficiently to maintain due rigour of this study (Tracy, 2010). Again, I utilised the electronic program NVivo 8 to process the data as soon as it came in, and then arranged the data into profiles for each of the participants. I transcribed interviews myself to gain a more intimate knowledge of the data, which proved useful in looking for common threads within the data (O’Toole, 2006). During the data collection process, I looked for patterns and connections: firstly, connections between the experiences of participants, and then connections to themes and dimensions generated in Phase 1. I was mindful when looking for connections to the themes revealed in Phase 1, not to overlook new ideas that may have emerged (O’Toole, 2006). The process of interrogating the data, while similar to those adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994) in Phase 1, was as follows:

1. Data was collected through fieldnotes, lesson observations, mentor interviews, practicum journals, lesson plans, lesson evaluations and practicum evaluations. Profiles were generated for each participant.

2. Data was reviewed through a process of selecting, sorting and sifting through profiles which identified similar patterns and connections.

3. Identified patterns and connections were compared to themes and dimensions revealed in Phase 1 of the research. This was represented in a data matrix of themes and dimensions and their supporting phrases.
**Discussing and presenting data.** In keeping with the metaphor “raising the curtain”, I have presented Phase 2 as a more detailed and descriptive account of key issues and challenges of practicum. Again, I have employed the use of narrative vignettes taken from interviews with pre-service drama teachers and mentor teachers and supplement the story with reflections from participants’ journals, lesson plans and reflections, practicum evaluations and my fieldnotes. As the “curtain rises”, I clarify questions raised from Phase 1 of the research and make reference to previous research in the field.

**Phase 3: Reflections on school drama.**

Phase 3 of the research focused on participants’ experiences of drama when they were students at school. This was achieved by conducting individual interviews with participants to hear their stories and perspectives in order to learn about their world. The rich information elicited from the interviews was used to create individual portraits, which reveal valuable insight into participants’ feelings towards school and drama. Further, these portraits enable a construction of knowledge about the influence of drama experience on practicum.

**Participants and setting.** The same five participants from Phase 2 were used in Phase 3 of the study. Again, at the request of participants, interviews were held at the university in a small room away from their peers and other distractions. Interviews were conducted one
to two weeks after the completion of their ATP. I purposely chose this timing, in case the participants wished to discuss any further aspects of their ATP. Each participant arrived on time and seemingly eager to take part in their interview. Participants did not bring any notes into the interview; instead they were comfortable to talk freely and spontaneously about their experiences.

Procedure. The main source of data produced from this phase of the study was the transcripts from individual interviews conducted with participants. At the commencement of each interview, I verbally delivered the aims of the research and the procedure of the interview.

Participants were asked to describe their recollections in detail and thus were given guiding questions two weeks prior to assist in thinking about key concepts when recounting their experiences (Appendix N). The guiding questions were developed from the themes and dimensions that emerged from phases 1 and 2, as well as the research questions of this study. The guiding questions were open-ended so as to stimulate more in-depth reflection and focus on the participants’ reflecting on their prior experiences of drama at school.

A face-to-face interview, rather than a phone or online interview, was used to allow for good rapport to be established and maintained between myself and the participant (Lichtman, 2009). Although prompting questions were posed when further elaboration or clarification was needed (Esterberg, 2002), the interview session was conducted in a casual way and I aimed not to interrupt or intervene when the participant was telling his or her story (O’Toole, 2006).

The audiotaped materials obtained during the interviews were transcribed into text using NVivo 8. Portraits were constructed from the data using first person voice and omitting the questions. To minimise the chance of misinterpretation, portraits were emailed to
participants, who were invited to make changes if ideas were incorrectly presented. None of the participants made changes to the portraits.

*Constructing portraits.* In constructing portraits for this phase of the study, I turned to the expertise of Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983), who first formulated portraiture methodology and later developed it with psychologist Jessica Hoffman David (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). In highlighting the purpose behind portraiture methodology, Gaztambide-Fernandez, Cairns, Kawashima, Menna, and VanderDussen (2011) explained “like most qualitative methodologies, the purpose is to explore participants’ experiences and the complexities of how meanings are produced within a particular context” (p. 4). Furthermore, portraiture methodology aims to capture and express the complexity and dynamics of lived experience through artistic lenses. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) explained that by blending various art forms with the rigour of science, portraitists are able to “document and illuminate the complexity and detail of a unique experience or place” (p. 13).

A defining feature of portraiture methodology is the researcher’s search for goodness: a search for strengths and possibilities as opposed to deficiencies (Dixson, Chapman & Hill, 2005). Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) argued for the merit of locating moments of resistance and negotiation that would ultimately lead to success, rather than the task of locating and documenting failures or shortcomings. They stated “It is an intentionally generous and eclectic process that begins by searching for what is good and healthy and assumes that the expression of goodness will always be laced with imperfections” (p. 9). This notion has been a key consideration in constructing portraits of the participants in this study. While individual portraits reveal the vulnerabilities participants experienced during their years at school, they also reveal moments of resilience and the ways in which challenges were approached and handled (Chapman, 2005).
Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) categorised the major aspects of portraiture research to include: (a) context; (b) voice; (c) relationships; (d) emergent themes; and, (e) the aesthetic whole. In the following paragraphs, a summary of these aspects in relation to this research is provided. It is important to note that the authors did not intend for these aspects to be performed in a linear fashion but rather to frame all stages of the inquiry process (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

**Context.** Integral to understanding why people act as they do, “context” is a crucial element of portraiture methodology. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) defined context as “the setting – physical, geographic, temporal, historical, cultural, aesthetic – within which the action takes place” (p. 41). This approach contrasts significantly with positive methodology, which sees “context” as a potential source of distraction or confusion (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997); portraitists see context as a resource for understanding. Capturing the context in this phase of the research, entailed describing the setting in enough detail for the reader to feel they are actually there. Therefore, selective details are provided which vividly locates the participant in his or her respective school, classroom or event.

**Voice.** Voice refers to both the voice of the portraitist and the participants. While the portraitist’s work is empirically grounded, the voice of the portraitist is everywhere (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). In the case of this research, I have constructed each portrait so that the participant’s voice dominates the story but then use my voice to frame the meaning of the story. My intent is to paint the story from the participants’ point of view and not to let my voice overshadow the participants’ perspectives.

**Relationships.** The building of relationships is at the centre of portraiture. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) affirmed that portraits are constructed, shaped and drawn through the development of a relationship, and through that relationship, access to
stories and insights are given. Relationships are developed by building trust, empathy, respect and rapport with the participant. In conducting the interviews in person, rather than using an outsider as interviewer, I was able to build the participants’ trust and confidence (O’Toole, 2006) so that participants comfortably and authentically shared their thoughts. As detailed previously, conducting member reflections for participants to review and comment on the data was key, not only to attend to the credibility of the research but to honour the relationships built with participants.

**Emergent themes.** The development of emergent themes reflects the portraitist’s efforts to interpret and bring insight to the data. Portraitists search for metaphors and symbols, and construct coherence out of themes that the participants may think nothing of (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). It is important to note that watching for emergent themes occurred throughout this phase and not just at the end of the interviewing process. Instead, I embarked on an iterative process of conducting an interview, analysing and interpreting the data, and identifying or disregarding themes before conducting the next interview. Whilst I sought to identify common themes, it was important to not let that overshadow the “flavour” of the participants’ perspective. Emergent themes were rendered using four of the five modes of analysis proposed by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997). First, I listened for and identified repetitive refrains articulated by the participants. Second, I identified resonate metaphors and symbols in the participants’ words and phrases. Third, I looked for rituals, both institutional and cultural, that portray themes of a culture (i.e., classroom or school) through their ceremonial events (i.e., school production). Finally, I revealed the patterns.

**The aesthetic whole.** Each of the elements contributes to the “aesthetic whole”. Through blending empirical choices, portraitists seek to capture insight and emotion and develop a narrative that informs and inspires (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). In attending to the “aesthetic whole” I followed the recommendations proposed by Lawrence-Lightfoot
and Davis (1997) by first constructing the overarching story for each portrait and then structuring the narrative to frame and organise specific ideas. I then considered how the form of each portrait could support and bring to life the structural elements. By constructing portraits in a coherent, logical fashion, I was able to vividly capture characteristics of participants and their experiences of drama. The narrative portraits developed for each of the participants is presented in Chapter 6.

**Discussing and presenting data.** The third and final phase of the study sees the “curtain fully raised.” In doing so, I present the narrative portraits developed for each of the participants, reflect on their meaning, and discuss the influence of these past experiences of drama on practicum, with connections to research.

**Summary**

This research investigates the practicum experience of pre-service drama teachers and ways in which their past school experience of drama may influence practicum. This chapter has provided an overview and justification of the study’s theoretical context in relation to its philosophy and methodology. Specifically, it provides a justification for choosing a constructivist epistemology and phenomenology, the interpretive paradigm, to generate knowledge about the practicum experience of pre-service drama teachers. Further, reasons for choosing a qualitative methodology were provided, followed by an elaboration on how this research attends to key markers of quality qualitative research proposed by Tracy (2010). Finally, the methods and procedures used for each of the three phases of the research is presented. The next chapter explores findings from the first phase of the research.
Chapter 4

Phase 1 – The Collective Voice

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides a description and discussion of the data from Phase 1. This phase explored responses to the first research question of the study, providing an overview of the practicum experience of pre-service drama teachers.

Research Question 1: In what ways do pre-service drama teachers experience the practicum?

I was not prepared for the emotional rollercoaster of practicum. One minute I was stressed out of my mind, the next minute I was having a ball. I’d go from hating it, to loving it and all in the matter of an hour. One minute I’d dread walking into class and the next moment I’d be exhilarated from teaching a great lesson. Luckily, I had a strong mentor teacher to learn from and support me. Prac is definitely the toughest part of this degree but then definitely the best too. (Tom)
Introduction

In Phase 1, three focus-group interviews were conducted with 19 pre-service drama teachers from a Western Australian university. The focus-group interviews scoped the project and were grounded in the participants’ reflections, insights, views and perceptions of practicum. This phase was designed to gain an overview of the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers, from which key issues and challenges could be identified. Full details of the methods for recruiting participants, data collection and analysis for this phase of the research is presented in the previous chapter, Chapter Three - Methodology.

Four Themes

Four themes emerged from the focus-group data: practicum stress; self-efficacy; mentoring practices; and, the business of teaching. Within each theme are a number of key dimensions. An overview of the Phase 1 themes and dimensions is provided in Figure 7. While the themes are presented separately, they are, in fact, interwoven and linked, as illustrated in Figure 7. For example, participants found planning lessons and scaffolding learning activities particularly challenging components of practicum (the business of teaching), yet believed their mentor teacher played an integral role in developing their lesson planning skills (mentoring practices).
Figure 7. Phase 1: Themes and Dimensions of Drama Practicum

**Theme 1 – Practicum stress.** Participants in the three focus groups believed that the practicum experience caused them considerable stress, which stemmed from three main sources: managing the demands of practicum along with their personal commitments; experiencing schools which were vastly different to their previous experiences of schools; and, feeling underprepared for practicum, particularly the challenges of teaching drama. Subsequently, three dimensions of practicum stress were identified: (1.1) managing practicum and personal commitments; (1.2) culture shock; and, (1.3) feeling underprepared.

**Dimension 1.1: Managing practicum and personal commitments.** Participants reported experiencing considerable stress from the heavy workload that practicum entailed, particularly from the time-consuming process of planning lessons and marking students’ work. In fact, participants described spending between three and six hours each evening planning lessons in preparation for the next day. In Sam’s case, keeping up with his lesson planning and marking students’ work became increasingly stressful.
He explained:

*To begin with, I was spending six hours a night just planning lessons. Then when the journals came in, I’d be trying to mark them too. I wasn’t getting to bed before 2am most nights and it all just got too much.*

While participants agreed that the practicum workload was sustained and arduous, they also experienced stress while managing their personal commitments, including completing assessments from their university coursework. Emily’s experience encapsulates this view:

*Lesson planning was so time consuming. I’d go home after two hours on a bus and then spend six hours writing three lesson plans. We’re still at uni, too, and I had two assignments due. It was so full on and stressful to say the least.*

Furthermore, all participants worked between eight and 15 hours a week in part-time jobs. As participants were unable to take leave from their jobs during the practicum, due to not being able to afford the loss of income, they experienced considerable stress managing both practicum and employment commitments. Claire, for example, recalled, “*working all day at my prac school, going straight to work for a five hour shift and then it would be home to plan lessons for the rest of the night.*” Cindy commented, “*I found juggling prac and my part-time job so stressful. I mean, prac is a full-time commitment but then we all have part-time jobs too. We have to work so we can afford to live.*”

Participants also discussed the added challenge of the non-curricular drama component of practicum such as attending or supervising rehearsals, assisting with direction or choreography for productions, sewing and mending costumes, and, assisting students with their character development and performance technique. Tessa’s experience highlights the struggle she experienced balancing her part-time job and her practicum commitments, which included attending rehearsals for the school production.
She explained:

*I work Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. So when we had the school production on, I was here all day, came back for rehearsals and performances and then went to work. It was an insane workload but I know it’s what drama teachers do. I mean the workload is full on.*

While participants understood that non-curricular commitments were an integral part of being a drama teacher, they generally felt that such commitments were difficult to manage and that they contributed to participants’ stress. It is interesting that participants seemed to accept that stress was an inevitable part of being a drama teacher and therefore an inevitable part of being a pre-service drama teacher during practicum.

It is reasonable to assume that all pre-service teachers find managing the practicum workload and personal commitments stressful at times. It would appear, however, that pre-service teachers with non-curricular responsibilities, like pre-service drama teachers involved in performance activities, may experience additional stress, due to added time demands and pressure on their workload.

**Dimension 1.2: Culture shock.** The second dimension of practicum stress embodies the culture shock participants experienced whilst on practicum. In the case of this research, “culture shock” refers to participants’ heightened sense of uncertainty and anxiety experienced when placed in a practicum school that was unfamiliar and often different from their own school experiences or previous practicum experiences. While it is necessary to expose pre-service teachers to a variety of schools in order to prepare them for the diverse school cultures in which they may eventually work, it was evident that these participants were largely unprepared for the culture shock experienced in some schools and which they found stressful. Vanessa, who had attended a conservative private school for most of her education, found the culture shock encountered on her first practicum overwhelming and stressful.
She explained:

_I came from a good school where we had an amazing drama teacher. I was like – this is what I want to do and this is what every classroom must be like. And then I got out there [practicum school] and yeah it was a big shock. The whole school was just so different to what I expected. I hated my first prac. I didn’t want to be there and I would come home and cry most days._

Other participants revealed that challenging student behaviour and the lack of respect for teachers contributed to their culture shock. Nella, for example, recalled feeling “out of [her] comfort zone” as she witnessed behaviour with which she was unfamiliar and uncomfortable. She said, “We’d never behave like that at school.” Alice similarly recalled:

_The first two weeks of my second prac was terrible. I’d never seen anything like it before and felt panicked as soon as I’d walk in the school gate. I got really upset because the kids weren’t very nice and it was completely different to how I went to school and how the kids were on my first prac. It was such a shock._

It is evident that these pre-service drama teachers attended the practicum with an expectation of what teaching, in particular their drama classes, would be like. The culture shock experienced when their expectations differed from the reality of the classroom resulted in participants experiencing considerable stress.

**Dimension 1.3: Feeling underprepared.** Participants in all three focus groups felt the coursework component of their pre-service education had been inadequate in preparing them for the rigours of practicum, particularly the curriculum and content knowledge required to teach drama. Consequently, participants felt the lack of adequate preparation caused them unnecessary angst and stress whilst on practicum. Mandy highlights these sentiments by describing the theoretical component of her teaching degree as being unhelpful in preparing her for the practicalities of teaching:

_I really struggle with being overly bombarded with all the theory in this course. So much of it seems pointless. I sit in class and wonder how this is helpful to me. I dread standing in front of a class and being so unprepared._
have no idea about drama curriculum or how to assess students? I need to understand practical things about teaching. Uni just doesn’t prepare us for that.

Participants also commented on the lack of drama pedagogical content knowledge in their teaching degree, and their dissatisfaction with generalised units that did not address the specific requirements of teaching drama. Claire and Nella’s discussion on this point was as follows:

Claire: We’ve learnt all this stuff that isn’t relevant. We need more drama-specific – like the drama classroom. How do you teach in the drama room and where do you stand? It’s such a big space and the kids can muck around in there without being seen. This was something I was nervous about when I went out on prac.

Nella: Our education units looked at classrooms where students sit behind a desk. Well that’s not drama. That’s not going to help me. I’m sick of hearing about maths teachers, English teachers etc. It’s all from that perspective. Drama’s different to all those subjects. It’s practical for a start and it has kids moving around the space, working in groups, even operating the lighting board.

Claire and Nella’s comments highlight the unique nature of teaching drama. The lack of drama-specific pedagogical content knowledge, which saw some participants attend practicum feeling unprepared and anxious about their ability to teach drama, suggests a need to re-examine the content and approaches taken in the coursework component of the participants’ teaching degree.

It is apparent from the participants’ reflections that practicum stress is an area of concern for pre-service drama teachers. While participants were aware of being stressed, they did not feel able to change their situation, instead resolving that stress was an inevitable part of practicum. A more thorough understanding of the sources that contribute to practicum stress is needed, in order to find ways to better prepare pre-service drama teachers to manage the challenges of practicum. Therefore, using additional sources of data, the dimensions of practicum stress will be investigated further in Phase 2.
Theme 2 – Self-efficacy. This theme depicts participants’ improved self-efficacy gained during practicum from positive key experiences. Participants agreed that, despite the challenges it presented, the practicum affirmed their career choice, belief in their capacity to be a good teacher and ignited their passion for teaching drama. Furthermore, participants believed that these positive key experiences, which as Tom suggested, “gave [them] more positive things to focus on” helped to mitigate the effects of the stress they experienced. Three dimensions of self-efficacy were identified: (2.1) building relationships of trust and rapport; (2.2) realisation of own ability; and, (2.3) teaching drama education.

Dimension 2.1: Building relationships of trust and rapport. Participants spoke at length of the enjoyment and satisfaction gained from working closely with students and the participants’ capacity to develop trust and rapport. The emotion, evident in participants’ voices and body language during focus groups, indicated the depth and significance of such encounters upon them. Simone, for example, described the effect a student with learning difficulties made on her during a practicum:

I was so touched when some of the kids gave me thank you cards at the end. There was a girl I was teaching who was dyslexic. She made me a card, drew a picture of me and worked hard to write as well. I was like...wow.

Similarly, participants described the enjoyment and fulfilment gained from seeing the impact of their teaching on their students’ learning. Some participants recalled specific moments when they had made a difference. Rebecca explained, “I love the glint in the students’ eyes when they start to comprehend what you’re trying to do. The excitement when you introduce something new. I really enjoyed that.”

In fact, participants agreed that the highlight of practicum was working with students, particularly in the connections participants made with students and in the gradual development of trust. For example, Vanessa recalled, “When kids test the boundaries
with you and then start to gradually develop a bit of respect, there’s like a click that goes off and they start to trust you.” It is evident that the participants’ ability to relate to their students and to build rapport, strongly affirmed their enthusiasm to work with young people.

**Dimension 2.2: Realisation of own ability.** Added to the personal satisfaction and enjoyment gained from working with students, participants spoke enthusiastically of the moment when they realised they had an ability to teach. For many of the participants, the practicum was their first opportunity to work with young people; therefore, being able to test their skills in the drama room was an important component. Carla explained, “I can know all the theory but if I can’t convey that to students then there’s no point me being a teacher. So being on prac and seeing that I can convey it, is the most affirming thing.” Participants recalled key experiences when they were presented with what seemed an overwhelming challenge, yet through their determination, they were able to succeed, learn, and grow in confidence. Kyle described an experience whereby the absence of his mentor teacher provided an opportunity to assume responsibility and experience success. He said:

> *My best experience on prac was a day my mentor teacher was sick and I was in charge. I was worried about the whole day because the teacher wasn’t there - but it went really well. That was the best moment on prac knowing I can do this and I can teach drama.*

It is evident that this positive key experience was a real turning point for Kyle and gave him the confidence to take control of his situation.

**Dimension 2.3: Teaching drama education.** Even though participants had identified feeling unprepared for teaching drama education, it was evident that they experienced success with some of the drama lessons they had prepared and delivered whilst on practicum. Participants spoke avidly of the enjoyment and rewards of teaching drama as
they shared stories of feeling empowered by the effect their lessons had on individual students. Skye recalled:

> When you see students going into the space and bravely explore issues such as racism, alcohol abuse and violence. You can explore these issues safely through drama. When it really clicks for them, I feel like I’ve helped them learn about certain issues and about themselves. That’s a pretty special thing to be able to do.

Aoife similarly experienced satisfaction in constructing lessons designed to develop students’ self-confidence. Aoife explained that while observing a particular year 10 class, she noticed two students did not want to participate in the activities and believed this to be from a lack of self-confidence. She said:

> These two girls just sat at the back and hid behind the others. I could see that they wanted to join in but didn’t have the guts to get up with the other kids. That night, I decided to specifically write them into the lesson by beginning with some drama games that would bring them out of their shells. It worked wonders. From that moment, I included little games at the beginning of each lesson to help these kids. By the end of my prac, I could see it had made a difference. That’s the beauty of drama.

It is clear that these positive key experiences are a valuable component of practicum, providing participants with reassurance and improved self-efficacy. Further, they provide participants with more positive experiences to focus on, rather than the challenges and stress practicum seems to engender.

**Theme 3 – Mentoring practices.** Mentoring practices were widely discussed in each focus group. Some participants’ spoke appreciatively of the support received and admiration developed for their mentor teachers. Other participants discussed mentor teachers who they deemed to be ineffective and unsupportive, which was detrimental to their professional development. Two dimensions of mentoring practices were identified: (3.1) positive mentoring practices; and, (3.2) negative mentoring practices.

**Dimension 3.1: Positive mentoring practices.** For some participants, the support and guidance of their mentor teacher was appreciated and deemed integral to their
development and enjoyment of practicum. These participants spoke with admiration of the mentor’s ability to model effective teaching practice, provide constructive feedback, as well as their generosity with resources. For instance, Skye recalled, “My mentor was amazing. She gave feedback that encouraged me but showed what I needed to improve on. She was helpful with resources and had strong strategies put in place so it was great to see how they’re demonstrated.” In addition, Rebecca attributed her practicum “survival” to the support and leadership provided by her mentor teacher, saying, “The only reason I got through my second prac was because I had an amazing mentor teacher. If I hadn’t had her there I would have asked to move. I probably wouldn’t continue teaching if I didn’t have her.”

The participants believed that having a mentor teacher who gave them freedom and flexibility during practicum was important to their development as drama teachers. Furthermore, participants appreciated having mentor teachers who acknowledged and valued the skills they brought with them and facilitated opportunities for participants to teach areas they were interested in or familiar with. Skye, for example, recalled that in her first practicum she “earned” her freedom, saying, “My mentor teacher gave me a lot of freedom but she had to actually test the waters first, like in the first couple of days, just to see what I was like.”

In summary, participants viewed a mentor teacher with positive mentoring practices as: (a) supportive; (b) provides guidance and constructive feedback; (c) models effective teaching practice; (d) shares resources; (e) encourages freedom and flexibility; and, (f) values the individual skills of the pre-service drama teacher. However, while some participants were able to benefit significantly from the collegial guidance and support of their mentor teacher, others experienced the relationship differently.
**Dimension 3.2: Negative mentoring practices.** Some participants expressed feeling unwanted by their mentor teacher. Ben, for example, commented, “You can see that the mentor teacher is frustrated because you’re taking a step out of their normal program.” Alana added, “Then through the grapevine you hear about teachers complaining about having prac students and having to get their students back on track once the prac teacher has left.” For these participants, feeling unwanted and an “annoyance” for the mentor teachers made them feel anxious and as Alice stated, “made me feel like I didn’t belong.”

Participants also spoke about the difficulty of having conflicting teaching styles to those of their mentor teachers. Several participants felt they were expected to teach like their mentor teacher, even when it conflicted with their own emerging style and beliefs. Tom stated, “I noticed my teacher came from an English teaching background. I struggled with her philosophies on drama education considering I’m from an acting and theatre background.” Despite differing styles, these participants found themselves “going along” with the expectations of their mentor teachers in order to avoid conflict, or as Alice described, “To keep the peace.”

Participants discussed mentor teachers who exhibited unprofessional and poor teaching practice. Fiona explained her experience with a mentor teacher who spent each lesson working with a select group of students while other students sat and watched. She recalled, “All they did was one production after another and they rehearsed during class. Some kids would just sit down and watch while he directed his favourite kids.”

Aoife felt her mentor teacher had exploited her and said:

> I wrote her job application for her while I was there. Some things she asked me to do were totally unreasonable but I didn’t want to break the expectation she had of me. I thought I did go above and beyond what was expected but at the time I was desperate to not annoy her.
In addition to exhibiting unprofessional and poor teaching practice, some mentor teachers were perceived to have bullied participants. Samantha recalled a practicum she had shared with a peer and the mentor teacher who had belittled them in front of students and treated them badly for the duration of the practicum.

She said:

*I just felt sick at the end of each day. It made me question if this [teaching] was what I wanted to do. I didn’t know why I felt sick; I guess I was just so nervous. The other student dropped out after the first week and I never saw her again. That was such a shame as I think she would have been a great teacher.*

A perceived lack of power to manage the relationship was a common feeling amongst participants, even when they knew they were being treated unfairly. Kyle recalled an experience where his mentor teacher had ignored him for the duration of his practicum, which left him feeling isolated and dreading each day. The lack of communication with his mentor teacher had rippling effects in the drama room. Kyle explained:

*On my last prac, I would have days where I’d go in and the mentor teacher wouldn’t even say hello. At the end of the day she would just leave without saying goodbye. So it would be a whole day with no communication. She didn’t even introduce me to classes so the first few days I was just this stranger in the corner. That set up my relationship with the students for the entire prac. I was that stranger in the corner and that stranger taking the class. It was terrible.*

The experiences of these participants highlight the considerable impact the mentor teacher has on the practicum. This influence is of particular concern when the mentor teacher exhibits unprofessional behaviour and the pre-service teacher feels powerless to speak up or seek help. The additional data collected in Phase 2, which includes the mentor teachers’ perspectives on mentoring, will explore this theme further. Of particular interest is whether pre-service drama teachers have realistic expectations of mentor teachers as well as how the mentor teacher views his or her role of mentoring.
The final theme identified in this phase of the research focused on the pre-service drama teacher’s work, both in and out of the classroom.

**Theme 4 – The business of teaching.** Participants reflected on a number of pedagogical skills they found challenging, including planning for student learning and assessment and instructional skills such as questioning. Participants also reflected on the different opportunities the practicum provided to experience and engage with the wider school community. Consequently, two dimensions of the business of teaching were identified: (4.1) pedagogical skills; and, (4.2) engaging with the wider school community.

**Dimension 4.1: Pedagogical skills.** Participants agreed that practicum provided a valuable opportunity to develop the pedagogical skills necessary to be an effective drama teacher; however, more time was needed in schools in order to hone these skills. For example, Sam said, “I don’t see why teaching can’t be more like an apprenticeship. You learn so much more when you’re out in the classroom than you do sitting in lectures back at uni!” Carla agreed, and said:

> Yeah, we had no school observation until second year. Even if it’s once a week where we could observe our mentors teach and start to develop some of these skills. There just isn't enough time in the classroom.

Consequently, given the lack of time in schools, participants found planning for student learning particularly challenging. Participants struggled to understand students’ prior knowledge and how to scaffold activities. Sometimes the participants had inaccurate notions of students’ achievement levels. This was reflected in Ken’s comment that, “A challenge for me was the students’ prior knowledge. Where to pitch it? At times I was pitching up here, when their actual level was much lower. Of course I wouldn’t realise that until half-way through the lesson.” However, despite the challenges participants experienced, it was evident that they remained optimistic and eager to improve their
pedagogical skills. Some participants highlighted the role their mentor teacher had played in helping them develop their skills.

Mandy said, “My mentor had really good questioning skills and she helped me to develop mine [questioning skills]. She said on my next prac we will continue to strengthen these skills.” Other participants employed self-reflection strategies to improve their teaching practice. Skye said:

*I preferred reflecting privately. When I was on prac, I not only reflected on my teaching practice, but also on when I was a teenager. Through that you form empathy because you know it is a hard time [growing up].*

It is not surprising that the practicum was a considerable learning experience for the participants, where their preconceived ideas of student learning and of their own pedagogical skills were tested. It would be reasonable to suggest, however, that even experienced teachers would find some of these pedagogical skills challenging. This raises the question as to whether these participants have realistic expectations of their skill levels. Additional data, collected in Phase 2, will establish if the participants’ personal expectations are reasonable and also determine whether these pedagogical skills and understandings improve given more time in schools.

**Dimension 4.2: Engaging with the wider school community.** Emerging from discussions on pedagogical skills, was the importance of moving beyond viewing the practicum as merely an opportunity to teach lessons, to an opportunity to understand and engage with the wider school community. Participants spoke about attending a variety of activities such as staff meetings and social events where they learnt about school procedures, met staff from other subject areas, and, as Mandy stated, “become familiar with the extra things teachers do.”

Participants emphasised the need for more time in schools in order to adjust to the school and, in Emily’s words, “soak up the school’s culture.” In fact, participants believed that
shorter practicums were problematic, particularly as they did not allow sufficient time to “settle in”. Mandy relayed:

_It’s like – I haven’t been in a high school since I was in high school myself. So I walk in and observe for a day and then I’m teaching a lesson. I didn’t know the kids or how the school worked or how the discipline system worked. Being able to go and observe the school before prac would have been really helpful._

In addition, participants highlighted their dissatisfaction with how little exposure they had had to schools within their pre-service education; they deemed this a hindrance to developing realistic understandings of what happens in schools. Participants yearned for further opportunities within their pre-service education to develop their understanding and familiarity with a variety of schools. Carla commented:

_For me to be more prepared for prac there needs to be more experience within a school culture. Not just the classroom – the actual culture of being in a school. It comes down to the lifestyle, career...it’s not just a job._

It is evident that pre-service drama teachers place high value on the role of practicum to acculturate them to working within schools. However, it appears that the low number of practicums and their short duration are problematic, due to insufficient time to develop important pedagogical skills and to engage with the wider school community. Additional data collected in Phase 2 will determine if an extended practicum helps alleviate some of the concerns these participants have.

**Discussion of Themes Emerging in Phase 1**

The focus groups enabled an overview of the practicum which has revealed the considerable highs and lows which characterise the practicum experience for pre-service drama teachers. These findings confirmed many of the initial concerns that prompted this research.

**Practicum highs.** The improved self-efficacy gained by participants during practicum was a significant finding in Phase 1. It was evident that the relationships participants built...
with their students, the realisation of their ability to be an effective teacher and their enthusiasm for teaching drama, resulted in improved self-efficacy and seemed to reduce the effects of practicum stress by providing positive experiences on which to focus.

Strong self-efficacy is important as research has shown that teachers with high self-efficacy are better able to assist students reach their potential and are more resilient (Pendergast et al., 2011).

An effective mentor teacher who welcomed the pre-service drama teacher into their school, valued their input and cared about their professional development, was identified as a significant component of a positive practicum experience. These findings are consistent with research which identifies the integral role of effective mentor teachers in creating quality practicum experiences for pre-service teachers (Appl & Spenciner, 2008; Lai, 2005; Wyckoff et al., 2009). Effective mentor teachers were collegial, provided support and guidance and became strong role models for participants. It was evident that practicum was made more manageable, enjoyable and productive for participants with a collegiate mentor relationship.

While it is helpful to understand the practicum “highs”, it is the “lows” that are of most concern to this dissertation and require further investigation in order to better prepare pre-service drama teachers for the practicum and thus strengthen their induction into the profession.

**Practicum lows.** Of particular concern is the stress participants experienced during practicum, caused by a range of factors that included the challenge of managing personal and practicum commitments, and the added non-curricular activities which is an integral component of teaching drama. Further factors were the culture shock experienced by participants whose expectations of teaching drama differed to its reality, the lack of
adequate preparation to manage the rigours of practicum, and content knowledge required to teach drama education.

Participants’ experience of stress is consistent with previous studies reporting on practicum stress (Badali, 2008; Caires et al., 2010; Hastings, 2004) and highlights the need for more adequate preparation and support of pre-service drama teachers to manage the challenges of practicum.

