

# **Dramatic Interventions:**

## **A multi-site case study analysis of student outcomes in the School Drama program**

**John Nicholas Rossato Saunders**

B.Cl (Drama), B.Ed (Secondary), M.Ed (Res)

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

2019

The University of Sydney

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Sydney School of Education and Social Work

## Abstract

For the last two decades a growing body of research has articulated the transformative potential of learning in, about and through The Arts (for example: Bamford, 2006, 2009; Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Deasy, 2002; DICE, 2010; Ewing, 2019, 2010a; Fiske, 1999; Fleming, Gibson, & Anderson, 2016; Winner & Cooper, 2000). In particular, it is clear that there can be a powerful relationship between drama-based pedagogy and the enhancement of student literacies (for example: Baldwin, 2012; Baldwin & Fleming, 2003; Ewing, 2019, 2010a, 2010b; Ewing & Simons, 2016, 2004; Gibson & Ewing, 2011; McNaughton, 1997; Miller & Saxton, 2004, 2009, 2016; Podlozny, 2000). At the same time there has been a need to equip educators with the knowledge, confidence and expertise in the use of drama as critical, quality pedagogy (Ewing, 2002, 2006).

This dissertation reports on research that has examined the process and outcomes of one teacher professional learning program, the *School Drama* program. *School Drama* is a teacher professional learning program developed through a partnership between Sydney Theatre Company and The University of Sydney's School of Education and Social Work. The program's dual aims are to provide primary classroom teachers with the knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence to use drama-based pedagogy with quality children's literature and to improve student literacy in a designated focus area such as confidence in oracy, creative/imaginative writing, descriptive language or inferential comprehension. Based on a co-mentoring professional learning model (Ewing, 2002, 2006), a teaching artist works alongside a primary classroom teacher to co-plan, co-teach and co-mentor each other during seven weekly in-class workshops over a term using quality children's literature and process drama-based strategies.

The *School Drama* program has been operating for ten years (from 2009 to 2019) reaching over 30,000 teachers and their students across Australia. While a growing body of research has explored aspects of the program, relatively little focus to date has centred on the student outcomes. This research aimed to investigate the impact of the program on students. An analysis of all data collected in 2017 from a range of participating schools, teachers and students provides a top-level overview of the program's outcomes. A fine-grained analysis of three case study classrooms in diverse school contexts follows. A range of data was collected from students, the class teacher and the teaching artist/researcher including: student pre- and post-program literacy benchmarking tasks; student pre- and post-program surveys; student focus groups; teacher interviews; and teaching artist/researcher observations and journals.

While the findings suggest positive shifts in student English and literacy outcomes in the selected focus area (inferential comprehension), particularly in less able male students, perhaps even more importantly there is strong evidence that quality drama-based pedagogy enhances student confidence, collaboration, imagination, engagement and connection to character. A model is proposed to explain how drama-based pedagogy enables more holistic outcomes for students.

## Acknowledgments

Firstly, I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which I live and work and on whose land this research has been conducted, the Gadigal and Bidjigal peoples. I pay my respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

I acknowledge my exceptional supervisors, Professor Emerita Robyn Ewing AM and Dr Victoria Campbell for their unwavering support, encouragement and guidance. Learning from you, Robyn and Victoria, has been a true privilege.

I thank and acknowledge the students and teachers at Waratah Grammar School, Gungahlin Public School and Wentworth Public School for allowing me to work with you during 2017. I have learnt so much from our time together. The research journey has been a profoundly transformative experience for me.

Thank you to my colleagues at Sydney Theatre Company, particularly Executive Director, Patrick McIntyre, who supported me to undertake further study. I can honestly say that I could not have done this research and written this thesis without his support. I also thank my colleagues in the Education and Communities Department, Zoe Hogan, Lisa Mumford, Jacqueline Cowell, Kaylee Hazell and all of our wonderful Teaching Artists, partners and funders who have supported the *School Drama* program.

I would like to thank my parents, Noel and Therese for their encouragement and support. Who would have thought, hey? I acknowledge my siblings for their support: my sister, Catherine; my brother, Patrick, my sister-in-law, Tegan and my little niece, Siarra. Thanks to my friend Dominic Hunt for his 'support' and ensuring our house was quiet when I needed to study.

Thank you to Shay Ryan, my wonderful copyeditor for your excellent proofreading.

Finally, I would like to thank my Australian and international drama education family. I am so glad that I became a Drama teacher and I have appreciated so many of you supporting me over the past few years while I've undertaken this study. I hope this research is useful and contributes in some small way to our field.



## Dedication

To my parents, Noel and Therese Saunders, and two very special teachers, Judy Frost and Jan Mulvihill, who never gave up on me.

## Author's Declaration

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

Name: John Nicholas Rossato Saunders

Signature: *J. N. Saunders*

## Table of Contents

### Contents

<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgments .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Dedication .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Author’s Declaration .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>List of Figures .....</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>xvi</b>
<b>Chapter 1 - Becoming: an introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The Lens .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Becoming a student ... ..</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Becoming engaged in the arts ... ..</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Becoming a pre-service teacher ... ..</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Becoming a teacher ... ..</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Becoming a researcher ... ..</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Purpose of Study and Research Question .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Definition of Key Terms .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i><b>Aesthetic .....</b></i>	<i><b>7</b></i>
<i><b>Benchmarking .....</b></i>	<i><b>8</b></i>
<i><b>Co-mentoring .....</b></i>	<i><b>8</b></i>
<i><b>Drama strategies .....</b></i>	<i><b>8</b></i>
<i><b>English as an additional language and/or dialect (EAL/D) .....</b></i>	<i><b>8</b></i>
<i><b>English and literacy outcomes in School Drama .....</b></i>	<i><b>8</b></i>
<i><b>Embodiment .....</b></i>	<i><b>9</b></i>
<i><b>Literacy .....</b></i>	<i><b>9</b></i>
<i><b>Motivation and engagement .....</b></i>	<i><b>10</b></i>
<i><b>National professional standards for teaching .....</b></i>	<i><b>10</b></i>
<i><b>Process drama and process-based drama .....</b></i>	<i><b>10</b></i>
<i><b>Pre-text .....</b></i>	<i><b>11</b></i>
<i><b>School Drama .....</b></i>	<i><b>12</b></i>
<i><b>Story drama .....</b></i>	<i><b>12</b></i>
<i><b>Super Six comprehension strategies .....</b></i>	<i><b>12</b></i>

<i>Teaching artist</i> .....	13
Overview of Chapters .....	14
Chapter 2 - The Power of The Arts in Learning: .....	16
A Review of the Literature .....	16
Introduction .....	16
Setting the Scene .....	17
Education and The Arts .....	24
Drama and Literacy .....	38
Skills, Dispositions and Capabilities .....	44
Collaboration .....	45
Imagination and creativity .....	46
Confidence .....	49
Empathy, emotion, connection and perspective taking .....	49
Embodiment, cognition and engagement .....	53
Conclusion .....	57
Chapter 3 - The <i>School Drama</i> Story and Research .....	58
Introduction .....	58
STC Education .....	58
The <i>School Drama</i> story begins .....	61
The pilot phase 2009 - 2012 .....	63
The growth phase 2013 - 2019 .....	69
Conclusion .....	79
Chapter 4 – Art is the Social Within Us: Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Design .....	81
Introduction .....	81
Theoretical Framework .....	81
Five Vygotskian concepts that frame the current study .....	82
Play and drama .....	83
The zone of proximal development .....	84
Creativity and imagination .....	87
<i>Perezhivanie</i> .....	88
Dual affect .....	89
A Qualitative Approach .....	89
Research question .....	90
Case study .....	91
The research sites and participants .....	93
Data Collection Methods .....	94

Interviews .....	96
Focus groups .....	97
Artefacts: Student work samples and Benchmarking .....	98
Filmed recordings of workshops .....	99
Student survey .....	99
Research journal .....	100
The position of the researcher and reflexivity .....	100
Ethical Considerations .....	102
Limitations .....	103
Data Analysis .....	103
Conclusion .....	105
<b>Chapter 5 – <i>School Drama 2017: A Broad Overview</i> .....</b>	<b>106</b>
Introduction .....	106
Student Benchmarking .....	106
Class A: Allora North Public School .....	107
Class B: Brown Street Public School .....	108
Class C: James Cook Public School .....	109
Class D: Nebo North Public School .....	109
Class E: Peterson Public School .....	110
Class F: Reid Public School .....	111
Class G: Whitlam Public School .....	111
Class H: Wentworth Public School .....	112
Class I: Gungahlin Public School .....	113
Class J: Waratah Grammar School (Case Study 1) .....	113
Class K: Gungahlin Public School (Case Study 2) .....	114
Class L: Wentworth Public School (Case Study 3) .....	115
Teacher Survey .....	117
Conclusion .....	129
<b>Chapter 6 - Case Study One: Waratah Grammar School .....</b>	<b>130</b>
Introduction .....	130
Background .....	130
The Intervention .....	132
The Data .....	133
Student benchmarking .....	133
Student surveys .....	134
Interviews, focus groups and reflective journal .....	134

<b>Analysis</b>	136
Literacy: Inferential comprehension	136
Inference, process drama and episodic text	148
<b>Skills, Dispositions and Capability Outcomes</b>	150
Engagement and embodiment	150
Collaboration and the collective zone of proximal development	152
Activating imagination	157
Confidence	159
<b>Conclusion</b>	165
<b>Chapter 7 - Case Study Two: Gungahlin Public School</b>	167
Introduction	167
Background	167
The Intervention	170
The Data	171
Student benchmarking	171
Student surveys	172
Interviews, focus groups and reflective journal	172
Analysis	174
Literacy: Inferential comprehension	174
Drama, episodic text and literacy learning	175
Empathy, emotion and connection	182
Embodiment leads to engagement	187
Collaboration and friendship	192
Conclusion	196
<b>Chapter 8 – Case Study Three: Wentworth Public School</b>	198
Introduction	198
Background	198
The Intervention	202
The Data	204
Student benchmarking	204
Student surveys	204
Interviews, focus groups and reflective journal	205
Analysis	206
Literacy: Inferential comprehension	206
The drama processes leading to deeper thinking, shift from literal to inferential comprehension	211