Another area of concern revealed from this phase of the research, is the impact of negative mentoring practices on participants’ practicum experience. The adverse effects of negative mentoring practices on pre-service teachers, and/or difficult relationships between pre-service teachers and their mentor teachers is recognised in the research (Hastings, 2004; Ralph, 2000), particularly the negative impact on pre-service teacher’s self-confidence (Moody, 2009). It was evident that participants experienced mentor teachers who exhibited unwelcoming and unprofessional behaviours which contributed to participants’ stress and poor practicum outcomes.

The final concern raised from Phase 1 is the lack of time in schools for pre-service drama teachers to hone their pedagogical skills, while getting to know the school and the way it operates. This finding is reflected in previous research which highlights the inadequate time pre-service teachers spend in real-school settings (e.g. Grudnoff, 2011; Langdon et al., 2012). Indeed, for pre-service drama teachers who need to experience both the curricular and non-curricular side of teaching drama, the practicum can be a whirlwind of experiences that passes all too quickly. It is thus reasonable to suggest that longer practicums may offer more opportunity and perhaps a better alternative for pre-service drama teachers.

Since the practicum is recognised as an integral component of pre-service education (de Leon-Carillo, 2007; Grudnoff, 2011; Wyckoff et al., 2009), the fears and concerns
articulated by these pre-service drama teachers are worthy of deeper investigation. Therefore, Phase 2 builds on this understanding by using additional sources of data (participant observation, formal and informal interviews, practicum journals, lesson plans, lesson reflections and practicum evaluations) to more closely examine three key issues and challenges of drama practicum. These are:

- Theme 1 – Practicum stress.
- Theme 3 – Mentoring practices.
- Theme 4 – The business of teaching.
Chapter 5

Phase 2 – Practice in Action

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the analysed data and discussion from Phase 2 of the research. This phase investigated the second research question of the study, using key themes and dimensions revealed in Phase 1, together with additional sources of data (participant observations, formal and informal interviews, journals, lesson plans, lesson reflections, practicum evaluations), to gain a clearer understanding of key issues and challenges of practicum for pre-service drama teachers.

Research Question 2: What are the key issues and challenges of the practicum for pre-service drama teachers?

Introduction

As noted in the previous chapter, the first phase of the research provided an overview of the practicum experience for pre-service drama teachers, providing insight into key issues and challenges. Phase 2 deepened the inquiry by using the site of participants’ ATP, the practicum most like the experience of a regular full-time drama teacher. This 11-week practicum involved participants assuming most of their mentors’ full teaching load,
approximately 18 hours of teaching each week, as well as assisting with non-curricular activities such as drama productions and excursions. Requirements and assessment information pertaining to the ATP are provided in Appendix E.

Participants

Five pre-service drama teachers selected from Phase 1 were participants in this phase of the study. As previously noted in Chapter 3, pseudonyms have been assigned to each participant. A short profile of each participant is provided, incorporating details of their age, practicum placement, personal challenges and results gained from their ATP. At the time of conducting this phase of the research, participants were all in their final year of pre-service education, completing a Bachelor of Arts (Education) and a Bachelor of Creative Arts.

Simone, 34 years old. Simone’s ATP was at a public high school, in a low socio-economic area. Simone was given a full teaching load from the first week of practicum, comprising dance education (her minor teaching area) and drama education (her major teaching area). Simone found student behaviour in her classes challenging, stating that the “good majority of students were unmotivated and with low aspirations to succeed in their drama studies”. Over time, Simone developed good rapport with her students, but found classroom management to be very challenging. Her relationship with her mentor teacher was difficult, as she felt her mentor was too controlling of the students, averse to giving Simone freedom to try her own ideas, and often rude to her in front of the students. In addition, Simone spent two hours travelling to and from practicum each day. As she lived out of home and had rent and living expenses to pay, Simone had to juggle part-time work with her practicum commitments. To compound her difficulties, part way through her practicum, Simone broke her leg and had to navigate her practicum with much reduced mobility. Consequently, Simone had to move back home.
with her parents so that her father could drive her to and from practicum. Simone did, however, complete her ATP and was awarded “Outstanding” for both her Teaching Skills and Professional Development.

Claire, 21 years old. Claire’s ATP was at a public high school in a low to middle socio-economic area, and her teaching load was comprised mostly of drama education (her major teaching area) with some art education (her minor teaching area). Claire struggled with the behaviour exhibited by many of the students and reported that they were generally “unmotivated, argumentative and loath to participate or succeed in drama”. Claire found the school environment, particularly classroom management issues, a constant challenge and consequently did not enjoy her ATP as much as some of her earlier practicums. Claire commented on how she struggled to be the teacher she wanted to be due to the poor behaviour students exhibited in most classes. Claire believed her mentor teacher was not interested in guiding her development and stated, “I feel left alone to sink or swim”. Despite the challenges this practicum presented, Claire worked hard and achieved “Outstanding” for both her Teaching Skills and Professional Development. However, at the conclusion of the practicum, Claire felt that her dream of becoming a drama teacher had to some extent been lost.

Cindy, 21 years old. Cindy’s ATP was at a public high school with a good reputation for academic achievement and the Arts. Cindy’s teaching load was made up mostly of drama education (major) with some art education (minor). Cindy found teaching at this school to be very rewarding and she stated that the students were “responsive, motivated, creative and a pleasure to work with”.

Cindy developed strong rapport with her students, particularly with her students in upper-school classes, which reminded her of what drama classes were like for her when
she was a student at school. This practicum was very positive and the most rewarding experience of all her practicum placements.

Cindy believed her mentor teacher was largely responsible for her success and appreciated the encouragement and support her mentor provided. Cindy felt that this was the only practicum where she was welcomed, and treated as a valued member of the school community; she was disappointed to finish her practicum due to the close bonds she had developed with her mentor and students. Cindy achieved “Outstanding” for both her Teaching Skills and Professional Development.

**Kyle, 24 years old.** Kyle was placed at a specialist Performing Arts school for his ATP, where he taught drama education (major) and media education (minor). The Performing Arts department had a large, enthusiastic staff and a range of well-equipped and purpose-built facilities. Kyle was mentored by four teachers, all with extensive experience and differing teaching styles. While at times Kyle found moving between four mentor teachers challenging, he enjoyed the opportunity to learn from four very different role models. Kyle felt welcomed, valued and supported during his ATP, which was a significant change from previous practicums.

However, while Kyle enjoyed his practicum, he was under financial pressure and was obliged to work considerable hours to keep up with his rent and living expenses. He also travelled up to two hours a day on his motorbike to his practicum school, often in adverse weather conditions. Kyle worked hard but found it a constant struggle to keep up with the expectations of the practicum, especially the extra rehearsals after school time, which would clash with his part-time work.

Kyle completed his practicum and achieved “Outstanding” for his Teaching Skills and “Highly Competent” for Professional Development.
**Nella, 23 years old.** Nella was placed at an elite private boys’ school for her ATP. Her teaching load comprised mostly of drama education (major) and dance education (minor). This was Nella’s most rewarding practicum and she reported her students to be “motivated, creative, respectful and responsive” to her as a teacher. As a result, Nella felt she was able to be the teacher she had always wanted to be.

Nella developed a close bond with her mentor teacher, who provided her with great encouragement and support throughout practicum, which was a departure from Nella’s experience of previous practicums. Nella had high expectations of herself and worked hard throughout practicum. She immersed herself into all aspects of the ATP, even volunteering to choreograph the school production. Due to the considerable workload, added involvement with the school production, and necessity of keeping up with her part-time work, Nella became sick and run down during practicum. Despite prolonged sickness, she persevered with practicum, achieving “Outstanding” for both her Teaching Skills and Professional Development.

**Mentor teachers.** The other participants in this phase of the research are the five in-service drama teachers who were the main mentors to participants during their ATP. In the interests of protecting the mentor teachers’ identity, individual details of their background and teaching career are not provided. However, it is important to note that the mentors’ teaching experience ranged from eight to 25 years, both in public and private schools within Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Three of the mentors had considerable experience mentoring pre-service teachers (over 15 pre-service drama teachers), and two teachers had mentored around six pre-service drama teachers. Four mentor teachers had volunteered to take a pre-service drama teacher for this ATP, whereas one mentor teacher had been approached by the university as they were in need of additional practicum placements. Furthermore, four of the mentor
teachers were female and one was male; all mentor teachers completed their pre-service education at a Western Australian institution.

**Drama Practicum – Key Issues and Challenges**

Three themes selected from Phase 1 of the research guided this phase:

- Theme 1 – Practicum stress.
- Theme 3 – Mentoring practices.
- Theme 4 – The business of teaching.

Each theme is now discussed in turn, beginning with Theme 1 – Practicum stress.

**Theme 1 – Practicum stress.** Phase 1 revealed that practicum stress was a concern for pre-service drama teachers, and in Phase 2 further clarification was sought regarding the sources of stress, particularly the implications of non-curricular drama as well as participants’ personal expectations.

In Phase 2, evidence of the dimensions of practicum stress was found, as well as two further dimensions: stress experienced due to previous negative practicum experiences, and stress due to the “high stakes” nature of the ATP. As Table 5 illustrates, the participants experienced stress in both similar and different ways. For example: all participants experienced stress from managing the practicum workload and personal commitments; two participants experienced stress from culture shock in their practicum school; three participants were stressed about being underprepared for the ATP; three participants were stressed prior to beginning the ATP due to previous negative practicum experiences; and all participants felt sustained stress due to the high-stakes nature of the ATP.
Table 5
*Phase 2: Dimensions of Practicum Stress*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Simone</th>
<th>Claire</th>
<th>Cindy</th>
<th>Kyle</th>
<th>Nella</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Managing practicum and personal commitments</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Culture shock</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 Feeling under prepared</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<td>1.4 Previous negative experiences</td>
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<td>1.5 High-stakes practicum</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dimension 1.1: Managing practicum and personal commitments.**

“*Managing it all is killing me.*” (Kyle)

While participants recognised that the ATP was going to be hard work managing part-time work, non-curricular drama activities, lesson planning, programming and assessment tasks, the research showed that participants were largely unaware of just how stressful it would become. This was partly due to the lack of attention this issue had been given in the coursework component of their teaching degree, and in part due to the extended duration of the ATP, with participants needing to manage their practicum workload and personal commitments for 11 weeks. Kyle, for example, experienced considerable stress juggling his part-time job and his practicum commitments. He stated in an interview, “*Having to work week nights and weekends was so hard and not getting the down time I needed because I was working to pay the bills.*” Indeed, the lack of “down time” contributed to his stress and had repercussions on his personal relationship. Kyle explained, “*This had such a negative effect on my relationship with my girlfriend. I just had to remind myself that the work and stress would be gone in a number of weeks. I was also lucky that my mentor teachers were so understanding and supportive.*”
Kyle’s mentor teacher was aware of the stress Kyle experienced while managing a part-time job with practicum commitments, stating, “Kyle needs to earn a living. He’s not in a situation of being at home and having that support.” While Kyle’s mentor teacher was sympathetic to his situation, he believed Kyle’s part-time work commitments prevented Kyle from gaining the most from his practicum experience. The mentor teacher stated, “There are times when he just has to go, and he can’t do stuff like work with the guest directors because he has to eat. He had to go to the tavern on Tuesday night to wash dishes straight after school.”

Kyle’s experience highlights the adversity some pre-service teachers face during the teaching practicum, which in Kyle’s case, took the form of financial hardship. For Kyle, like other participants in this study, managing personal issues with the rigours of the ATP caused considerable stress, particularly as the practicum was sustained. These findings are consistent with previous research, which indicates that the practicum experience for pre-service teachers is a complex process that involves pre-service teachers attending to both personal and professional issues (Calderhead, 1996; Dobbins, 1996; Groundwater-Smith, 1993).

Furthermore, considerable evidence was found in relation to the impact of the non-curricular drama component on the participants’ practicum stress. Nella, for example, was involved in the school production, assisting her mentor teacher with rehearsals and production tasks as well as choreographing the entire show (approximately 12 dances). This commitment, along with the pressure to keep up with lesson planning and marking, accumulated to a point where she experienced a “breakdown” of sorts. She wrote in her practicum journal:

*I’m stressed. I had a breakdown tonight after a long day of production rehearsals. I doubt myself and whether I’ll make it through to the end of this prac but I need to keep going. I’ve had a big cry. I’m exhausted.*
Following the production, Nella became unwell and rundown from lack of sleep and energy spent in production activities. Her journal described her exhaustion and poor physical health when she wrote, “*The production has taken its toll. I’m extremely tired and beginning to fall behind with my lesson plans. My body aches all over and my throat feels like I’m swallowing glass.*”

While Nella’s mentor teacher spoke highly of Nella’s commitment to her practicum, she was also aware of the physical toll Nella’s involvement in the school production had taken. She stated:

> *Nella sat through a 90-hour week during the production and she did a good job. Even though I told her she could go [home] as she had to work the next day, she stuck it out because she wanted to be here [practicum school]. But she’s sick now. I was sick straight after too. That’s what happens, I guess, when you get so run down.*

It is evident from Nella’s practicum experience, and those of the other participants in this phase, that involvement in non-curricular drama activities placed considerable pressure on the pre-service drama teachers and contributed to their practicum stress. Furthermore, it seems that while mentor teachers were aware of this issue, they believed non-curricular involvement to be an inevitable part of being a pre-service drama teacher.

**Dimension 1.2: Culture shock.**

> “*The behaviour is so bad. I’m stressed out of my mind. What am I going to do?”* (Claire)

Claire and Simone were the only participants who experienced stress from the culture shock of working in schools that differed considerably from the schools in their previous experiences. The main issue was the poor student behaviour, which as Simone stated in an interview, was “*stressful and confronting.*”
It is important to note that both Claire and Simone’s previous practicum evaluations indicate a high ability to manage student behaviour and thus behaviour management was not an area of weakness perceived by previous mentor teachers.

For Simone, the behaviour in both drama and dance classes was very confronting and she reported having not experienced such inappropriate behaviour in her previous experiences of school. The first three weeks were particularly challenging and she stated in her journal, “What a culture shock! These kids scare the living daylights out of me. They just won’t do a thing I ask them. This is hell. Somehow I have to stay optimistic and turn things around.” Simone’s resilience and hard work clearly paid off as by week six, she was more at ease with the students’ behaviour. She explained in an interview, “I knew it would get better, and it did. It just took time, patience and a thick skin.”

Claire’s experience similarly encapsulates the notion of culture shock as her ATP was the first occasion she had experienced such disruptive behaviour from her students which, as her practicum journal revealed, both shocked and distressed her:

*Week Three: All week the students have continually shocked me! They seem to be free to use inappropriate language and themes throughout drama and dance classes. All the improvisations are so derogatory to homosexuals! There is no real structure and many of the students don’t seem to do anything. I can’t believe how rude and disrespectful these students are! I can’t help but question if this is what I really want to do. We’d never behave like that. I mean, we loved drama.*

In addition, Claire’s mentor teacher confirmed the behaviour management issues within the school, saying “This is a school with a low to average socio-economic status and at times a poor standard of behaviour. Claire has had to deal with a range of behaviour management issues which have challenged her.” While Claire developed some effective classroom management skills to assist her, she nonetheless endured considerable stress throughout the duration of her ATP as a result of the challenging behaviour.
It is apparent from Claire’s experience that she approached the practicum with an expectation of what the school, and in particular her drama classes, would be like. This expectation was informed partly by her previous experience in schools, both as a school student and as a pre-service drama teacher. The culture shock she experienced when her expectations were not met, was stressful and caused her considerable anxiety. Claire’s experience highlights the significance of pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching based on their own experiences as students, and is consistent with previous research (Cheng et al., 2010; Joseph, 2010; Kagan, 1992).

**Dimension 1.3: Being underprepared.**

“I’m feeling vulnerable and anxious.” (Nella)

Claire, Cindy and Nella were stressed in the lead-up to and during their ATP. All three pre-service drama teachers were anxious about their perceived lack of content knowledge and preparedness for the rigours of teaching in their major and minor subject areas. For Claire, teaching her minor area of art education caused her particular stress, which she attributed to the poor level of instruction she had received at university. Whereas, Cindy stated in an interview prior to ATP that the “lack of attention given at uni to the specific skills of teaching drama” was at the centre of her stress.

Nella’s stress stemmed from a fear of her students knowing more than she. Nella’s week-three journal entry reflected her fears:

> I’m lying awake at night worrying they [students] will think I’m stupid. Then before and during class, I doubt my own knowledge and feel quite intimidated by the students and their wealth of knowledge. I’m not sure I’m cut out for this. I’m feeling vulnerable and stressed.

Fortunately, Nella’s mentor teacher was aware of the stress Nella experienced when teaching in particular areas in which she lacked confidence. In an interview, the mentor
teacher explained how she had helped Nella construct her lessons and reassured her that it was “okay to not know everything.” She recalled:

A couple of weeks ago she [Nella] did a session on the unseen script analysis of the exam with the year 11 students. We put the lesson together but she was very stressed about it because she hadn’t had enough opportunity to delve into those areas yet. I could see she was embarrassed and I had to let her know that it’s okay to not know everything. I mean there’s a lot to learn being a drama teacher.

The lack of confidence Nella felt in her ability and content knowledge was recognised and supported by her mentor teacher. This resulted in Nella being able to manage her stress and to strengthen her grasp of unfamiliar content knowledge with her mentor’s support and guidance.

**Dimension 1.4: Previous negative experiences.**

“What if they treat me like the woman from my last prac? I just couldn’t cope with 11 weeks of that.” (Kyle)

A further dimension of practicum stress was revealed in Phase 2 of the research, the stress participants felt based on previous negative practicum experiences. Kyle, Cindy and Nella reported feeling so stressed before commencing their ATP that they considered “dropping out”. Fortunately, their fears and anxieties were relieved within the first three weeks of the ATP by the warm reception provided by their mentor teachers.

Illustrating this dimension is Kyle’s experience of a previous practicum where he had been made to feel like an “unwanted stranger in the room.” This negative experience had left him feeling nervous and anxious about his ability to “fit in and cope in another hostile environment.” Kyle said in an interview, “What if they treat me like the woman [mentor teacher] from my last prac? I just couldn’t cope with 11 weeks of that. I must admit, I was so worried about it, I even considered dropping out.”
Similarly, Nella’s previous practicum had caused her to “dread what lies ahead,” describing her upcoming practicum in an interview as “a stressful, torturous chore.” This was largely due to the lack of opportunity to teach drama content during previous practicums, which had adversely impacted upon Nella’s confidence and self-belief. Nella had reservations about her ability to make it through her final practicum, an anxiety which is highlighted in her journal:

Week 1: (Monday) My previous prac experiences have been dominated by behaviour management problems and I haven’t had much chance to teach content. I know the expectations at this school are different and I’m scared I won’t know enough and my lack of confidence in what I’m teaching will show through.

It is evident that previous negative experiences had a significant impact on how participants approached their final practicum. Battling feelings of dread, self-doubt and inadequacy, the pre-service drama teachers attended their ATP, feeling stressed and anxious. Fortunately, their stress was managed by the actions and support of their mentor teachers, again reinforcing the importance of the mentor teacher to the practicum experience of pre-service teachers (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Ure, et al., 2009).

Dimension 1.5: High-stakes practicum.

“I feel I have to do what she [university supervisor] says as, at the end of the day, she’s assessing me.” (Cindy)

Participants reported considerable stress from the pressure of being assessed and the implications that their final assessment would have on their future teaching career. Participants remarked on how this stress continued for the duration of the ATP, and was only relieved once they had received confirmation of their final result in week 11. Cindy’s week-two reflection in her practicum journal described the stress she felt after going through the ATP marking key with her mentor teacher. She wrote, “I had a meltdown
when I got home. I’m scared to death that no matter how hard I try, I won’t get the marks I need to get a good job.”

In addition, Cindy’s feelings of stress were heightened after receiving conflicting feedback on her pedagogical skills from her university supervisor. This experience proved frustrating and stressful, as Cindy knew the university supervisor would have input into her final result. Cindy’s journal expressed the anguish she felt when her university supervisor came to observe her teach, and the negative feedback she received:

Week Four: This week was deflating to say the least. I felt like I’ve been going so well with all the feedback I have got from my mentor. But then my university supervisor came to watch me teach and has said the opposite. She has told me that I’m “too controlled and structured, and that I should let the kids go wild and see what they create”. I feel I have to do what she says as at the end of the day, she’s assessing me.

It could be argued that the university supervisor’s recommendation to “let the kids go wild” in order to “see what they create” shows a lack of understanding of drama pedagogy. Thus, for Cindy, enduring a university supervisor without adequate subject knowledge contributed to her stress and anxiety, as she felt she needed to accept and act on this advice, even when she knew it was not reasonable. Significantly, Cindy’s experience highlights the powerlessness pre-service teachers feel during the practicum, especially as their final result is determined by their mentor teacher and/or university supervisor.

**Summary.** The participants’ experiences of stress are consistent with previous studies (Badali, 2008; Caires et al., 2010; Hastings, 2004) reporting on practicum stress, and highlights the need for adequate preparation for pre-service teachers before embarking on practicum and support throughout the practicum.

For the participants in this research, addressing areas such as managing personal commitments with the practicum workload as well understanding personal expectations
and beliefs about teaching, would perhaps alleviate some of the stress experienced during practicum. By understanding the ways pre-service teachers experience and cope with stress during practicum, teacher educators may be better able to prepare pre-service teachers for the practicum and assist them to become more resilient teachers (Murray-Harvey, 2001).

Furthermore, there is a clear need to address the issue of workload for pre-service drama teachers due to the considerable impact of the non-curricular drama activities on their physical and mental health. While the pre-service drama teachers acknowledged that such activities were part of a drama teacher’s job, they nonetheless experienced added stress from the additional time commitment these activities engendered. Additionally, the issue of workload needs to be addressed with mentor teachers who appeared accepting of participants’ willingness to work extraordinary hours each week and resolved that while the non-curricular drama component was challenging and stressful, it was the reality of being a drama teacher. Donelan (1989) highlighted that stress is a recurring theme in the lives of drama teachers, due to the multiple roles and extra workload they are expected to assume. However, M. Anderson (2002, 2003) cautioned against overloading drama teachers, and questioned why more consideration is not given to beginning drama teachers facing these pressures.

**Theme 3 – Mentoring practices.** Phase 1 revealed that mentor teachers played an integral role in the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers and, while effective mentoring practices assisted participants to thrive, negative mentoring practices contributed to stress and poor practicum outcomes. Therefore, Phase 2 set out to gain a clearer understanding of the mentoring practices that best support a pre-service drama teacher.
As Table 6 illustrates, the participants’ experiences of mentoring practices were varied, with three participants benefiting from positive mentoring practices, and two participants experiencing somewhat negative mentoring practices.

Table 6
Phase 2: Dimensions of Mentoring Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Simone</th>
<th>Claire</th>
<th>Cindy</th>
<th>Kyle</th>
<th>Nella</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Positive mentoring practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Negative mentoring practices</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dimension 3.1: Positive mentoring practices.

“They made me feel like a teacher rather than a prac teacher.” (Kyle)

Cindy, Kyle and Nella’s mentor teachers proved positive role models, earning respect and admiration from the pre-service drama teachers. These participants thrived with the support and guidance of their mentor teachers, and believed that their success and enjoyment of their ATP was due largely to the role their mentor teachers played. Cindy admired the professionalism and efficacy of her mentor teacher and aspired to reach that level. In week five, she commented in her practicum journal:

I am having so much fun with my mentor teacher and we get along like a house on fire. She is just amazing to watch teach and I can only hope that one day I can have that [relationship] with my own students.

The generosity, support and nurturing manner of Cindy’s mentor teacher is highlighted further by the mentor’s reflection on her own mentoring style. The mentor explained:

I want my prac students to feel supported. I want them to teach areas that they feel passionate and confident about as well. I just want them to have a positive experience. I want to give them as much breadth of experience within the school as I can. I want to be as encouraging and supportive as I possibly can be. Giving them the freedom to work with classes and not to feel like they
have to teach in my style or anyone else’s style. I want them to discover their own style of teaching. I try to ensure that they’ve got classes that are well prepared for them as well, so it’s not like they have to take the really difficult classes. I give them experience with my upper-school classes and trust them.

The mentor’s reflection highlights the trust she places on her pre-service drama teachers as well as her desire for them to explore their own teaching style. Furthermore, the mentor’s reflection emphasises the clear vision she has of her mentoring role and how best to support her pre-service drama teachers.

Kyle’s mentor teachers played an integral role in alleviating the anxiety he felt approaching his ATP with the warm welcome they provided. This sharply contrasted to the unwelcoming reception Kyle received at his previous practicum school. He commented in an interview, “They [mentor teachers] could see that I was anxious and went out of their way to make me feel welcome. I felt so comfortable there. They made me feel like a teacher rather than a prac teacher.” The welcoming environment Kyle’s mentor teachers created helped to foster a sense of belonging in an unfamiliar and feared environment for Kyle. This had positive repercussions on his self-confidence and practicum outcomes.

In the cases of Nella and Cindy, their mentor teachers became allies and confidantes to them during the practicum. This was perhaps due to the extended time spent in practicum schools during the ATP and the resulting opportunity for mentor teachers and pre-service drama teachers to get to know each other.

This topic is discussed in mentoring literature, which indicates how mentoring roles change as the relationship evolves (Beijaard et al., 2007; Kostovich & Thurn, 2006; Lai, 2005). In fact, Cindy and Nella developed such strong relationships with their mentor teachers that they were able to confide openly and honestly without fear of appearing incompetent. Confiding in their mentor teachers proved to be a valuable coping strategy for these participants. Even though Cindy and Nella were anxious about the high-stakes
nature of the practicum and achieving the highest result possible, they were inclined to
speak honestly with their mentor teacher due to the trust, understanding and friendship
developed. Nella reflected in her practicum journal, “We’re similar in many ways; you’d
think the prac office [Professional Practice Department] paired us up based on a
personality match. It’s so bizarre and unfamiliar for me to have a relationship like this
with my mentor.”

It would appear that the connection Nella had with her mentor teacher meant that the
balance of power was more equal. Sharing similarities to her mentor teacher meant that
Nella felt more like a colleague than a practicum student. As a consequence, this more
balanced and collegial relationship fostered openness and honesty between the mentor
and pre-service drama teacher, which as Beck and Kosnik (2002) asserted, is a highly
desirable quality in the mentor/pre-service teacher relationship.

Nella’s mentor teacher echoed these sentiments by saying:

*She will have days where she will look at me and say, “I just don’t know what
to do.” I say, “That’s okay. We all have those days. Let it go. How are we
going to fix it? Okay, let’s try this.” If she’s scared of something, she’s not
alone.*

The nurturing, humanistic style embodied by this mentor teacher is most evident, as is her
ability to foster a sense of belonging for Nella. The opportunity to confide honestly and
ask for help was integral to Nella’s development and ability to thrive during her ATP.

The experiences of these participants and the literature pertaining to mentoring in
pre-service education, indicate that an effective mentor is vital in developing the
professional efficacy of pre-service teachers (Flores & Day, 2006; Harrison, 2008;
Hayes, 2004; Langdon et al., 2012).

Phase 1 of this research depicted effective mentoring practices as a mentor who is: (a)
supportive; (b) provides guidance and constructive feedback; (c) models effective
teaching practice; (d) shares resources; (e) encourages freedom and flexibility; and, (f) values the individual skills of the pre-service drama teacher. Phase 2 builds on this picture adding: (g) welcoming; (h) fosters a sense of belonging; (i) trusting; and, (j) collegial.

While this list of attributes appears idealistic, evidence of mentor teachers who possessed most, if not all of these qualities, was found in this phase of the research.

**Dimension 3.2: Negative mentoring practices.**

“We have such different teaching styles. She expects me to do as she does.” (Simone)

Simone and Claire did not benefit from the same level of support and guidance from their mentor teachers, which they believed impeded their professional development.

Furthermore, Simone and Claire were concerned with how these relationships would impact upon their final assessment and thus chose not to confide their true feelings to their mentor teachers.

Simone’s relationship with her mentor teacher proved difficult from the beginning of her ATP. During an interview, Simone conveyed how rude her mentor teacher had become towards her, making her feel uncomfortable and unwanted. Furthermore, Simone’s practicum journal highlighted the deteriorating relationship. In week six Simone noted, “I need to be allowed to learn, make my own decisions and mistakes. I think she’s [mentor teacher] getting freaked out that she’s not in control. I think she may resent me being here.” The angst Simone felt continued to grow as she worried how this relationship would impact upon her assessment. In week 10 she wrote:

*She is driving me crazy. I feel like I’m being treated as though I’m back on my first prac and she doesn’t think I know anything so needs to control it all. It makes me feel so uncomfortable as I can’t speak up to her. I hate to think what I’m going to get for my final assessment.*
Interestingly, Simone’s view of her mentor teacher as being “unhelpful and undermining” conflicted with how the mentor perceived her role and style. When asked in an interview about her mentoring style, the mentor teacher explained:

*I try to support my prac students and help them learn ways that work for me. Simone has timing issues in her classes so I bought a timer [stop watch] for the theatre to help her. I’ve also helped her a lot with lesson structure as they [students] need to be very structured here. If it wasn’t so structured, the classes would just dissolve into chaos very quickly.*

Although Simone’s mentor felt she was being helpful by teaching Simone “ways that work” for her, Simone believed her mentor expected her to adopt the mentor’s teaching style. This was particularly challenging for Simone, as she felt that in order for her to pass the ATP, she would have to “play the game”. Simone expressed her concerns in an interview saying, “*We have such different teaching styles. She expects me to do as she does. It just doesn’t come naturally to me. To be honest, I don’t like the way she teaches.*”

Simone’s predicament highlights the difficulty posed when there are differences in teaching style (Beck & Kosnik, 2002) and personal attributes (Ure et al., 2009) between mentor and pre-service teacher. A clear demarcation of roles and more assertive communication initiated by Simone would have been beneficial to Simone’s relationship with her mentor teacher. This is similarly acknowledged by Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) who emphasised the need for mentors and pre-service teachers to understand each other’s roles and how best to interact.

It was evident that Simone had clear ideas as to the attributes of an effective drama teacher, based on her experiences of drama teachers when she was a student at school. She recalled, in an interview, her drama teacher as being “*open, enthusiastic, energetic and inspiring.*” However, the reality of her practicum experience was a mentor teacher who differed considerably to how she imagined a drama teacher should be. This mismatch between expectation and reality disappointed and confused Simone.
Furthermore, she felt her practicum experience didn’t provide her with the standard of mentoring some of her peers were experiencing. She recorded in her practicum journal, “I’m honestly not learning anything of use from her [mentor teacher], whereas some of my friends have got amazing mentors and they’re improving out of sight. I don’t think this is really helping me.”

While Claire’s relationship with her mentor teacher was not as strained as Simone’s, Claire struggled with the lack of presence and support, particularly in the early stages of her ATP. Claire wrote about the lack of feedback and the insecurity this caused in her practicum journal. In week two she noted, “I guess my main issue this week is where do I stand? I need for my mentor to give me more direction. Actually SOME direction would be nice!” By week four, Claire wrote:

> I am nervous as my mentor hasn’t given me much feedback and I’m not sure where I stand. I’ve received a couple of feedback sheets for lessons, but she doesn’t go through anything with me, and I’m not sure what this means. I have produced a year 10 program and countless lesson plans, but she hasn’t looked at anything.

Claire needed reassurance from her mentor teacher to build her confidence, however, the lack of feedback caused her considerable angst and perhaps hindered her professional development. This notion is supported by P. R. Wright and R. Pascoe (2004), who highlighted the importance of constructive feedback in guiding the pre-service teacher’s developing Arts teaching practices.

By week six of the ATP, Claire felt her ability to manage challenging student behaviour and her pedagogical skills were not improving. Claire disclosed in an interview that her mentor teacher was rarely present in her lessons and stated, “She has left me to sink or swim alone. Unfortunately, I think I’m sinking and she [mentor] doesn’t seem to notice.” Claire’s mentor teacher explained her mentoring style in an interview conducted during the ATP. She revealed her desire to give her practicum students freedom and space to
explore. She liked to do this for the stronger pre-service teachers and believed Claire was particularly strong. While Claire perceived this “pace” as a lack of interest or care, this was not the intention of the mentor teacher, who explained:

*I let them sink or swim a bit and don't baby them too much. I mean I'll encourage them and write some lesson reviews at the beginning until they kind of find their feet. But then after that, I let them have free reign to find out. Because when you start teaching, you're on your own. You might get a bit of help here and there but you have to become responsible and professional.*

Significantly, Claire’s experience highlights the issues that occur when there is a lack of communication between mentor and pre-service teacher. While Claire desired more feedback and direction from her mentor teacher, she did not communicate this to her mentor teacher, for fear of “appearing needy and annoying”. The lack of communication was perhaps exacerbated by the lack of power Claire felt during the practicum. Furthermore, it is evident that the mentor teacher did not communicate to Claire how well she was doing, which resulted in Claire doubting her ability.