Agency and empowerment.....	216
Engagement.....	219
Connection, empathy and perspective taking .....	223
Conclusion .....	230
<b>Chapter 9 – Making Meaning: Cross Case Analysis, Discussion and Findings.....</b>	<b>232</b>
Introduction.....	232
Similarities and Patterns .....	232
Literacy: Inferential comprehension.....	232
Benchmarking.....	233
Gender and benchmarking data .....	234
Number of texts used.....	236
Reported perceptions of learning shifts .....	237
Skills, Dispositions and Capabilities.....	248
Engagement.....	248
Collaboration and the collective zone of proximal development .....	256
Emotion, empathy and connection .....	259
Confidence.....	273
Imagination and creativity .....	284
Agency and empowerment.....	290
The Model: Inputs and Outcomes Working in Symphony .....	290
Conclusion .....	292
<b>Chapter 10 - What We Know: Concluding Comments and Looking to the Future.....</b>	<b>293</b>
Introduction.....	293
Broad Overview of 2017 Program Data.....	293
Teacher professional learning outcomes .....	294
English and literacy outcomes .....	294
Three Case Studies .....	294
English and literacy outcomes .....	294
Student perceptions of drama on learning .....	295
Skills, Dispositions and Capabilities.....	295
Student engagement through embodiment .....	295
Collaboration and the collective zone of proximal development .....	296
Empathy, emotion and connection .....	296
Student confidence .....	296
Imagination and creativity .....	297
Significance of Research.....	297

Limitations of Research and Recommendations for Further Research .....	298
Final Remarks .....	299
Reference List .....	300
Appendices .....	323
Appendix A - Waratah Grammar School Intervention and Brief Reflections .....	324
Workshop One.....	324
Brief Reflection – Workshop One .....	325
Workshop Two .....	326
Brief Reflection – Workshop Two .....	328
Workshop Three .....	328
Brief Reflection – Workshop Three.....	329
Workshop Four .....	330
Brief Reflection – Workshop Four.....	331
Workshop Five.....	332
Brief Reflection – Workshop Five .....	334
Workshop Six.....	334
Brief Reflection – Workshop Six .....	336
Workshop Seven.....	336
Brief Reflection – Workshop Seven .....	337
Appendix B - Gungahlin Public School Intervention and Brief Reflections .....	338
Workshop One.....	338
Brief Reflection – Workshop One .....	340
Workshop Two .....	340
Brief Reflection – Workshop Two .....	342
Workshop Three .....	342
Brief Reflection – Workshop Three.....	343
Workshop Four .....	344
Workshop Five.....	346
Workshop Six.....	347
Brief Reflection – Workshop Six .....	349
Workshop Seven.....	349
Brief Reflection – Workshop Seven .....	350
Appendix C - Wentworth Public School Intervention and Brief Reflections .....	352
Workshop One.....	352
Brief Reflection – Workshop One .....	354
Workshop Two .....	356



<b>Workshop Three .....</b>	<b>357</b>
<b>Brief Reflection – Workshop Three.....</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>Workshop Four .....</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>Brief Reflection – Workshop Four.....</b>	<b>361</b>
<b>Workshop Five.....</b>	<b>361</b>
<b>Brief Reflection – Workshop Five .....</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>Workshop Six.....</b>	<b>363</b>
<b>Workshop Seven.....</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>Appendix D – Pre- and Post-Program Student Surveys .....</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Pre-Program Student Survey .....</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Post-Program Student Survey.....</b>	<b>374</b>
<b>Appendix E – The University of Sydney Ethics Approval .....</b>	<b>383</b>
<b>Appendix F – State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP) Approval .....</b>	<b>384</b>
<b>Appendix G – Teacher Participant Information and Participant Consent Form .....</b>	<b>385</b>
<b>Teacher Participant Information Statement .....</b>	<b>385</b>
<b>Teacher Participant Consent Form.....</b>	<b>388</b>
<b>Appendix H – Student Participant Parents and Carers Information and Consent Form .....</b>	<b>390</b>
<b>Parent/Carer Consent Form .....</b>	<b>394</b>
<b>Appendix I – <i>School Drama Classic</i> Teacher Pre- and Post-Program Survey.....</b>	<b>396</b>
<b>Teacher Pre-Program Survey .....</b>	<b>396</b>
<b>Teacher Post-Program Survey.....</b>	<b>399</b>
<b>Appendix J – Sample Benchmarking Task and Rubric (Comprehension and Inference, 2017) .....</b>	<b>402</b>
<b>Appendix K – Sample Teacher Interview Transcript .....</b>	<b>404</b>
<b>Appendix L – Sample Student Focus Group Transcript .....</b>	<b>408</b>

## List of Tables

Table 1 Activity Name and Tag .....	98
Table 2 Grade and Mark Value .....	107
Table 3 Breakdown of literacy foci identified in 2017 benchmarking .....	115
Table 4 Breakdown of 2017 benchmarking into Stage and Year Level.....	116
Table 5 Breakdown of 2017 Benchmarking Stage/Year level Average Shift.....	116
Table 6 Breakdown of 2017 benchmarking into literacy foci .....	117
Table 7 Schedule of intervention and data collection points at Waratah Grammar School .....	134
Table 8 Schedule of intervention and data collection points at Gungahlin Public School .....	172
Table 9 GPS Question 39.....	196
Table 10 Schedule of intervention and data collection points at Wentworth Public School .....	205
Table 11 Gender breakdown of average marks for each case study.....	234
Table 12 Gender breakdown on average benchmarking scores .....	235
Table 13 Analysis of Question 39.....	256
Table 14 Cross Case Analysis Question 19 .....	261
Table 15 Site Average Responses Question 30 .....	279
Table 16 Cross Case Analysis of Question 16.....	287

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Importance of School Drama aims for teachers (2012) .....	67
Figure 2 Student pre- and post-program benchmarking .....	76
Figure 3 School Drama Reach 2009 to 2018 .....	79
Figure 4 Data Collection Methods .....	95
Figure 5 Allora North Public School Benchmarking .....	107
Figure 6 Brown Street Public School Benchmarking.....	108
Figure 7 James Cook Public School Benchmarking .....	109
Figure 8 Nebo North Public School Benchmarking.....	109
Figure 9 Peterson Public School Benchmarking.....	110
Figure 10 Reid Public School Benchmarking.....	111
Figure 11 Whitlam Public School Benchmarking .....	111
Figure 12 Wentworth Public School Benchmarking .....	112
Figure 13 Gungahlin Public School Benchmarking.....	113
Figure 14 Waratah Grammar School Benchmarking (Case Study 1) .....	113
Figure 15 Gungahlin Public School Benchmarking (Case Study 2).....	114
Figure 16 Wentworth Public School Benchmarking (Case Study 3) .....	115
Figure 17 Response to PostPTS Question 4 .....	118
Figure 18 Response to PostPTS Question 6 .....	119
Figure 19 Response to PostPTS Question 8 .....	121
Figure 20 Response to PostPTS Question 9 .....	122
Figure 21 Response to PostPTS Question 10 .....	123
Figure 22 Response to PostPTS Question 11 .....	124
Figure 23 Response to PostPTS Question 12 .....	125
Figure 24 Response to PostPTS Question 13 .....	126

Figure 25 Response to PostPTS Question 14 .....	127
Figure 26 Response to PostPTS Question 16 .....	128
Figure 27 WGS Pre- and Post- Benchmarking Results .....	137
Figure 28 WGS Male Students Pre- and Post-Benchmarking Results .....	138
Figure 29 WGS Female Students Pre- and Post-Benchmarking Results .....	138
Figure 30 WGS Question 10 .....	140
Figure 31 WGS Question 13 .....	140
Figure 32 WGS Question 14 .....	141
Figure 33 WGS Question 60 .....	155
Figure 34 WGS Question 15 .....	162
Figure 35 WGS Question 30 .....	163
Figure 36 WGS Question 53 .....	164
Figure 37 WGS Question 59 .....	165
Figure 38 WPS Pre- and Post-Benchmarking Results.....	175
Figure 39 GPS Question 48 .....	178
Figure 40 GPS Question 51 .....	179
Figure 41 GPS Question 52 .....	180
Figure 42 GPS Question 58 .....	186
Figure 43 GPS Question 61 .....	187
Figure 44 GPS Question 14 .....	190
Figure 45 GPS Question 54 .....	191
Figure 46 GPS Question 7.....	194
Figure 47 GPS Question 8.....	195
Figure 48 WPS Pre- and Post-Program Benchmarking Results.....	207
Figure 49 WPS Question 54 .....	221
Figure 50 WPS Question 14 .....	222
Figure 51 WPS Question 19 .....	226
Figure 52 WPS Question 43 .....	227
Figure 53 WPS Question 49 .....	228
Figure 54 WPS Question 58 .....	229
Figure 55 WPS Question 61 .....	230
Figure 56 Waratah Grammar School Question 48.....	243
Figure 57 Gungahlin Public School Question 48 .....	243
Figure 58 Wentworth Public School Question 48 .....	244
Figure 59 All Case Studies Question 48.....	244
Figure 60 Waratah Grammar School Question 51.....	245
Figure 61 Gungahlin Public School Question 51 .....	246
Figure 62 Wentworth Public School Question 51.....	246
Figure 63 All Case Study Data Question 51.....	247
Figure 64 Waratah Grammar School Question 54.....	249
Figure 65 Gungahlin Public School Question 54 .....	249
Figure 66 Wentworth Public School Question 54.....	250
Figure 67 All Case Study Data Question 54.....	250
Figure 68 Waratah Grammar School Question 19.....	260
Figure 69 Gungahlin Public School Question 19 .....	260
Figure 70 Wentworth Public School Question 19.....	261
Figure 71 Waratah Grammar School Question 43.....	262
Figure 72 Gungahlin Public School Question 43 .....	263

Figure 73 Wentworth Public School Question 43 .....	263
Figure 74 All Case Study Data Question 43.....	264
Figure 75 Waratah Grammar School Question 49.....	266
Figure 76 Gungahlin Public School Question 49 .....	266
Figure 77 Wentworth Public School Question 49 .....	267
Figure 78 All Case Study Data Question 49.....	267
<i>Figure 79 Waratah Grammar School Question 58.....</i>	<i>268</i>
Figure 80 Gungahlin Public School Question 58 .....	269
Figure 81 Wentworth Public School Question 58.....	269
Figure 82 All Case Study Data Question 58.....	270
Figure 83 Waratah Grammar School Question 61.....	271
Figure 84 Gungahlin Public School Question 61 .....	271
Figure 85 Wentworth Public School Question 61 .....	272
Figure 86 All Case Study Data Question 61.....	272
Figure 87 Waratah Grammar School Question 15.....	276
Figure 88 Gungahlin Public School Question 15 .....	276
Figure 89 Wentworth Public School Question 15 .....	277
Figure 90 Waratah Grammar School Question 30.....	278
Figure 91 Gungahlin Public School Question 30 .....	278
Figure 92 Wentworth Public School Question 30 .....	279
Figure 93 Waratah Grammar School Question 53.....	280
Figure 94 Gungahlin Public School Question 53 .....	280
Figure 95 Wentworth Public School Question 53 .....	281
Figure 96 All Case Study Data Question 53.....	281
Figure 97 Waratah Grammar School Question 59.....	282
Figure 98 Gungahlin Public School Question 59 .....	283
Figure 99 Wentworth Public School Question 59 .....	283
Figure 100 All Case Study Data Question 59.....	284
Figure 101 Waratah Grammar School Question 16.....	286
Figure 102 Gungahlin Public School Question 16 .....	286
Figure 103 Wentworth Public School Question 16.....	287
Figure 104 Waratah Grammar School Question 52.....	288
Figure 105 Gungahlin Public School Question 52 .....	288
Figure 106 Wentworth Public School Question 52 .....	289
Figure 107 All Case Study Data Question 52.....	289
Figure 108 Inputs and Outcomes across All Case Studies: The Symphony.....	292

## Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIRAML	Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Automation and Machine Learning
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
ARC	Australian Research Council
AUD	Australian Dollar
BPS	Bayside Public School
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CAPA	Creative and Performing Arts
CAPE	Chicago Arts Partnership in Education
CBD	Central Business District
CZPD	Collective Zone of Proximal Development
DECD	Department of Education and Child Development.
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DICE	Drama Improves Lisbon key Competences in Education
EAL/D	English as an Additional Language and/or Dialect
EOI	Expression of Interest
EWPS	Everton West Public School
FG	Focus Group
FHPS	Fortress Hill Public School
GPS	Gungahlin Public School
HORSCEET	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training
HORCET	House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training
HPE	Health and Physical Education

HSIE	History, Society and its Environment
I	Interview
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Education Advantage
IDIERI	International Drama in Education Research Institute
K	Kindergarten
KLA	Key Learning Areas
LTTA	Learning Through the Arts
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
MES	Motivation and Engagement Scale
ML	Machine Learning
NAAE	National Advocates for Arts Education
NADIE	National Association for Drama in Education
NAPLAN	National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy
NEA	National Education Association
NELS	National Educational Longitudinal Survey
NESA	New South Wales Educational Standards Authority
NSW	New South Wales
NSWDET	NSW Department of Education and Training,
OC	Opportunity Classes
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OP	Overall Position
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PD	Professional Development
PL	Professional Learning
PostPSS	Post-Program Student Survey
PostPTS	Post-Program Teacher Survey
PrePSS	Pre-Program Student Survey
PrePTS	Pre-Program Teacher Survey
Q	Question
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
SDP	School Drama Program

SERAP	State Education Research Applications Process
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SEWB	Social-Emotional Wellbeing
STC	Sydney Theatre Company
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Maths
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
TSR	The Song Room
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States
WGS	Waratah Grammar School
WPS	Wentworth Public School
WWCC	Working With Children Check
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

## Chapter 1 - Becoming: an introduction

“School should be a joyful place.” (Scottish Children’s Parliament, 2016, p. 1).

### Introduction

The Arts, and Drama in particular, possess an extraordinary power to transform education. Both Australian (Bryce, Mendelovits, Beavis, McQueen, & Adams, 2004; Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012; Ewing, 2010a, 2019; Fleming, Gibson, & Anderson, 2016; Hunter, 2005; Martin, Mansour, Anderson, Gibson, Liem, & Sudmalis, 2013) and international (Bamford, 2006, 2009; Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Deasy, 2002; DICE, 2010; Fiske, 1999; Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, & Palmer, 2009; Winner & Cooper, 2000) research has continued to evidence the impact of quality arts and drama education on students, teachers, “at risk” community members, schools and the public more generally.

The Australia Council for the Arts found, after surveying over 3,000 Australians from a range of economic and geographical backgrounds, that 89% of Australians agreed that “The arts should be an **important** part of the education for **every Australian**” (Australia Council for The Arts, 2014, p. 15, my emphasis). In contrast, little is actually known about the delivery of The Arts in Australian schools. Two studies have indicated that the delivery of Music and Visual Arts in schools is patchy and tied to socio-economic advantage (Davis, 2008; Pascoe, Leong, MacCallum, Mackinlay, Marsh, Smith, Church, & Winterton, 2005). Despite the research evidence, policy documents and the general public’s acknowledgment of the importance of The Arts, their place in the curriculum and in schools is almost constantly threatened and advocates are frequently required to justify their place (Saunders & Stinson, 2016).

### The Lens

As this research subscribes to a sociocultural approach, context and background information about the researcher is important to frame the study. This is of particular importance as I was both the researcher and the teaching artist involved in this study.



### Becoming a student ...

As a young boy growing up in Brisbane, Australia, I knew I was different. Starting Year 1 at Mater Dei Catholic Primary School, several blocks walk from our family home in the quiet tree-lined streets of the suburb of Ashgrove, I enjoyed school. It was a joyful and happy place. I can't remember much of my first year at school, but my parents recall that I loved my teacher and loved going to school. Over time, that changed. By Year 3, I had grown into a funny but misbehaving young person who, I was told, 'had trouble learning'. I did find aspects of school very, very challenging. Reading, writing and spelling were the hardest for me. Maths was not much better for me either. Everyone else in my small single stream class of Year 3s seemed to find it relatively easy to learn to read and write. However, I would excel in anything practical, anything when we were *doing* or *being* something. My Year 3 teacher was a wonderful visual artist and loved creating things. I recall long afternoons spent in the hot classroom painting, drawing, silk-screen printing, moulding clay and creating papier-mâché.

By the time Year 4 came around, I was in trouble and school was not a happy place. I became frustrated that I could barely read or spell (although I could write sentences that no one else could read!). It was in that year that I was taken to a string of doctors and child psychologists to see what was 'wrong' with me. I was told I had a 'learning disability' and finally put on the drug Ritalin to assist my Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Reflecting as an adult, I think that it did help me become less disruptive to my classmates and to my teacher, but thankfully, after 12 months on the drug, my parents decided that as my learning had not improved at school, there was no point in continuing on the drug. I do recall winning the Year 4 Art prize for my sketch of a Nike running shoe and I knew that I could tell stories and make my peers laugh. It seemed to me that these were skills that most of the other kids did not have, but these skills were not valued.

### Becoming engaged in the arts ...

Moving into the final few years of primary school, The Arts started to become a larger part of school and my life. We had an afterschool drama program for a semester and all of the other 'naughty' and 'disruptive' students seemed to gravitate to that. A parent at the school decided to take over the drama program and develop a play. She asked me if I would play a part. I told her, sheepishly, that if we had to read a script I probably should not participate as I really could not read. She assured me that it would be ok and that there were other ways to learn a script, 'and anyway' she added, 'the script is just a starting point for us.' I can't recall the title of the play. But it was a different and comical version of the Cinderella story; however, Cinderella was 'Cinderfella'. I played that leading role. Looking back, I believe this was a pivotal moment for me in my schooling. I found a group of students

who liked me and whom I liked, I developed confidence and I tasted success. As an adult, I don't recall if the play was actually any good, but at the time, I thought it was brilliant.

My dramatic encounters continued through the final few years of primary school, devising plays and scenes, and MC-ing events at the school. I was often removed from regular English and Maths classes and taken for special tutoring sessions with a teacher's aide or the learning support teacher. I recall reading books that I thought were for babies, with silly stories that made no sense. I was both embarrassed about this and offended that these teachers thought that these baby books might interest or help me read better. They did not.

A girl in my class also found reading difficult, she was probably very much like me. We were great friends and participated in lots of the drama activities together. She, like me, was a wonderful storyteller and probably the funniest person in my class. Also like me, she found reading a challenge and her parents discovered a tutor for both of us, Judy Frost. Judy was a former primary learning support teacher who had developed a particular way of teaching students to learn to read (Frost, 1997). This method consisted of the student reading aloud to Judy (once a week) and to a parent (four times a week) for 20 to 30 minutes. The student would read the book and when they encountered a word they were not familiar with, the student would 'tap' their index finger and either Judy or the parent would provide a clue for the word (the number of clues were recorded on a spreadsheet) and the student would try to figure out what the word was. If the student still could not get it, he or she would tap a finger again, and the adult would provide the word (and that was also recorded on the spreadsheet).

Judy got to know me and my interests and found a book, a large thick novel (not a 'baby' book) called *A Genius in the Family* (du Pré, 1997). It was about the author's very famous sister, Jacqueline du Pré. Jacqueline was an exceptional cellist (and at that time, I played the violin). Life was not easy for Jacqueline as she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, which ended her career in her late 20s and her life in her early 40s. The book captivated me. It was hard to read, but I was engaged and wanted to read more and find out what happened to Jacqueline. It must have taken me at least 18 months to read the whole book, but I did. I still have the book on my bookshelf as a trophy symbolising the breakthrough. I could read. An entire world had been unlocked and opened up to me. Reading still wasn't easy, and my spelling was atrocious, but I was determined. This was another pivotal moment.

The move to secondary school (Year 8, at that time) was enormous. I had lost my close-knit group of 25 best friends from primary school, as the girls went to several local single-sex Catholic high schools and all of the boys (including me) went to the local Catholic single-sex school, Marist College Ashgrove. To compare this, my primary school Mater Dei had about 300 students. Everyone knew each other and it had a warm community feel. In contrast, my Year 8 cohort at Marist had around 300 students in it. It was easy to get lost. Sometimes I enjoyed the anonymity of being at a huge school. However, adjusting to a new and massive school was not easy. I continued to see Judy each Saturday morning through secondary school, reading other books and discussing them, and life more generally, for hours.

Also during this time the learning support teacher at Marist, a strong woman, Jan Mulvihill, found me as a result of my appalling academic grades. I was put into the learning support strand for English and Maths (which we called 'Mulvi Maths' and 'Mulvi English') for several years before re-entering mainstream classes for the final years of secondary school, in order to be eligible for a tertiary entrance score. A benefit of attending a large and well-resourced school was the smorgasbord of subjects on offer. From Year 9, we could choose which subjects we wanted to do, and unsurprisingly I was drawn to The Arts. I studied Drama, Visual Art, Film and Television, and Music. I played the violin, performed with the college string ensemble and symphony orchestra and sang in the choir. We didn't have Dance at the school, however, we were the only all male school in the state of Queensland to participate in the Rock Eisteddfod, a competition where schools would perform a dance and movement sequence of no more than 8 minutes in length, telling a story. And of course, I signed up. It was through these subjects and extra-curricular activities that I developed strong friendships and school became a happier place, even a joyful place. I had tasted success at the end of primary school and I knew it was possible. I may not have had the natural academic gifts that most of my peers had, but I had a work ethic that knew no bounds. I knew that if I put my mind to something and worked hard, I could achieve it.