**Summary.** This study has shown that the mentor teacher, whether effective or ineffective, was integral to the participant’s success and enjoyment of the ATP. This finding mirrors that of Le Cornu (2009), who stated, “There is little doubt that the relationships…whether they be encouraging or discouraging, have a major influence on the pre-service teachers’ practicum experience” (p. 720).

Research acknowledges that pre-service teachers learn to teach drama through experience and that opportunities of modelling and observing practice, while belonging to a community of drama educators is important (R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012). Consistent with previous research (P. Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005), it was evident that participants with effective mentor teachers were at a distinct advantage, as they were given more feedback, support and guidance, which boosted their confidence and improved their pedagogy.
While no official training was provided to the mentor teachers on effective mentoring practices, it is evident that mentor training would assist in addressing some of the problematic areas identified in this research. The notion of training for mentor teachers is identified in prior research, which asserts that well-resourced, formally structured mentoring partnerships encompassing “training for the trainers” are of critical importance to effective pre-service training (Martinez & Mackay, 2003; Paris, 2008).

**Theme 4 – The business of teaching.** Phase 1 of the research highlighted the problems associated with the lack of time in schools as well as the short duration of practicums for pre-service drama teachers. Subsequently, Phase 2 set out to investigate how the extended duration of the ATP affected the practicum outcomes of pre-service drama teachers.

As Table 7 illustrates below, participants experienced the business of teaching in similar and different ways. For example, all participants developed high level pedagogical skills; and four participants benefited from a variety of opportunities to engage with the wider school community.

**Table 7**  
**Phase 2: Dimensions of the Business of Teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Simone</th>
<th>Claire</th>
<th>Cindy</th>
<th>Kyle</th>
<th>Nella</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dimension 4.1: Pedagogical skills.

“He’s got that knowledge base and confidence in teaching that he can make changes in the classroom.” (mentor teacher)

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the extended duration of the ATP, participants showed considerable development with their pedagogical skills. An example of Simone’s improvement, recorded in my lesson observation notes, stated, “Her classroom management and questioning skills have improved greatly. This time all students have their hands up and are eager to contribute. She now has good rapport with the students who were messing around last lesson.” The high-level pedagogical skills developed by participants was also recognised by mentor teachers. For example, Kyle’s mentor teacher praised Kyle’s creativity and willingness to take risks and initiative to shift directions in a lesson if required. He said, “These are high-level skills that even really experienced teachers struggle with.” Simone’s mentor teacher was similarly impressed, particularly by her ability to cater for a range of abilities. She said, “These classes aren’t easy as there is such a wide range of abilities. Simone has worked really hard to cater for everyone. I mean this is really complex stuff.”

Additionally, the participants’ understanding of the unique pedagogical skills required to facilitate drama lessons developed substantially during the ATP. Nella, Kyle and Cindy became more confident using their voice and proxemics in a large open space, without desks and chairs, which they had struggled with in earlier practicums. While Simone, who worked with many students who did not want to participate in drama, found ways to encourage these students to engage in practical drama activities. Simone’s mentor teacher explained, “You’ve got kids that don’t want to do drama and would sooner saw their own leg off than get up and perform. Simone’s been able to get these kids into it.”
Furthermore, it was apparent that these participants saw drama as a valuable tool to develop personal and social skills amongst their students. This was evidenced in the lesson plans and reflections, where participants identified areas of weakness amongst students and strategies they employed to address such issues. For example, a lesson reflection completed by Nella towards the end of her ATP stated, “The students are working together so much better now. I have really targeted team work and problem solving through my warm-ups this term and can see how much it has improved things.” Nella’s reflection highlights the value that she, and the other participants, place on drama education and its capacity to provide rich and complex learning opportunities for students (Dinham, Wright, Pascoe, MacCallum & Grushka, 2007).

While participants believed their previous practicum experiences were important to their personal and professional development, they felt that with the added time, opportunities and responsibilities of the ATP, they began to identify as a teacher rather than a pre-service teacher. These sentiments are reflected by Simone who stated in an interview, “Previous pracs had left me feeling like an undervalued and unappreciated praccie [pre-service teacher], whereas this prac transformed me into a teacher.” This observation exemplifies the importance of a pre-service teacher being viewed as a professional teacher and, as Beck and Kosnik (2002) argued, pre-service teachers see being respected and treated as a teacher, an integral component of a good practicum placement.

Subsequently, participants had clear ideas about the kind of teacher they aspired to be and were able to articulate what this ideal was. Simone said in an interview, “I want to be open, fair, enthusiastic, energetic and inspiring for my students” and Nella explained in an interview, “I want to be respectful of students, energised, exciting yet disciplined. A teacher who encourages students to learn about themselves and develop their self-confidence.” Furthermore, some participants were able to achieve their ideal such as
Simone, who went onto say, “Despite such a challenging prac and having to overcome some pretty huge obstacles, I can proudly say that I have become the teacher I aspired to be” and Cindy who remarked, “For the first time, I was able to be the drama teacher I wanted to be.”

However, unlike Simone, Cindy, Kyle and Nella, Claire struggled to achieve her ideal teacher identity during her ATP. She felt this was partly due to the lack of support and guidance from her mentor teacher, as well as the challenging student behaviour exhibited so frequently in her classes. She explained in an interview:

*Unfortunately, I struggled to be the teacher I wanted to be. I just couldn’t be myself; instead, I felt I was fighting a losing battle, and I hated not being in control. I just wasn’t able to teach and run things the way I wanted, which was so frustrating.*

Claire’s lack of control over her situation caused considerable stress and anxiety, especially as she felt her dream of being a drama teacher was slipping away. She explained, “I can’t help feeling disappointed with the final part of the journey [teaching degree]. I wish I could finish with a bounce in my step and confidence in my ability to teach drama.” Even though Claire received an “Outstanding” for her Teaching Skills and Professional Development, she was disappointed at not being able to be the teacher she aspired to be.

**Dimension 4.2: Engaging with the wider school community.**

“I felt like a valued member of the staff and like people wanted to have me around, which made me feel welcome and a part of the school community.” (Cindy)

With the extended duration of the ATP, participants were able to immerse themselves in the wider school community by taking part in a variety of non-curricular activities, which included staff meetings, social events, school excursions and professional development.
It was evident that these engagements enabled the participants to feel a part of the school community.

Cindy made a point of getting to know other staff members by going to the staffroom every day for morning tea and attending non-curricular activities. Her willingness to engage in non-curricular activities enabled her to feel a part of the school community. She wrote in her practicum journal, “I was offered a spot to go to the ski trip! I felt like a valued member of the staff and like people wanted to have me around, which made me feel welcome and a part of the school community.” Cindy’s mentor teacher reiterated these sentiments, acknowledging the profound impact Cindy had made on the school through her initiative and involvement in non-curricular activities.

She commented on Cindy’s evaluation form:

*Cindy has taken the initiative to become an integral part of our school community. Her confidence and enthusiasm have allowed her to establish sound relationships across a wide range of learning areas and she has participated in non-curricular activities. All staff that meet and work with Cindy are impressed with her confidence and high level of initiative both in and outside the classroom environment.*

The participants’ enthusiasm to engage with the school community, by taking part in non-curricular activities and opportunities to meet other staff members, highlights their desire to “belong” in their practicum school. When interviewed at the conclusion of their ATP, Kyle said, “My ATP was such a great experience and the only prac I’ve felt welcomed and valued for what I brought to the school” and Nella said, “I felt like a valued member of the school community.” Claire, who was the only participant to feel disconnected to her practicum school for the duration of the ATP, said, “Things aren’t getting any better. Even though I’m trying to fit in and get to know the other teachers, I don’t feel I belong here.” It is evident, when examining previous practicum evaluations that “fitting in” was not deemed to be a problem for Claire. This is indicated by a previous mentor teacher’s comment, “She [Claire] makes a concerted effort to join in and get to
know her colleagues. She’s easily become part of our performing arts team.” Thus, it appears that the lack of belonging Claire experienced during her ATP, while not characteristic, had negative repercussions on her practicum experience.

It was evident that for some participants, an emerging connection to the wider drama education community developed during the ATP. Opportunities to engage in moderation marking at other schools, as well as taking part in professional development where they met other drama teachers, enabled participants to see the value of fostering networks with fellow drama teachers. Cindy commented in an interview, “My mentor taught me so much including how important it is to be connected to the drama community as it can be quite isolating in a small department.” As Le Cornu and Ewing (2008) pointed out, “Teacher learning is facilitated in collaborative cultures, as teachers learn with and from each other reducing feelings of isolation” (p. 1804). Learning the value of networking with the wider drama community was an important lesson for these participants, as drama teachers are often isolated, being the only drama teacher in their school. Furthermore, having a “critical friend” and colleague to call upon, is useful for beginning teachers to build resilience (Martin, 2006; Paris, 2008).

Summary. The extended duration of the ATP afforded participants valuable time to develop their teaching practice which, in Nella’s mentor’s estimation “was equal [to] if not better to some experienced teachers”. This finding reflects the view of Langdon et al., who stated “it is only on the job that the intellectual and emotional complexity of teaching becomes a reality, and it is only in context that certain understandings and skills can be developed” (2012, p. 400). Furthermore, and consistent with previous research (Grudnoff, 2011; Sudeck et al., 2008), the participants’ engagement with the wider school community had ramifications on the sense of belonging felt in their practicum school. Therefore, this research confirms the benefits of a longer practicum for pre-service teachers (Edwin, 2003; Rakow, Reynolds & Ross, 2002; Vaishali, 2008).
Discussion: Drama Practicum – Key Issues and Challenges

The experiences of the five participants in Phase 2 of this research provides further clarification of the key issues and challenges posed by the teaching practicum for pre-service drama teachers. The data has revealed the practicum to be a complex experience during which the participants experienced considerable vulnerability, as they navigated their personal and professional journey. These findings are influential when considering how to best manage the practicum in order for pre-service drama teachers to gain the most from the experience.

The stress participants experienced during their ATP is of concern, particularly due to the negative repercussions the stress has been shown to have had on their physical and mental health. While the effect of stress on practicum outcomes and the need to respond to the stress of pre-service teachers are recognised in previous research (Badali, 2008; Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Murray-Harvey, 1999), this research has revealed that managing practicum stress was not addressed at any stage in the participants’ pre-service education. Rather than leaving pre-service drama teachers to cope or not cope with practicum stress, investigating ways to manage stress needs to be a focus for teacher educators and form part of practicum preparation.

The experience of Claire, particularly, highlights the need for better preparation and management of pre-service drama teachers’ stress during practicum. It was evident that the stress Claire experienced due to ongoing challenges with poor student behaviour, a lack of support from her mentor teacher, and a lack of belonging to her practicum school contributed to the “loss of a dream” of becoming a drama teacher. Her experience is consistent with the findings of Gold (1996) who suggested that beginning teachers approach their placements with “a dream”, and that this dream can be eroded by factors such as behaviour management issues and poor support. M. Anderson (2002, 2003)
argued that beginning teachers need to be adequately prepared during their pre-service education if they are to survive such tough conditions and the resulting “loss of the dream”.

The impact of workload stress was most evident amongst participants in this study. Given the cost of financing a degree, the necessity for tertiary students combining paid work and study is common (Briggs, Clark & Hall, 2012; Lingard, 2012; McInnis & Hartley, 2002), and, research suggests that this combination has adverse effects on students’ stress, academic outcomes and well-being (Curtis and Williams, 2002; Lingard, 2012). Therefore, a more manageable workload needs to be negotiated for pre-service drama teachers, which also factors in the non-curricular drama component. While there is implicit expectation that drama teachers undertake this non-curricular component in addition to their teaching workload, evidence indicates that this exorbitant workload contributes to increased levels of stress and burnout (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Donelan, 1989; Haseman, 1989; Wales, 1999). For pre-service drama teachers to also assume this workload, while managing the rigours of practicum (curricular and non-curricular) with their own personal commitments such as part-time employment and university course work, seems an unreasonable expectation.

The findings from this research are consistent with earlier research into the teaching practicum revealing the emphasis pre-service teachers place on the practicum to develop important teaching skills and practices, as well as to prepare them for a career in teaching (Grudnoff, 2011; K. Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005; Townsend & Bates, 2007). Additionally, Phase 2 revealed the added opportunities of an extended practicum for pre-service drama teachers particularly in developing relationships with their students, learning school and classroom procedures, and feeling like a teacher (Imig & Switzer, 1996; Ure, 2010). Even though the extended practicum was stressful for participants who had to manage a considerable workload over a sustained period of time, the opportunity to be involved in
longer projects such as school productions was invaluable to their developing understanding of the work of drama teachers. Therefore, it would appear that a longer practicum maybe a better model of delivery for pre-service drama teachers.

The connection between a lack of belonging and stress is a significant finding in this research and contributes to previous research indicating that isolation and a lack of belonging are common feelings amongst pre-service teachers during the practicum (Bloomfield, 2010; Grudnoff, 2011; Sudeck et al., 2008). Therefore, finding ways to enhance a sense of belonging for pre-service drama teachers on practicum must be considered, such as sourcing suitable mentors and providing training for prospective mentor teachers.

Finally, the relationship between beliefs and expectations on the participants’ stress has been a prominent finding in this research. Simone and Claire’s experience of culture shock when their expectations and beliefs about teaching and learning differed to reality is described in prior research (Pendergast et al., 2011) and confirms the need to address this issue when preparing pre-service drama teachers for the practicum. Therefore, identifying what pre-service drama teachers’ expectations and beliefs are, based on their own experiences of school and in particularly their experiences of drama, is investigated in the next chapter, Phase 3: Reflections on School Drama.
Chapter 6

Phase 3 – Reflections on School Drama

Chapter Overview

This chapter focuses on the third and final phase of the study. This phase investigated how past school experiences of drama influenced the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers. A narrative portrait developed for each of the participants is presented, followed by a reflection, which highlights key points and influences from the participants’ experiences. Finally, the chapter provides a discussion of the influence of previous experiences on the practicum.

Research Question 3: In what ways do past school experiences of drama influence the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers?

Introduction

A key finding from phases 1 and 2 of this research was that pre-service drama teachers experienced significant stress when their beliefs and expectations about teaching drama differed to the reality of practicum. Therefore, investigating the experiences and beliefs about drama education held by pre-service drama teachers was necessary in order to understand the influence of these experiences on practicum.
Phase 3 involved individual in-depth interviews with the five pre-service drama teachers who participated in Phase 2 of the study, in order to access stories about their experiences of drama when they were students at school. The transcripts from the interviews were used to construct narrative portraits which enrich our understanding of the participants’ experience (van Manen, 2014). Consequently, the complexity and dynamics of the participants’ lived experience, captured within each portrait, has enabled a construction of knowledge about the influence of these experiences on their practicum.

As explained in Chapter 3, Nella’s portrait has been omitted from this phase of the study. However, by way of honouring Nella’s experiences and input into this research, I have given her the final comments within the conclusion of the thesis.

**Narrative Portraits**

The individual portraits are created in the first person to capture the participant’s unique voice. The structure of each portrait is determined by the content and key points shared by each participant, therefore, not created in a unified structure. Portraits do, however, contain a reflection on the participants’ schooling, particularly their memories of drama education. Some of the portraits also detail the participants’ involvement in out-of-school activities. Each portrait finishes with a description of why the participant chose drama teaching as a profession. The first portrait tells Simone’s story.

**Simone.**

“Drama provided a place to belong; within a school that seemed to not want me.”

*My primary education was spent at the local school, which was five minutes from my home. As my parents worked, I had to go to after-school care, which was awful. I never really had many friends at school and was picked on a lot. My parents weren’t as well off as some of the students I went to school with, and I just never fitted in with most of the kids. School was a very lonely place for me. I always wanted to fit in and be liked but it never happened in that environment.*
I’m not overly academic or sporty, either, which was a real focus in our school. School often reminds you of what you’re not.

Primary school was dull and not a happy place for me. I was very shy and didn’t think highly of myself at all. I remember being chosen by the teacher to be the lead narrator in year 1, so obviously my teacher saw something in me back then. I don’t remember doing anything like that again during primary school, though, and wonder if my lack of self-confidence prevented me putting myself forward. It’s sad when I look back as to how very lonely I was at school.

I was lucky that I had an outside group of friends from Brownies. If it wasn’t for them, I don’t think I would be where I am now, or at least as mentally healthy. I remember an occasion in Brownies where I was chosen to read out a story at a Foundation Day ceremony. In that environment, surrounded by people who liked me and made me feel good about myself, I thrived.

Years eight to 12 were spent at my local high school, which I hated just as much as primary school. I didn’t have many friends and wasn’t academic, which is not good at a large academic high school. I was bullied badly and taunted for being “fat, ugly and stupid”. It was hard because my brother was very popular and good at sport and I was in his shadow.

Even though school was a very lonely place for me, I loved my drama classes. Drama provided a place to belong within a school that seemed to not want me. Drama was a class that I was passionate about and loved doing. The best aspect was being able to explore different elements of myself and of theatre. I loved the class – it was my favourite subject. I studied Drama in upper school, too; it was a relief to do something that I loved. I remember creating a 10-minute solo performance, which was just the best experience. I loved the creative process, from researching to performing. I was lucky to have my drama classes to keep me sane amidst all the bullying and hardship I was facing at school.

I had some really inspirational teachers. My drama teacher was amazing. She was approachable, welcoming, supportive and could see strengths in her students that we didn’t know we had. She made us feel part of something special. She knew what she was teaching and had an obvious love of it. She worked really hard to ensure we had school productions as they weren’t something the school really promoted. In fact, when I think about the kind of drama teacher I would
like to be, it’s just like her: open, enthusiastic, energetic and inspiring. I want to be there for all students and not just the ones with talent.

It was 13 years between graduating high school and starting drama teaching at university. After I left school, I had a number of jobs, from working in a bakery to being a receptionist. I went to college to repeat my year 12 and did much better the second time round; I guess because I didn’t have the pressure of my peer group to contend with. I worked really hard and finished as one of the top students. That was a great year.

A turning point for me was the year I went overseas to work with kids at a specialist performing arts camp. I slept in the bunks with the kids and became like a big sister to them. It was amazing! I got to teach drama classes as well as direct and choreograph shows. Even though I didn’t have any formal training in acting or directing, I just had the initiative. It made sense to me. I could feel it, see and hear it. So, while I was away doing camp, it solidified for me what I wanted to do. I wanted to do something I was good at and that was to teach drama.

Reflection – Drama and a place to belong. The search to find a sense of belonging is illustrated throughout Simone’s story. To begin with, her early school years depict her lack of confidence and struggle to fit in with her peers. Simone believed that she didn’t look like the other students and was teased for being “fat, ugly and stupid”. In addition, she lacked both academic and sporting ability, and success at sports was embedded in the school’s culture.

Fortunately, Simone experienced a sense of belonging in her Brownies community as well as in her drama classes at school. While Simone disliked school in general, she recalled drama very differently and stated, “I loved the class. It was my favourite subject.” Simone described herself as being passionate about drama, seeing it as a way to express herself while learning about an art form she was highly interested in. It is evident that Simone felt safe in her drama classes, which became a haven for her amidst all the bullying and isolation she experienced in the school yard. Furthermore, Simone viewed
her drama teacher as playing an integral role in creating this sense of belonging for Simone and her peers. She said, “She [teacher] made us feel part of something special.” It is apparent that Simone flourished in this welcoming and safe environment and, understandably, developed a deep respect for her drama teacher who became an inspiration to her.

Simone’s journey to drama teaching was not immediate, as it was for some of the other participants in this study, perhaps due to her lack of confidence combined with her negative memories and feelings towards school. Instead, Simone’s realisation that she wanted to be a drama teacher happened 13 years after leaving high school whilst working with children at a performing-arts camp. The opportunity to once again engage in creative work, both teaching drama classes and engaging in production activities, enabled Simone to experience a sense of purpose and belonging. This led to Simone embarking on a career in drama teaching, where she not only hoped to find a sense of belonging, but also create a sense of belonging for her future students.

While the importance of belonging is shared by other participants, it is in Simone’s story that it resonates most strongly. The next portrait, that of Claire, reveals more about the role of drama, curricular and non-curricular, in developing her self-confidence.

Claire.

“I absolutely loved being in drama and felt that I could be whatever I wanted.”

I enjoyed primary school but I was really shy and often struggled with my friendship groups. I found the girls quite difficult and it was easier to hang out with the boys. The boys seemed to just accept me into their games and we’d have lots of fun just mucking around. But somewhere in there, probably around year 6, it became unacceptable to play with boys and I was expected to hang out with other girls.
Looking back, I was teased a bit for being the “teacher’s pet”. I didn’t go out of my way to suck up but I never did the wrong thing. As a result, I was always given special jobs to do and I enjoyed the responsibility. I remember my report cards often said what a “responsible and mature” student I was. That was me to a tee. Responsible, mature but painfully shy.

I went to my local high school and generally had a positive experience. I would always do my homework and hand work in on time, which was also overseen by my parents. My mum and dad were hard workers and wanted us kids to have a good work ethic. Dad would always tell us that no matter what, we had to try our best and work hard.

I wasn’t concerned with being the most popular kid at school. I didn’t have any enemies as such but I had a few peer group issues. I found the bitchiness of some of the girls really hard to deal with. They’d often gang up on people and bully them. I hated that kind of thing and the way they would go out of their way to make others feel bad. I’d find it easier to exclude myself from them, to avoid getting picked on or involved in stuff I didn’t want to be a part of. I never had the confidence to stand up to them and tell them to stop. I regret that now. That’s pretty hard to do as a teenager when all you really want to do is avoid trouble. This has tarnished my memories of school to be honest. I guess I don’t trust people as easily any more.

I decided to try a drama class in year 8, partly because my parents thought it might be good for me because I was so painfully shy. I was keen to try it too because I’d heard some other students talk about it and I wanted to see what it was all about. At first, I was a bit apprehensive. But after a couple of lessons, I knew that it was something I wanted to be a part of. Unlike other subjects, I loved the freedom we had in drama and the fun activities our teacher would do with us. I loved improvising different scenarios and playing funny characters. I absolutely loved doing drama and felt that I could be whatever I wanted. I would do things in my drama classes that I wouldn’t have the guts to do in my other classes. Drama provided me with an escape from reality and I made really strong friendships. In fact, I didn’t feel the same kind of social pressure with my drama friends as I did with my other friends.
Studying drama also allowed me to be involved in school productions, which was a fantastic experience and really helped my confidence grow. My first drama teacher encouraged me to audition for the school musical and I, somehow, managed to get the lead role. Since that moment, I have been addicted to being on stage and just wanted more! I never dreamed I would be able to do this. I loved working in a team with a whole lot of people I had things in common with. I loved doing something that could be enjoyed by others. I also enjoyed having the chance to perform and show my skills. My parents would come to all the shows and were so proud of me. Mum told me once that she would never have had the guts to perform on stage. I remember feeling really chuffed and proud of myself.

My drama teacher was the best teacher I had but, in saying that, she, too, had her flaws. She had strong content knowledge and was really encouraging and supportive of all her students; however, one of her flaws was that she’d tell us too many personal stories. I really understand from my own experience on prac how you have to keep the boundaries clear between yourself and the students. She wasn’t very good at that.

In Year 12, I became Head Girl and started doing a lot of non-curricular work at the school. I had good relationships with my teachers and liked feeling a part of the school community. Teachers would tell me that I would be a wonderful teacher, so I guess this got me thinking about teaching as a career. Considering how much I loved drama at school, I thought well, why not? And here I am.

Reflection – Drama and developing self-confidence. Like Simone, Claire described her struggle to fit in with her peers at school and in particular how confronted she felt witnessing their bullying of other students. Even though she didn’t like how her peers treated people, Claire, like many other children in this situation, lacked the confidence to stand up for the victims.

It seems though, that Claire’s lack of confidence concerned her parents, who described Claire as being “painfully shy”. It is likely that Claire’s parents were familiar with the
potential for drama to improve self-confidence, as they encouraged Claire to enrol in drama classes at school. This became a turning point for Claire.

To begin with, Claire found a sense of belonging in her drama class where she was able to be herself and enjoy the freedom to work creatively. She found drama classes offered her a place to escape reality, namely the pressure from her social group. She recalled, "I absolutely loved being in my drama classes and felt that I could be whatever I wanted.” Claire distinguished drama education from her other subjects, recognising its capacity to be fun and enable freedom, which she highly valued. It was evident that Claire’s drama classes provided her with an avenue for personal growth and was a place where, without knowing, her sense of self and confidence grew.

Additionally, Claire loved being involved in school productions and recognised that these experiences were instrumental in further developing her self-confidence. Encouraged by her drama teacher and supported by a community of like-minded peers, Claire was able to perform on stage. She described becoming “addicted to being on stage”, perhaps from the adrenalin rush of performing in front of an audience combined with the positive attention she received from her family and friends. It is likely that prior to studying drama education, Claire would not have had the confidence to perform on stage.

Claire’s story highlights the personal growth and self-confidence brought about by engaging in drama activities. The next portrait tells Cindy’s story and her entrance into the drama community.

Cindy.

“Hanging out with my fellow drama mates was just so easy.”

I went to the local public primary school in year 7 when we moved here from New Zealand. I found I was a bit behind [academically] the other kids to begin with, so I had a tricky start catching up. It was difficult coming to Australia, as I
didn’t really know anyone. All the kids seemed to have established their friendship groups and were not so open to welcoming a newcomer. I don’t remember my teachers doing anything to help me fit in or make friends; I was kind of left to work it out myself. That’s pretty hard on a young kid and I know, as a teacher, I would do things differently for my students.

I went to a private Catholic school for high school and mostly enjoyed the experience. I was a bit of a floater, though. I had my group of friends but, to be honest, I didn’t really like them all that much. I guess I felt grateful being in a group as it was so lonely when I first arrived. However, these kids weren’t like me at all; they were catty and manipulated each other. I just wasn’t like that and I’ve never been interested in behaving like that. I tended to float around to different groups.

My only solace at school was drama. Thank God for drama! It was the best period of the day. Hanging out with my fellow drama mates was just so easy. Unlike my peer group friends, everyone in drama got on like a house on fire. Actually, it reminds me of the year 11 class I taught when I was on prac [ATP]. All those kids were from different social groups, from the cool guys to the really unpopular kids, but when they were all together in drama, they had so much fun. It was awesome. Well, this is what drama was like for me at school and I want to recreate this for my future students. I guess the drama space was safe and fun. In drama, we were encouraged to support each other rather than to criticise or judge. In drama, we were open and happy to share our ideas and experiences. It was a safe environment to be myself. This was quite different to what happened out in the school yard; no wonder I gravitated to the drama room so much.

I mostly had really good drama teachers at school. Looking back, I think I had greater expectations of my drama teacher than any of my other teachers. Drama was my favourite subject and I expected my drama teacher to deliver! I remember a relief teacher we had in lower school, for a whole term, who was really unprofessional. She would turn the lights off in the theatre and let us play blind chasey for a whole lesson. I remember thinking it was fun but then, deep down, I knew she was irresponsible and a lazy teacher. In fact, she was more interested in being a friend to the kids than a teacher. Luckily she only lasted a term, which made way for my next drama teacher, who was just amazing. She created a great balance between theory and practice. She made everything so
interesting and always had us on our feet, putting words into action. She created a little community for us where we felt safe and able to take risks. She’s made a real impact on the sort of drama teacher I want to be.

Our school had a tradition of doing a big production each year. I remember watching the production with my parents one year and, at the end of the show, declaring that I would audition for the next one. That show had made a huge impact on me and I knew it was something I wanted to be involved in. All the students looked like they were having so much fun on stage. I had seen them rehearsing after school and walking around wearing their production t-shirts. True to my word, I auditioned the following year and managed to gain a part. Well that was it – hook, line and sinker. I went back for more each year and even scored some lead roles. It was so much fun to be on stage and have my family and friends watching me. I loved being a part of the production community and surrounded with like-minded people. The teachers worked hard to create that team feeling, like organising a special production t-shirt and photo.

Getting into drama teaching was a natural choice for me. I loved drama and I liked who I was in drama. Drama was my sanctuary at school and, luckily, I happened to be very good at it. It made sense to follow this path and pursue a career into what I was most passionate about.

**Reflection – Drama and its community of like-minded people.** Cindy’s story particularly highlights the strong sense of community she found in her drama classes. She recalled, “I didn’t have many common interests with my friends but hanging out with the drama students was different. Everyone got on like a house on fire.” The sense of camaraderie Cindy enjoyed enabled her to feel safe and able to take risks. Furthermore, Cindy believed her drama teacher fostered this community spirit by encouraging the students to support each other rather than to criticise or judge. Cindy, who lacked a sense of belonging with her peer group, thrived in the drama room surrounded by a community of peers who shared her enthusiasm for drama. While the notion of safety is described in all the participants’ recollections of drama, Cindy described an atmosphere which was friendly, supportive and a place where they could take risks without the threat of ridicule.
Cindy also believed her drama teacher was integral in creating this safety by instilling a “non-judgmental zone” where students were comfortable to share their ideas and experiences.

Additionally, Cindy enjoyed the community aspects of being involved in the school productions; particularly the opportunity to work with like-minded peers. She was aware of the role her teachers played in fostering the sense of community amongst students and explained, “I loved being a part of a community and all the little things the teachers would do to create that team feeling like the cast photo and t-shirt.”

Ewing (2010) noted that participation in the Arts has the propensity to generate “a more developed sense of, or involvement in, community, working in partnership with other organisations for the community, feeling more positive or safer about where they live, pride in own culture or ethnicity” (p. 49). It is evident that Cindy’s school experiences of drama made a significant impact on how she would like to facilitate her drama classes, particularly the sense of community and camaraderie amongst students. This is particularly evident in the parallels she draws between her own experiences of drama as a student at school, and that of the students she taught during her ATP. The next portrait tells Kyle’s story and relates the opportunity drama provided him to recognise his strengths.

Kyle.

“It felt so good to be receiving accolades for a change.”

I had an awful time in primary school. I was a terrible speller and my teachers did little to help or encourage me. They could have made school a very different place for me but, instead, they seemed to do everything to diminish my confidence and make school a scary place. I can honestly say that I hated school. I was not only ashamed of my low ability but I thought I was dumb. I’d cover up my work so no one could see it in case it was wrong. I still think about those
teachers and what they did. One teacher even called me an idiot in front of the class for spelling a word wrongly. I felt so ashamed and like I wasn’t good enough to be there. I didn’t enjoy primary school and the teachers had a lot to do with that.

I went to the local high school that had a reputation for being a bit rough. I was glad to leave primary school behind and start a new school where my teachers didn’t know me. I mostly enjoyed high school but I was pretty naughty. My grades were still poor so being cheeky and attention seeking was the best way to hide it. I used to do all sorts of pranks, like stealing a fire extinguisher from a science lab. Fortunately, I had better teachers in high school than I did in primary school. My favourite teacher was my drama teacher, because she treated students with respect and made me feel good about myself. She definitely contributed to my confidence improving. She was really encouraging and made me feel worthy. She would remind us to treat people like we wanted to be treated ourselves, which understandably made an impact on me. I also enjoyed the fact that drama classes were predominantly practical and didn’t contain a lot of writing. This meant that I could throw myself into my work and not have to cover it up. Unlike my other subjects, I didn’t muck around in my drama classes. I think this was because I really liked my teacher and mostly because I was actually really good at it. It’s important to do things you’re good at.

I tried a few different activities outside of school, such as footy, karate and boxing, but nothing really stuck and I was never motivated enough to go consistently. I’d skip training or not bother to turn up for games if I didn’t feel like it. That was my attitude in general really. However, that all changed when I scored a role in the school production! I went from not caring, to not wanting to miss a minute of rehearsals. I don’t really know why. Maybe it was because I was doing something I felt good at.

I remember being involved in a production of Cosi where I played the role of Zac, an inmate from a mental asylum who was a dangerous pyromaniac. He was also a misfit, a loner and a really sad character. For some reason, I felt some kind of connection to him and wanted to do more than play this character for laughs. I saw Zac as a real person, one with a sad story behind him, which had made him into the person he now was. I put a lot of work into developing his character and took my role very seriously. My hard work paid off and I gained
amazing feedback from my teachers and friends when they saw me play Zac. It felt so good to be receiving accolades for a change.

I also loved the fact that production work was practical and didn’t have any written assessment afterwards. I think doing production work actually made me a better drama student as it helped me make connections between the theory and the practice. This is what I want to do for my students.

I remember creating amazing sets when I was at school doing drama. One time we filled the drama room with white sand when we produced Away and another time we built a forest with a huge water feature for The Golden Age. We’d all chip in five dollars and work until one o’clock in the morning creating the set. We loved building it together. In fact, during ATP I thought a lot about those times. I really want to do this sort of thing with my students, so that they, too, experience the joys of building a set and working on a project together.

Thanks to my drama classes, school productions and some teachers who believed in me, I made it through school. I’m sure my mum breathed a sigh of relief when she saw me cross the stage at graduation. After considering my options, and seeking advice from my family, I decided to try teaching. But not just teaching anything…I wanted to teach drama. It made sense for me to go down that path since drama had made such an impact on me as a school student.

I wanted an opportunity to help kids like me.

Reflection – Drama and the opportunity for mastery. Kyle’s primary school story reveals the impact of his poor literacy skills on his self-confidence, which was further undermined by the actions of some of his teachers. He recalled, “One teacher even called me an idiot in front of the class for spelling a word wrongly. I felt so ashamed and like I wasn’t good enough to be there.” It is evident that these experiences contributed to the lack of belonging Kyle felt during his primary school years as well as a lack of confidence in his academic ability.

Kyle’s struggle with his academic work continued into high school where he sought ways to deflect attention from the real problems he was facing. He said, “My grades were still poor so being cheeky and attention seeking was the best way to hide it.” Fortunately,
Kyle found support in his drama teacher, who he felt treated him respectfully and encouraged him to reach his potential. He explained, “My drama teacher was my favourite teacher because she treated students with respect and made me feel good about myself.” Furthermore, Kyle found the drama space to be “safe”, in that it was predominantly practical work. He said, “I could throw myself into the work and not have to cover it up.” Consequently, Kyle did not need to misbehave in his drama classes as he was not only able to do the work, but was able to do it very well. He said, “I was actually really good at it. It’s important to do things you’re good at.” Ewing (2010) described the belief in the power of arts-based activities for “generating participant engagement, re-locating individual identities and restoring self-esteem…” (p. 49). It is evident that when Kyle realised he had the ability to succeed in drama, his self-belief and confidence grew, which provided him with more positive experiences to focus on at school.

While Kyle tried a number of activities outside of school, he admitted that he wasn’t particularly interested or committed to them. However, a turning point came when he gained a role in the school production, where he described himself going from “not caring, to not wanting to miss a minute of rehearsals.” As in his drama classes, Kyle excelled in these activities. He recalled, “I enjoyed the attention from being on stage as well as the attention I received from my drama teacher which made me feel worthy. It was one of the best experiences of my life.”

Further to the accolades and attention Kyle gained from performing on stage, it is evident that his interest in set design also emerged during these productions. He described the late nights spent transforming the performing arts room into a “theatre” and the satisfaction gained working with his peers towards a common goal. These experiences have been integral to how Kyle views his work as a drama teacher, particularly the importance of effectively connecting theory and practice through engaging in production work.
Given Kyle’s success in both curricular and non-curricular drama, it is not surprising that he was drawn to a career in drama teaching. Furthermore, it appears that Kyle is particularly focused on being able to help students who may struggle to fit in, lack self-confidence or lack the academic ability he did as a student at school.

Discussion: Influence of Drama Experiences on Practicum

The narrative portraits highlight a number of key experiences that illustrate how important curricular and non-curricular drama was to the participants as students at school. It is evident that the sense of belonging participants felt in their drama classes enabled them to feel safe and supported by a community of like-minded peers. Furthermore, participants found their strengths, grew in confidence and benefitted considerably from the support of their drama teacher. Clearly, these participants place high value on the role of drama in children’s lives and therefore recognise the power of drama as a pedagogy to engage and motivate students in their education (Morgan & Saxton, 1987). These participants have experienced what drama can do for students firsthand and are thus eager to create similar experiences for their own students.

Consequently, three distinct factors emerge when considering how past school experience of drama may influence the practicum experience for pre-service drama teachers. The first factor is the importance for pre-service drama teachers to belong.

The importance of belonging. The participants shared a sense of not fitting in to the school culture or peer group during primary and/or secondary school. The lack of belonging experienced at school left a lasting impression on the participants and an element of sadness resonated throughout their stories. It is evident that this lack of belonging had detrimental effects on the participants’ self-esteem, peer relationships, academic achievement and enjoyment of school. The link between belonging, and positive academic and social outcomes is recognised in the research (Anderman &
Freeman, 2004; Osterman, 2000), leading Brendtro and Larson (2006) to emphasise that every person, no matter what age, possesses a fundamental need to belong and that the positive feelings that come from belonging, contribute substantially to a healthy self-esteem.

Fortunately, for these participants, the sense of belonging they found in their drama classes was profound, enabling them to build their self-confidence, support networks and ultimately experience success. It was evident that participants felt safe to work creatively, were well supported by their drama teacher and were able to be themselves in a class of like-minded peers. Ewing (2010) noted that participation in the Arts provides students with a sense of social cohesion - “an increased friendship or social network, increased contact with other cultures, a sense of ‘belonging’ to a particular group/club/network/community” (p. 49).

Correspondingly, the importance of belonging for pre-service drama teachers undertaking practicum was revealed in phases 1 and 2 of the research, with participants experiencing considerable stress when they lacked a sense of belonging. The feeling of alienation was often exacerbated by mentor teachers who the participants deemed unwelcoming and unsupportive. It is evident that the lack of belonging participants experienced during practicum had detrimental effects on their practicum outcomes, particularly as it diminished their self-confidence and eagerness to pursue opportunities the practicum provided. Feelings of isolation during practicum is not uncommon for pre-service teachers (Sudeck et al., 2008) and research has shown that a lack of belonging contributes to stress and feelings of vulnerability in pre-service teachers (Caires et al., 2012).

Social researcher, B. Brown (2006) explained that shame is often experienced by people where personal vulnerability exists. Often this personal vulnerability is not acknowledged
and when a person is caught off guard, he or she is overwhelmed with emotions, frightened and confused about their feelings. B. Brown (2006) highlighted that practitioners working with women on shame issues should help them identify their personal vulnerabilities and to reach out to others. These findings have implications for the present research, particularly the personal vulnerability participants have with “belonging” and the importance for participants to be able to “reach out” to their mentor teacher and seek help when feeling vulnerable.

Arguably, attending to the pre-service drama teacher’s basic need to belong, may need consideration in order to maximise the learning of pre-service drama teachers during practicum. Perhaps, given the busyness of teaching and the level of maturity and professionalism expected of pre-service teachers, attending to their basic needs is overlooked by both mentor teachers and teacher educators. However, as this study has shown, finding a sense of belonging in a practicum school had rippling effects to the participants’ self-esteem and confidence, teaching efficacy and the ability to manage the stress associated with practicum.

The value of drama. It is evident that participants in this study are highly invested in their drama practice, as they understand implicitly the benefits that drama can provide to young people. Ewing (2010), in describing benefits to health and well-being through participating in Arts programs, stated “An improved physical and/or mental health, reduction in stress or pain, reduction in morbidity, increased physical and mental activity, a more positive outlook on life” (p. 49). Benefits to health and well-being are certainly reflected in Simone and Cindy’s stories as they described the sense of belonging they found in their drama classes, the connections they made and the close community of like-minded people with whom they enjoyed working. These conditions enabled them to thrive and experience success. Similarly, Claire’s story, documented her transformation from being “painfully shy” to having the self-confidence to perform on stage. Kyle’s
story described the success he experienced and his improved sense of self-worth through involvement in curricular and non-curricular drama activities. Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep shift in thoughts, feelings and activities (Mezirow, 2003) and as Ewing (2010) suggested, often includes a change in our understanding of ourselves and our relationships with others. It is most evident, that these pre-service drama teachers’ experiences of drama were transformational and have stimulated life-long interest in drama.

Given that a teacher’s experiences of school can influence his or her beliefs and teaching practice (Chan & Elliot, 2004; Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008), it is conceivable that a drama teacher’s school experiences of drama will impact upon their orientations of teaching drama (Wales, 2009). Accordingly, the participants’ reflections on their experiences of school drama revealed that while they enjoyed aesthetic learning about drama as an art form, through developing skills, concepts and knowledge, they reflected more vividly on the enjoyment and benefits they gained from their personal and social learning (Neelands & Goode, 2000). Consequently, the work participants found most satisfying during their ATP was in providing experiences for their students that promoted self-discovery and development. While these participants may not be aware of their personal subjectivities (Wales, 2009), it is evident that their previous experiences of school drama have had considerable influence on their orientations of teaching drama.

Considering the participants’ attachment to and personal history with drama, it is not surprising that they attended practicum with high expectations of what their drama classes would be like. Participants expected to find students who behaved similarly to how they behaved in drama classes at school and were somewhat disillusioned when met with students who did not want to engage in drama activities. Claire, for example, made frequent comparisons in her practicum journal between her own drama experiences as a school student, to the poor behaviour exhibited by the students at her ATP school. When
Claire was not able to create the same feeling of safety within her drama classes that she had enjoyed as a school student, she felt disillusioned and doubtful of her ability to be an effective drama teacher. Claire needed support and reassurance from her mentor teacher to help her readjust her expectations; unfortunately, that support was not forthcoming.

**The drama teacher as role model.** The participants in this study experienced some inspirational and highly effective drama teachers during their school years, who were integral in their decision to become drama teachers. The participants’ recollections record the respect they have for their drama teachers, particularly for their ability to create highly effective, creative environments where students gained a sense of belonging, and were encouraged to take risks, while learning about drama practice. It would appear that these drama teachers were dedicated to their work, student-centred and provided opportunities for students to develop their personal skills and talents. Consequently, the participants’ teacher identities are partially constructed of the positive characteristics of the drama teachers they learned from during their schooling (Murphy, Delli & Edwards, 2004; Ng et al., 2010).

Given the high level of expertise displayed by these teachers, it would be reasonable to suggest that these drama teachers were operating at a “highly accomplished” or “lead” standard according to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). While it is important for pre-service drama teachers to have good role models to aspire to, it is also important for them to recognise that it takes time and experience to progress from a “graduate” standard to “highly accomplished” or “lead” standard (AITSL, 2011). The experiences of the participants in this study showed how having unrealistic expectations of themselves created added pressure and stress.

While some participants may have had unrealistic expectations of what they would be able to achieve whilst on practicum, they were aware of the diverse responsibilities of
drama teachers. This awareness has been partly formed by their experiences at school, especially the many productions their drama teachers produced, and the hard work, dedication and time commitments these teachers demonstrated. Armed with this knowledge, participants approached their practicum with an eagerness to engage in non-curricular activities, despite the added challenges and stress that this discipline involves.

**Summary**

The findings from this phase of the research illuminate a number of beliefs participants have about teaching drama which have been influenced by their previous experiences of school drama. First, drama provides a sense of belonging and creating a sense of belonging for students is integral to the work of drama teachers. Second, drama education can promote self-discovery and personal development and, therefore, has the potential to transform lives. Third, drama teachers are hardworking, highly skilled professionals who are dedicated to bringing out their students’ potential.

Knowing pre-service teachers’ beliefs is important because these beliefs play a crucial role in their own learning, teaching methods and classroom practices (Bryan, 2003; Uzuntiryaki & Boz, 2007). As this research has shown, beliefs formed from previous school experiences, has impacted participants’ practicum experiences. Specifically, participants approached practicum with an expectation of how they would belong and feel in the drama space, how their students would engage in drama, and what their mentor teacher would be like. When participants’ expectations were in harmony with the practicum experience, they generally had a more positive practicum and developed improved self-efficacy. However, when expectations were not met, participants experienced culture shock, stress and felt vulnerable.
Clearly, investigating beliefs about teaching is an integral part of preparing pre-service teachers for practicum, indeed the profession. However, for these participants, the coursework component of their teaching degree focused on developing content knowledge of education theory and practice, and lacked dedicated time to exploring personal expectations or how prior educational experience affects teaching practice.

Chapter 7 provides a discussion of the implications of this research in preparing pre-service drama teachers for the profession and makes recommendations for future practice.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

Chapter Overview

The final chapter of the thesis begins with a brief overview of the research. Then, drawing on the three research questions of this study, a reflection of the findings from phases 1, 2 and 3 is provided with discussion of the implications of these findings to practice. Next, the contribution this research makes to knowledge is presented followed by four recommendations for practice. Finally, the limitations of the study are acknowledged and recommendations are made for future research.

Research Overview

This research focuses on pre-service drama teachers and their experiences of practicum. This focus is important because there is consensus amongst researchers that an effective practicum component of teacher education leads to more confident and competent beginning teachers who are more likely to remain in the profession (de Leon-Carillo, 2007; Grudnoff, 2011; Townsend & Bates, 2007; Twomey, 2007; Wyckoff et al., 2009).

Van Manen (2002) suggested that to engage in phenomenology should involve the researcher investigating phenomena that is of serious interest to them. Accordingly, the impetus for this study, stems from my experience teaching and working with pre-service drama teachers, and witnessing the challenges they encountered during practicum. Of particular concern was the stress they experienced and their reported feelings of being underprepared, overwhelmed and unable to manage the inherent challenges practicum presented. These observations are set in a context where practicum is understood to be a
complex and diverse experience, where pre-service teachers experience considerable challenges (Grudnoff, 2011; Ralf et al., 2008; S. Tang, 2004; Wyckoff et al., 2009) and where researchers have consistently highlighted the need for more adequate preparation of pre-service teachers to manage the stress associated with practicum (Badali, 2008; Caires et al., 2010; Chaplain, 2008). With little known previous research conducted on pre-service drama teachers’ experience of practicum, it became apparent that an investigation of this phenomenon was needed in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of practicum for pre-service drama teachers and better induct them into the teaching profession.

The study was designed in three phases. Phase 1 scoped the project through focus-group interviews and identified ways in which pre-service drama teachers experienced practicum. Phase 2 focused on five participants’ lived experience of an extended practicum (ATP), investigating key issues and challenges. Phase 3 explored the influence of past experiences of drama on the practicum and communicated these influences through a series of narrative portraits. Each phase was iterative in nature, adding depth, breadth and rigour to the research.

**Reflecting on the Research Questions**

The main findings from each phase of the study were summarised within the respective chapters: Chapter 4: Phase 1 – The Collective Voice; Chapter 5: Phase 2 – Practice in Action; Chapter 6: Phase 3 – Reflections on School Drama. This next section synthesises these findings and points to implications for practice.

**Research question 1: In what ways do pre-service drama teachers experience the practicum?** In the first phase of the research, the data revealed a number of ways in which pre-service drama teachers experienced practicum. Figure 8 provides a graphical representation of the highs and lows of the drama practicum experience.
**Figure 8. Highs and Lows of Drama Practicum**

**Practicum highs.** Three highlights of practicum were identified: (a) authentic experience; (b) self-efficacy; and, (c) professional collegiality.

**Authentic experience.** First and foremost, participants in this study recognised that teaching drama was complex and that time in real school settings with effective mentor teachers was integral to their professional development. For example, Carla recognised that the practicum provided valuable opportunity to connect theory to practice and Mandy appreciated developing her pedagogical skills with direct guidance and input from her mentor teacher.

It was evident that despite the testing moments or challenges experienced during practicum, participants retained a sense of the value of practicum in providing them with time, albeit condensed, to experience how schools operate, and gain exposure to the diverse tasks carried out by drama teachers.
The high regard these pre-service drama teachers placed on gaining authentic experience in schools to learn their pedagogical craft is similarly recognised in M. Anderson’s (2002, 2003) research.

**Self-efficacy.** Consistent with previous research (Bloomfield, 2010; Edwards, 1993; Hrncir, 2007), participants enjoyed a range of positive key experiences during practicum which had affirming repercussions on their self-efficacy. These positive experiences were diverse and stemmed from relationships built with students, engaging with students in non-curricular drama activities, and teaching successful lessons where participants experienced enjoyment and fulfilment in teaching drama. For example, when Kyle’s mentor teacher was away, Kyle needed to overcome his fear and lack of self-confidence, and assume responsibility for teaching his mentor’s classes. Kyle reported feeling proud of his achievements and furthermore, recognised he had an ability to teach drama. This finding is consistent with earlier research revealing how positive experiences often signify a turning point where pre-service teachers take active control of their own development and gain enhanced self-efficacy (Meijer et al., 2011).

**Professional collegiality.** The importance for pre-service drama teachers having an effective mentor teacher is highlighted in this research, and supports earlier research claiming that an effective mentor is vital in developing pre-service teachers’ professional efficacy (Flores & Day, 2006; Harrison, 2008; Langdon et al., 2012; M. Morgan et al., 2009). Rebecca, for example, believed that without her mentor’s support, she would not have “survived” the practicum, and Skye appreciated the opportunity to observe quality teaching practice.

The experiences and perspectives provided by participants in Phase 1 of the research, led to the identification of six attributes of an effective mentor teacher for pre-service drama teachers. These attributes describe the mentor teacher as: (a) supportive; (b) provides
guidance and constructive feedback; (c) models effective teaching practice; (d) shares resources; (e) encourages freedom and flexibility; and, (f) values the individual skills of the pre-service drama teacher. Phase 2 of the study confirmed these attributes and revealed four further attributes: (g) welcoming; (h) fosters a sense of belonging; (i) trusting; and, (j) collegial.

While some of these attributes have been identified in previous mentoring and practicum research such as the importance of mentor teachers providing quality feedback and moral support (Ganser, 2002; Hayes, 2004; Ralf et al., 2008), this research revealed that for these participants, a mentor teacher who fostered collegiality and a sense of belonging was deemed highly favourable and most conducive to enhancing participants’ self-confidence and professional efficacy.

**Practicum lows.** Two “lows” of practicum were identified for pre-service drama teachers: (a) stress; and, (b) ineffective mentoring.

*Stress.* Consistent with previous research, the participants’ experience of stress during practicum was multifaceted (Badali, 2008; Caires et al., 2010). First, the difficulty in managing personal and practicum commitments exacerbated by additional non-curricular drama activities was a key contributor to their stress. For instance, Tessa explained her workload during practicum as “insane” as she struggled to manage four nights working at her part-time job, planning lessons and attending rehearsals for the school production.

The stressfulness of this intense workload highlights the reality of higher education in contemporary times, where many tertiary students also work part-time, and in some cases full-time, to support themselves financially through their studies (Briggs et al., 2012; Clark & Hall, 2012; Lingard, 2012; McInnis & Hartley, 2002). As this research has revealed, workload stress had negative repercussions to participants’ well-being.
Second, the culture shock encountered when participants’ expectations differed to the reality of practicum caused considerable stress. For example, Vanessa recalled the culture shock she experienced working in a school which differed vastly from her previous school experiences and how she would return from practicum each day distressed and in tears. While the experience of culture shock during practicum is recognised in previous research (Pendergast et al., 2011), this research revealed the influence of previous school experiences of drama on participants’ expectations of practicum and consequently their experience of culture shock and stress.

Third, participants reported stress about their perceived lack of preparation to manage the rigours of practicum, particularly the content and pedagogical knowledge required to teach drama. For example, Nella was unprepared for teaching in an open space, managing class dynamics and facilitating effective group work, which as Wales (2009) emphasised, is essential drama pedagogy. The inadequacy of participants’ pre-service education in preparing them for teaching drama is acknowledged in M. Anderson’s (2002, 2003) research.

It is interesting that while participants were aware of being stressed, and consistent with the findings of Fives et al. (2007), they had little idea how to manage their stress. Furthermore, participants believed that stress was an inevitable reality of the practicum, and, an inevitable part of being a drama teacher. It would appear that participants’ beliefs about drama teacher stress, was formed from their previous experiences of drama teachers – both during their own schooling and during practicum. Indeed, stress in the lives of drama teachers is recognised in previous research (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Donelan, 1989; Haseman, 1989; Wales, 1999).

Ineffective mentoring. Participants with ineffective mentor teachers felt anxious, powerless to change their situation and as noted in Moody’s (2009) observation,
generally experienced a more stressful practicum. Ineffective mentor teachers were deemed by the participants to be those who lacked enthusiasm for teaching and/or mentoring, exhibited unprofessional behaviour, and/or made them feel unwelcome. Aoife, for example, described writing her mentor teacher’s job application for her and feelings of being exploited. Another participant, Samantha, recalled being bullied and belittled by her mentor teacher in front of the students. The findings from this research supports earlier research revealing the negative repercussions on pre-service teachers’ self-confidence and attitude towards practicum when lacking mentor support (Hastings, 2004; Ralph, 2000).

**Implications for practice.** There are three significant points to highlight in considering the implications of these findings for pre-service drama teachers and practicum. First, the highs and lows depicted in this research reveal the humanness and complexity of practicum for pre-service drama teachers where they are faced with new experiences and challenges to navigate each day, in every class and activity, both curricular and non-curricular. This research has shown that practicum involves participants stepping into the unknown and embarking on a steep learning curve where they encounter a range of positive and negative experiences and emotions, some of which are familiar and some unfamiliar. The complexity of practicum is recognised in the research (e.g. Ure et al., 2009) as well as its capacity to be a psychologically demanding experience for pre-service teachers (Klassen & Durksen, 2014). Therefore, providing adequate preparation and support for pre-service drama teachers to manage practicum challenges is key.

Second, many of the experiences described by participants were consistent with findings in the literature, such as the tendency of practicum to be stressful (Badali, 2008; Caires et al., 2010; Hastings, 2004), the high value pre-service teachers place on practicum (Grudnoff, 2011; Townsend & Bates, 2007; K. Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005), and the impact
of the mentor teacher on practicum experiences (Appl & Spenciner, 2008; Roehrig et al., 2008; Wyckoff, et al., 2009). A unique finding of this research, is the impact of added non-curricular drama activities on participants’ experience of stress during practicum. This finding is important, as it not only builds on previous research which highlights the implication of extra non-curricular responsibilities on a drama teacher’s physical and mental health (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Donelan, 1989; Haseman, 1989; Wales, 1999) but confirms a need to revise practicum workload for pre-service drama teachers, which factors in the non-curricular component of being a drama teacher.

Third, this research revealed that the quality of practicum varied greatly between participants, with some participants benefitting significantly from quality mentoring, positive experiences, and opportunities to build self-efficacy. By contrast, other participants endured unsatisfactory experiences with ineffective mentoring and insufficient opportunity to learn necessary pedagogical skills and understandings required for teaching drama. This finding is recognised in previous research (Ure et al., 2009) and highlights that inconsistent practicum quality continues to be a concerning reality for pre-service education programs. Therefore, providing quality practicum experiences for all pre-service drama teachers to learn their pedagogical craft and develop the efficacy required to be classroom-ready is necessary.

Research question 2: What are the key issues and challenges of the practicum for pre-service drama teachers? This research has revealed significant vulnerabilities for pre-service drama teachers during practicum.

Vulnerability from a lack of belonging. When participants lacked a sense of belonging in their practicum school, they felt vulnerable. These findings are reflected in previous research, which indicate that isolation, and a lack of belonging are common feelings amongst pre-service teachers during practicum (Caires et al., 2012; Grudnoff, 2011;
Sudeck et al., 2008). For example, when Kyle felt disconnected and lacked a sense of belonging in earlier practicums, he battled feelings of vulnerability and poor self-confidence; when he gained a sense of belonging during his ATP, he developed improved self-confidence and teaching efficacy.

**Vulnerability from mismatched expectations and beliefs.** When expectations and beliefs about teaching mismatched to the reality of practicum, participants felt vulnerable, and experienced culture shock and stress. Simone felt vulnerable when her expectations of the attributes of an effective drama teacher did not correspond to the reality of her mentor teacher. Claire’s preconceived ideas about how students would behave and engage in drama were very different to her practicum reality. Consistent with Gold’s (1996) claim, Claire’s mismatched expectations and beliefs about teaching made her feel vulnerable and contributed to her “loss of the dream” of becoming a drama teacher.

**Vulnerability from inadequate preparation for practicum.** As illustrated in previous research (Ramanaidu et al., 2014), this research revealed that participants felt vulnerable when they perceived their content knowledge, personal and/or interpersonal skills were inadequate for practicum. For example, Nella felt vulnerable when having to teach content from the upper-school drama syllabus that she was unfamiliar with. Simone and Claire felt vulnerable when relationships with students and/or mentor teachers were in conflict and they lacked the skills to manage this conflict more effectively.

**Vulnerability manifesting as stress.** Feelings of vulnerability experienced by participants often manifested as stress. The participants’ expectations of practicum, pressure to gain outstanding results in order to improve prospects of securing a teaching position, lack of financial support, lack of mentor teacher support, as well as the extensive workload, contributed to participants’ feelings of vulnerability and stress. The considerable time, physical and emotional energy invested into the practicum by participants were most
evident. In Nella’s case, her drive to obtain outstanding results for her ATP and her commitment to choreographing the school production made it increasingly difficult for her to cope under such pressure. This left Nella feeling vulnerable and stressed which had negative repercussions on her physical and mental health. Nella’s challenging workload, exacerbated by the additional non-curricular component, is recognised in the research as an issue faced by many in-service drama teachers in schools (M. Anderson, 2002, 2003; Donelan, 1989; Haseman, 1989; Wales, 1999).

**Vulnerability and mentor teacher support.** The importance of the mentor teacher as a key support for pre-service teachers has been identified in earlier research (Ganser, 2002; Hayes, 2004; Ralf et al., 2008) and consistently highlighted in this research. For example, when Kyle, Nella, and Cindy felt vulnerable, they found strength and reassurance from the support of their mentor teachers who cared for them personally and was invested in their professional development. However, Simone and Claire, without such support from their mentor teachers, lacked a sense of belonging and felt vulnerable.

**Drama practicum pathways.** The literature identified that distress and high levels of vulnerability are experienced by pre-service teachers during practicum (Caires et al., 2010) and that a lack of belonging contributes to feelings of pressure, stress and vulnerability (Caires et al., 2012). These findings were confirmed in Phase 2 of the research, which also revealed that when participants lacked a sense of belonging, experienced mismatch between beliefs and the reality of practicum, and/or lacked adequate preparation to manage practicum, they were more susceptible to stress, and therefore needed additional support provided by their mentor teacher.

The research identified two pathways through practicum for these participants: one leading to success, self-efficacy and effective preparation for teaching drama; the second leading to distress, disillusionment and unsuccessful preparation for teaching drama.
What this research highlights is that the critical factor in these two pathways was the quality of the mentor teacher support. The interplay between each of these factors, illustrated in Figure 9, informs the effectiveness of the practicum experience and its lasting impact on teachers of drama.
Figure 9. Drama Practicum Pathways

Implications for practice. This research has recognised that practicum is a time when pre-service drama teachers feel vulnerable. What is key, however, is for pre-service drama teachers to acknowledge their vulnerability and to recognise that with vulnerability comes opportunity to take risks, overcome fears, build resilience, and experience personal and professional growth (B. Brown, 2006). Nella’s fear of appearing incompetent in front of her students saw her reach out to her mentor teacher for help.
Nella acknowledged her vulnerability, sought help, which in turn led to stronger self-efficacy. In Simone’s case, the culture shock experienced when her expectations of student behaviour mismatched to the reality of practicum, as well as a lack of support and effective mentoring, contributed to her feeling vulnerable and stressed. Simone acknowledged her vulnerability and that, given time and perseverance, her ability to confront challenges would improve, as too would her resilience. Simone was able to find ways to better manage student behaviour, which reduced feelings of vulnerability and led to her increased sense of efficacy. Kyle felt vulnerable before embarking on the ATP due, in part, to previous negative practicum experiences and a perceived lack of belonging. While Kyle stepped into the ATP feeling vulnerable and scared, he was quickly reassured and supported by mentor teachers who acknowledged his fears and provided a sense of belonging. Cindy felt vulnerable when her university supervisor, who was partly responsible for assessing her, recommended that Cindy change her teaching style. Like Nella, Cindy sought reassurance and support from her mentor teacher, and her feelings of vulnerability were managed. Clearly, the mentor teacher played an important role in helping these participants manage feelings of vulnerability and build resilience during their practicum.

These examples reveal moments where participants felt vulnerable yet, with courage and in some cases support from mentor teachers, participants overcame fears and experienced personal growth and increased self-efficacy. Meijer et al. (2011) emphasised that when pre-service teachers experience a positive key moment, it often signifies a turning point and an opportunity to transform a negative situation into success. This was certainly the case for some participants in this research – vulnerability provided an opportunity to “step up”, overcome fear, and gain improved self-efficacy.

However, Claire’s vulnerability remained throughout her ATP and, despite small successes from time to time, she felt overwhelmed and believed she lacked the ability to
change her unsatisfactory situation. For Claire, her inability to be the teacher she wanted to be, and the lack of belonging she felt in her practicum school contributed to feelings of vulnerability, which made her question a future career in teaching drama. The lack of support from her mentor teacher compounded her sense of vulnerability. It is interesting that even though Claire received outstanding results for her ATP, her feelings of vulnerability, disconnectedness, and low level of personal satisfaction with the practicum experience remained throughout her ATP.

These participants’ experiences of vulnerability reveal the courage it takes to embark on the practicum, where stepping into the unfamiliar is daunting and with no guarantee of success. The participants are vulnerable because they are human, they are learning and they will make mistakes. Research informs us that vulnerability is a common human experience, but that as we are supported in dealing with our sense of vulnerability, we can access the courage required to overcome and succeed (B. Brown, 2006).

A key outcome from phases 1 and 2 of the research was the mismatched expectations participants found when on practicum. It was this element of the research that lead to phase three and the following research question.

**Research question 3: In what ways do past school experiences of drama influence the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers?** This research revealed the significant influence of participants’ past experiences of school drama on their beliefs about teaching, the knowledge they privilege, and their expectations. Key findings include the importance of beliefs and a sense of belonging, beliefs and the influence of drama teachers, and beliefs and the power of the dramatic form.

**Beliefs and a sense of belonging.** Phase 3 of the research revealed the sense of belonging participants gained in curricular drama classes and non-curricular drama activities when they were students at school. For example, Simone and Kyle struggled to fit in with their
sporting and/or academic school cultures yet felt they could be themselves to work creatively and without judgement in the drama room.

Correspondingly, a belief participants hold true is that curricular and non-curricular drama can provide a sense of belonging, and, creating a sense of belonging is integral to the work of drama teachers. Participants, therefore, attended practicum with an expectation of experiencing a sense of belonging and creating a sense of belonging for their students.

**Beliefs and the influence of drama teachers.** Participants have vivid memories of their school drama teachers. In most cases, these memories evoke the expertise, passion and dedication exhibited by drama teachers and their capacity to create a sense of belonging for students. For Kyle, his drama teacher made him feel good about himself and encouraged Kyle to reach his true potential, and Simone’s drama teacher inspired her and helped Simone recognise her strengths.

These teachers made a significant impact on participants’ ideas of an effective drama teacher and, therefore, influenced participants’ vision of the drama teacher they aspire to be. Furthermore, it would appear that these ideas have influenced participants’ expectations of their mentor’s teaching style and expertise.

**Beliefs and the power of drama.** Participants have personally experienced the benefits drama can provide to young people and are therefore highly invested in and strong advocates of drama education. For Kyle, drama provided an opportunity for mastery and for Claire, an avenue to develop self-confidence. These experiences illustrate how drama provided participants with a place to belong, a place to experience success, and a place for personal development. Participants therefore attended practicum with high expectations of how their students would engage in drama. Participants were also enthusiastic to recreate experiences that promote self-discovery and development in others. **Interplay**
between school experiences of drama and practicum. This research revealed factors that interact to influence how a pre-service drama teacher experiences the practicum, and, beliefs in this interaction are key. Figure 10 represents, in a graphical way, the participants’ trajectories on the road to becoming drama teachers, and the interaction between them.

Figure 10. Interplay between school experiences of drama and practicum
Participants have personally experienced drama education as students at school. This experience has informed their ideas and beliefs about teaching drama, that is, the propensity for drama education to provide a sense of belonging, attributes of an effective drama teacher, and the high value of drama education and its ability to transform lives. Participants approached practicum with an expectation of what it would be like to teach drama and how it would feel in the drama room. These beliefs and expectations were either in harmony or disharmony with what they experienced. If in harmony, the participant was more likely to have a positive practicum experience and develop improved self-efficacy. If in disharmony, the participant was more likely to feel vulnerable and require additional support from their mentor teacher to manage the culture shock, stress and disillusionment they experienced.

**Implications for practice.** The humanistic qualities of drama that initially appealed to and engaged these participants has been shown to have significant influence on their practicum experience. These findings support earlier research claiming that prior experiences of drama are influential to pre-service teachers’ understanding of the relevance and pedagogical potential of drama (R. Pascoe & Sallis, 2012).