As it turned out, the more engaged I became in The Arts at school, the better my academic grades became, and the more engaged and motivated I became at school, the happier I was and the more confident I became. At the end of Year 12, I finished high school claiming the top mark for Legal Studies, the third highest mark for Drama and an Overall Position (or 'OP' as it's known, the tertiary entrance score in Queensland of between 1 and 25, 1 being the best) of 7, placing me in the top 30% of the state. This was beyond what even I thought was possible. Doors were now open to me that others had assured my parents and me were absolutely shut. Doors such as attending university.

### Becoming a pre-service teacher ...

Having loved the final few years of school, I decided to enrol in the dual degree of a Bachelor of Creative Industries (Drama) and a Bachelor of Education (Secondary) at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). The four-year dual degree was split into two year blocks. The first two years focused on Drama and the second two years focused on Education. At the beginning I was nervous, of course, but when I arrived to meet the other students, I realised they were just like me. They loved the same things that I loved. Many of my peers and lecturers are still close friends and colleagues. To say that I loved this experience is an understatement.

Before graduating, I attended practicum (a four to eight-week placement in a school as a pre-service teacher) in several schools, shadowing experienced teachers, then delivering lessons I had carefully planned. During my final practicum at Kenmore State High School, I was working with an exceptional Drama Teacher, Sean Box. Sean suggested that I try to write a process drama based on a picture-book called *The Rabbits* (Tan & Marsden, 1998). I did. It was a three-hour epic process drama drawing on what I had learned at QUT after studying a compulsory unit on process drama led by Sharon Hogan and Kim Flintoff. That unit was unlike anything I had ever experienced before. I still recall the lectures by Sharon explaining the theory and discussing the importance of a quality pre-text and the different phases of a process drama. Later we were guided through a range of process dramas by Kim. The most memorable was a version of *The Seal Wife*, a very famous process drama developed by Cecily O'Neill (1995). This was another pivotal moment.

### Becoming a teacher ...

I graduated from university and was employed at Southern Cross Catholic College in Redcliffe, just north of Brisbane. The school had four campuses, the 'Middle and Senior Years' where I worked, catering for students from Years 7 to 12, and three 'Early and Primary Years' campuses catering for Preparatory (Kindergarten in other states) to Year 6 students. At first, I had very little to do with the primary years, focusing my attention on growing the Drama Department. Over time I became Head of Department: The Arts at the College. At that point I became interested in The Arts, or the lack of The Arts, on the primary campuses. There was a great instrumental music program, but no Drama. I was invited to deliver a series of afterschool workshops for the primary teachers, sharing aspects of process drama and drama-based pedagogy with them. I was then invited into their classrooms, primarily their History classes, to try some drama with their students. This was another pivotal moment in my journey. These children were comfortable with each other and engaged in a way that was quite different to their secondary peers. The primary teachers enjoyed the experience so much

that they asked the principal if a specialist Drama teacher could be employed to work with the primary students, and the principal agreed.

At this point, I was also leading the state professional teaching association, Drama Queensland and the association was to host the Drama Australia (formerly NADIE, National Association for Drama in Education) National Conference in 2012. A name that had been thrown around as a potential keynote speaker was Professor Robyn Ewing from The University of Sydney. I had read a bit of Robyn's work over the years as I became more interested in primary drama, and she had recently released a powerful monograph (Ewing, 2010a) with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) about the benefit of The Arts in schools. I had also seen a short clip of Robyn on an evening current affairs program on the television where she was talking about the work she was doing with Sydney Theatre Company on a program called *School Drama*. I emailed her, asking if she would consider delivering a keynote for us. She responded immediately and agreed.

A year later, the feeling of change was taking hold of me when a job was advertised with Sydney Theatre Company as the Teacher Professional Learning Specialist, who would manage the *School Drama* program. In addition, the aspect of the job that won me over, was that I would also be a teaching artist on the program, working in a classroom one morning every week delivering the *School Drama* program. I applied, had three rounds of interviews and within five weeks, I had packed up my life in Brisbane and moved to Sydney to take on this new role. Over my six years at the Sydney Theatre Company, I have been promoted to Education Manager, and recently Director of Education and Community Partnerships, overseeing the company's entire Education and Communities program.

### Becoming a researcher ...

After a year at Sydney Theatre Company, I enrolled in a Masters of Education (Research) at The University of Sydney. I wanted to work with a single class and measure what impact the program had on the students' academic (literacy) outcomes. Indeed, my research found that there were shifts in student literacy (inferential comprehension and descriptive language). Unanticipated outcomes which surprised me were what I labelled 'non-academic' outcomes, specifically, student motivation, engagement and empathy (Saunders, 2015). I also conceived that the academic and non-academic outcomes were thought of separately or polarised. The Masters research sparked my curiosity: I wanted to continue to explore these so-called 'academic' and 'non-academic' outcomes enabled by the *School Drama* program and to attempt to capture and measure any shifts in outcomes. I enrolled in a PhD.

## Purpose of Study and Research Question

In this chapter I briefly explain the purpose of this research. Most of the research on the *School Drama* program has focused largely on the outcomes of the teacher professional learning, and less on the student experience. My purpose is to delve more deeply into how drama-based pedagogy could impact student learning.

This research is underpinned by a sociocultural constructivist approach to research within the qualitative paradigm and has been informed by five Vygotskian concepts: Play and Drama (Vygotsky, 1930/2004); the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978), Creativity and Imagination (1930/2004); *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1934/1994) and Dual Affect (Vygotsky, 1933/1966; discussed in detail in Chapter 4). Case study has been employed as the central methodology for this research and a range of data collection methods have been used.

The research questions are mentioned here to frame and introduce the study:

What are the experiences and outcomes of students engaged in the *School Drama* program?  
Do the drama-based pedagogical practices and processes contribute to positive shifts in student outcomes? If so, how?

## Definition of Key Terms

Key terms are defined here to provide context and clarity to the reading of this research. The definitions draw on previous related work including Ewing and Saunders (2016) and Saunders (2015).

### *Aesthetic*

Piazzoli (2018) asserts that “Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy concerned with art, beauty, perception and sensory experience” (p. 54). Dewey and Greene popularised the concept of aesthetic education. Greene recalls “John Dewey once said that the opposite of ‘aesthetic’ is ‘anaesthetic’” (2007, p. 1) and this is a helpful way of conceiving what aesthetic education looks like and feels like. While anaesthetic education can be conceived as the numbing of the senses and emotions, aesthetic education, to use Greene’s words, provides a “wide-awakeness” (1977, 2001) to learning. In this thesis the experiences that occur within the process drama-based workshops are defined as aesthetic.

### *Benchmarking*

Benchmarking refers specifically to the student work sample collected before and after the *School Drama* intervention. Sample benchmarking tasks and criteria (rubrics) aligned to curriculum specific outcomes in the New South Wales (NSW) English syllabus are provided for each of the focus literacy areas as tools to support teachers in measuring student achievement over the term (see example in Appendix J).

### *Co-mentoring*

The co-mentoring professional learning model used in the *School Drama* program was developed by Ewing (2002, 2006) predominantly at Curl Curl North Public School over 17 years. The model involves the teaching artist and the classroom teacher working together to co-plan, co-teach and co-mentor each other throughout the program. It breaks down the traditional hierarchy in mentoring relationships with an expert and apprentice.

### *Drama strategies*

Sometimes referred to as process drama conventions or devices, the strategies structure a learning experience. Examples of these include: Teacher-in-Role, Freeze Frames, Conscience Alley, Hot-Seat, Tableau and Tap-In etc. (see Baldwin, 2012; Baldwin & John, 2012; Ewing & Saunders, 2016; Ewing & Simons, 2016; Miller & Saxton, 2004, 2016; Neelands & Goode, 1990, 2000; O'Toole & Dunn, 2002).

### *English as an additional language and/or dialect (EAL/D)*

In Australia the term 'English as an additional language and/or dialect' (EAL/D) is used to describe students "whose first language is a language or dialect other than English" (Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2019a).

### *English and literacy outcomes in School Drama*

Within the *School Drama* program there are four English/literacy focus areas. During the piloting of the program over its first four years (2009 to 2012), the four areas selected most often by teachers were: confidence in oracy; creative/imaginative writing; descriptive language; and inferential comprehension. These are defined to align with the relevant NSW and Australian curriculum documents.

#### *Confidence in oracy*

The increased development of students' speaking and listening skills, developing confidence in using the voice as a key part of communication (Ewing & Saunders, 2016; Saunders, 2015).

### *Creative/imaginative writing*

Imaginative and creative writing involves students writing fiction in an original or innovative way. Originally in *School Drama* we referred to this area as narrative writing; however, given the new emphasis on imagination in the revised NSW syllabus document (NESA, 2012) the focus was refined to become creative/imaginative writing.

### *Descriptive language*

The aspects of language used to communicate or convey a setting, character, moment or feeling. This area has a particular focus on developing rich vocabulary (Ewing & Saunders, 2016; Saunders, 2015).

### *Inferential comprehension*

Comprehension is the understanding of what has been read and inference refers to the understanding of what is implied but not explicit within the text, understanding that is beyond the literal meaning (ACARA, 2015; Department of Education and Child Development, 2015; Ewing & Saunders, 2016; NESA, 2012, 2018; Saunders, 2015).

### *Embodiment*

Embodiment or embodied learning has been succinctly defined by Lindgren and Johnson-Glenberg (2013) as “the enactment of knowledge and concepts through the activity of our bodies” (p. 445).

### *Literacy*

A more detailed discussion of literacy is included in Chapter 2. A brief definition is included here from *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.

Literacy is the capacity, confidence and disposition to use language in all its forms. Literacy incorporates a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, listening, viewing, reading and writing. [...] In an increasingly technological world, the ability to critically analyse texts is a key component of literacy. (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009, p. 41).



### *Motivation and engagement*

This thesis subscribes to Martin, Collie and Evans' (2016) definition of motivation and engagement:

Motivation refers to one's energy and drive to learn and perform to potential. Engagement is more often referred to as the behaviours that follow from this motivation. Motivation and engagement are central to one's interest in and enjoyment of what one does. (p. 167).

### *National professional standards for teaching*

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL; 2011) lists seven professional teaching standards that all teachers must meet. Two strands are of particular note in relation to this research. The National Professional Teaching Standards acknowledge in Standard One that the classroom teacher will "know their students and how they learn" (AITSL, 2011, p. 10) as well as (through Standard Two) "know the content and how to teach it" (AITSL, 2011, p. 12) of which literacy is specifically named as a key focus area within this standard (AITSL, 2011).