Pre-service drama teachers and teacher educators should celebrate these experiences, after all, it is these experiences that have drawn participants to pursue a career in drama teaching. However, it is important for pre-service drama teachers and teacher educators to question whether these experiences have been recalled through “rose-coloured glasses” and whether the participants have consequently developed unrealistic expectations and beliefs about teaching drama. This is necessary since previous research has noted the propensity for pre-service Arts teachers to have unrealistic and idealistic notions of teaching (L. Thompson, 2007).
Therefore, it is vital for pre-service drama teachers to investigate their own beliefs and expectations throughout their pre-service journey and to also consider how their past experiences have shaped their orientations of teaching drama. Awareness of the influence of these factors may assist pre-service drama teachers manage culture shock, and teacher educators to identify supports and measures to assist pre-service drama teachers better manage practicum and gain the most from this seminal developmental process.

**Contribution to Knowledge**

This research provides a timely reflection on the relevance and nature of practicum as an essential component of teacher education in the context of its role in drama teacher education. Critically examining drama practicum enables questioning of what is taken as a given or a commonplace assumption (van Manen, 2014). In doing so, this research leads to articulating distinctive qualities of professional practice in drama education, the conditions necessary for quality practicum experiences and an effective component in preparing drama teachers for the profession.

The lived experiences of the participants in this research provide lenses through which to critically consider the nature and, ultimately, the purpose and effectiveness of practicum for pre-service drama teachers. Van Manen (1990) alerted researchers to the nature of lived experience and its impact on the uniqueness of each human situation. Practicum is a portal experience, an apprenticeship through which pre-service drama teachers enter their own ongoing practice. The value of practicum lies both in the experience and then reflecting on the experience.

When the practicum experiences of the participants in this research are critically examined, who they are and who they may become in their careers as drama teachers, is contextualised by their situated and embodied experiences during the practicum (van Manen, 2014). Simone, for example, understands the importance of belonging and sees
that fostering a sense of belonging for her students is integral to her role as a drama teacher. Claire recognises that teaching drama is highly challenging and that collegial support is vital. Cindy’s passion for the social benefits of drama informs her orientations of teaching drama. Nella places high value on relationships and works best with the company and support of like-minded colleagues. Kyle understands the importance of recognising personal strengths and sees his future teaching career helping students find their strengths.

Van Manen (2014) pointed to the importance of the experience of being with others, being embodied and being material with a sense of space, place and time. This research showed that these aspects of practicum experience impacted on the pre-service drama teachers’ personal and professional lives. For example, Kyle experienced the benefits of the practicum with mentor teachers who made him feel welcome, whereas Claire felt vulnerable when her relationship with her students and mentor were challenged. Simone’s experience of being in the drama room with students and catering for their wide range of abilities, reinforced the importance of embodied experience. Indeed, the embodied or “felt” experience of practicum triggered feelings and memories for participants of school. Nella was reminded of the joys of being involved in school productions and the adrenalin rush from performing on stage. Kyle was reminded of the production work he loved doing with his peers and working towards common goals.

The context of place and space was significant. All participants remembered their drama space at school as being a safe place to be themselves, a place that was creative and a place in which they felt they belonged. For Cindy, the drama space during practicum had similar qualities and was a place in which she thrived. However for Claire, the drama space during ATP felt intimidating and she wasn’t comfortable with who she was in this space. All participants showed a keen awareness of time pressures, particularly the added involvement in non-curricular drama. Kyle particularly experienced considerable time
pressures commuting to and from practicum, and juggling his part-time job with his practicum commitments.

Ewing (2010) noted social impact benefits from learning in drama and the role of “improving a sense of self and increasing individuals’ or communities’ confidence and sense of self-worth, enabling empowerment over one’s own life” (p. 48). Participants in this research reiterated the distinctive personal value of not only learning in drama but also teaching drama in developing self-efficacy and identity. For example, Simone observed her resilience and improved ability to manage challenges through patience and perseverance. Kyle recognised he had overcome personal fears and developed considerable personal and professional growth, and Cindy discovered she had become the teacher she wanted to be.

The primacy of the actual experience in the teaching practicum is further strengthened through reflection. Schön’s (1983a, 1983b) exploration of how professionals think in action alerted researchers to the significance of reflective practice – reflection in action, on action and for action. For the participants in this research, reflecting in their practicum journals, receiving feedback from their mentor teachers, completing lesson evaluations and receiving anecdotal feedback from students, provided valuable information for reflective practice. Simone’s reflection on challenging student behaviour and how this behaviour made her feel, enabled her to develop strategies and provided the personal affirmation that she needed to persevere. Claire’s practicum journal detailed comparisons between her own school experiences of drama and the practicum experience, helping to clarify her feelings and fears. Furthermore, participating in this research provided participants with opportunities to reflect on personal experiences of drama and the highs and lows of their journey through pre-service education. As Kyle stated at the conclusion of his interview, “This [research] has made things make sense – what I liked about drama, what I like about teaching drama, and now, how I see myself as a drama teacher.”
As noted in Chapter 1, this research re-energises research on pre-service drama education. The findings confirm the transformational role of drama education in the lives of young people (Ewing, 2010). Furthermore, this research reveals components of a quality practicum experience for pre-service drama teachers, integral to their classroom-readiness and induction into the teaching profession. These components include: (a) collegiality and effective mentoring; (b) opportunities to experience success and develop professional and self-efficacy; (c) a manageable workload comprising curricular and non-curricular drama; (d) sufficient time to “settle in” and develop pedagogical skills required for teaching drama; and, (e) a sense of belonging.

**Limitations of the Research**

There are limitations with the present research. First, the research does not aim to represent all pre-service drama teachers, but rather those within the context where the study was conducted. While the inclusion of 19 pre-service drama teachers and five mentor teachers generated rich data to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena, I recognise that more and possibly differing perspectives could have been included. For example, in Phase 2 of the research, only metropolitan practicum schools were used; thus the research did not provide information on how pre-service drama teachers experienced practicum in rural and regional areas, which could pose additional challenges and possible benefits. Furthermore, it would be potentially illuminating to incorporate participants from a variety of institutions rather than the single university used in this research. The findings, while authentic for this particular group of participants, should however, resonate for other pre-service drama teachers, pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and those working in pre-service education.

A second limitation is the reliability of the responses provided by participants. The researcher’s presence during data gathering, a reality of most qualitative research, can
affect the participants’ responses (Liampittong, 2013). In the case of this research, interview responses provided by pre-service drama teachers and their mentor teachers may have been influenced by trying to provide what they thought I wanted to hear. I have taken steps to address this issue by using multiple sources of data (e.g. observations of classroom practice to supplement interview information) and paying attention to other markers of quality (Tracy, 2010) including: (a) accounting for my own positionality; (b) acknowledging limitations; (c) meticulous record keeping; and, (d) showing the congruence of my findings with previous research.

The third limitation of the research focuses on issues of anonymity and confidentiality. Since the participants were from the same university and the drama education community in Western Australia is relatively small, presenting the findings to protect the participants’ anonymity was challenging. Therefore, individual details of the practicum schools and mentor teachers have been withheld, which may compromise the rich description needed to understand the context of experiences.

Despite these limitations, this research serves to illuminate how some pre-service drama teachers experience practicum and how their past school experiences of drama influence beliefs and expectations of practicum.

**Recommendations for Future Practice – Drama Practicum**

The significance of this research is that it highlights a number of factors that can influence the efficacy of the practicum experience for pre-service drama teachers. The following recommendations are based on the premise that attending to these factors will facilitate a more positive practicum experience where opportunities to develop pedagogy and self-efficacy are maximised for pre-service drama teachers. With this in mind, recommendations have been developed for key stakeholders in the teaching practicum, these being practicum planners, teacher educators, mentor teachers, and pre-service
drama teachers. While some of these recommendations may indeed apply to pre-service teachers generally, the focus of these recommendations is on seeing improved outcomes for pre-service drama teachers. I begin with recommendations for practicum planners.

**Recommendation 1: Practicum planners revise workload guidelines for pre-service drama teachers which recognise the non-curricular component undertaken during practicum.** The need to address the issue of workload for pre-service drama teachers is a significant finding revealed in this research. Managing the additional non-curricular component of practicum caused additional stress for participants and had negative repercussions on their physical and mental health. The extra time committed to these activities ranged between eight and 15 hours a week and often involved participants working late at night and on weekends. This non-curricular component made a substantial impact on the participants’ workload, particularly considering they were teaching around 18 hours of curricular material each week. Therefore, it is recommended that a revision of workload guidelines is undertaken by practicum planners, recognising the non-curricular drama component is a necessary yet time-consuming, exhausting and stressful part of practicum for pre-service drama teachers.

**Recommendation 2: Practicum planners provide training for mentor teachers, exploring effective mentoring practices and components of quality practicum experiences for pre-service drama teachers.** This research highlights the integral role mentor teachers play in practicum experiences, particularly in enhancing the professional efficacy of pre-service drama teachers. While there is an expectation that mentor teachers know how to mentor pre-service teachers, this research revealed considerable variance and disparities in mentoring styles and quality.

The data from this study identified the attributes of an effective mentor teacher for a pre-service drama teacher as: (a) supportive; (b) provides guidance and constructive
feedback; (c) models effective teaching practice; (d) shares resources; (e) encourages freedom and flexibility; (f) values the individual skills of the pre-service drama teacher; (g) welcoming; (h) fosters a sense of belonging; (i) trusting; and, (j) collegial.

Furthermore, the data revealed components of a quality practicum experience for pre-service drama teachers: (a) collegiality and effective mentoring; (b) opportunities to experience success and develop professional and self-efficacy; (c) a manageable workload comprising curricular and non-curricular drama; (d) sufficient time to “settle in” and develop pedagogical skills needed for teaching drama; and, (e) a sense of belonging.

While all practicum stakeholders (practicum planners, teacher educators, mentor teachers and pre-service drama teachers) would benefit from understanding these mentoring attributes and practicum components, it is particularly important for mentor teachers to be familiar with factors that are most conducive to supporting pre-service drama teachers and their induction into the teaching profession.

**Recommendation 3: Practicum planners make provision for longer practicum placements and/or further authentic experiences for pre-service drama teachers.**

A “one size fits all” model or approach to practicum is neither in the best interests of pre-service drama teachers nor is a reflection of our schools or, indeed, our society. This research revealed issues with shorter practicum placements for participants, such as inadequate time to get to know the students and the way in which the school operates, insufficient time to understand how students learn, and insufficient time to develop their pedagogy.

By contrast, the longer practicum (ATP) enabled participants to develop important pedagogical skills, was more conducive to gaining a sense of belonging and enabled participants to engage in long-term projects, which provided a more realistic insight into
the work of drama teachers. Therefore, this research recommends longer practicums for pre-service drama teachers, and/or further opportunities to gain authentic experience in schools.

**Recommendation 4: Teacher educators facilitate considerable opportunities for pre-service drama teachers to investigate their experiences, beliefs and expectations of teaching drama.** This research revealed the significant influence of pre-service drama teachers’ beliefs and expectations on their experiences of practicum. Given the literature on pre-service teacher beliefs confirms the capacity for teacher educators to have some influence on pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching (e.g. Ng et al., 2010), it is recommended that reflecting on past experiences of drama and investigating the influence of these experiences feature prominently throughout pre-service drama education. This focus is important since this research revealed that when pre-service drama teachers’ beliefs were in harmony with the practicum, participants experienced self-efficacy; when beliefs were in disharmony, participants experienced culture shock, vulnerability and stress.

**Summary.** These four recommendations have been suggested as essential for practicum stakeholders to consider in order to improve the quality of practicum experiences for pre-service drama teachers and, therefore, their induction into the teaching profession. Furthermore, these recommendations have been suggested on the basis that pre-service drama teachers can use this new knowledge to understand the factors that will challenge them during the practicum and take active measures to prepare themselves.

**Future Research**

Several suggestions for future research have been developed from the findings of this study. The first direction is the use of a wider range of practicum schools. Schools from remote and rural regions of Western Australia, which would entail their own set of unique
challenges, could be included. Given that support is key, investigation could then be made into how participants navigate practicum whilst living in a rural community, away from their regular support networks. Furthermore, ways in which participants connect to the wider community could be investigated, such as opportunities to engage with a community club, and its impact on their sense of belonging.

Kahn (2001) acknowledged the high importance of the voices of classroom teachers and professional educators being heard in the process of developing and improving teacher education programs. With this in mind, the second direction for future research focuses on mentor teachers and their own experiences of practicum when they were pre-service teachers. Since one of the strengths of this study is in its use of stories to understand experience, mentor stories could provide the opportunity for pre-service drama teachers to understand alternative perspectives to their own. Furthermore, this would be potentially illuminate the beliefs held by mentor teachers, and how these beliefs influence their classroom and mentoring practice.

This research has revealed that pre-service drama teachers work best when a sense of belonging is experienced during practicum, and that mentor teachers play an integral role in this process. Therefore, a third direction for future research is to investigate how mentor teachers, and indeed the schools in which they work, create a sense of belonging for their pre-service teachers and, of potential significance, how the school creates a sense of belonging for their teaching staff and students.

It is reasonable to assume that all pre-service teachers with a significant non-curricular component to their practicum would find that this adds to their stress. Therefore, the fourth direction for further research is to investigate other subject areas with a significant non-curricular component, and ways in which these areas support, or do not support, pre-service teachers. This may produce further evidence to support a revision of workload
guidelines that factor in the non-curricular component of pre-service drama teachers, as recommended in this research.

The final direction for further research is investigating ways in which pre-service drama teachers manage their vulnerability during practicum. Accessing participants’ stories, that illustrate confronting moments of vulnerability that lead to empowerment and self-efficacy, will be of benefit to the training of pre-service drama teachers and indeed, all pre-service teachers.

These suggested directions for research will add to the body of knowledge surrounding pre-service education, practicum, pre-service teacher beliefs, mentoring, and pre-service drama education. Encouraging greater awareness of key issues and challenges of practicum can only serve to enhance the experience for pre-service teachers, their mentor teachers and, of course, their future students.

**Concluding Comments**

As mentioned, this research has illuminated the human dimensions of practicum experience. In doing so, this research has revealed that pre-service drama teachers experience significant challenges during practicum, which are not a sign of weakness or a message that they are not “cut out” to be a drama teacher. Rather, it recognises that practicum is complex, challenging and stressful, and pre-service drama teachers are vulnerable and need support.

Allowing pre-service drama teachers to “sink or swim” is not in the best interests of pre-service drama teachers themselves, their future students, or the longevity and efficacy of drama education in schools. Black-Branch and Lamont (1998) argued that teacher education programs have, at least, an ethical responsibility to provide support for pre-service teachers to learn to cope with high levels of stress during their practicum. I support this claim and emphasise that, despite the difficulty of implementing change, all
stakeholders working with pre-service drama teachers are responsible for making the changes necessary to improve practicum experiences. Supporting pre-service drama teachers in their transition from learner to teacher is critical and involves a deep understanding of the emotional support needed by pre-service drama teachers during practicum.

While Nella’s portrait was omitted from the research due to issues with confidentiality, Nella and I decided to include a portion of her portrait by way of concluding the thesis. Therefore, in the words of Nella, when reflecting on her ATP:

*I remember when I started to feel like I fitted in, which made such a difference to the whole prac experience. It was in the performing-arts office one day. You see there was a great group of teachers there and they all got along so well. If one of them went down to the shop, they’d buy a Diet Coke for everyone. Without even asking! They really looked after each other. Well this particular day, I was bought a Diet Coke. It was such a small thing, but it made me really feel a part of something. It also made me remember how it felt to belong in my drama class when I was a kid at school. *

*So, now, I’ve come to realise that I have a really important job ahead of me and I’m so lucky to have had great drama teachers at school and mentors on prac to help me. I have the capacity to make such a difference to my future students. To create a place for them to belong. A safe place where they can just be themselves. *

*Being a drama teacher is an honour and I want to get it right. This prac has shown me how I can get it right. Now, all I need is to get a job!*

Nella’s reflection issues a challenge for those working with pre-service drama teachers. It illustrates that, if done well, drama education in our schools has the capacity to transform the lives of young people and so deserves the very best drama teachers to take care of its future.
References


O’Toole, J. (2006). *Doing drama research: Stepping into enquiry in drama, theatre and education.* City East, Qld: Drama Australia.


Research Papers in Education, 19(2), 185–204.


## Professional Knowledge

### Standard 1 - Know students and how they learn

#### Focus area 1.1 Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students

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Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.

- Use teaching strategies based on knowledge of students physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics to improve student learning.
- Select from a flexible and effective repertoire of teaching strategies to suit the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students.
- Lead colleagues to select and develop teaching strategies to improve student learning using knowledge of the physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students.

#### Focus area 1.2 Understand how students learn

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Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.

- Structure teaching programs using research and collegial advice about how students learn.
- Expand understanding of how students learn using research and workplace knowledge.
- Lead processes to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching programs using research and workplace knowledge about how students learn.

#### Focus area 1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds

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Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.

- Design and implement teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Support colleagues to develop effective teaching strategies that address the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Evaluate and revise school learning and teaching programs, using expert and community knowledge and experience, to meet the needs of students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.
### Focus area

#### 1.4 Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

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<td>Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.</td>
<td>Design and implement effective teaching strategies that are responsive to the local community and cultural setting, linguistic background and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.</td>
<td>Provide advice and support colleagues in the implementation of effective teaching strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students using knowledge of and support from community representatives.</td>
<td>Develop teaching programs that support equitable and ongoing participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students by engaging in collaborative relationships with community representatives and parent bodies.</td>
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### Focus area

#### 1.5 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities

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<td>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.</td>
<td>Develop teaching activities that incorporate differentiated strategies to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.</td>
<td>Evaluate learning and teaching programs, using student assessment data, that are differentiated for the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.</td>
<td>Lead colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching programs differentiated for the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.</td>
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### Focus area

#### 1.6 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability

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<td>Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.</td>
<td>Design and implement teaching activities that support the participation and learning of students with disability and address relevant policy and legislative requirements.</td>
<td>Work with colleagues to access specialist knowledge, and relevant policy and legislation, to develop teaching programs that support the participation and learning of students with disability.</td>
<td>Initiate and lead the review of school policies to support the engagement and full participation of students with disability and ensure compliance with legislative and/or system policies.</td>
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## Standard 2 - Know the content and how to teach it

### Focus area

#### 2.1 Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area

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<td>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area.</td>
<td>Apply knowledge of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area to develop engaging teaching activities.</td>
<td>Support colleagues using current and comprehensive knowledge of content and teaching strategies to develop and implement engaging learning and teaching programs.</td>
<td>Lead initiatives within the school to evaluate and improve knowledge of content and teaching strategies and demonstrate exemplary teaching of subjects using effective, research-based learning and teaching programs.</td>
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**Focus area**

#### 2.2 Content selection and organisation

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<td>Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence.</td>
<td>Organise content into coherent, well-sequenced learning and teaching programs.</td>
<td>Exhibit innovative practice in the selection and organisation of content and delivery of learning and teaching programs.</td>
<td>Lead initiatives that utilise comprehensive content knowledge to improve the selection and sequencing of content into coherently organised learning and teaching programs.</td>
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**Focus area**

#### 2.3 Curriculum, assessment and reporting

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<td>Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans.</td>
<td>Design and implement learning and teaching programs using knowledge of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.</td>
<td>Support colleagues to plan and implement learning and teaching programs using contemporary knowledge and understanding of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.</td>
<td>Lead colleagues to develop learning and teaching programs using comprehensive knowledge of curriculum, assessment and reporting requirements.</td>
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</table>

**Focus area**

#### 2.4 Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.</td>
<td>Support colleagues with providing opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.</td>
<td>Lead initiatives to assist colleagues with opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Focus area
#### 2.5 Literacy and numeracy strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.</td>
<td>Apply knowledge and understanding of effective teaching strategies to support students’ literacy and numeracy achievement.</td>
<td>Support colleagues to implement effective teaching strategies to improve students’ literacy and numeracy achievement.</td>
<td>Monitor and evaluate the implementation of teaching strategies within the school to improve students’ achievement in literacy and numeracy using research-based knowledge and student data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Focus area
#### 2.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students.</td>
<td>Use effective teaching strategies to integrate ICT into learning and teaching programs to make selected content relevant and meaningful.</td>
<td>Model high-level teaching knowledge and skills and work with colleagues to use current ICT to improve their teaching practice and make content relevant and meaningful.</td>
<td>Lead and support colleagues within the school to select and use ICT with effective teaching strategies to expand learning opportunities and content knowledge for all students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

## Professional Practice

### Standard 3 - Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning

**Focus area**

3.1 Establish challenging learning goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set learning goals that provide achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics.</td>
<td>Set explicit, challenging and achievable learning goals for all students.</td>
<td>Develop a culture of high expectations for all students by modelling and setting challenging learning goals.</td>
<td>Demonstrate exemplary practice and high expectations and lead colleagues to encourage students to pursue challenging goals in all aspects of their education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Focus area**

3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies.</td>
<td>Plan and implement well-structured learning and teaching programs or lesson sequences that engage students and promote learning.</td>
<td>Work with colleagues to plan, evaluate and modify learning and teaching programs to create productive learning environments that engage all students.</td>
<td>Exhibit exemplary practice and lead colleagues to plan, implement and review the effectiveness of their learning and teaching programs to develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Focus area**

3.3 Use teaching strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include a range of teaching strategies.</td>
<td>Select and use relevant teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.</td>
<td>Support colleagues to select and apply effective teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.</td>
<td>Work with colleagues to review, modify and expand their repertoire of teaching strategies to enable students to use knowledge, skills, problem solving and critical and creative thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Focus area**

3.4 Select and use resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning.</td>
<td>Select and/or create and use a range of resources, including ICT, to engage students in their learning.</td>
<td>Assist colleagues to create, select and use a wide range of resources, including ICT, to engage students in their learning.</td>
<td>Model exemplary skills and lead colleagues in selecting, creating and evaluating resources, including ICT, for application by teachers within or beyond the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Focus area
#### 3.5 Use effective classroom communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Use effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student understanding, participation, engagement and achievement.</td>
<td>Assist colleagues to select a wide range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support students’ understanding, engagement and achievement.</td>
<td>Demonstrate and lead by example inclusive verbal and non-verbal communication using collaborative strategies and contextual knowledge to support students’ understanding, engagement and achievement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Focus area
#### 3.6 Evaluate and improve teaching programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate personal teaching and learning programs using evidence, including feedback from students and student assessment data, to inform planning.</td>
<td>Work with colleagues to review current teaching and learning programs using student feedback, student assessment data, knowledge of curriculum and workplace practices.</td>
<td>Conduct regular reviews of teaching and learning programs using multiple sources of evidence including: student assessment data, curriculum documents, teaching practices and feedback from parents/carers, students and colleagues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Focus area
#### 3.7 Engage parents/carers in the educative process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Describe a broad range of strategies for involving parents/carers in the educative process.</td>
<td>Plan for appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in their children’s learning.</td>
<td>Work with colleagues to provide appropriate and contextually relevant opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in their children’s learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Initiate contextually relevant processes to establish programs that involve parents/carers in the education of their children and broader school priorities and activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Standard 4 - Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments

#### Focus area

**4.1 Support student participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities.</td>
<td>Establish and implement inclusive and positive interactions to engage and support all students in classroom activities.</td>
<td>Model effective practice and support colleagues in implementing inclusive strategies that engage and support all students.</td>
<td>Demonstrate and lead by example the development of productive and inclusive learning environments across the school by reviewing inclusive strategies and exploring new approaches to engage and support all students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Focus area

**4.2 Manage classroom activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the capacity to organize classroom activities and provide clear directions.</td>
<td>Establish and maintain orderly and workable routines to create an environment where student time is spent on learning tasks.</td>
<td>Model and share with colleagues a flexible repertoire of strategies for classroom management to ensure all students are engaged in purposeful activities.</td>
<td>Initiate strategies and lead colleagues to implement effective classroom management and promote student responsibility for learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Focus area

**4.3 Manage challenging behaviour**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour.</td>
<td>Manage challenging behaviour by establishing and negotiating clear expectations with students and addressing discipline issues promptly, fairly and respectfully.</td>
<td>Develop and share with colleagues a flexible repertoire of behaviour management strategies using expert knowledge and workplace experience.</td>
<td>Lead and implement behaviour management initiatives to assist colleagues in broadening their range of strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Focus area

**4.4 Maintain student safety**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe strategies that support students' wellbeing and safety within school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.</td>
<td>Ensure students' wellbeing and safety within school by implementing school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.</td>
<td>Initiate and take responsibility for implementing current school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements to ensure student wellbeing and safety.</td>
<td>Evaluate the effectiveness of student wellbeing policies and safe working practices using current school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements and assist colleagues to update their practices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus area
4.5 Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.</td>
<td>Incorporate strategies to promote the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.</td>
<td>Model, and support colleagues to develop, strategies to promote the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.</td>
<td>Review or implement new policies and strategies to ensure the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

## Standard 5 - Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning

### Focus area

#### 5.1 Assess student learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning.</td>
<td>Develop, select and use informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative assessment strategies to assess student learning.</td>
<td>Develop and apply a comprehensive range of assessment strategies to diagnose learning needs, comply with curriculum requirements and support colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of their approaches to assessment.</td>
<td>Evaluate school assessment policies and strategies to support colleagues with using assessment data to diagnose learning needs, complying with curriculum, system and school assessment requirements and using a range of assessment strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Focus area

#### 5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning,</td>
<td>Provide timely, effective and appropriate feedback to students about their achievement relative to their learning goals,</td>
<td>Select from an effective range of strategies to provide targeted feedback based on informed and timely judgements of each student's current needs in order to progress learning.</td>
<td>Model exemplary practice and initiate programs to support colleagues in applying a range of timely, effective and appropriate feedback strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Focus area

#### 5.3 Make consistent and comparable judgements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.</td>
<td>Understand and participate in assessment moderation activities to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.</td>
<td>Organise assessment moderation activities that support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.</td>
<td>Lead and evaluate moderation activities that ensure consistent and comparable judgements of student learning to meet curriculum and school or system requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Focus area

#### 5.4 Interpret student data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.</td>
<td>Use student assessment data to analyse and evaluate student understanding of subject/content, identifying interventions and modifying teaching practice.</td>
<td>Work with colleagues to use data from internal and external student assessments for evaluating learning and teaching, identifying interventions and modifying teaching practice.</td>
<td>Co-ordinate student performance and program evaluation using internal and external student assessment data to improve teaching practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus area
5.5 Report on student achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate understanding of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.</td>
<td>Report clearly, accurately and respectfully to students and parents/carers about student achievement, making use of accurate and reliable records.</td>
<td>Work with colleagues to construct accurate, informative and timely reports to students and parents/carers about student learning and achievement.</td>
<td>Evaluate and revise reporting and accountability mechanisms in the school to meet the needs of students, parents/carers and colleagues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Professional Engagement

### Standard 6 - Engage in professional learning

**Focus area**  
6.1 Identify and plan professional learning needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs.</td>
<td>Use the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and advice from colleagues to identify and plan professional learning needs.</td>
<td>Analyse the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to plan personal professional development goals, support colleagues to identify and achieve personal development goals and pre-service teachers to improve classroom practice.</td>
<td>Use comprehensive knowledge of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers to plan and lead the development of professional learning policies and programs that address the professional learning needs of colleagues and pre-service teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Focus area**  
6.2 Engage in professional learning and improve practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand the relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers.</td>
<td>Participate in learning to update knowledge and practice, targeted to professional needs and school and/or system priorities.</td>
<td>Plan for professional learning by accessing and critiquing relevant research, engage in high quality targeted opportunities to improve practice and offer quality placements for pre-service teachers where applicable.</td>
<td>Initiate collaborative relationships to expand professional learning opportunities, engage in research, and provide quality opportunities and placements for pre-service teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Focus area**  
6.3 Engage with colleagues and improve practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices.</td>
<td>Contribute to collegial discussions and apply constructive feedback from colleagues to improve professional knowledge and practice.</td>
<td>Initiate and engage in professional discussions with colleagues in a range of forums to evaluate practice directed at improving professional knowledge and practice, and the educational outcomes of students.</td>
<td>Implement professional dialogue within the school or professional learning network(s) that is informed by feedback, analysis of current research and practice to improve the educational outcomes of students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Focus area

6.4 Apply professional learning and improve student learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for improved student learning.</td>
<td>Undertake professional learning programs designed to address identified student learning needs.</td>
<td>Engage with colleagues to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher professional learning activities to address student learning needs.</td>
<td>Advocate, participate in and lead strategies to support high-quality professional learning opportunities for colleagues that focus on improved student learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Standard 7 - Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community

#### Focus area

**7.1 Meet professional ethics and responsibilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.</td>
<td>Meet codes of ethics and conduct established by regulatory authorities, systems and schools.</td>
<td>Maintain high ethical standards and support colleagues to interpret codes of ethics and exercise sound judgement in all professional dealings with students, colleagues and the community.</td>
<td>Model exemplary ethical behaviour and exercise informed judgements in all professional dealings with students, colleagues and the community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Focus area

**7.2 Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.</td>
<td>Understand the implications of and comply with relevant legislative, administrative, organisational and professional requirements, policies and processes.</td>
<td>Support colleagues to review and interpret legislative, administrative, and organisational requirements, policies and processes.</td>
<td>Initiate, develop and implement relevant policies and processes to support colleagues' compliance with and understanding of existing and new legislative, administrative, organisational and professional responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Focus area

**7.3 Engage with the parents/carers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers.</td>
<td>Establish and maintain respectful collaborative relationships with parents/carers regarding their children’s learning and wellbeing.</td>
<td>Demonstrate responsiveness in all communications with parents/carers about their children’s learning and wellbeing.</td>
<td>Identify, initiate and build on opportunities that engage parents/carers in both the progress of their children’s learning and in the educational priorities of the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Focus area

**7.4 Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Highly Accomplished</th>
<th>Lead</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand the role of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers’ professional knowledge and practice.</td>
<td>Participate in professional and community networks and forums to broaden knowledge and improve practice.</td>
<td>Contribute to professional networks and associations and build productive links with the wider community to improve teaching and learning.</td>
<td>Take a leadership role in professional and community networks and support the involvement of colleagues in external learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – Arts Syllabus: Organisation and Structure

Organisation

Content Structure

The Arts learning area comprises five subjects: Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts.

The Arts curriculum is written on the basis that all students will study at least two Arts subjects from Pre-primary to the end of Year 8. It is a requirement that students study a performance subject and a visual subject.

In Years 9 and 10, the study of the Arts is optional.

In the Arts, it is desirable that schools provide students with the opportunity to engage with all five Arts subjects across Pre-primary to Year 10.

Each of the five Arts subject is organised into two interrelated strands: Making and Responding.

Making

Making in each Arts subject engages students’ cognition, imagination, senses and emotions in conceptual and practical ways and involves thinking kinesthetically, critically and creatively. Students develop knowledge and skills to plan, produce, present, design and perform in each arts subject independently and collaboratively. Students work from an idea, an intention, particular resources, an imaginative impulse, or an external stimulus.

Part of making involves students considering their work in the Arts from a range of points of view, including that of the audience. Students reflect on the development and completion of making in the Arts.

Responding

Responding in each Arts subject involves students reflecting, analysing, interpreting and evaluating in the Arts. Students learn to appreciate and investigate the Arts through contextual study. Learning through making is interrelated with, and dependent upon, responding. Students learn by reflecting on their making and responding to the making of others. The points of view students hold, shift according to different experiences in the Arts.

Students consider the Arts’ relationships with audiences. They reflect on their own experiences as audience members and
begin to understand how the Arts represent ideas through expression, symbolic communication and cultural traditions and rituals. Students think about how audiences receive, debate and interpret the meanings of the Arts.

**Relationships between the strands**

Making and Responding are intrinsically connected. Together they provide students with knowledge and skills as practitioners, performers and audience members and develop students’ skills in critical and creative thinking. As students make in the Arts, they actively respond to their developing work and the works of others; as students respond to the Arts, they draw on the knowledge and skills acquired through their experiences to inform their making.

**Year level descriptions**

Year level descriptions provide an overview of the key concepts addressed, along with core content being studied at that year level. They also emphasise the interrelated nature of the two strands and the expectation that planning will involve integration of content from across the strands.

For the five Arts subjects, the year level description includes forms, genres, styles, contexts, materials, practices and/or elements relevant to each Arts subject that informs approaches to teaching and learning in the Arts.

**Content description**

Content descriptions set out the knowledge, understanding and skills that teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn. They do not prescribe approaches to teaching. The core content has been written to ensure that learning is appropriately ordered and that unnecessary repetition is avoided. However, a concept or skill introduced at one year level may be revisited, strengthened and extended at later year levels as needed.

Additional content descriptions are available for teachers to incorporate in their teaching programs. Schools will determine the inclusion of additional content, taking into account learning area time allocation and school priorities.

The additional content will not be reflected in the Achievement Standard.