### *Process drama and process-based drama*

Originally referred to as 'Educational Drama' by Heathcote (1984) and Heathcote and Bolton (1995), the name 'process drama' was first coined by Haseman (1991), a disciple of Heathcote. Haseman acknowledged when the article was re-published (Haseman, 2014) that his article was "one of the first uses of the term Process Drama in print but it was, at that moment of time, just sitting there waiting to be adopted" (p.6). O'Neill (1995) further developed the concept of process drama and introduced the concept of a 'pre-text'. O'Neill (1995) explained that:

Process drama is a complex dramatic encounter. Like other theatre events, it evokes an immediate dramatic world bounded in space and time, a world that depends on the consensus of all those present for its existence. Process drama proceeds without a script, its outcome is unpredictable, it lacks a separate audience, and the experience is impossible to replicate. (p. xiii).

O'Neill (1995) identified elements and characteristics of process drama that included: episodic in nature; a fictional dramatic world; an experience without audience where participants make agreement; and void of scripts. As Cremin and Macdonald (2013) discuss, in process drama students:

[...] do not re-enact the known, but working alongside their teacher as a fellow artists [...], take risks and explore the unknown. Process drama challenges children to imaginatively make,

share and respond to each other's ideas, collaboratively co-authoring new narratives together. (Cremin & Macdonald, 2013, p. 2).

I now do not refer to our work as pure process drama, but rather as 'episodic text model with process-based drama' to capture the approach used in the *School Drama* program.

### *Pre-text*

Process drama needs a pre-text, as O'Neill asserts:

Although process drama may lack an obvious textual source, it will never arise in a vacuum. The dramatic world may be activated by a word, a gesture, a location, a story, an idea, an object, or an image, as well as by a character or a play script. (O'Neill, 1995, p. 19).

This pre-text is most often introduced in the early part of the process drama, hence the emphasis on 'pre'. The text is read or introduced and then participants enter the fictional world and the process drama emerges. I described the way that Ewing and others (including Miller & Saxton, 2004, 2016) have worked with picture-books and novels, not as pre-texts or story drama, but rather as 'episodic pre-texts' (Saunders, 2015). However, after further critical reflection, I believe this term does not sufficiently capture the approach, as the text is not introduced 'pre' drama, it is explored in episodes throughout the drama. I slightly refined the concept in 2016: "In this model the literary text is not read to the participants in full during the orientation of the drama, but rather is broken into episodes or sections which are explored sequentially over a series of learning experiences" (Ewing & Saunders, 2016, p. 5). I no longer use the term 'episodic pre-text' as the text is not introduced 'pre' drama. O'Neill (1995) did discuss the idea of 'weaving the text' and told us that:

It is useful to conceive of the text, whether written, improvised, or transcribed, as the "weave" of the event. Instead of regarding it as a linear set of directions, it is possible to perceive the text as a design for action, a kind of net or web woven tightly or loosely and organising the materials of which it is made. It comes into being *during* the dramatic event. (p. 19).

This 'weaving' idea does resonate with the 'episodic text model' as the quality children's literature is woven throughout the unit and understanding of the text becomes richer throughout the process drama-based experiences.

### *School Drama*

*School Drama* refers to the program developed by Sydney Theatre Company and The University of Sydney's School of Education and Social Work, particularly Professor Robyn Ewing AM. *School Drama* is a teacher professional learning program where a teaching artist works with a primary classroom teacher in a co-mentoring model where the teaching artist and class teacher co-plan, co-teach and co-mentor each other over a school term. Central to the program is the focus on quality children's literature (most often a picture-book or short novel) and this is explored using an episodic text model with process-based drama.

### *Story drama*

Booth (1994) introduced the term 'story drama' and described it as "improvised role play stimulated by a story" (Booth, 2005, p. 8). Story drama has connotations of re-enacting sections of the story and places a strong focus on improvisation and shares the conventions, strategies or devices that make up a process drama.

### *Super six comprehension strategies*

The 'Super Six' comprehension strategies are a set of strategies developed by the NSW Department of Education and Training's (NSWDET) Literacy Unit to support teachers. They are based on the work of McLaughlin and Allen (2009) and Hoyt (2009) and inform the teaching of comprehension in NSW schools. The Super Six are:

- **Marking Connections**

Learners make personal connections from the text

- Something in their own life (text to self)
- Another text (text to text)
- Something occurring in the world (text to world)

- **Predicting**

Learners use information from graphics, text and experiences to anticipate what will be read/viewed/heard and to actively adjust comprehension while reading/viewing/listening

- **Questioning**

Learners pose and answer questions that clarify learning and promote deeper understanding of the text. Questions can be generated by the learner, a peer or the teachers

- **Monitoring**  
Learners stop and think about the text and know what to do when meaning is disrupted
  - **Visualising**  
Learners create a mental image from a text read/viewed/heard. Visualising brings the text to life, engages the imagination and uses all of the senses
  - **Summarising**  
Learners identify and accumulate the most important ideas and restate them in their own words.
- (NSWDET, 2010, pp. 5-6).

### *Teaching artist*

Booth (2003) tells us that: “It seems that the term [teaching artist] was officially coined by June Dunbar at the Lincoln Center Institute in the early 1970s” (p.6). Booth (2003) worked with 19 colleagues in an attempt to define the term ‘teaching artist’ and concluded that: “a Teaching Artist is an artist, with the complementary skills and sensibilities of an educator, who engages people in learning experiences *in, through, or about* the arts” (p. 11, my emphasis). He later developed his own definition by describing a teaching artist as: “an artist who chooses to include artfully educating others, beyond teaching the technique of the artform, as an active part of a career” (Booth, 2009, p. 3). In Booth’s (2003) survey of colleagues, April’s definition is worthy of particular note: “A teaching artist is an artist who actively engages learners in consciously developing the aesthetics of their own processes for learning” (April in Booth, 2003, p. 10). Booth (2003) also identified seven ‘areas of wide agreement’ from his survey of colleagues and these areas are: beyond the artform; audience (broad); modelling; pedagogy; profession; focus on process; and the dual nature of the role (adapted from Booth, 2003, pp. 7-9).

Within the *School Drama* program and this thesis, the term ‘teaching artist’ refers to the person employed by Sydney Theatre Company to work in a co-mentoring model (also defined in this section) to deliver the program. Teaching artists come from a range of backgrounds including acting and performing, community and applied theatre, and drama/theatre education. Many have hybrid training backgrounds and hold both extensive experience in the artform and facilitating or teaching through the artform. Some have formal educational qualifications or are undertaking them.

Having introduced the research and the researcher, briefly outlined the question driving this research and defined the key terms used in this thesis, this chapter concludes by providing a brief overview of the forthcoming chapters.

## Overview of Chapters

*Chapter 2 - The Power of The Arts in Learning: A Review of Literature* commences by outlining several key arguments about the importance of The Arts in schools, including links to relevant Australian and international policies and statements. Chapter 2 also provides some arguments about why The Arts, and Drama in particular, are important in a changing world. It analyses existing research in the field, starting with a broad international examination of Education and The Arts before narrowing the focus to explore research in drama and literacy development. Skills, dispositions and capabilities that are central to this research are briefly explored. These include collaboration; imagination and creativity; confidence; empathy, emotion, connection to character; embodiment, cognition and engagement.

*Chapter 3 - The School Drama Story and Research* introduces the *School Drama* program and how it was developed over a four-year pilot (2009 to 2012) and refined to its current form (2013 to 2019). It reviews ten years of literature on the *School Drama* program including evaluations, a meta-analysis, and a range of case studies undertaken.

*Chapter 4 - Art is the Social Within Us: Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Design*, argues why the qualitative paradigm, case study methodology and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural constructivist approach are appropriate for this research. Five Vygotskian concepts that are central to this study are examined and their relationship to drama made explicit. Chapter 4 also explains how data has been collected and analysed with a focus on Richardson's (1997) concept of crystallisation. This chapter briefly introduces the three case study sites and also notes the ethical considerations involved in a study of this nature.

*Chapter 5 – School Drama 2017: A Broad Overview* provides a detailed snapshot of all the *School Drama* data (student and teacher) collected in 2017 thus establishing a broader perspective on the program's impact, including the teacher professional learning model.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 each include a brief explanation of the drama-based workshops in each case study context followed by an in-depth analysis and discussion of each case study.

*Chapter 9 – Making Meaning: Cross Case Analysis, Discussion and Findings*, compares and contrasts the three case studies to identify the resonances across all three alongside their individualities. The student pre-program and post-program survey data are used to examine shifts in student outcomes. The final section of this chapter introduces two models. The first illustrates how *School Drama* develops literacy and the second explains the resonances common to the three case studies. This model maps the inputs and outcomes of the drama-based intervention.

*Chapter 10 – What We Know: Concluding Comments and Looking to the Future*, succinctly summarises the findings, documents the limitations of the current research, and recommends a way forward for further research in this field.

## Chapter 2 - The Power of The Arts in Learning:

### A Review of the Literature

“The arts’ position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important.” (Eisner, 2000, p. 14).

#### Introduction

Chapter One introduced this research project, my lens as the researcher, the context of the research and defined the key terms involved. This chapter reviews and critiques the broad literature relating to the different dimensions of this research starting with a broad analysis of the current context of The Arts in learning, before delving deeply into the key themes of the study. This literature review extensively develops and extends my earlier research in this area (Saunders, 2015).

Unlike my earlier Masters research (Saunders, 2015) where I used the organisers of academic and non-academic outcomes, this literature review and the analysis and synthesis of data I have collected illustrates that I now believe this division of academic and non-academic was a false dichotomy. Rather all ‘outcomes’ represent related knowledge, understanding, skills, dispositions and capabilities developed through quality drama experiences. Each dimension or outcome overlaps and intertwines in a relationship of reciprocity to develop student wellbeing outcomes which in turn enhances learning. This conceptual shift to a more holistic perspective has created some difficulty in dividing the literature review into sections.

The chapter commences with an outline of The Arts and Education and then move into a micro view of specific areas relating to this research. It is divided into sections beginning with setting the scene and providing a broad overview of the current education landscape in Australia including a summary of educational aims and key policy statements. I then explore several large international studies pertaining to The Arts and Education before defining literacy and the powerful relationship between drama and literacy. Several significant Australian and international studies are reviewed before an exploration of the literature focuses on the skills, dispositions and capabilities that are relevant to this research (such as collaboration; imagination and creativity; student confidence; empathy and emotion; and embodiment, cognition and engagement).