**Achievement standards**

From Pre-primary to Year 10, achievement standards indicate the quality of learning that students should typically demonstrate by a particular point in their schooling. An achievement standard describes the quality of learning (e.g., the depth of conceptual understanding and the sophistication of skills) that would indicate the student is well-placed to commence the learning required at the next level of achievement.

**Glossary**

A glossary is provided to support a common understanding of key terms and concepts included in the core content.
Appendix C – Drama Syllabus: P–10

Drama

Pre-primary year Syllabus

The syllabus is based on the requirement that all students will study at least one of the five Arts subjects from Pre-primary to Year 3. It is a requirement that students study a performance subject and a visual subject.

Year Level Description

In Pre-primary, learning in drama builds on the capabilities of learning developed in the early years.

Students, through purposeful play, respond to stimuli to create drama and develop improvisation skills. They are introduced to the elements of voice and movement to create drama, offering and accepting ideas as they improvise, using simple stories.

Students experience drama as performers and audience members, engaging in both spontaneous and structured play to communicate ideas; they recognise that the purpose of drama is to share itself with others.

As they make and respond to drama, students explore the different places where drama can be seen or heard in the community.

Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEAS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of skills (phasis, sounds or music) to develop dramatic action about the real and imagined worlds (ACDHPR010)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Creative and critical thinking</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEAS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience behaviour (listening, attending, responding appropriately) when viewing drama (ACDHPR030)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal and social capability</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intercultural understanding</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development of improvisation skills (accepting offers) to develop dramatic action (ACDHPR020)

- **Literacy**
- **Creative and critical thinking**
- **Personal and social capability**
- **Intercultural understanding**

Personal responses to drama they view and make (ACDHPR030)

- **Literacy**
- **Creative and critical thinking**
- **Personal and social capability**
- **Intercultural understanding**

Exploration and experimentation with the two (2) elements of drama:

- voice (loud, soft)
- movement (big, small)

To create drama (ACDHPR020)

- **Literacy**
- **Creative and critical thinking**
- **Personal and social capability**

Simple stories based on stimuli and available technologies (ACDHPR020)

- **Literacy**
- **Creative and critical thinking**
- **Personal and social capability**

PERFORMANCE

Performance of improvised drama that communicates ideas to an audience (ACDHPR030)

- **Literacy**
- **Creative and critical thinking**
- **Personal and social capability**

Performance skills (being the audience) when watching drama with peers (ACDHPR030)

- **Personal and social capability**
Achievement standard

To be developed in 2015 using assessment work sample evidence to 'set' standards through paired comparisons.

Year 1 Syllabus

The syllabus is based on the requirement that all students will study at least two of the five Arts subjects from Pre-primary to Year 8. It is a requirement that students study a performance subject and a visual subject.

Year Level Description

In Year 1, learning in drama builds on the dispositions of learning developed in the early years.

Students explore personal experiences to create drama and develop improvisation skills. They are introduced to the element of role and continue to experiment with voice and movement to create their drama.

Students experience the roles of performers and audience members, learning performance skills and audience behaviour. They have the opportunity to explore the different places where drama is performed.

As they make and respond to drama, students explore the key moments in drama they view and make.

Making

IDEAS

Use of dramatic action to sequence events to communicate an idea or message (ACHDRH007)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Improvisation skills (contributing to the progression of action) to develop dramatic action (ACHDRH008)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

SKILLS

Responding

Audience behaviour (giving attention to the development of a story) when viewing drama (ACHDRH009)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Intercultural understanding

Different places where drama is performed (ACHDRH010)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Intercultural understanding

Personal responses expressing ideas and feelings to key moments in drama they view and make (ACHDRH011)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Intercultural understanding

Exploration and experimentation of the three (3) elements of drama:

- voice (loud, soft, varying loud and soft)
- movement (big, small, use of facial expressions)
- role (fictional character)

To create drama (ACHDRH012)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Intercultural understanding

Use of known stories and personal experiences to create drama with simple objects and available technologies (ACHDRH013)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

PERFORMANCE

Performance of planned and spontaneous drama that expresses feelings, moods, ideas and experiences to an audience (ACHDRH014)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Performance skills (performing towards the audience, raising chin for good eye lines) when sharing drama with peers (ACHDRH015)

Personal and social capability

Achievement standard

To be developed in 2015 using assessment work sample evidence to 'set' standards through paired comparisons.
Year 2 Syllabus

The syllabus is based on the requirement that all students will study at least two of the five Arts subjects from Pre-primary to Year 8. It is a requirement that students study a Performing Arts subject and a Visual Arts subject.

Year Level Description

In Year 2, learning in drama builds on the knowledge and skills developed in early years.

Students explore personal events and fictional stories to create drama. They continue to develop improvisation skills, exploring ways to role for voice, movement and role. Students are introduced to the element of situation.

Students experience drama as performers and audience members, presenting scenes in which they apply story structures to link the action with an ending. Students view drama based on unfamiliar stories.

As they make and respond to drama, students experiment with the elements of voice, movement, role and situation. Students explore reasons why people make drama.

Making

IDEAS

Use of dramatic action to sequence events communicating an idea, message or story (ACADRM026)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Improvisation skills (establishing a situation) to develop dramatic action and ideas (ACADRM028)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

SKILLS

Exploration and experimentation of the four (4) elements of drama:

- Voice (loud, soft, varying loud and soft, pace and pitch)
- Movement (big, small; use of facial expressions; gestures; posture)
- Role (fictional character; listening and responding in role)
- Situation (establishing a fictional setting and relating to it in role)

to create drama (ACADRM028)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Development of drama to communicate important personal events or fictional stories using objects, puppets, images and/or available technologies (ACADRM029)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Responding

Audience behaviour (responding to interactive elements) where students view drama that uses different styles and unfamiliar stories (ACADRM031)

Personal and social capability

Inter-cultural understanding

Reasons why people make drama (ACADRM031)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Inter-cultural understanding

Personal responses using the elements of voice and movement in drama they view and make (ACADRM031)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Performance

Performance of drama to an audience demonstrating story structures to set the scene, link action and create an ending (ACADRM033)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Performance skills (suitable openings and conclusions to performances, appropriate stage crossed) when sharing drama with familiar audiences (ACADRM034)

Personal and social capability

Achievement Standard

To be developed in 2015 using (assessment) work sample evidence to ‘set’ standards through paired comparisons.
Year 3 Syllabus

The syllabus is based on the requirement that all students will study at least two of the five Arts subjects from Pre primary to Year 8. It is a requirement that students study a performance subject and a visual subject.

Year Level Description

In Year 3, students extend their understanding of role and situation as they create improvised and devised drama.

Students begin to experiment with varying forms and styles using focus and control when improvising or devising drama. They continue to develop improvisation skills, varying voice and movement. Students are introduced to the elements of space, character, and time.

Students experience drama as performers and audience members. They begin to use rehearsal processes to support audience engagement and continue to learn appropriate responses to the drama of others.

As they make and respond to drama, students identify and reflect on the elements of drama used in a performance. Students have the opportunity to experience drama from a range of cultures, times and locations.

Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEAS</th>
<th>Responding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvised and devised drama based on narrative structures in formal forms and styles (ACDPRE021)</td>
<td>Appropriate responses to, and respect for, drama of others as performers and audience members (ACDPRE024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical and creative thinking</td>
<td>Personal and social capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and social capability</td>
<td>Inter-cultural understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvisation skills (breaking patterns) to develop drama (ACDPRE022)</td>
<td>Features of drama in different cultures and places (ACDPRE023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical and creative thinking</td>
<td>Personal and social capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and social capability</td>
<td>Inter-cultural understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Skills

Exploration and experimentation of seven (7) elements of drama:

- voice (loud, soft, varying; loud and soft; pitch variation; pace; volume)
- movement (facial expressions and gestures to create believability for character and situation)
- role (taking on the point of view of a fictional character; listening and responding to role, adopting a role and maintaining focus)
- situation (establishing and sustaining a fictional setting)
- space (establishing a clear setting)
- character (communicating role traits; developing relationships between characters)
- time (sense of time to create believability in drama)

When creating, improvised or devised drama

ACDPRE025

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability

Performance

Rehearsal processes (to improve the flow of the performance) to support audience engagement (ACDPRE026)

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability

Performance skills and audience awareness (where performers use focus and control) when performing drama forms and styles (ACDPRE027)

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
Achievement standard

To be developed in 2015 using assessment sample evidence to ‘set’ standards through paired comparisons.

Year 4 Syllabus

The syllabus is based on the requirement that all students will study at least two of the five Arts subjects from Pre- Primary to Year 8. It is a requirement that students study a performance subject and a visual subject.

Year Level Description

In Year 4, students extend their understanding of role and situation, as they continue to explore ideas through improvisation.

Students continue to explore the elements of drama to communicate ideas using role, situation, space, character and time. They are introduced to relationships and how relationships influence character development.

Students experience drama as performers and audience members. They continue to use rehearsal processes to enhance audience engagement and shape the drama for an audience.

As they make and respond to drama, students explore narrative structures and reflect on the meaning and purpose of their drama and the drama of others. They reflect on, and respond to, the ideas in drama from different cultures.

Making

- Ideas
  - Improvised and devised drama based on narrative structures in non-realistic drama forms (ACADRM001)
    - Literacy
    - Critical and creative thinking
    - Personal and social capability

- Improvisation skills (working with limitations) to develop drama (ACADRM002)
  - Literacy
  - Critical and creative thinking
  - Personal and social capability

Responding

- Considered responses to, and respect for, the drama of others as performers and audience members (ACADRM003)
  - Personal and social capability
  - Intercultural understanding

- Ideas in drama from different cultures (ACADRM004)
  - Literacy
  - Critical and creative thinking
  - Personal and social capability
  - Intercultural understanding

- Responses that involve identifying and reflecting on the

SKILLS

Exploration and experimentation of eight (8) elements of drama:

- voice (loud, soft, varying loud and soft pitch variation, pace, volume)
- movement (facial expressions and gestures to create behaviour in character and situation)
- role (taking on the point of view of a fictional character; listening and responding in role; adapting a role and maintaining focus)
- situation (establishing and sustaining a fictional setting)
- space (establishing a clear setting)
- character (communicating role traits; developing relationships between characters)
- time (sense of time to create behaviour in drama)
- relationships (how relationships influence character development)

when creating improvised or devised drama.

PERFORMANCE

Rehearsal processes (to improve transitions between scenes) to enhance audience engagement.

Performance skills and audience awareness (where the

performers use focus and control) when performing drama.
Improvisation skills (creating climax and dénouement) to enhance drama

**SKILLS**

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability

**Experimentation and refinement of eleven (11) elements of drama:**

- voice (loud, soft, varying loud and soft; pitch variation; pace; volume; clarity)
- movement (facial expressions and gestures to create belief in character and situation)
- role (taking on the point of view of a fictional character; listening and responding in role; adopting a role and maintaining focus)
- situation (establishing and sustaining a fictional setting)
- space (establishing a clear setting)
- character (communicating role traits; developing relationships between characters)
- time (sense of time to create belief in drama)
- tension (factors that contribute to suspense in stories; tension in characters’ relationships)
- focus (framing drama to highlight and communicate key story elements and characters’ motivations)
- mood (dramatic action created or emerging from the performance)
- relationships (how relationships influence character development)

When creating improvised, devised or scripted drama

**Making**

IDEAS

Dramatic structures to sequence how a story is opened, new events are presented (mood and tension elements) and key details to help the audience understand: dramatic meaning

**Responding**

The role of drama in different cultures and times

**Achievement standard**

To be developed in 2015 using (assessment) work samples evidence to ‘set’ standards through paired comparisons.

**Year 5 Syllabus**

The syllabus is based on the requirement that all students will study at least two of the five Arts subjects from Pre-primary to Year 8. It is a requirement that students study a performance subject and a visual subject.

**Year Level Description**

In Year 5, students begin to refine and experiment with the elements of drama to communicate improvised, devised and scripted drama.

Students continue to use the elements of drama to communicate meaning, including the use of voice, movement, role, situation, space, character, time and relationships. They are introduced to tension, focus and mood. They explore story structures and ideas to create dramatic action, considering mood and atmosphere.

Students experience the roles of performers and audience members. They work together, giving and receiving feedback, to improve drama to engage an intended audience. As they make and respond to drama, students explore the purpose of drama and how the elements of drama are used to communicate meaning. They have the opportunity to experience drama from a range of cultures, times and locations.
PERFORMANCE

Rehearsal techniques (giving and receiving feedback; working together) to improve drama to engage an intended audience. (ACARA5065)

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability

Performance skills and audience awareness (where the performer control the focus to convey meaning to the audience). (ACARA5067)

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability

Achievement standard

To be developed in 2013 using assessment work sample evidence to set standards through paired comparisons.

Year 6 Syllabus

The syllabus is based on the requirement that all students will study at least two of the five Arts subjects from Pre-primary to Year 8. It is a requirement that students study a performance subject and a visual subject.

Year Level Description

In Year 6, students refine and experiment with the elements of drama, considering how feedback can be used to enhance improvisation, devised and scripted drama. Students are introduced to script formatting and conventions.

Students experience drama as performers and audience members. They develop their performance skills to establish connections and build trust with the audience.

As they make and respond to drama, students explore how narrative structures and dramatic tension communicate meaning. They examine the factors that influence drama in different cultures, times, and contexts.

IDEAS

Dramatic action (the driving force and forward motion of drama to create dramatic meaning) driven by narrative structure and dramatic tension. (ACARA5066)

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking

Script formatting and conventions, including planning and documentation. (ACARA5068)

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking

Improvisation skills (finding a resolution and signalling a conclusion) to enhance drama. (ACARA5069)

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability

SKILLS

Experimentation and refinement of eleven (11) elements of drama:

- voice (loud, soft, varying loud and soft; pitch variation; pace; volume; clarity; projection)
- movement (facial expressions and gestures to create belief in character and situations)
- role (taking on the point of view of a fictional character; listening and responding in role; adopting a role and maintaining focus)
- situation (establishing and sustaining a fictional setting)
- space (establishing a clear setting)
- character (communicating role traits; developing relationships between characters)
- time (sense of time to create believability in drama)
- tension (factors that contribute to suspense in stories)

Factors that influence drama in different cultures, times, and contexts. (ACARA5070)

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Intercultural understanding

Responses that explain how the elements of drama and production elements are used to communicate meaning in drama, using drama terminology. (ACARA5071)

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Intercultural understanding

Making

Responding
and tension in characters' relationships.
- Focus (dramatic action) to highlight and communicate key story elements and characters' motivations.
- Mood (dramatic action created or emerging from the performance).
- Relationships (how relationships influence character development).

When creating [improvised, devised or scripted drama].

**Performance**

Rehearsal techniques (the consideration of feedback to improve drama performances to engage an audience).

**Achievement standard**

To be developed in 2015 using (assessment) work sample evidence to 'self' standards through paired comparisons.

**Year 7 Syllabus**

The syllabus is based on the requirement that all students will study at least two of the fine Arts subjects from Pre-primary to Year 8. It is a requirement that students study a performance subject and a visual subject.

**Year Level Description**

**Pre-19th century drama**

In Year 7, Drama students will be given an opportunity to plan, develop and present drama to peers by safely using processes, techniques, conventions and elements of drama. Drama will be improvised, or taken from appropriate, published script excerpts (e.g., Australian or world drama), using selected drama forms and styles (Note: students will have an opportunity to present a scripted drama and improvisation performance at least once over Year 7 and Year 8). Student work in devised and/or scripted drama is the focus of informal reflective processes using general drama terminology and language.

Teachers are required to address knowledge and skills in Drama through one or more of the forms or styles below. Other forms and styles may be used in addition to teach knowledge and skills in Drama.

Drama forms and styles for Year 7: Restoration comedy, circus, Kathakali, medieval theatre, or ritual theatre.

**Making**

**Voice and Movement**

Voice and movement techniques for selected drama forms and styles (ADAR0143).

**Responding**

**Drama Reflections**

Reflective processes on own and others' work, the impact on meaning of the elements of drama in performance and general drama terminology and language (ADAR0144).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability.

Critical and creative thinking.

Inter-cultural understanding.

**Preparation techniques for voice and movement for selected drama forms and styles (ADAR0145)**

**mime techniques (creating objects using shape and weight) in drama (ADAR0146)**

- Critical and creative thinking.
- Personal and social capability.
Ethical understanding

Intercultural understanding

**DRAMA PROCESSES AND THE ELEMENTS OF DRAMA**

Drama proceeds through exploration of one or more elements of drama (role, character, and relationships; voice and movement; space, time and situation; mood, atmosphere and dramatic tension) to establish dramatic meaning and action-audience relationships.

**ACADEMIC:**

- Literary
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

**Approaches to characterisation (adapting archetypes)**

**ACADEMIC:**

- Literary
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

**DRAMA FORMS AND STYLES**

Script interpretation of a scene or section through the elements of drama to create mood and reinforce themes.

**ACADEMIC:**

- Literary
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

Extended improvisation exploring personal themes based on research and selected drama forms and styles.

**ACADEMIC:**

- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

**DRAMA CONVENTIONS**

Drama structures based on episodic structures and non-linear dramatic storytelling.

**ACADEMIC:**

- Literary
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

Drama conventions for selected drama forms and styles.

**ACADEMIC:**

- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

Improvisation conventions (establishing scenarios and reenactment).

**ACADEMIC:**

- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

**SPACES OF PERFORMANCE**

Levels and status in making drama.

**ACADEMIC:**

- Literary
Effective group work processes (problem-solving, listening skills) in drama (ACDrama4).

Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding

Safe practices in drama (backstage management to ensure safety) (ACDrama5).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability
Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding

Achievement standard

To be developed in 2015. Using assessment work sample evidence to 'set' standards through paired comparisons.

Year 8 Syllabus

The syllabus is based on the requirement that all students will study at least two of the five Arts subjects from Pre-primary to Year 8. It is a requirement that students study a performance subject and a visual subject.

Year Level Description

Pre-19th century drama

In Year 8, Drama students will be given opportunities to plan, rehearse and present drama to peers by safely using processes, techniques and conventions of drama. Drama will be based on extended improvisations, or taken from appropriate, published script excerpts, using selected drama forms and styles (Note: students will have an opportunity to present a scripted drama and improvisation performance at least once over Years 7 and 8). Student work in devised and/or scripted drama is the focus of informal reflective processes using more detailed drama terminology.

Teachers are required to address knowledge and skills in Drama through one or more of the forms and styles below. Other forms and styles may be used in addition to teach knowledge and skills in Drama.

Drama forms and styles for Year 8: readers theatre, children’s theatre, naturalism or realism.
Making

VOICE AND MOVEMENT

Voice and movement techniques for selected drama forms and styles (ACSM0406)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Inter-cultural understanding

Preparation techniques for voice and movement for selected drama forms and styles (ACSM0406)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Inter-cultural understanding

Setting techniques (mapping the imaginary space before the performance and for audience during the performance) in drama (ACSM0406)

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Inter-cultural understanding

DRAMA REALISMS AND STYLES

Drama processes through exploration of one or more elements of drama role, character and relationships; voice and movement; space, time and situation; mood, atmosphere and dramatic tension; to establish dramatic meaning and impact on audience (ACSM0406)

Literacy

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Inter-cultural understanding

Responding

DRAMA REFLECTIONS

Reflective processes on own and others' work, the impact on audience responses of the use of the elements of drama in performance and use of specific drama

terminology and language (ACSM0406)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Ethical understanding

Inter-cultural understanding

ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING

Approaches to characterisation (creating believable characters) (ACSM0406)

Literacy

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Ethical understanding

Inter-cultural understanding

DRAMA FORMS AND STYLES

Script interpretation of a scene or section through the elements of drama to highlight mood and reinforce selected themes (ACSM0406)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Ethical understanding

Inter-cultural understanding

Extended improvisation exploring community themes based on research and selected drama forms and styles (ACSM0406)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Ethical understanding

Inter-cultural understanding

DRAMA CONVENTIONS

Drama structure based on action, introduction and moving to a resolution (ACSM0406)

Literacy
Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding

Drama conventions for selected drama forms and styles

Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding

Improvisation conventions (extending the action, responding to conflicts in the narrative)

Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding

SPACES OF PERFORMANCE

Levels, status and protocols in making drama

Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding

Stage geography, blocking notation and the impact of proscenium arch stages

Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding

Imaginary spaces shaped by stage components and properties, the elements of drama and audience

Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology to support dramatic impact and audience enjoyment of the theatrical experience

Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding
Intercultural understanding

SELF-MANAGEMENT AND GROUP MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND PROCESSES

Effective group work processes (providing constructive feedback) in drama

Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social capability
Ethical understanding

Safe practices in drama (use of safety features of drama design and technology)

Critical and creative thinking
Achievement standard

To be developed in 2015 using (assessment) work sample evidence to 'set' standards through paired comparisons.

Year 9 Syllabus

The syllabus is based on the requirement that in Years 9 and 10 the study of the Arts is optional.

Year Level Description

Non-realist drama

In Year 9, Drama students are given opportunities to refine their knowledge and skills to present drama as an event, by safely using processes, techniques and conventions of drama. Students develop drama based on devised drama processes and appropriate, published script excerpts (e.g. Australian drama pre-1900 or world drama), using selected drama forms and styles. Student work in devised and scripted drama is the focus of reflective and responsive processes supported through established frameworks using drama terminology and language.

Teachers are required to address knowledge and skills in Drama through one or more of the forms and styles below. Other forms and styles may be used in addition to teach knowledge and skills in Drama.

Drama forms and styles for Year 9: melodrama, neoclassical drama, multi formed devised drama, commedia dell’arte, or Kabuki theatre.

Making

VOICE AND MOVEMENT

Voice and movement techniques for selected drama forms and styles (A0AUD10005).

Responding

Drama Reflections

Reflective writing, on own and others' work, evaluating the impact of choices in drama making and using specific drama terminology and language (A0AUD10006).

Preparation techniques for voice and movement for selected drama forms and styles (A0AUD10007).

Drama Responses

Analytical writing on viewed live performances (live or digital copies of live performances); focusing on the elements of drama to make meaning (A0AUD10008).

Critical and creative thinking

Ethical understanding

Intercultural understanding
Intercultural understanding

DRAMA FORMS AND STYLES
Script interpretation of a scene or section through the elements of drama to shape and manipulate mood and communicate themes to audience.

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

Devised drama exploring national themes based on research and selected drama forms and styles.

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

DRAMA CONVENTIONS
Drama structures based on the 'well-made play' approach.

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

Drama conventions controlled for selected drama forms and styles.

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

Improvisation conventions (creating dramatic tension, building to a climax).

- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

SPACES OF PERFORMANCE
Levels, status, promenades and focus in making drama.

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

Stage geography, blocking notation and the impact of promenades and traverse stages.

- Literacy
- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding

Imaginary spaces controlled by stage components and properties: the elements of drama and audience.
INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology to emphasise dramatic tension and mood (ACHDPR140)

Critical and creative thinking

B. Ethical understanding

Design principles (balance, contrast, repetition) used to make meaning and add to experience of theatre (ACHDPR140)

Critical and creative thinking

B. Ethical understanding

SELF-MANAGEMENT AND GROUP MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND PROCESSES

Effective group work processes (planning and reviewing critical feedback) in drama (ACHDPR140)

Critical and creative thinking

B. Ethical understanding

Safe practices in drama (audience area planning and monitoring during performances) (ACHDPR140)

Critical and creative thinking

B. Ethical understanding

Achievement standard

To be developed in 2015 using (assessment) work sample evidence to set standards through paired comparisons.

YEAR 10 SYLLABUS

The syllabus is based on the requirement that in Years 9 and 10 the study of the Arts is optional.

YEAR 10 DESCRIPTION

20TH CENTURY DRAMA

In Year 10, Drama students are given opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in the assessment of drama for purposes and wider external audiences, safety using processes, techniques and conventions of drama. Students will develop drama based on devised drama processes and taken from appropriate, published script excerpts (e.g. Australian drama post World War II) or selected drama forms and styles. Students will have opportunities to research devised drama and read in selected script excerpts in context. Student work in devised and scripted drama is the focus of reflective and responsive processes. Students are encouraged to develop their use of extended answer forms and interviews, using drama terminology, language and different forms of communication, based on own drama and the drama of others.

Teachers are required to address knowledge and skills in Drama through two or more of the forms and styles below. Other forms and styles may be used in addition to teach knowledge and skills in Drama.

Drama forms and styles for Year 10 (Gibbs\textendash;Small, 1999; Australian Drama Society, Contemporary Aboriginal Theatre, Theatre of the Absurd, or British).

MAKING

VOICE AND MOVEMENT

Voice and movement techniques for selected drama forms and styles (ACHDR1450)

B. Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

B. Ethical understanding

Preparation techniques for voice and movement for selected drama forms and styles (ACHDPR140)

B. Literacy

RESPONDING

DRAMA REFLECTIONS

Reflective writing, on own and other work, analysing choices in drama making and using precise drama terminology and language (ACHDPR140)

B. Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

B. Ethical understanding

INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

DRAMA RESPONSES

Analytical writing using different forms of communication
on viewed live performances (live or digital copies of live performances), focusing on the elements of drama and design and technology to make meaning (ACDRA065).

**ORAL COMMUNICATION**

Oral communication (explaining in an interview, the reasons behind choices in drama making) (ACDRA065).

**DRAMA FORMS AND STYLES**

Script interpretation, based on a reading of the complete text, of an extended scene or section to manipulate mood and interpret themes for audience (ACDRA065).

**DRAMA CONVENTIONS**

Drama structures based on cyclical structures and numerous platforms (ACDRA065).

**Interpersonal understanding**

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Ethical understanding

Interdisciplinary understanding

**DRAMA PROCESSES AND THE ELEMENTS OF DRAMA**

Drama processes through combining the elements of drama (role, character and relationships; voice and movement; time, space and situations; mood, atmosphere and dramatic tension; language and text; symbol and metaphor) used by selected drama practitioners such as Rudolf Laban, Augusto Boal or Cathy O’Neill to manipulate dramatic meaning and audience relationships (ACDRA065).

**Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability**

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Ethical understanding

Interdisciplinary understanding

Approaches to characterisation suited to the selected drama forms and styles, texts and themes (ACDRA065).

**Literacy**

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Ethical understanding

Interdisciplinary understanding

265
Ethical understanding

Intercultural understanding

Improvisation conventions, plucking, creating an
effective sensibility (ACM1PM03)

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Ethical understanding

SPACES OF PERFORMANCE

Levels, status, proverbs, focus and balance in making
a drama (ACM1DP03)

Literacy

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Ethical understanding

Intercultural understanding

Stage geography, blocking notation and the impact of in-
the-round and adapted stages (ACM1DP03)

Literacy

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Ethical understanding

Intercultural understanding

Imaginary spaces manipulated by stage components and
properties, the elements of drama and audience

ACM1DP03

Literacy

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) capability

Critical and creative thinking

Personal and social capability

Ethical understanding
Achievement standard
Appendix D – Senior School Drama Syllabus

Drama
ATAR Course

Year 12 syllabus
## Content

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</table>
Rationale

Drama is a vibrant and varied art form found in play, storytelling, street theatre, festivals, film, television, interactive games, performance art and theatres. It is one of the oldest art forms and part of our everyday life. Through taking on roles and enacting real and imagined events, performers engage audiences who suspend their disbelief to enter the world of the drama. Through drama, human experience is shared. Drama entertains, informs, communicates and challenges.

Students achieve outcomes through the key activities of creation, performance and reflection. They explore and communicate ideas and learn particular processes and skills to enable them to work with drama forms, styles, conventions and technologies. They reflect, respond and evaluate drama and become critical, informed audiences, understanding drama in the context of their own society and culture, drawing on a diverse range of drama from other cultures, places and times to enrich their inter-cultural understanding.

The Drama ATAR course focuses on aesthetic understanding and drama in practice as students integrate their knowledge and skills. They use the elements and conventions of drama to develop and present ideas and explore personal and cultural issues. They engage in drama processes such as improvisation, playbuilding, text interpretation, playwriting and dramaturgy which allow them to create original drama and interpret a range of texts written or devised by others. Their work in this course includes production and design aspects involving sets, costumes, makeup, props, promotional materials, and sound and lighting. Increasingly, students use technologies such as digital sound and multimedia. They present drama to a range of audiences and work in different performance settings.

Students work independently and collaboratively, learning self-management skills, showing initiative and demonstrating leadership and interpersonal skills. The Drama ATAR course requires them to develop and practise problem-solving skills through creative and analytical thinking processes. They develop their capacity to respond to, reflect on, and make informed judgements using appropriate terminology and language to describe, analyse, interpret and evaluate drama, drawing on their understanding of relevant aspects of other art forms.

In this course, students engage in both Australian and world drama practice. They understand how drama has changed over time and will continue to change according to its cultural context. Through the Drama ATAR course, they can understand the experience of other times, places and cultures in an accessible, meaningful and enjoyable way. They understand the economic factors that affect drama practice and explore the vocational opportunities that drama offers.

While some students intend to make a career in drama and related fields, they also participate in drama for enjoyment and satisfaction. They experience the pleasure that comes from developing personal skills, knowledge and understandings that can be transferred to a range of careers and situations. The Drama ATAR course builds confidence, empathy, understanding about human experience, and a sense of identity and belonging. These are invaluable qualities for contemporary living.
Course outcomes

The Drama ATAR course is designed to facilitate achievement of the following outcomes.

Outcome 1 – Drama ideas
Students create, interpret, explore, develop and present drama ideas.
In achieving this outcome, students:
- articulate their own ideas and interpret the ideas of others to make drama
- explore and experiment to develop ideas in drama
- present drama ideas for specific purposes, audience and spaces.

Outcome 2 – Drama skills and processes
Students apply drama skills, techniques, processes, conventions and technologies.
In achieving this outcome, students:
- apply specific skills, techniques and processes
- apply knowledge and conventions of drama
- use technologies and undertake production roles and responsibilities.

Outcome 3 – Drama responses
Students respond to, reflect on and evaluate drama.
In achieving this outcome, students:
- respond to drama using processes of engagement and inquiry
- reflect on the process of producing and performing drama
- evaluate drama using critical frameworks and cultural perspectives.

Outcome 4 – Drama in society
Students understand the role of drama in society.
In achieving this outcome, students:
- understand the interrelationships between drama and its historical and cultural contexts
- understand the social and cultural value and purpose of drama
- understand economic considerations related to drama.
Organisation

This course is organised into a Year 11 syllabus and a Year 12 syllabus. The cognitive complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12.

Structure of the syllabus

The Year 12 syllabus is divided into two units which are delivered as a pair. The notional time for the pair of units is 110 class contact hours.

Unit 3 – Reinterpretation of drama for contemporary audiences

This unit focuses on reinterpretation of dramatic text, context, forms and styles for contemporary audiences through applying theoretical and practitioner approaches.

Unit 4 – Contemporary and devised drama

This unit focuses on interpreting, manipulating and synthesising a range of practical and theoretical approaches to contemporary and devised drama.

Each unit includes:

• a unit description – a short description of the focus of the unit
• unit content – the content to be taught and learned. This includes acting and non-acting roles and set texts for the purpose of the external examination.

Organisation of content

The course content is divided into three content areas:

• drama language
• contextual knowledge
• production and performance.

Set text list

This course has a set text list (refer to Appendix 2). One Australian text and one world text from the Set text lists in Appendix 2 are to be used to support learning in Unit 3 and Unit 4 in the Drama ATAR course. These texts provide a context for investigating drama in performance and responding to drama based on the drama knowledge, skills, processes and roles of Unit 3 and Unit 4.

A selection of online and other resources have been published on the SCSA Drama course page providing an overview of these texts and their theoretical approaches to drama in performance. Texts that have digital versions of the play in performance have also been highlighted.

Please note the bibliographic details supplied with each set text are to assist in their location. Other editions and translations faithful to the original text may be used for the purposes of the examinations. These do not include reinterpretations or adaptations including graphic novelised versions of some texts.
Roles

Roles are a critical part of student appreciation of scope and depth in drama. In this course, the roles to be studied are defined as actor, director, dramaturge, and the design roles of lighting, sound and costume and scenographer.

Over Unit 3 and Unit 4, students are required to engage with all of the roles listed in the unit content in the context of making and responding to drama.

Representation of the general capabilities

The general capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Drama ATAR course. The general capabilities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Literacy

The ability to study a variety of texts for performance is essential for all students where levels of meaning are investigated and communicated to an audience. Use of various forms of communication with appropriate conventions and approaches will also be investigated and applied to particular tasks.

Numeracy

In the Drama ATAR course, numeracy involves students recognising and understanding the role of mathematics in the world and having the dispositions and capacities to use mathematical knowledge and skills purposefully. This includes calculating, estimating, spatial reasoning and working with scale and proportions in the Drama ATAR course.