## Setting the Scene

I have worked in education for more than a decade. During this time every Australian Education Minister has called for some form of ‘back to basics’ in education, yet research continues to demonstrate that much more than a ‘basic’ education is needed to equip Australian students for life and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Arts are devalued by government and continue to be pushed to the margins in schools (Davis, 2008; Ewing, 2010a; Pascoe et al., 2005; Saunders, 2018). This review of current literature examines why this is highly problematic and how The Arts (the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* includes five distinct subjects: Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts) and Drama specifically, should be central to curriculum and learning. My research aims to play a part in drawing together current thinking around the role that The Arts and drama education in particular, can play in transforming and enhancing the lives and education of children and young people.

Australian education, like education in many other developed countries, has succumbed to the ‘standards movement’ (Marzano & Kendall, 1996; Robinson & Aronica, 2015). Robinson with Aronica (2015) have argued that the problems associated with the ‘standards movement’ have only been increased by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) introducing the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA involves the use of standardised tests in OECD countries every three years. Student results in three areas are measured and compared: reading, maths and science. Robinson with Aronica (2015) reflect:

The political impact of PISA has grown [...] In 2001, the results attracted relatively mild attention in the European press. In 2013, they made headlines round the world and sent tremors through governments everywhere. Ministers of education now compare their respective rankings like bodybuilders flexing their biceps. Like the press, they seem to treat the rankings as an absolute measure of their success. (p. 7).

Disappointingly, only the reading, maths and science scores are most often the focus of politicians and the media. PISA has also produced reports focusing on student wellbeing; however, this domain rarely receives the same level of media and political attention as the academic rankings.

Bamford’s (2006, 2009) vast international research project explored the impact of ‘arts-rich’ programs commissioned by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and found that “the arts appear in the educational policy in almost every country in the world [and] there



is a gulf between the ‘lip service’ given to arts education and the provisions provided within schools” (2009, p. 11). Bamford’s observation reflects the current state of Australian schools. Both the *Australian National Review of School Music Education* (Pascoe et al., 2005) and the *National Review of Visual Education* (Davis, 2008) indicated links between socio-economic advantage and the delivery of quality arts education and resourcing in schools (at least for Music and Visual Arts Education, the more privileged of the five arts subjects in Australia). Sadly, there is no national review of Drama, Dance or Media Arts Education, or Arts Education more broadly in Australia. It is my view, however, that the provision of the three remaining arts subjects in schools (Dance, Drama and Media Arts) would be inferior to that for Music and Visual Arts, particularly in early childhood and primary school contexts.

This is despite a central entitlement enshrined in the national *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA, 2011) that dictates that:

The Australian Curriculum for the Arts will be based on the assumption that all young Australians are entitled to engage with the five Arts subjects and should be given an opportunity to experience the special knowledge and skills base of each. (ACARA, 2011, p. 4).

This provision was elaborated by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority’s (ACARA) statements that “all students will study the five Arts subjects [...] from Foundation [or Kindergarten in some jurisdictions] to the end of primary school” and “From the first year of secondary school [...] students will have the opportunity to experience some Arts subjects in greater depth and to specialise in one or more Arts subjects” (ACARA, 2011, p. 4). However, to date, no national research has been conducted to indicate how the implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* has been undertaken in schools. In addition, the Australian Curriculum fails to acknowledge literature as an art form, even though the literary arts are recognised by 87% of Australians (Australia Council, 2014).

The entitlement to an Arts Education in Australia is also framed by the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA], 2008). In Australia, every ten years, all Education Ministers (state, territory and federal) gather to determine the educational goals and agenda for the next decade. Much to the credit of national professional teaching associations and through the coalition of the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE), as well as advocacy by prominent

Australian artists, The Arts were included in this important bipartisan policy document (Saunders & Stinson, 2016). The *Melbourne Declaration* has two major goals, the first being a broad statement: “Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence” (MCEECDYA, 2008, p. 7), and the second goal:

Goal 2: All young Australians become:

- successful learners
- confident and creative individuals and
- active and informed citizens. (MCEECDYA, 2008, p. 8).

Within each sub-point in goal 2 (above), the *Melbourne Declaration* provides further elaborations. A selection of these that resonate with this study include:

Successful learners ...

- develop their capacity to learn and play an active role in their own learning
- are able to think deeply and logically, and obtain and evaluate evidence in a disciplined way as the result of studying fundamental disciplines
- are creative, innovative and resourceful, and are able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas and disciplines
- are able to plan activities independently, collaborate, work in teams and communicate ideas
- are able to make sense of their world and think about how things have become the way they are
- are motivated to reach their full potential.

Confident and creative individuals ...

- have a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing
- have a sense of optimism about their lives and the future
- are enterprising, show initiative and use their creative abilities
- have personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for others
- have the knowledge, skills, understanding and values to establish and maintain healthy, satisfying lives
- relate well to others and form and maintain healthy relationships

- are well prepared for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members.

Active and informed citizens ...

- act with moral and ethical integrity
- are committed to national values of democracy, equity and justice, and practice in Australia's civic life
- are responsible global and local citizens. (MCEECDYA, 2008, p. 8-9).

Further, the goals are expanded with the statement that eight learning areas will be included in a 'world class curriculum' that includes The Arts (which the document divides into performing arts and visual arts).

Internationally, The Arts, play and creativity are included in The United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989), of which Australia is a signatory. Article 31 particularly deserves attention:

1. State Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. State Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity. (United Nations, 1989, p. 9).

I contend that The Arts are not an optional addition to core curriculum; they are core curriculum and a human right, as outlined by the United Nations. Despite this, the place of The Arts in the curriculum is almost constantly under threat within schools in Australia. Review after review of curriculum, schooling and education (see for example the *Review of the Australian Curriculum*, Donnelly & Wiltshire, 2014; *Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*, Gonski, Arcus, Boston, Gould, Johnson, O'Brien, Perry & Roberts, 2018; and the most recent *NSW Curriculum Review*, Masters, in press) continue to devalue The Arts in schools.

Yet, an expansive body of evidence documents the many benefits The Arts can bring to the lives and education of children and young people. The following section discusses some of these studies.

In Australia, a growing focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) (Education Council, 2018) learning continues to privilege these subjects in schools. The Arts are placed towards the bottom of the subject hierarchy while STEM floats towards the top alongside English and literacy. The Federal Government's 2015 *National Innovation and Science Agenda* strongly pushed for STEM learning in schools, and recent government announcements have included the provision of \$1.1 billion AUD over a four-year period and \$64.6 million AUD for "initiatives to help students embrace the digital age and prepare for the jobs of the future" (Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, 2018, para 3). The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training's (HORSCEET) *Inquiry into Innovation and Creativity* recommended that: "the National Innovation and Science Agenda explicitly recognises the importance of STEAM, creative digital skills, the creative industries and the arts more generally" (HORSCEET, 2017, p. XIX). Yet, there has been no visible change by the Australian Government to include The Arts in STEAM rather than STEM.

I've recently argued (Saunders, 2018), by drawing on the work of Chalmers and Quigley (2017) and Frey and Osbourne (2013) that we are working in an education paradigm "with the false ideas that Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) learning will 'future proof' young people and adequately prepare them for a world that we are struggling to imagine" (Saunders, 2018, p. 42). Chalmers and Quigley (2017) claim that the economy and the world have moved into a seventh revolution of artificial intelligence (AI), Robotics, Automation and Machine Learning (ML) (hereafter referred to as 'AIRAML'). They also argue that this AIRAML revolution is very different from the previous six historical revolutions (from the First Agricultural Revolution through to the Digital Revolution) that have significantly shaped life and work for humans because "while earlier revolutions replaced human effort, this one goes a step further to directly challenge some intrinsic traits that make us human – thinking, problem-solving and decision-making" (Chalmers & Quigley, 2017, p. 3). However, little attention is given to the importance of Arts Education in tackling these challenges.

In contrast, Frey and Osbourne (2013) analysed the susceptibility of much of today's employment being replaced by computerisation in the United State (US). Their investigation revealed that "47 percent of total US employment is in the high-risk category, meaning that associated occupations are potentially automatable over some unspecified number of years, perhaps a decade or two" (Frey & Osbourne, 2013, p. 38). Similar figures have been identified by researchers exploring the Australian employment landscape, noting that "44 percent (5.1 million) of current Australian jobs are at high risk of being affected by computerisation and technology over the next 20 years" (Reading, Thorpe, & Peake, 2015, p. 4). Reading et al. (2015) argue for "business [...] to take a leading role alongside

government and the education sector in order to deliver the STEM outcomes Australia needs to remain a competitive, innovative and prosperous nation” (p.4). They claim that: “there will be a growing need for the broad skills that STEM fosters. Critical thinking and problem solving, analytic capabilities, curiosity and imagination have all been identified as critical ‘survival skills’ in the workplace of the future” (Reading et al., 2015, p. 14). There is no mention of The Arts or STEAM in Reading et al.’s paper, nor how the mentioned skills can be fostered in quality Arts learning. In stark contrast, Frey and Osbourne (2013) identify that ‘creative and social skills’ are evident in jobs that are the least likely to be redundant through computerisation (Frey & Osbourne, 2013). They contend:

Our findings thus imply that as technology races ahead, low-skilled workers will reallocate to tasks that are non-susceptible to computerisation – i.e., tasks requiring creative and social intelligence. For workers to win the race, however, they will have to acquire creative and social skills. (p. 45).

In the United States, the ‘21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Movement’ has been advanced by the National Education Association (NEA). This association formed *Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills* which collaborated with experts in education, business and government to develop a “common vision for education that will prepare our young people for college, work, and life” (NEA, 2013, p. 2). In 2002 NEA released a *Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning* which outlined 18 essential skills. These skills have been revised down to four overarching skills and are now referred to as the ‘4Cs’: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (NEA, 2013). These 4Cs are in addition to students’ strong content knowledge (NEA, 2013). Jefferson and Anderson (2017) have recently slightly altered them, suggesting their 4Cs as: creativity, critical reflection, communication and collaboration although ‘critical reflection’ is included as part of ‘critical thinking’ in the NEA’s version. Many educators argue that Arts processes are central to realising the 4Cs.

Internationally, the *OECD Learning Framework 2030* (OECD, 2018) also aims to create a shared vision for education. The learning framework provides three areas of competency, each with a series of descriptors.

**Knowledge:** Disciplinary, interdisciplinary, epistemic, and procedural knowledge.

**Skills:** Cognitive & meta-cognitive, social and emotional, physical & practical skills.

**Attitudes and Values:** Personal, local, societal and global attitudes and values.

(Adapted from OECD, 2018, p. 4).