Information and communication technology capability

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is important for the development and presentation of drama skills, techniques and processes and for awareness of emergent technologies used in drama such as linking drama performances across spaces separated by geography.

Critical and creative thinking

The finding of satisfying solutions to creative problems involves a broad repertoire of critical and creative thinking skills, including the investigation of new possibilities of achieving dramatic and aesthetic outcomes in drama.

Personal and social capability

All learning in drama is a social, collaborative and cooperative process. The Drama ATAR course involves working with others with empathy, and managing personal resources including time to achieve goals in a timely fashion. The skills associated with self-management and effective group processes are refined and developed in the context of drama.
Ethical understanding

The development of drama involves an understanding of, and working with, social, moral and legal requirements with care and sensitivity. This includes copyright, as well as gaining permission to use materials generated by or with others such as personal stories and audio, still or video images of members of the public when producing drama.

Intercultural understanding

The creation of drama, whether devised or in the interpretation of scripts, includes the understanding and appropriate demonstration of cultures from other times and/or places. Part of the success of presenting social and historical cultures on stage involves both a cognitive understanding and empathetic representation of identity through drama.

Representation of the cross-curriculum priorities

The cross-curriculum priorities address contemporary issues which students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate the priorities into the teaching and learning program for the Drama ATAR course. The cross-curriculum priorities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures carry an ancient tradition with stories that communicate mythical histories of indigenous Australia that are unique and share parallels with other ancient cultures. Exploration of the history and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures provides a rich opportunity to build greater understanding of a part of Australian history and society as well as fostering values of mutual understanding and respect between cultures included under the broad identity of this country.

Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia

The Asia region represents a highly diverse spectrum of cultures, traditions and peoples, with a third of the world’s population located immediately north of Australia. Engaging in a respectful exploration of particular traditions from countries such as China, India, Korea (both North and South), and Japan, for example, will enable students to understand more deeply the values and histories of our near neighbours with whom we share important interrelationships.

Sustainability

The challenge of sustainability and the human impact on our environment such as the ongoing challenge of human overconsumption and production of waste can be explored through drama in two important ways. Firstly, by exploring sustainable practices in the production of drama and secondly, through engagement in creative problem solving to address sustainability issues.
Unit 3 – Reinterpretation of drama for contemporary audiences

Unit description
The focus for this unit is to reinterpret dramatic text, context, forms and styles for contemporary audiences through applying theoretical and practitioner approaches. This includes physical theatre approaches, such as Jacques Lecoq, Anne Bogart and Tadao Suzuki and text-based approaches, such as Theatre of the Absurd, Asian theatre and Poor Theatre. In this unit, students work on the reinterpretation of text, subtext, context, form and style through in-depth study.

Unit content
An understanding of the Year 11 content is assumed knowledge for students in Year 12. It is recommended that students studying Unit 3 and Unit 4 have completed Unit 1 and Unit 2.

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below. This is the examinable content.

In the context of drama in both Performance and Response, students analyse, synthesise and evaluate:

Drama language
Voice and movement
• voice techniques (posture, breathing techniques, voice production, articulation, pace, pause, pitch, projection, phrasing, tone and accent as appropriate and dynamics) for clarity, control and flexibility of voice in performance appropriate to text, forms and styles
• movement techniques (facial expression, posture, gesture, gait, weight, space, time, energy and proxemics) to achieve precision and control of movement in performance appropriate to text, forms and styles
• physical and text-based approaches to voice and movement preparations for particular texts, forms and styles and contexts of performance
• focus and spatial awareness in reinterpreting dramatic texts, contexts, forms and styles

Drama processes and the elements of drama
• strategies and approaches to performance development
• the elements of drama (role, character and relationships, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, mood and atmosphere, dramatic tension) focusing on characterisation developed through the combination of physical and psychological approaches to role and dramatic action refined through improvisation
• the elements of drama to create dramatic action by exploring choices (varying light and darkness, sound and silence, stillness and movement, colour and space) to support selected themes, approaches and theories
• the elements of drama used in historical and contemporary preparation processes including physical and
text-based approaches in the re-interpretation of drama for contemporary audiences
• the elements of drama shaped through improvisation to critically engage with role, character, situation
and themes in reinterpreted drama for contemporary audiences
• contemporary approaches to the role of the director, that manipulate the elements of drama and
relationships between drama roles, through improvisation and other rehearsal processes

Drama forms and styles
• reinterpretation of historical and contemporary forms and styles by manipulating the elements of drama
and directing and design processes through improvisation and collaborative processes
• relationships between selected forms and styles appropriate to chosen texts shaped by viewpoints

Contextual knowledge

Drama conventions
• techniques of structuring and reinterpreting drama texts based on forms and styles for audiences
• conventions of improvisation (breaking routines, dynamic use of space) in reinterpreted drama for
contemporary audiences
• dynamic relationship between drama conventions and their historical, social and cultural contexts, at the
time of creation and in subsequent performances
• conventions of interpreting a script explored through improvisation in reinterpreted drama for
contemporary audiences
• conventions of recording reinterpreted drama for a contemporary audience (stage manager’s prompt
copy, metonymic design concept overviews)
• audience theory, such as identification and aesthetic distance, appropriate to reinterpreting drama for
contemporary audiences

Values, forces and drama practice
• impact of changing historical, social and cultural values on drama production for audience reception
• forces that contribute to the re-interpretation of drama for contemporary audiences
• development of theoretical approaches to drama, with a focus on particular approaches, in the context
of historical and contemporary social and cultural trends
• dramaturgical processes related to re-interpretation of scripted drama, such as historical, social and
cultural customs and their meanings in context
Production and performance

Spaces of performance
- ways that performers and spectators can interact in a given space, such as shaping and directing the role of the audience during drama
- ways that different performance spaces (conventional theatre spaces, found or adapted spaces) shape audiences' interpretations of drama through the social, historical and cultural values they represent
- adaptation of purpose built spaces for specific performance purposes

Design and technologies
- the collaboration of director and scenographer with the actors, dramaturge, lighting designer, sound designer and costume designer in reinterpreted drama for contemporary audiences
- principles of design (balance, contrast, emphasis, harmony, repetition, unity, variety, movement, scale/proportion, pattern, rhythm), visual elements (line, shape, texture, colour, tone/value, 3D form and space) and design technologies appropriate to design roles, chosen text, available technologies and performance space
- impact of design and technologies on the reinterpretation of devised and scripted drama

Management skills and processes
- intellectual property rights and performance rights in drama in a 21st century context
- safe working practices in drama in purpose-built/found performances spaces
- visual elements and principles of design in publicity of set text performances

Oral and written communication
Students are expected to develop skills and abilities in multiple drama-based forms of communication. Students are to address appropriate aspects of written and oral communication through drama in performance and associated learning activities. This includes:
- short and extended answer forms
- graphic organisers, diagrams, and illustrations with appropriate annotations and colour
- interviews and other oral presentations
- structuring of ideas and responses.
Set text list for Unit 3

In this unit, students must study one text from the Set text list. This text must be used by students when answering Section Two in the WACE Drama written examination. Over the two Drama ATAR Year 12 units, students must study two texts (one Australian drama and one world drama) from the Set text list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian texts for Unit 3</th>
<th>World texts for Unit 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wesley Enoch: <em>The Story of Miracles at Cooke’s Table</em></td>
<td>Brecht: <em>The Reassable Rise of Arturo Ui</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis Nowra: <em>Kodalacs</em></td>
<td>Carol Churchill: <em>Mud Forest</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannie Rayson: <em>Two Brothers</em></td>
<td>Eugene Ionesco: <em>Rhinoceros</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Sewell: <em>Myth, Propaganda and Disaster in Nazi Germany and Contemporary America</em></td>
<td>William Shakespeare: <em>As You Like It</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alana Valentine: <em>Panamatta Girls</em></td>
<td>Sophocles: <em>Antigone</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study of a set text must include the following:

- evidence of dramatic forms and styles (historical, acting and personal) in the set text
- forces that impact on the set text
- approaches to design and scenography for at least one historical or contemporary production of the set text in performance
- roles of audience (audience theories) for at least one historical or contemporary production of the set text in performance.

Other texts

In this unit, students must study two additional script excerpts, not necessarily from the Set text list. Each script excerpt should allow students exposure to different ideas and approaches to drama. In the written examination, students may refer to these excerpts but the focus of their answer must be on set text studied in this unit.

Roles

Over Unit 3 and Unit 4, students are expected to research, investigate and/or present in performance all roles. Knowledge of these roles in performance will be used in the practical and written component of the external examination for Drama.

Director: decides upon the interpretation or the conceptualisation of the text and works with actors and the creative team to realise the drama event.

Actor: interprets and presents the text by adopting role or character through action to create the drama event.

Dramaturge: assists directors, actors, scenographers and designers through contextual research and textual analysis in the process of making meaning in the drama event.

Scenographer: provides design for the stage setting to create the sensory environment and layout of a performance space for a drama event.
Costume designer: provides design for the appearance of characters on stage including accessories, footwear, make-up, and plans costume changes during a drama event.

Lighting designer: provides design for illumination, focus, mood and atmosphere through lighting technologies in a drama event.

Sound designer: provides design for aural support for mood, action, context and transitions in a drama event.
Unit 4 – Contemporary and devised drama

Unit description
The focus for this unit is interpreting, manipulating and synthesising a range of practical and theoretical approaches to contemporary and devised drama. This includes contemporary theatre approaches, such as Barrie Kosky and Robert Lepage and experimental approaches, such as Robert Wilson and VE Meyerhold.
In this unit, students show their understanding of how a range of practical and theoretical approaches manipulate the elements of drama to devise and perform original work.

Unit content
This unit builds on the content covered in Unit 3.
This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below. This is the examinable content.

In the context of drama in both Performance and Response, students analyse, synthesise and evaluate:

Drama language

Voice and movement
- voice techniques (posture, breathing techniques, voice production, articulation, pace, pause, pitch, projection, phrasing, tone and accent as appropriate and dynamics) to achieve clarity, control, flexibility and modulation of voice in performance in contemporary and devised drama
- movement techniques (facial expressions, posture, gesture, weight, gait, shape, space, time, energy and proxemics) to achieve precision, control and flexibility of movement in performance in contemporary and devised drama
- practical and theoretical approaches to voice and movement preparations for contemporary and devised drama
- focus and spatial awareness in self-devised and contemporary drama

Drama processes and the elements of drama
- strategies and approaches to performance refinement processes
- the elements of drama (role, character and relationships, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, mood and atmosphere, dramatic tension) focusing on role/characterisation in contemporary and devised drama, shaped through the combination of physical and psychological approaches, to the interpretation of role and dramatic action refined through improvisation
- the elements of drama to create dramatic action, by exploring choices about varying light and darkness, sound and silence, stillness and movement, colour and space in contemporary and devised drama, to emphasise selected themes, approaches and theories
- the elements of drama used in strategies and processes to rehearsing and directing (improvisation, systematic corrective rehearsal, shaping, pacing) in contemporary and devised drama
the elements of drama shaped through improvisation to critically engage with role, character, situation and themes in contemporary and devised drama

experimental approaches to the role of the director that manipulate the elements of drama and relationships between drama roles through improvisation and other rehearsal processes

Drama forms and styles

- selection of dramatic forms and styles to create dramatic meaning for audiences and contexts by manipulating and controlling the elements of drama, directing and design processes
- personal style informed by existing forms, styles and contemporary approaches

Contextual knowledge

Drama conventions

- techniques of manipulating audience perspectives (selection, omission, subversion and emphasis) through the elements and conventions of drama
- conventions of improvisation (truthfulness, advancing the scene) in contemporary and devised drama
- dynamic relationships between existing and emerging drama conventions
- conventions of interpreting a script explored through improvisation in contemporary and devised drama
- conventions of documenting contemporary and devised drama (creating a performance vision for self-devised and original drama)
- audience theory including techniques for manipulating and directing audience responses appropriate to contemporary and devised drama

Values, forces and drama practice

- impact of drama that reinforces, shapes and/or challenges historical, social and cultural values
- forces that are challenged by contemporary and devised drama
- development of new/experimental approaches that synthesise practical and theoretical approaches to drama in the context of contemporary social and cultural values
- dramaturgical processes related to contemporary and devised drama including structuring drama for character journey

Production and performance

Spaces of performance

- ways that drama and audiences can interact flexibly for different performance spaces
- ways that limited performance spaces can be adapted for dramatic meanings, purposes and audiences
- selection and adaptation of non-purpose built spaces such as public spaces, natural landscapes and commercial buildings for specific performance purposes

Drama | ATAR | Year 12 syllabus
Design and technologies

- the collaboration of director and scenographer with the actors, dramaturge, lighting designer, sound designer and costume designer in contemporary and devised drama
- principles of design (balance, contrast, emphasis, harmony, repetition, unity, variety, movement, scale/proportion, pattern, rhythm), visual elements (line, shape, texture, colour, tone/value, 3D form and space) and design technologies to manipulate the relationship between the elements of drama in contemporary and devised drama
- impact of design and technologies on the reinterpretation of devised and scripted drama

Management skills and processes

- intellectual property rights and performance rights in drama in a 21st century context
- safe working practices in drama in purpose-built/found performances spaces
- visual elements and principles of design in publicity of contemporary and devised drama

Oral and written communication

Students are expected to develop skills and abilities in multiple drama-based forms of communication. Students are to address appropriate aspects of written and oral communication through drama in performance and associated learning activities. This includes:

- short and extended answer forms
- graphic organisers, diagrams, and illustrations with appropriate annotations and of colour
- interviews and other oral presentations
- structuring of ideas and responses

Set text list for Unit 4

In this unit, students must study one text from the Set text list. This text must be used by students when answering Section Two in the WACE Drama written examination. Over the two Drama ATAR Year 12 units, students must study two texts (one Australian Drama and one World Drama) from the Set text list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian texts for Unit 4</th>
<th>World texts for Unit 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Baxell: Where the Rain Stops Falling</td>
<td>Samuel Beckett: Endgame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Cameron and Tim Finn: Poor Boy</td>
<td>Friedrich Durrenmatt: The Visit: A Tragic Comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Fatchett and Helen Howard: A Beautiful Life</td>
<td>Bev Negus: Beautiful Burnout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lally Katz: Return to Earth</td>
<td>Tracey Larsen: August: Osage County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Kemp: Kilmen</td>
<td>Yasmina Reza: God of Carnage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kit Lazaroo: Asylum</td>
<td>Brian Yorkey (writer) and Tom Kitt (composer): Next to Normal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study of a set text must include the following:

- evidence of dramatic forms and styles (historical, acting and personal) in the set text
• forces that impacted on the set text
• approaches to design and scenography for at least one historical or contemporary production of the set text in performance
• roles of audience (audience theories) for at least one historical or contemporary production of the set text in performance

Other texts
In this unit, students must study two additional script excerpts, not necessarily from the Set text list. Each script excerpt should allow students exposure to different ideas and approaches to drama. In the written examination, students may refer to these excerpts but the focus of their answer must be on set text studied in this unit.

Roles
Over Unit 3 and Unit 4, students are expected to research, investigate and/or present in performance all roles. Knowledge of these roles in performance will be used in the practical and written component of the external examination for Drama.

Director: decides upon the interpretation or the conceptualisation of the text and works with actors and the creative team to realise the drama event.

Actor: interprets and presents the text by adopting role or character through action to create the drama event.

Dramaturge: assists directors, actors, scenographers and designers through contextual research and textual analysis in the process of ‘making meaning’ in the drama event.

Scenographer: provides design for the stage setting to create the sensory environment and layout of a performance space for a drama event.

Costume designer: provides design for the appearance of characters on stage including accessories, footwear, make-up, and plans costume changes during a drama event.

Lighting designer: provides design for illumination, focus, mood and atmosphere through lighting technologies in a drama event.

Sound designer: provides design for aural support for mood, action, context and transitions in a drama event.
School-based assessment

The Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Manual contains essential information on principles, policies and procedures for school-based assessment that needs to be read in conjunction with this syllabus. Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. The tables below provide details of the assessment types for the Drama ATAR Year 12 syllabus and the weighting for each assessment type.

Assessment table practical component – Year 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of assessment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>To SCSA</th>
<th>Weighting for combined mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance/production</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching and investigating drama in different contexts to support making drama; applying an understanding of drama in improvised, devised and scripted drama including interpreting set texts. Developing drama as an actor, director, dramaturge, scenographer, lighting designer, sound designer and costume designer; applying drama skills, techniques, elements, processes and principles informed by theoretical approaches and audience theory.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical (performance) examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically conducted at the end of semester and/or unit and reflecting the practical examination design brief and the practical (performance) examination requirements document for this syllabus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment table written component – Year 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of assessment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>To SCSA</th>
<th>Weighting for combined mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to analysis and evaluation of own, others’ or professional drama works; using viewpoints and primary and secondary sources. Planning, presenting and justifying approaches to drama texts in performance in different contexts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically conducted at the end of semester and/or unit and reflecting the written examination design brief for this syllabus.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers are required to use the assessment table to develop an assessment outline for the pair of units.

The assessment outline must:

- include a set of assessment tasks
- include a general description of each task
- indicate the unit content to be assessed
- indicate a weighting for each task and each assessment type
- include the approximate timing of each task (for example, the week the task is conducted, or the issue and submission dates for an extended task).
In the assessment outline for the pair of units, each assessment type must be included at least twice. The set of assessment tasks must provide a representative sampling of the content for Unit 3 and Unit 4. Assessment tasks not administered under test/controlled conditions require appropriate validation/authentication processes. For example, the completion of extended reviews must include appropriate notes and drafting to validate the work has been completed by the student.

**Grading**

Schools report student achievement in terms of the following grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>High achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Limited achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Very low achievement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher prepares a ranked list and assigns the student a grade for the pair of units. The grade is based on the student’s overall performance as judged by reference to a set of pre-determined standards. These standards are defined by grade descriptions and annotated work samples. The grade descriptions for the Drama ATAR Year 12 syllabus are provided in Appendix 3. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, through the Guide to Grades link on the course page of the Authority website at www.scsa.wa.edu.au

To be assigned a grade, a student must have had the opportunity to complete the education program, including the assessment program (unless the school accepts that there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances).

Refer to the WACE Manual for further information about the use of a ranked list in the process of assigning grades.
WACE examination

All students enrolled in the Drama ATAR Year 12 course are required to sit the WACE examination. The examination is based on a representative sampling of the content for Unit 3 and Unit 4.

Details of the written and practical WACE examinations are prescribed in the examination design briefs on the following pages.

Refer to the WACE Manual for further information.
 Practical (performance) examination design brief – Year 12

**Time allocated**
- Examination: 20 minutes

**Provided by the candidate**
- A signed Declaration of authenticity
- Two copies of the Original solo performance script with completed cover pages
- Two copies of the Scripted monologue with completed cover pages
- Sound equipment (if required), including CD player, MP3 player and Dock or laptop
- Props or costumes (if required) that the candidate can carry into the room unassisted

**Provided by the supervisor**
- One school desk and two chairs
- A warm-up space

**Additional information**
The candidate will be dressed in plain 'theatre blacks' and/or costume.
The candidate is to work within the marked performance area.
The time allocated includes transition time.
The markers will stop the preparation or performance after the maximum allocated time has elapsed for that component.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>SUPPORTING INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1</strong></td>
<td>Original solo performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation: 60 seconds</td>
<td>The candidate performs an original solo performance portraying a character journey of one or more characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance duration: 4 minutes-6 minutes 15 seconds</td>
<td>The candidate can bring scenery, props and costume limited to what they alone can carry and set-up in 60 seconds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The candidate can use an audio recording to support their performance and have a technical assistant to operate sound.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2</strong></td>
<td>Scripted monologue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation: 60 seconds</td>
<td>The candidate has 60 seconds to prepare for the Scripted monologue. The preparation time can be used to arrange the space, props and/or costume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration: 2 minutes-3 minutes 15 seconds</td>
<td>The candidate performs their choice of a scripted monologue from a published play text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 3</strong></td>
<td>Spontaneous improvisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation: 60 seconds</td>
<td>The candidate is given an improvisation based on the Original solo performance or the Scripted monologue of a character located in either in a different time or situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance duration: 1 minute-2 minutes 15 seconds</td>
<td>The preparation time can be used to plan the improvisation and/or organise the space, props and costume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 4</strong></td>
<td>Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration: 2 minutes-3 minutes 30 seconds</td>
<td>The candidate is asked three questions relating to Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the practical (performance) examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through their answers the candidate explains and critically analyses intentions, drama processes and theory relevant to their examination performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The candidate is required to answer in clear, well-structured ways using appropriate terminology and drama language addressing specific techniques, elements, conventions and principles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Drama | ATAR | Year 12 syllabus
**Written examination design brief – Year 12**

**Time allowed**
- Reading time before commencing work: ten minutes
- Working time for paper: two and a half hours

**Permissible Items**
- Standard items: pens (blue/black preferred), pencils (including coloured), sharpener, correction fluid/tape, eraser, ruler, highlighters
- Special items: n/a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>SUPPORTING INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section One</strong>&lt;br&gt;Analysis and interpretation of a drama text&lt;br&gt;Short answer&lt;br&gt;60% of the written examination&lt;br&gt;Two questions&lt;br&gt;Suggested working time: 90 minutes</td>
<td>The candidate is required to analyse and interpret a short unseen drama text from the point of view of an actor, director, lighting designer, sound designer, costume designer, scenic designer and/or dramaturge. The drama text includes a script excerpt and other information about the script which can include character lists, director’s or designer’s notes, images, background and contextual information. The candidate can use lists, summaries, annotated sketches or diagrams, tables and graphic organisers where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section Two</strong>&lt;br&gt;Australian drama and world drama&lt;br&gt;Extended answer&lt;br&gt;40% of the written examination&lt;br&gt;One question from a choice of five&lt;br&gt;Suggested working time: 60 minutes</td>
<td>The candidate is required to analyse and explain how they would perform or stage one Australian play and one world play from the Set text lists. The response is from the point of view of one role for both set texts. That is, actor, director, scenic designer, lighting designer, sound designer, costume designer or dramaturge. The response requires candidates to explain and justify how they would select and apply drama processes to perform or stage both set texts using conventions, elements, principles and/or techniques of drama. Candidates are required to use extended answer formats drawn from drama practice where they develop their ideas, analysis, discussion and arguments using, as appropriate to the question, the following sequenced and structured paragraphs with topic sentences supported by evidence, lists, tables, annotated diagrams, graphic organisers, text references and/or justifications.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 1 - Grade descriptions Year 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>Sensitive, effectively and confidently integrates drama knowledge, skills and processes in the preparation, development and realisation of published or devised performance/production; originality is sometimes evident in the work. Applies reflective and cooperative processes in highly efficient and effective ways. Succinctly describes, analyses, interprets and evaluates contextual, theoretical and aesthetic considerations of realising and experiencing drama; insightful responses draw on a substantial range of evidence and justification. Explores and communicates in detail and depth, the critical analysis of drama forms, styles and contexts as related to realising and experiencing drama in performance/production. Structures work coherently; uses relevant drama terminology accurately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>Effectively, and with some confidence and sensitivity, integrates drama knowledge, skills and processes in the preparation, development and realisation of published or devised performance/production. Applies reflective and cooperative processes efficiently and effectively. Clearly describes, analyses, interprets and evaluates contextual, theoretical and aesthetic considerations of realising and experiencing drama; informed responses include a range of evidence. Explores and clearly communicates a critical analysis of drama forms, styles and contexts as related to realising and experiencing drama in performance/production. Structures work well with accurate use of relevant drama terminology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>Competently, and with some confidence, integrates drama knowledge, skills and processes in the preparation, development and realisation of published or devised performance/production. Applies reflective and cooperative processes in mostly efficient ways with some effect. Describes, analyses, interprets and evaluates the contextual, theoretical and aesthetic considerations of realising and experiencing drama, although sometimes superficially; provides some evidence to support responses. Communicates an adequate analysis of drama forms, styles and contexts as related to realising and experiencing drama in performance/production. Meets all task requirements and uses relevant drama terminology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Applies in limited and/or sometimes inconsistent ways drama knowledge, skills and processes in the preparation, development and realisation of published or devised performance/production. Applies reflective and cooperative processes with inconsistent and/or limited effect. Briefly describes, analyses and evaluates the contextual and aesthetic considerations of realising and experiencing drama; judgements are supported with little evidence. Communicates a largely descriptive and superficial analysis of drama forms, styles and contexts as related to realising and experiencing drama in performance/production. Meets most task requirements and uses drama terminology, although sometimes inaccurately and/or ineffectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>Does not meet the requirements of a D grade.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 2 – Set text lists

#### Australian set text list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIBLIOGRAPHIC DETAILS</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lally Katz (2011) Return to Earth, Strawberry Hills, NSW: Currency Press</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nannie Rayson (2003) Two Brothers, Strawberry Hills, NSW: Currency Press. (Also on iTunes books)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Sewell (2007) Myth, Propaganda and Disaster in Nazi Germany and Contemporary America, Strawberry Hills, NSW: Currency Press. (Also on iTunes books)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### World set text list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIBLIOGRAPHIC DETAILS</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tracy Letts (2008) August: Osage County, New York, NY: Dramatist Play Service Inc.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryony Lavoy (2012) Beautiful Burnout, London, UK: Faber and Faber</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasmina Reza (2009) God of Carnage (translated by Christopher Hampton), London, UK: Faber and Faber</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophocles (1898) Antigone (translated by Robert Fagles), London, UK: Penguin Classics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Yorkey (writer) and Tom Kitt (composer) (2010) Wacc to Normal, New York, NY: Theatre Communications Group</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E – Assistant Teacher Program Guidelines 2010

Guidelines

The Assistant Teacher Program:

This exciting aspect of teacher education plays a crucial role in the creation of knowledge, dispositions, understandings and competencies in the next generation of educators and provides Assistant Teachers with the opportunity to work alongside experienced teachers over an extended period of time, in a school context where they can pursue professional inquiry into practice, and develop relationships with colleagues, school students and communities.

Throughout this experience Assistant Teachers work collaboratively with their Mentor Teachers to maximise the outcomes for the students they teach. They develop their teaching skills and professionalism in order to assume the responsibilities of a teacher.

The Assistant Teacher Program should provide Assistant Teachers with opportunities to demonstrate all the skills that are outlined in the “Criteria for Assessing Teaching Skills and Professional Development” beginning on p. 15 of this booklet.

A Collaborative Partnership

This professional experience is intended to be mutually beneficial to students, Assistant Teachers, Mentor Teachers, schools, communities and the University’s School of Education. High quality professional experience for X Assistant Teachers requires collaboration between partners in the learning community. This partnership is characterised by an Assistant Teacher Program that is flexible, focused on students’ learning and acknowledges the contribution of the school staff. University Colleagues work closely with Mentor Teachers to enhance the learning of the Assistant Teacher and moderate the assessment process.

Requirements for the ATP are designed to complement and build on university course work and previous school experiences.

Roles and Responsibilities

Assistant Teachers

Prior to the ATP, Assistant Teachers will contact schools to arrange visits with their Mentor Teachers. The purpose of these visits is to make contact with Mentor Teachers, to learn about the students they will be teaching, the school environment within which they will be working and to plan for the first weeks of the ATP. These visits also provide an ideal opportunity for Assistant Teachers to interact with students and collaborate with Mentor Teachers.

Assistant Teachers work collaboratively with Mentor Teachers, gradually assuming responsibility for students’ learning over time.

Assistant Teachers are expected to work within and support the policies of the school and demonstrate their commitment, enthusiasm, initiative, effort, and professionalism in a full-time capacity.

Assistant Teachers seek advice, discuss their teaching openly and objectively and act on the advice received.
Mentor Teachers

The role of the Mentor Teacher is a crucial and complex one, vital to the development of Assistant Teachers and the quality of the next generation of the teaching profession. Mentoring empowers Assistant Teachers, making a difference to the quality of their learning, teaching, confidence and reflection. Through modeling, coaching and the provision of feedback, Mentor Teachers enable Assistant Teachers to become autonomous, collaborative teachers.

The opportunity exists for two-way learning as Mentor Teachers and Assistant Teachers share their knowledge about students and school experience. Assistant Teachers frequently comment on how much they appreciate constructive, balanced feedback. They place high value on written feedback which is accompanied by the opportunity to discuss that feedback. It is important that this regular written and verbal feedback continues throughout the Assistant Teacher Program and a sample Mentor Teacher Feedback Form is included on p. 47 as a guide.

The ongoing development of the collaborative relationship between Assistant Teachers, Mentor Teachers and University Colleagues enables positive, honest and open discussion and problem solving to occur, and enhances the learning of Assistant Teachers.

In schools hosting a number of Assistant Teachers, Mentor Teachers are encouraged to watch Assistant Teachers in other classes and work together in making consistent judgements, taking into account the different class contexts. Schools using this collegial approach have found it to be a highly effective way of “cross marking” and validating assessment while providing Assistant Teachers with additional feedback.

Early identification of problems or issues regarding the satisfactory development of an Assistant Teacher is essential. This will ensure all parties are supported in enabling any issues to be resolved. Mentor Teachers are asked to contact their University Colleague for further information.

Principals and School Practice Coordinators

Principals and School Practice Coordinators play a pivotal role in ensuring the smooth operation of the school based component of teacher education. Principals and School Practice Coordinators welcome Assistant Teachers into the school and induct them in the relevant policies and procedures of the school. They also encourage, monitor, support, communicate and problem solve as required.

Principals and School Practice Coordinators liaise with the appropriate X personnel as the need arises and forward results and other documentation to the University as required.

Principals and School Practice Coordinators provide guidance in assessing the Professional development of Assistant Teachers and take an active role in contributing to the assessment of an Assistant Teacher who is at risk of failing or is expected to gain a grade of outstanding in either Professional Development or Teaching Skills.

University Colleagues

University Colleagues work with Mentor Teachers and Assistant Teachers in a three way relationship to enhance the learning, teaching and professional development of Assistant Teachers. They communicate and collaborate with school personnel and represent X in developing and maintaining the partnership between the school and the University.

University Colleagues visit a number of schools to liaise with the Mentor Teachers, Assistant Teachers and Principals/School Practice Coordinators as appropriate, in order to support them in their work during the Assistant Teacher Program.
Structure of the Assessment

Key elements of the assessment procedures are summarised on the Assessment Flow Chart below.

Assessment Flow Chart

**Week 1**
- Start of Assistant Teacher Program.
- Mentor Teachers provide ongoing verbal and written feedback to Assistant Teacher on lessons taught.

**Week 2**
- Mentor Teachers provide evidence of progress using the 'Criteria for assessing Teaching Skills and Professional Development' p. 15. Assistant Teacher to sign.

**Week 3**
- Verbal and written feedback to Assistant Teacher on lessons taught.

**Week 4**
- Mentor Teachers provide evidence of progress using the 'Criteria for assessing Teaching Skills and Professional Development'. Assistant Teacher to sign.

**Week 5**
- Verbal and written feedback to Assistant Teacher on lessons taught.

**Week 6 & 7**
- Verbal and written feedback to Assistant Teacher on lessons taught.

**Week 8**
- Request Confirmatory Visit for any Assistant Teacher not meeting all the requirements (failing)

**Week 9**
- Mentor Teachers provide evidence of progress using the 'Criteria for assessing Teaching Skills and Professional Development' p. 15. Assistant Teacher to sign.

**End Week 10**
- The Final Grade is agreed upon by school personnel and the University Colleague. Final Grade is discussed by Mentor Teacher(s)/Principal/School Practice Coordinator with the Assistant Teacher. Results Form signed by all parties.

**Week 11**
- Original signed Results Form forwarded to X by University Colleague.
Decision Making

Assistant Teachers need time to develop skills and to sustain their performance. Decisions concerning their final grades should not be predicted early in the Assistant Teacher Program. Only in exceptional circumstances, where it is necessary to withdraw an Assistant Teacher from the school, should an early decision be reached.

If an Assistant Teacher has not reached the standard required to achieve the competent level in both Teaching Skills and Professional Development by the end of the seventh week of the Professional Practice (Mt Lawley), then the Confirmatory Process will be invoked.

During the ATP, Assistant Teachers will be observed teaching by both school personnel and a University Colleague. By the final week of the Assistant Teacher Program, once the decision has been made that an Assistant Teacher has reached the required standard to pass the Assistant Teacher Program, the Teaching Skills and Professional Development grades should be determined in consultation between Mentor Teachers, Principals/School Practice Coordinators and University Colleagues.