The OECD provides a list of skills that “is not exhaustive but constructs are selected that are closely related to the key concepts underpinning the framework” (p. 17). These are:

- Adaptability/ Flexibility/ Adjustment/ Agility
- Compassion
- Conflict resolution
- Creativity/ Creative thinking/ Inventive thinking
- Critical-thinking skills
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Engagement/Communication skills/Collaboration skills
- Equality/Equity
- Global mind-set
- Goal orientation and completion (e.g. grit, persistence)
- Gratitude
- Growth mind-set
- Hope
- Human dignity
- Identity/Spiritual identity
- Integrity
- Justice
- Manual skills for information and communication technology (related to learning strategies)
- Manual skills related to the arts and crafts, music, physical education skills needed for the future
- Meta-learning skills (including learning to learn skills)
- Mindfulness
- Motivation (e.g. to learn, to contribute to society)
- Open mind-set (to others, new ideas, new experiences)
- Perspective-taking and cognitive flexibility
- Pro-activeness
- Problem solving skills

- Purposefulness
- Reflective thinking/Evaluating/Monitoring
- Resilience/Stress resistance
- Respect (for self, others, including cultural diversity)
- Responsibility (including locus of control)
- Risk management
- Self-awareness/Self-regulation/Self-control
- Self-efficacy/Positive self-orientation
- Trust (in self, others, institutions). (OECD, 2018, p. 17).

In the following chapters I argue that many of these constructs, knowledges, values, attitudes and skills are developed through the use of drama as critical, quality pedagogy (Ewing, 2002, 2006) and deeply embedded in the *School Drama* program.

## Education and The Arts

This section reviews the vast literature exploring Education and The Arts, with a particular focus on broad international studies. This review of literature highlights much of the large-scale and longitudinal research into the impact and outcomes of Arts Education. It must be noted, however, that much of this research is dated and more current research is desperately needed.

*Champions of Change: The Impact of The Arts on Learning* is a seminal compendium of seven independent research studies edited by Fiske (1999). This was a unique and significant report and laid a solid foundation for further large-scale research and meta-analysis investigating the impact of The Arts in Education. Overall, Fiske concluded:

- The arts reach students who are not otherwise being reached.
- The arts reach students in ways that they are not otherwise being reached.
- The arts connect students to themselves and each other.
- The arts transform the environment for learning.
- The arts provide learning opportunities for the adults in the lives of young people.
- The arts provide new challenges for those students already considered successful.
- The arts connect learning experiences to the world of real work. (Fiske, 1999, p. IX).

Catterall, Chapleau and Iwanaga (1999) researched the areas of music and theatre arts (drama) and human development over a 10-year period with some 25,000 US students using the NELS:88 (National Educational Longitudinal Survey) data (Catterall et al., 1999). When looking at The Arts broadly, Catterall and his colleagues found that there were “positive academic developments for children [who] engaged in the arts” (Catterall et al., 1999, p. 2). These positive academic shifts became “more pronounced over time” (Catterall et al., 1999, p. 2), signifying that the time allocated for The Arts and continued learning in The Arts is fundamental in realising the full potential of The Arts in Education. The research explored ‘high arts’ (both curriculum-based and extra-curricular activities) and ‘low arts’ engagement at school and compared high socio-economic status (SES) students to low SES students. The researchers looked particularly at music and theatre art (drama) in secondary school students. For those students involved in theatre arts/drama, they found increased self-concepts. Those students who engaged in theatre/drama were more empathetic and tolerant of others than the ‘low arts’ students. Significantly, Catterall et al., (1999) found that:

The pattern in the reading proficiency data is fairly clear. The involved students outscored the non-involved students as of 8<sup>th</sup> grade; both groups gain skill as they proceed through high school; and the difference favouring students involved in theatre grows steadily to where nearly 20 percent more are reading at a high proficiency by grade 12. (p. 14).

A decade later, Catterall (2009) continued his research of the then high school students who by 2009 were aged 20 and 26 years old. His research provided a unique investigation into the long-term impacts of The Arts on these people as they emerged into adulthood. Catterall (2009) found that students from both low and high SES backgrounds who had ‘high arts’ participation at school, were more likely to engage in volunteer work, more likely to be registered to vote and indicated that ‘strong friendships’ were important to them. ‘High arts’ students were also more likely to attend four-year post-secondary school education institutions (such as college or university) and were less likely to be dependent on public assistance than their peers who had ‘low arts’ engagement at school (Catterall, 2009).

Brice Heath with Roach’s (1999) study, *Imaginative Actuality: Learning in the Arts during the Nonschool Hours* compared youth engagement in three non-school-based areas; Athletic (including sporting teams), Community-Service (including environmental and religious activities), and Arts-based (across a range of Arts areas including drama/theatre). Similar to the previous study, the research



took place over a 10-year period with 124 organisations across the three categories mentioned above. For Arts-based engagement, the research findings suggested that:

Effective youth arts organisations build strong pro-civic and pro-social values in young people, enhancing opportunities for youth to reshape the climate of their neighbourhoods through local family entertained, socialization for younger children, public service work, and promotion of the arts in their communities. (p. 33).

Significant differences were found when comparing young people participating in non-school Arts-based activities to the NELS:88 data including that those who engage in the arts outside of school were more likely to 'read for pleasure', were much more likely to participate in youth groups, dedicated time to continuing to learn about a particular artform in classes and were more likely to undertake community services compared with their peers who did not engage in non-school-based arts programs (Brice Heath with Roach, 1999). In addition, they found that young people engaged in the non-school-based arts programs had more positive perceptions of self than their peers who did not engage in arts-based activities (Brice Heath with Roach, 1999). The research also indicated a list of skills developed through The Arts, such as "the ability to collaborate, stick to pursuits, show discipline, be expressive, and sustain challenging team memberships transfers well to the multiple demands of the information-based projects and performances that make American corporations and small-business entrepreneurship" (pp. 33-34).

Next in Fiske's compendium was Burton, Horowitz and Abeles' (1999) research which focused on 2,000 students from Years 4 to 8 with school-based arts programs. They found "significant relationships between rich in-school arts programs and creative, cognitive and personal competencies needed for academic success" (Burton et al., 1999, p. 36). In addition, the research revealed that the high-arts students had substantially higher perceptions of self as learners, including in reading, and they ranked considerably stronger in areas such as expression, risk taking and imagination than the low-arts students (Burton et al., 1999). Importantly, Burton and her colleagues commented that "Many of these same competencies and dispositions extend to other subject domains where they coalesce in equally distinctive forms – mathematical, scientific, linguistic – as pupils organize different kinds of meaning, insight, and understanding" (Burton et al., 1999, p. 45).

An evaluation of The Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE) by Catterall and Waldorf (1999) explored the first six years of CAPE's work partnering teaching artists and arts organisations with

Chicago-based primary, middle and secondary schools in an integrated curriculum approach. The program aimed to connect arts learning to non-arts learning, specifically in reading, social studies, science and maths (Catterall & Waldorf, 1999). The research illustrated that “a very strong case can be made for CAPE program effects in reading and math at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level, and a moderate case can be made for CAPE program effects in reading and math at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level” (Catterall & Waldorf, 1999, p. 54). The research also illuminated “positive changes in school climate resulted because of CAPE” (p. 52) and shifts in teachers’ perception of The Arts changed through the program as “teachers believe that an arts integrated curriculum has learning, attitudinal, and social benefits for children” (Catterall & Waldorf, 1999, p. 52).

Seidel’s (1999) study of two programs delivered by the Massachusetts-based company, Shakespeare & Company, explored the teaching and learning of Shakespeare in schools. Resonating with this thesis is the outcome of increased levels of literacy through the approach employed by Shakespeare & Company. This is perhaps best described by one of the participating students in the study, who commented:

In school we’re just reading over the book: reading it to get to the next chapter, never with feeling in it or gratification. When I walked out of classes reading Shakespeare, I used to be confused as to what it was about. After you walk away from these rehearsals, you can really understand the scenes because of the many techniques used to go over the various interpretations of the text. (Anonymous student in Seidel, 1999, p. 82).

Seidel (1999) also observed that:

Many participants also noted that their experience as active readers of complex texts in these programs was relevant well beyond the specific work they did with Shakespeare’s plays – in entering math and physics texts as well as approaching other literature. (p. 82).

Another large meta-analysis of 62 individual research studies compiled by Deasy (2002) explored the relationship between The Arts (Dance, Drama, Media, Music and Visual Arts and Multi-Arts) and the cognitive capacities developed through learning in The Arts. Catterall’s (2002) final essay in this collection of studies draws important threads together both for Drama and The Arts more broadly. For Drama, he found that the cognitive capacities and motivations to learn included:

- Story comprehension (oral and written)
- Character identification
- Character motivation
- Increased peer interaction
- Writing proficiency and prolixity
- Conflict resolution skills
- Concentrated thought
- Understanding social relationships
- Ability to understand complex issues and emotions
- Engagement
- Skills with subsequently read, unrelated texts
- Problem-solving dispositions/strategies
- General self-concept. (Catterall, 2002, p. 164).

The list for Multi-Arts is even more extensive:

Integrated arts/academics	Reading, verbal and mathematics skills Creative thinking Achievement motivation Cognitive engagement Instructional practice in the school Professional culture of the school School climate Community engagement and identity
Intensive arts experiences	Self-confidence Risk-taking Paying attention Persevering Empathy for others Self-initiating Task persistence Ownership of learning Collaboration skills

Arts-rich school environments	Leadership
	Reduced dropout rates
	Educational aspirations
	Higher-order thinking skills
	Creativity
	Engagement/attendance
	Range of personal and social developments
	Higher-order thinking skills
	(Catterall, 2002, p. 164).

Ewing (2010a) suggests there are four overall outcomes from Deasy's (2002) compendium of studies. Arts-rich programs foster "positive achievements in reading, language and mathematics development, evidence of increased higher order thinking skills and capacities, evidence of increased motivation to learn, [and] improvement in effective social behaviours" (p. 13). Several of the individual studies referred to in Deasy's (2002) publication are explored in the subsequent sections of this literature review.

More recently, Bamford's (2006, 2009) international research found that the impact of The Arts in education were profound. She concluded that, Arts-rich education:

- improves skills and competencies within the arts
- is beneficial for the children involved but may not be more broadly applied to general education
- contributed to improved student educational attainment and academic achievement
- significantly enhanced literacy and performance in language learning
- led to improvement in student, parent and community perceptions of schools
- improved students' attitude to school by increasing co-operation, respect, responsibility, tolerance, and appreciation
- has a positive impact on the development of social and cultural understandings
- plays a major role in community and cultural development
- can lead to social, economic, and educational improvements within schools and communities

- can help build positive perceptions of the individual, the school and community contexts through performances and public presentations
- nurtures through imagination and creativity
- can instigate more creative and interesting approaches to teaching
- benefits health and well-being
- involves learning process that are structurally different from other disciplines within the curriculum
- develops ICT literacies and technical skills
- should use industry standard software and hardware
- needs to be given greater access to technology, especially in the economic developing countries.