Mentor Teachers, Principals/School Practice Coordinators and University Colleagues discuss the Professional Development grade to ensure that all perspectives and relevant information are considered. The final decision as to whether an Assistant Teacher is awarded a Professional Development grade of Competent, Highly Competent or Outstanding remains with the school.

Interim Report

Mid-way through the Assistant Teacher Program, an Interim Report is completed by the Mentor Teacher. The purpose of this report is to ensure that Assistant Teachers receive written and verbal feedback on their progress at the mid-point of the Assistant Teacher Program. This evaluation should provide Assistant Teachers with feedback on areas of strength and areas needing further development against the assessment criteria on pp. 15-20 of this booklet. This supports the learning of Assistant Teachers through an appropriate balance of positive encouragement and specific constructive feedback.

Confirmatory Processes

Where the Mentor Teacher and University Colleague agree that an Assistant Teacher has not met the competent requirements either in Teaching Skills or Professional Development by the end of the seventh week of the Assistant Teacher Program, the confirmatory process will be instigated.

Where the confirmatory process is needed, the Mentor Teacher and University Colleague both sign the Request for Confirmatory Visit form, and return this to the relevant Professional Practice Coordinator.

In the case of concerns regarding Teaching Skills, a Confirmatory Panel member will make confirmatory visits to the school to review and discuss the Assistant Teacher's performance with the Assistant Teacher and the staff concerned. The Confirmatory Panel member will observe the Assistant Teacher teach for a significant period of time on two separate occasions, and will also review appropriate documentation. This member of the Confirmatory Panel will then allocate the final grade for Teaching Skills.

If the confirmatory request relates only to Professional Development, the Confirmatory Panel member may make one visit and it may not be necessary to watch the Assistant Teacher teach.

Where a fail is awarded for either the Teaching Skills or Professional Development, the Confirmatory Panel member will determine an overall grade of Fail and will advise the Assistant Teacher of this outcome.
Requests for confirmatory visits should be made no later than three weeks before the end of the ATP. This is to ensure that due process can be followed. Late requests will be considered if there is significant change in the performance of the Assistant Teacher or there are other extenuating circumstances in the last weeks of the ATP. Where concerns about an Assistant Teacher’s performance become evident, early involvement of the University Colleague is highly recommended.

Should an Assistant Teacher withdraw from the ATP after the Confirmatory Process has been instigated, the Assistant Teacher will automatically fail the Professional Practice.

Results Form and Evaluation Form

Results Form

The Mentor Teacher or Principal/School Practice Coordinator, the University Colleague and the Assistant Teacher sign the Results Form. The University, Assistant Teacher and School each receive copies of this form. The University copy (original) needs to be posted to the Professional Practice Office during the final week of the ATP.

Evaluation Form

The Mentor Teacher should complete the Evaluation Form including accurate information consistent with the Teaching Skills and Professional Development grades of the Assistant Teacher. The University and Assistant Teacher receive copies of this form.

Assistant Teachers should place a copy of the completed Evaluation Form in their portfolio for future reference or when applying for teaching positions.

The Evaluation Form provides information on the achievements of the Assistant Teacher and a copy is required by the Department of Education for graduates applying for a teaching position.
Determining the Final Grade

To pass the ATP, Assistant Teachers must achieve a competent level in both Teaching Skills and Professional Development. The final grade allocated to the unit and shown on the academic transcript is a combination of these two grades and is calculated using the following grid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Development</th>
<th>Teaching Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>High Distinction (PD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Competent</td>
<td>Distinction (PD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Credit (PC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Fail (F)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Awarding the Final Grades

The criteria for assessing the Teaching Skills and Professional Development of Assistant Teachers follow on pp. 15 to 20. The following table acts as a guide for awarding the final grades.

Mentor Teachers, University Colleagues and Assistant Teachers should monitor performance against the criteria at regular intervals during the ATP and before final grades are determined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>A competent Assistant Teacher has consistently demonstrated achievement of all Competent criteria and continues to develop knowledge, skills and professional attitudes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Competent</td>
<td>A highly competent Assistant Teacher has consistently demonstrated achievement of all Highly Competent criteria and continues to develop knowledge, skills and professional attitudes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>An outstanding Assistant Teacher has consistently demonstrated achievement of all Outstanding criteria, continues to exhibit an exceptional ability to respond to student learning needs and demonstrates an outstanding level of individual thinking and initiative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Criteria for Assessing Teaching Skills

Assessment of performance in the ATP is criterion referenced. Minor Teachers and University Colleagues are asked to refer to the following criteria in determining the final grade for Teaching Skills and Professional Development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETENT</th>
<th>HIGHLY COMPETENT</th>
<th>OUTSTANDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A competent Assistant Teacher has consistently demonstrated achievement of all Competent criteria and continues to develop their knowledge, skills and professional attitudes.</td>
<td>A highly competent Assistant Teacher has consistently demonstrated achievement of all Highly Competent criteria and continues to develop their knowledge, skills and professional attitudes.</td>
<td>An outstanding Assistant Teacher has consistently demonstrated achievement of all Outstanding criteria, continues to exhibit an exceptional ability to respond to student learning needs and demonstrates an outstanding level of individual thinking and initiative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 1. Facilitating Student Learning

**Planning to support learning**

- Identifies clear, specific learning outcomes responsive to student needs.
- Designs and implements learning experiences responsive to student needs and learning styles.
- Designs and implements challenging learning experiences which cater extensively for student needs, interests, learning styles and abilities.

**Prepares programs that demonstrate sequential learning experiences, linking learning outcomes, experiences and assessment.**

- Prepares programs that demonstrate sequential learning experiences, making coherent links between learning outcomes, experiences and assessment.
- Prepares programs that demonstrate sequential learning experiences, making strong links between learning outcomes, experiences and assessment.

**Identifies individual learning needs and plans to support these.**

- Identifies individual learning needs and adjusts learning experiences to support these.
- Identifies effective learning experiences for students with diverse learning needs and interests.

**Plans and implements teaching strategies appropriate to the learning experience and students.**

- Selects and implements a variety of teaching strategies appropriate to the learning experience and students.
- Evaluates and modifies appropriate and diverse teaching strategies to enhance problem solving, collaboration, inquiry and creativity.

**Implements Duty of Care procedures consistent with school and sector policies.**

- Initiates action to improve the safety and well being of students.
- Anticipates potentially hazardous situations and works to minimise risks.

**Demonstrates appropriate content knowledge in planning and implementing learning experiences.**

- Demonstrates thorough content knowledge in planning and implementing learning experiences.
- Demonstrates excellent content knowledge in planning and implementing challenging learning experiences.

---

**Promoting Student Learning**

- Effectively gains student attention and introduces learning experiences.
- Uses a variety of strategies to gain student attention and stimulate interest in learning experiences.
- Confidently uses purposeful and effective strategies to gain student attention and motivate students throughout the task.

- Explains the purpose of learning experiences and links new concepts to prior knowledge.
- Makes the purpose of learning experiences clear and links new concepts to prior knowledge.
- Makes the purpose of learning experiences explicit, effectively linking new concepts to prior knowledge.

- Displays the flexibility to adapt plans during learning experiences.
- Enhances learning by adapting and modifying plans in response to student needs during learning experiences.
- Maximises student learning by recognising opportunities to adapt and modify plans during learning experiences.

- Appropriately engages students in learning.
- Implements a range of effective strategies to engage students in learning.
- Implements a range of effective strategies to engage students in learning and foster collaboration, enquiry and self-esteem.

- Uses appropriate language and voice projection to promote understanding.
- Uses appropriate language, voice projection and modulation to enhance understanding.
- Confidently projects voice and varies volume, pitch, pace and voice patterns to suit the context, maximises understanding and maintain engagement.

- Uses appropriate questioning strategies to encourage student involvement.
- Uses a range of questioning and responding strategies to promote student involvement.
- Uses a range of effective questioning and responding strategies to promote student involvement, critical thinking and problem solving.

- Selects and uses resources to enhance learning experiences, including ICT where appropriate.
- Selects and uses a wide range of resources, including ICT where appropriate.
- Selects and designs challenging and purposeful resources including ICT where appropriate.

- Effectively concludes learning experiences to review and consolidate learning.
- Purposely concludes learning experiences to consolidate and evaluate learning.
- Confidently concludes learning experiences to consolidate and evaluate learning, promote sense of student achievement and encourage transfer of learning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary ATIF Guidelines</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Managing Teaching and Learning Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organises, allocates and manages time, resources and physical space.</th>
<th>Organises, allocates and manages time, resources and physical space to support learning of individuals and groups.</th>
<th>Organises, allocates and manages time, resources and physical space to create an optimum learning environment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintains established routines and procedures to manage student behaviour.</td>
<td>Effectively monitors routines and procedures and maintains awareness of all behaviour.</td>
<td>Uses professional knowledge to initiate or adapt routines and procedures which enhance learning, independence and decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives clear and appropriate directions and instructions.</td>
<td>Gives clear and appropriate directions and instructions which engage learners.</td>
<td>Gives clear and effective directions and instructions which enhance and scaffold learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses praise and encouragement to keep students on task.</td>
<td>Uses praise and encouragement to promote effort and participation in learning experiences.</td>
<td>Uses a range of motivational strategies to engage students and develop their intrinsic desire to learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishes clear expectations for standards of behaviour supportive of school ethos.</td>
<td>Communicates clear expectations and actively models and reinforces positive behaviours.</td>
<td>Promotes a positive learning environment in which students are encouraged to take responsibility for own behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responds to off-task/inappropriate behaviours in keeping with the school policy.</td>
<td>Uses a variety of consistent, positive management strategies and develops contingency plans.</td>
<td>Anticipates and takes pre-emptive action to minimize disruption and encourage independent learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2. Assessing Student Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring and Assessing Learning for Ongoing Planning and Reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plans and implements appropriate assessment strategies relevant to planned learning experiences and intended outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses basic assessment tools which are explicit, educative, fair, valid and reliable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses appropriate recording systems in keeping with school assessment practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides timely, clear, constructive and appropriate feedback to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses information from monitoring and assessment to modify ongoing planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Engaging in Professional Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflecting on Professional Knowledge and Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeks feedback and advice from Mentor Teacher and applies to planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans action based on self-reflection and feedback to promote own professional learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses classroom observation and feedback as a basis for active reflection.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Participating in Curriculum Development and Teamwork

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Using Professional Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applies an understanding of the Curriculum Framework to planning documents through the identification of Overreaching Outcomes, Learning Area Outcomes and Core Values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates an awareness of how learning areas are interconnected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participates collegially in school based experiences and activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5. Forming Partnerships within the Classroom and School Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building and Maintaining Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Displays confidence and enthusiasm within the classroom and school community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fosters positive relationships and a respect for all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses appropriate verbal, non-verbal and written communication to enhance learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

299
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Assessing Professional Development</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Highly Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
<td>Clearly articulates own developing approach and philosophy to teaching and learning, respecting other approaches and philosophies.</td>
<td>Confidently articulates and reflects upon own approach and philosophy to teaching and learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates a commitment to teaching and learning</td>
<td>Demonstrates a high level of commitment to teaching and learning.</td>
<td>Demonstrates an exemplary commitment to teaching and learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks assistance from school staff and University Colleagues to identify professional learning needs.</td>
<td>Takes responsibility for addressing own professional learning needs.</td>
<td>Is proactive in identifying, addressing and improving own professional learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Responsibilities</td>
<td>Shows respect for the ethos of the school and its values. Works with staff in supporting the ethos of the school and its values.</td>
<td>Integrates the school ethos and values into professional work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works in a respectful and cooperative manner with all members of the school community.</td>
<td>Works in a respectful and cooperative manner as an active member of the school community.</td>
<td>Seeks opportunities for collaboration with members of the school community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operates with the best interests of students in mind.</td>
<td>Operates with the best interests of students in mind to effectively enhance their well-being.</td>
<td>Actively promotes the physical, social and emotional well-being of students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintains all Professional Practice documentation to a satisfactory professional standard.</td>
<td>Maintains all Professional Practice documentation to a high professional standard.</td>
<td>Maintains all Professional Practice documentation to an exemplary professional standard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submits teaching plans and documentation within required timeframes and guidelines.</td>
<td>Submits teaching plans and documentation within required timeframes and guidelines.</td>
<td>Submits teaching plans and documentation within required timeframes and guidelines.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Relationships</td>
<td>Acts with fairness in all dealings with school personnel, students and parents. Acts with integrity and fairness in all dealings with school personnel, students and parents.</td>
<td>Acts with an exemplary level of integrity, fairness and dignity in all dealings with school personnel, students and parents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respects diverse teaching and working styles within the school.</td>
<td>Respects and supports diverse teaching and working styles within the school.</td>
<td>Engages in professional discussions about diverse teaching and working styles to enhance understanding of teaching and learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepts and responds to advice in a positive manner.</td>
<td>Seeks and acts on advice in a positive and purposeful manner.</td>
<td>Demonstrates a high level of motivation in seeking and acting on advice in striving for excellence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintains a professional level of interaction.</td>
<td>Demonstrates effective interpersonal skills in professional communication.</td>
<td>Demonstrates a high level of interpersonal and communication skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operates collaboratively as part of a team.</td>
<td>Operates collaboratively as part of a team, contributing own ideas.</td>
<td>Articulates innovative ideas that foster collaboration within the classroom and wider community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondary ATP Guidelines 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Conduct</th>
<th>Displays initiative and enthusiasm in the classroom</th>
<th>Displays initiative and enthusiasm at a school level.</th>
<th>Displays a high level of initiative, enthusiasm and independence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborates with Mentor Teacher to share professional duties.</td>
<td>Accepts responsibility for professional duties.</td>
<td>Shows initiative in assuming responsibility for professional duties.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctual and reliable.</td>
<td>Is punctual and reliable.</td>
<td>Is punctual and reliable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observes school and university regulations for attendance and reporting absences.</td>
<td>Observes school and university regulations for attendance and reporting absences.</td>
<td>Observes school and university regulations for attendance and reporting absences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintains an appropriate professional standard of dress and grooming.</td>
<td>Maintains an appropriate professional standard of dress and grooming.</td>
<td>Maintains an appropriate professional standard of dress and grooming.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respects the confidentiality and privacy of information about the school, students and colleagues.</td>
<td>Respects the confidentiality and privacy of information about the school, students and colleagues.</td>
<td>Respects the confidentiality and privacy of information about the school, students and colleagues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondary ATP Guidelines 2013
Appendix F – Assistant Teacher Program Guidelines 2015

**FINAL EVALUATION FORM**
Assistant Teacher Program 2015

AATP4211 (Secondary)

Student Name:  
School:  
Student Number:  
Year Level Taught:  
University Supervisor (Name):  
(Please type your name above and email to X using your X Staff email)

**OVERALL ASSESSMENT LEVEL DESCRIPTORS**

The overall assessment level must be determined from the descriptors below. These descriptors relate to the competencies of Assistant Teachers against the National Standards for graduate teachers. They do not relate to the competencies of an experienced, qualified teacher. The Assistant Teacher is required to reach a graduate level in all of the criteria in all Standards and X Professional Requirements to gain a pass grade for the Assistant Teacher Program.

The overall assessment for each Standard should reflect a balanced evaluation of the Assistant Teacher’s overall performance for that Standard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAIL</td>
<td>To be assessed at a Fail grade, the Assistant Teacher has been assessed as Unsatisfactory in at least one of the criteria within the Standards and X Professional Requirements and therefore does not meet the requirements of the Assistant Teacher Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADUATE</td>
<td>To be assessed at a Graduate level, the Assistant Teacher demonstrates achievement in all Standards and possesses the requisite knowledge and skills to plan for and manage learning programs for students. A competent Assistant Teacher is able to engage students in sequences of purposeful and appropriate experiences to promote learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGHLY COMPE'TENT GRADUATE</td>
<td>To be assessed as a Highly Competent Graduate, the Assistant Teacher demonstrates a high standard of achievement in all Standards and possesses the requisite knowledge and skills to plan and manage learning programs for students. A highly competent Assistant Teacher independently designs engaging and meaningful programs to provide enrichment in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTSTANDING GRADUATE</td>
<td>To be assessed as an Outstanding Graduate, the Assistant Teacher demonstrates an exceptional standard of achievement in all Standards and possesses the requisite knowledge and skills to plan for and manage learning programs and students. An outstanding Assistant Teacher should demonstrate high level decision making and be able to independently deliver an inclusive curriculum with differentiated teaching that is designed to meet the learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching Skills

PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

STANDARD 1: KNOW STUDENTS AND HOW THEY LEARN

The Assistant Teacher’s practice should illustrate that learning is influenced by many factors through:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tick the appropriate level achieved by the Assistant Teacher</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Highly Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adapting learning experiences to respond to the physical, social and intellectual needs of students.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using teaching strategies that are responsive to the cultural, linguistic, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds of students.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differentiating teaching to meet the individual learning needs of students.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporating strategies to support students with disabilities.</td>
<td>No Opportunity</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using strategies that are responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as appropriate.</td>
<td>No Opportunity</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fail ☐ Graduate ☐ Highly Competent Graduate ☐ Outstanding Graduate ☐

Comment:

STANDARD 2: KNOW THE CONTENT AND HOW TO TEACH IT

The Assistant Teacher’s practice illustrates use of appropriate content knowledge and supporting strategies in learning and teaching through:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tick the appropriate level achieved by the Assistant Teacher</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Highly Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using content knowledge and concepts to structure teaching and learning.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising and sequencing content.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for learning using appropriate curriculum, assessment and reporting guidelines.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating literacy and numeracy across learning areas.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing ICT to expand learning opportunities for students.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building respect for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian histories, culture and languages.</td>
<td>No Opportunity</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fail ☐ Graduate ☐ Highly Competent Graduate ☐ Outstanding Graduate ☐

Comment:
**PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

**STANDARD 3: PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The Assistant Teacher's practice illustrates the ability to plan, implement and assess programs to support learning through:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tick the appropriate level achieved by the Assistant Teacher</th>
<th>Unassessed</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Highly Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting challenging goals that consider student characteristics and abilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structuring experiences and content in a sequential manner.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging students by using a variety of teaching strategies and resources, including ICT.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using appropriate verbal, non-verbal and written communication skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using appropriate questioning strategies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaying the flexibility to adapt plans during learning experiences.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using various strategies to evaluate the teaching program to improve student learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporating strategies to involve parents, families or carers in the educative process.</td>
<td>No Opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail □</td>
<td>Graduate □</td>
<td>Highly Competent Graduate □</td>
<td>Outstanding Graduate □</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STANDARD 4: CREATE AND MAINTAIN SUPPORTIVE AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

The Assistant Teacher's practice illustrates the ability to maintain supportive and safe learning environments through:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tick the appropriate level achieved by the Assistant Teacher</th>
<th>Unassessed</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Highly Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying strategies that promote student engagement and participation in learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising, allocating and managing time, resources and physical spaces.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving clear and appropriate directions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining routines and procedures that guide student behaviour.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding appropriately to challenging behaviour.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting student well-being and safety.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating awareness of ethical issues and teacher responsibilities surrounding the use of ICT with students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail □</td>
<td>Graduate □</td>
<td>Highly Competent Graduate □</td>
<td>Outstanding Graduate □</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

303
# Standard 5: Assess, Provide Feedback and Report on Student Learning

The Assistant Teacher’s practice illustrates the ability to use appropriate assessment, feedback and reporting strategies through:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tick the appropriate level achieved by the Assistant Teacher</th>
<th>Un satisfactory</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Highly Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using informal and formal strategies relevant to planned learning experiences and intended goals.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing clear feedback to students in a timely manner.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making consistent and comparable judgements.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using assessment data to modify teaching.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping appropriate records of student achievement.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing feedback to parents or carers and assisting in reporting student achievement.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Fail | □ |
| Graduate | □ |
| Highly Competent Graduate | □ |
| Outstanding Graduate | □ |

**Teaching Skills**

- Outstanding Graduate
- Highly Competent Graduate
- Graduate
- Fail
Professional Development

PROFESSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

STANDARD 6: ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The Assistant Teacher plans for professional learning through:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tick the appropriate level achieved by the Assistant Teacher</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Highly Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of the National Professional Standards for Graduate Teachers and their learning needs.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating an awareness of appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting advice and assistance from mentors and professional colleagues.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing and articulating a coherent approach and philosophy to learning and teaching.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fail ☐ Graduate ☐ Highly Competent Graduate ☐ Outstanding Graduate ☐

Comment:

---

STANDARD 7: ENGAGE PROFESSIONALLY WITH COLLEAGUES, PARENTS, CARERS AND COMMUNITIES

The Assistant Teacher’s practice illustrates ethical and respectful relationships with colleagues, parents, carers and the community through:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tick the appropriate level achieved by the Assistant Teacher</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Highly Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applying the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complying with relevant legislative and organisational policies and procedures.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working respectfully, sensitively and confidentially with parents and carers.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fail ☐ Graduate ☐ Highly Competent Graduate ☐ Outstanding Graduate ☐

Comment:
**X PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

The Assistant Teacher demonstrates professionalism through:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please tick the appropriate level achieved by the Assistant Teacher</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Highly Competent</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fostering positive relationships and respect for all students</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing respect for the ethos of the school and its values</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaying initiative and enthusiasm in the classroom</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrating a professional standard in all written communication</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising Professional Practice documentation appropriately</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting requirements for timely submission of teaching plans and documentation</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with Mentor Teacher to share professional duties</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining a professional standard in conduct, dress, grooming, punctuality and reliability</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fail ☐
Graduate ☐
Highly Competent Graduate ☐
Outstanding Graduate ☐

**Professionalism**

☐ Outstanding Graduate
☐ Highly Competent Graduate
☐ Graduate
☐ Fail
Appendix G – Phase 1 Focus Group Interview Questions

Guiding Questions

Phase One: Focus Group Interview

Can you tell me about your experiences of being a pre-service drama teacher during a teaching practicum?

What do you most enjoy about being in a school as a pre-service drama teacher?

What are the challenges of being a pre-service teacher during a teaching practicum?

Describe the curricular drama classes you observed/taught during practicum.

Describe the non-curricular drama activities you observed/participated in during the practicum.
Information Letter: Pre-Service Teacher
Phase One: Focus Group Interview

Project Title: Practicum Experiences of Pre-Service Drama Teachers

Investigator: Christina Gray
Contact Person: Christina Gray
Telephone: ***

Dear [Name],

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a research project that aims to study the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers. Your involvement will be in the first phase of the study which will take the form of a focus group interview.

Background
Teacher training must be able to equip pre-service teachers with the skills and understandings needed to experience success during the practicum and beyond. Furthermore, teacher training must be kept up to date with current trends and issues occurring in classrooms. This research will explore the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers in order to gain a contemporary understanding of these issues.

Aim of the Study
The study aims to better understand the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers in order to maximize the benefits of the teaching practicum and inform teacher education accordingly.

What Does Your Participation Involve?
The research will involve a focus group interview, with other pre-service drama teachers from ***. If you agree to take part in the research, the interview will take place at *** and at a time convenient to those participating. The interview will involve reflecting on the practicum and discussing experiences and issues that arise. An audio recording will be taken during the focus group interview.

Your involvement in this study is voluntary and while we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. If you withdraw, all information you have provided will be destroyed. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.
Possible Benefits and Risks
The opportunity to reflect and discuss practicum experiences will enable an opportunity to explore and possibly understand the experiences with more clarity. Having your stories captured and constructed in written form may also be quite satisfying. Please note that the researcher will NOT be assessing your practice.

Questions
If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact Christina Gray on *** or Dr Peter Wright on *** or Mr Robin Pascoe on ***. We would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you.

You will receive a copy of the interview once the information has been collated. You can expect to receive this information within two months of the interview.

We would like to thank you in advance for your assistance with this research project. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter Wright Mr Robin Pascoe Ms Christina Gray

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (2010/048). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University’s Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix I – Phase 1 Focus Group Consent Form

Consent Form: Pre-Service Teacher
Phase One: Focus Group Interview

Practicum Experiences of Pre-Service Drama Teachers

Participant

I have read the participant information sheet, which explains the nature of the research and the possible risks. The information has been explained to me and all my questions have been satisfactorily answered. I have been given a copy of the information sheet to keep.

I am happy to be interviewed and for the interview to be audio recorded as part of this research. I understand that I do not have to answer particular questions if I do not want to and that I can withdraw at any time without consequences to myself. I understand that the interviewer’s role is that of researcher, not as my university lecturer and that my involvement is not being assessed.

I agree that research data gathered from the results of the study may be published provided my name or any identifying data is not used. I have also been informed that I may not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study.

I understand that all information provided by me is treated as confidential and will not be released by the researcher to a third party unless required to do so by law.


Signature of Participant

Date

Investigator

I have fully explained to ___________________________ the nature and purpose of the research, the procedures to be employed and that I will not be assessing his/her practice. I have provided the participant with a copy of the Information Sheet.


Signature of Investigator

Date

Print Name

Position
Appendix J – Phases 2 and 3 Pre-Service Drama Teacher Information Letter

Information Letter: Pre-Service Teacher

Phase Two: Practicum Observations, Journal, Practicum Reports and Mentor Teacher Interview

Phase Three: Reflections on School Drama

Project Title: Practicum Experiences of Pre-Service Drama Teachers
Investigator: Christina Gray
Contact Person: Christina Gray
Telephone: ******

Dear __________________________

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a research project that aims to study the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers. Your involvement will be in Phase Two and Three of the study. Phase Two of the study will involve the researcher observing two of your lessons, meeting with yourself and mentor teacher, perusing your practicum journal and practicum reports. Phase Three of the study will entail an individual interview.

Background
Teacher training must be able to equip pre-service teachers with the skills and understandings needed to experience success during the practicum and beyond. Furthermore, teacher training must be kept up to date with current trends and issues occurring in classrooms. This research will explore the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers in order to gain a contemporary understanding of these issues.

Aim of the Study
The study aims to better understand the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers in order to maximize the benefits of the teaching practicum and inform teacher education accordingly.

What Does Your Participation Involve?
Phase Two: The researcher will observe you teaching two lessons during the teaching practicum and meet with you afterwards to debrief the experience and your development. You will need to keep an informal electronic journal throughout the practicum and email it to the researcher at the conclusion of your practicum. The researcher will also peruse your past practicum reports if you are able to provide these documents. The researcher will conduct a separate interview with your mentor teacher to gain his/her insight and perception of your practicum experience.

If you agree to take part in the research, the lesson observations and debrief meetings will take place at a time convenient to yourself and notes will be taken.
Phase Three: The researcher will individually interview you at a time and location convenient to you. You will have guiding questions well in advance to assist in thinking about your responses. The interview will focus on your prior experiences of drama when you were a student at school. An audio recording will be taken during the interview and later transcribed into a text-based format.

Narratives will be constructed from the data using first person voice and omitting the questions. To minimize the chance of misinterpretation, stories will be sent to you via email to ensure that ideas are correctly presented. You can expect to receive this information within two months of the interview.

Your involvement in this study is voluntary and while we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. If you withdraw, all information you have provided will be destroyed. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.

Possible Benefits and Risks
The opportunity to reflect and discuss experiences will enable an opportunity to explore and possibly understand the experiences with more clarity. Having your stories captured and constructed in written form may also be quite satisfying. Please note that the researcher will NOT be assessing your practice.

Questions
If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact Christina Gray on *** or Dr Peter Wright on *** or Mr Robin Pascoe on ***. We would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you.

We would like to thank you in advance for your assistance with this research project. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter Wright  Mr Robin Pascoe  Ms Christina Gray

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2010/048). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix K – Phases 2 and 3 Pre-Service Drama Teacher Consent Form

Consent Form: Pre-Service Teacher

Phase Two: Practicum Observations, Journal, Past Practicum Reports and Mentor Teacher Interview

Phase Three: Reflections on School Drama Interview

Practicum Experiences of Pre-Service Drama Teachers

Participant

I have read the participant information sheet, which explains the nature of the research and the possible risks. The information has been explained to me and all my questions have been satisfactorily answered. I have been given a copy of the information sheet to keep.

I am aware of the procedures involved in this study. I understand that the researcher will observe my teaching, peruse my practicum journal and past practicum reports. I am willing to discuss my development with the researcher after each lesson and for the researcher to interview my mentor teacher. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without consequences to myself. I understand that the interviewer’s role is that of researcher, not as my university lecturer and that my involvement is not being assessed.

I agree that research data gathered from the results of the study may be published provided my name or any identifying data is not used. I have also been informed that I may not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study.

I understand that all information provided by me is treated as confidential and will not be released by the researcher to a third party unless required to do so by law.

______________________________   __________________________
Signature of Participant            Date

Investigator

I have fully explained to __________________________ the nature and purpose of the research, the procedures to be employed, and that I will not be assessing his/her practice. I have provided the participant with a copy of the Information Sheet.

______________________________   __________________________
Signature of Investigator            Date

______________________________
Print Name

______________________________
Position
Appendix L – Phase 2 Mentor Teacher Information Letter

Information Letter: Mentor Teacher

Phase 2: Practicum Observations, Journal, Past Practicum Reports and Mentor Teacher Interview

Project Title: Practicum Experiences of Pre-Service Drama Teachers
Investigator Christina Gray
Contact Person Christina Gray
Telephone ***

Dear ____________________

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a research project that aims to study the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers. Your involvement will be in Phase Two of the study which will involve the researcher interviewing you to discuss the development of your pre-service teacher.

Background
Teacher training must be able to equip pre-service teachers with the skills and understandings needed to experience success during the practicum and beyond. Furthermore, teacher training must be kept up to date with current trends and issues occurring in classrooms. This research will explore the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers in order to gain a contemporary understanding of these issues.

Aim of the Study
The study aims to better understand the practicum experiences of pre-service drama teachers in order to maximize the benefits of the teaching practicum and inform teacher education accordingly.

What Does Your Participation Involve?
The researcher will meet with you at a convenient time to gain your perception and insights into the practicum experience of the pre-service teacher. The interview will involve reflecting on the practicum and discussing the development and experiences of the pre-service teacher. An audio recording will be taken during the interview.

Your involvement in this study is voluntary and while we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline. There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation. If you withdraw, all information you have provided will be destroyed. All information will be treated in a confidential manner, and your name will not be used in any publication arising out of the research.
Possible Benefits and Risks
The opportunity to reflect and discuss the practicum experiences of the pre-service teacher will enable an opportunity to explore the practicum experience and your role as a mentor with more clarity. None of the procedures (interviews) include activities which may result in adverse outcomes and therefore the risks to participants are minimal. Furthermore the interviewer’s role is that of researcher, not as university lecturer and that the involvement of your pre-service teacher is not being assessed.

Questions
If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact Christina Gray on *** or Dr Peter Wright on *** or Mr Robin Pascoe on ***. We would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you.

You will receive a copy of the interview once the information has been collated. You can expect to receive this information within two months of the interview.

We would like to thank you in advance for your assistance with this research project. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter Wright  Mr Robin Pascoe  Ms Christina Gray

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2010/048). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University's Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 5677 or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix M – Phase 2 Mentor Teacher Consent Form

Consent Form: Mentor Teacher

Phase 2: Practicum Observations, Journal, Past Practicum Reports,
Mentor Teacher Interview

Practicum Experiences of Pre-Service Drama Teachers

Participant

I have read the participant information sheet, which explains the nature of the research and the possible risks. The information has been explained to me and all my questions have been satisfactorily answered. I have been given a copy of the information sheet to keep.

I am happy to be interviewed and for the interview to be audio recorded as part of this research. I understand that I do not have to answer particular questions if I do not want to and that I can withdraw at any time without consequences to myself or my pre-service teacher.

I agree that research data gathered from the results of the study may be published provided my name, school or any identifying data is not used. I have also been informed that I may not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study. I understand that the interviewer’s role is that of researcher, not as university lecturer and that the involvement of my pre-service teacher is not being assessed.

I understand that all information provided by me is treated as confidential and will not be released by the researcher to a third party unless required to do so by law.

Signature of Participant ______________________________ Date ________________

Investigator

I have fully explained to ________________________________ the nature and purpose of the research, the procedures to be employed, and the possible risks involved. I have provided the participant with a copy of the Information Sheet.

Signature of Investigator ______________________________ Date ________________

Print Name ______________________________ Position ______________________________
Appendix N – Phase 3 In-Depth Interview Guiding Questions

Guiding Questions

Phase 3: Narrative Portraits

Tell me about some of your own school experiences of drama when you were a student at school.

Tell me about some of the different drama teachers you had at school.

Tell me about the non-curricular drama activities you did when you were at school.

Tell me about your decisions to choose drama teaching as your profession.

Is there anything you would like to discuss with regard to your Final Teaching Practice?

Any further ideas or insight you wish to contribute?