(Adapted from Bamford, 2009).

At the same time, Bamford (2006) also noted that “more longitudinal research is needed on the impact of arts education” (p. 115) and that teachers needed more professional learning in The Arts.

Catterall, Dumais and Hampden-Thompson (2012) also acknowledge the need for more longitudinal research and attempted to address this, in part, through their report, *The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth*. They collected data from four databases, three of them administered by the US Department of Education. The data collected spanned 20 years from 1988 to 2008 (Catterall et al., 2012). The correlations between arts engagement at school or as extracurricular activities with young people who were ‘at-risk’ (defined as socially and economically disadvantaged) and higher academic achievement were significant. They found that students engaged in arts-rich activities from low-socioeconomic backgrounds were: more likely to finish high school; had stronger Grade Point Averages across high school; were more likely to want to attend college or university; and were more likely to complete a bachelor degree (Catterall et al., 2012). Relating to civic outcomes, the ‘high arts’ low-socioeconomic students were: more likely to read newspapers on a weekly basis; more likely to participate in “student government and school service clubs at four times the rate of low-SES students who lacked those experiences” (Catterall et al., 2012, p. 18); they were more likely to volunteer regularly; and later on in life, were more likely to vote (Catterall et al., 2012). The researchers note, however, that their report does:

... not permit an analysis of causal links that might exist between deep arts involvement and academic and civic outcomes. All of the findings attest only to statistical correlations, although the literature does point to various theories that may account for causal links between arts involvement and academic and social development. (Catterall et al., 2012, p. 24).

A large European research project from the Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education (DICE) Consortium (2010) explored the impact of drama and theatre education on several aspects of learning across twelve European countries. The five Lisbon Key Competences are: Communication in the mother tongue; Learning to learn; Interpersonal, intercultural and special competencies/civic competence; Entrepreneurship; and Cultural expression (DICE, 2010). DICE added an additional competence which they called “All this and more,” the universal competence of what it is to be human” (DICE, 2010, p. 24). The DICE Consortium (2010) research employed qualitative and quantitative methodology and collected data over a two year period. One hundred and eleven different programs were included in the study with 4,475 individual students between the ages of 13 and 16 (DICE, 2010). The researchers “collected data from the students, their teachers, theatre and drama programme leaders, independent observers, external assessors and key theatre and drama experts as well” (DICE, 2010, p. 24). Findings from the research are below:

Compared with peers who had not been participating in any educational theatre and drama programmes, those who had participated in educational theatre and drama:

- Are assessed more highly by their teachers in all aspects
- Feel more confident in reading and understanding tasks
- Feel more confident in communication
- Are more likely to feel that they are creative
- Like going to school more
- Enjoy school activities more
- Are better at problem solving
- Are better at coping with stress
- Are significantly more tolerant towards both minorities and foreigners
- Are more active citizens
- Show more interest in voting at any level
- Have more interest in participating in public issues
- Are more empathetic: they have concern for others

- Are more able to change their perspective
- Are more innovative and entrepreneurial
- Show more dedication towards their future and have more plans
- Are much more willing to participate in any area of arts and culture, and not just performing arts, but also writing, making music, films, handicrafts, and attending all sorts of arts and cultural activities
- Spend more time in school, more time reading, doing housework, playing, talking, spending time with family members and taking care of younger brothers and sisters. In contrast, they spend less time with watching TV or playing computer games
- Do more for their families, are more likely to have a part-time job and spend more time being creative either alone or in a group. They go more frequently to the theatre, exhibitions and museums, and the cinema, and go hiking and biking more often
- Are more likely to be a central character in the class
- Have a better sense of humour
- Feel better at home. (DICE, 2010, pp. 24-25).

Researchers at Project Zero from the Harvard Graduate School of Education looked intensively, not at the outcomes of arts-based experiences, but at what makes quality arts-based experiences in education in the US. Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland and Palmer's (2009) research, *Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education*, found that: "The drive for quality is personal, passionate, and persistent" (p. III); "Quality arts education serves multiple purposes simultaneously" (p. III); and "Quality reveals itself 'in the room' through four different lenses: learning, pedagogy, community dynamics and environment" (p. IV). They argue that "foundational decisions matter" (p. IV), particularly the decisions about "who teaches the arts [...] where the arts are taught [...] what is taught and how [it is taught, and] how arts learning is assessed" (p. IV). "Decisions and decision makers at all levels affect quality" (p. IV). And finally, that "reflection and dialogue is important at all levels" (Seidel et al., 2009, p. IV).

For 25 years, The Royal Conservatory in Canada's *Learning Through The Arts* (LTTA) initiative has been delivering and researching the impact of their programs. They identify four key findings from their research on the impact of their programs on students, which were:

- A national study (1999-2002) of the LTTA program in Canada found that Grade 6 students who had participated in the program for three years scored 11 percentile points higher on tests of computation and estimation than did their peers in control groups.
- In all LTTA studies, teachers, principals, and students have indicated that students are highly engaged in their learning in LTTA classes.
- In a 2010 LTTA study involving over 1,200 students, teachers reported that the positive effects of LTTA programming on students' engagement in learning, capacities to work collaboratively, openness to different points of view, and happiness to be at school were being transferred to students' school life and learning in general.
- A Pan-Canadian LTTA (2007-2009) found that Aboriginal learners feel a special resonance with arts-based learning. (The Royal Conservatory, 2019).

In Australia, Ewing (2010a) was commissioned by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to undertake a review of research and programs in Arts Education in Australia and internationally. The review, *The Arts and Australian Education: Realising Potential*, explored a vast range of studies and evaluations across The Arts, including a reference to the early stage of the *School Drama* program. Ewing, like Bamford before her, noted a gap between policy and practice. She asserted that:

... surveys of arts education in Europe [...] found that all national policy statements on education routinely emphasised the importance of the cultural dimension and the need to promote the artistic and creative abilities of young people. Yet in actuality the main disciplines taught were often limited to visual arts and music and were usually afforded less time and status than the sciences. (Ewing, 2010a, p. 11).

When reviewing the research on the impact of The Arts in education, Ewing synthesised the data to conclude that:

... those students whose learning is embedded in the Arts [...] achieve better grades and overall test scores, are less likely to leave school early, rarely report boredom and have more positive self concepts than those students who are deprived of arts experiences. In addition,



interestingly, they are more likely to become involved in community services. (Ewing, 2010a, p. 13).

Ewing (2010a) also discussed the important need to close the gap between policy and practice by stating, “If we are to realise the transformative potential of the Arts in education, we must move beyond rhetoric in policy about its importance, to action” (p. 56). Ewing’s (2010a) research was particularly powerful in collating much of the Australian and international research about The Arts in Education; however, this research is now almost a decade old and more current research on a similar scale is greatly needed.

Following Ewing’s (2010a) monograph, Vaughan, Harris and Caldwell (2011) and Caldwell and Vaughan (2012) explored the transformative power of The Arts in education focusing on programs delivered by an Australian organisation, The Song Room (TSR). TSR is a not-for-profit company who deliver artist-in-residence programs (initially in Music but over time across The Arts) in disadvantaged schools. Their programs run for one hour per week over a minimum of six months. Vaughan et al.’s (2011) research focused on Year 5 and 6 students (similar age ranges of students who participated in this study) in NSW. The research explored three areas:

[a.] attendance, dropout, detention and suspension [b.] Results on school tests and national tests in National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) [and c.] Social-Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) as measured by the SEWB Survey designed and validated by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). (Vaughan et al., 2011, p. 13).

The study compared three groups of schools; those who were involved in TSR programs ‘longer-term,’ those who were involved in TSR programs ‘initially,’ and ‘non-participating’ schools. Over an 18 month timeline, the research found “that schools participating in TSR programs outperformed those not participating on most indicators. Moreover, longer-term TSR schools tend[ed] to outperform initial TRS schools” (p. 15). Of particular note were “the results of Year 5 NAPLAN 2010 [which] revealed that a lower percentage of students in the longer-term TSR program were below the national minimum in Reading, Writing, Spelling and Grammar and Punctuation in comparison to students who had not participated in TSR” (p. 17). The Song Room’s research design is, however, problematic: it is very difficult within education research to compare schools given there is no such thing as a ‘like school’ (Blackmore, 2015). There are many variables that cannot be isolated. The use of control

groups can also be problematic ethically, as students may be deprived of important intervention experiences.

Vaughan et al., (2011) also discussed the need for more research in this area and that “before and after studies [would] be helpful, but were not possible in the current investigation” (p. 32). They also suggested that “Deeper case studies that look more closely at particular pedagogies employed by the TA [teaching artist] will be helpful” (p. 32). Although the *School Drama* and The Song Room’s programs are significantly different (*School Drama* having a strong focus on teacher professional learning and student English/literacy development), my research does aim to provide three in-depth case studies that do explore the particular pedagogical choices made by the teaching artist and capture before and after data in the identified English/literacy area.

Also in Australia, Martin, Mansour, Anderson, Gibson, Liem and Sudmalis’s (2013) longitudinal study combined qualitative and quantitative methods when collecting data across 15 schools working with 643 primary and secondary school students over three years (Martin et al., 2013). The study “identified significant school-, home-, and community-based arts participation factors predicting academic (e.g., motivation and engagement) and non-academic (e.g., self-esteem, life satisfaction) outcomes” (Martin et al., 2013, p. 721). Martin and his colleagues also found “these effects held after controlling for major socio demographic and prior achievement factors and prior variance in the outcomes under focus” (Martin et al., 2013, p. 721). This is a particularly significant study in Australia as there are so few mixed method longitudinal pieces of research in Arts Education.

Not all research has shed such a positive light on the impact of Arts Education. Hattie (2009) investigated impacts on student achievement through a meta-analysis of 800 quantitative studies, excluding the rich body of qualitative research in Arts Education. He found “Drama/Arts programs” had a medium impact on learning (affect size of  $d = 0.35$ ; p. 143), while also acknowledging that “programs with more hands-on activities had stronger affects than those relying on more passive methods” (Hattie, 2009, p. 44). However, Hattie used only three dated meta-analyses from Kardash and Wright (1987; exploring ‘creative dramatics’ and having and finding  $d = 0.67$ ); Conard (1992; exploring the relationship between drama and reading and finding  $d = 0.48$ ) and Podlozny (2000; focusing on drama and reading and finding  $d = 0.31$ ). In his analysis on the impact of drama-based work, the effect size for drama is  $d = 0.48$  (according to my calculations) and this would make drama-based experiences in the medium to high range of effect on the scale Hattie uses and places drama in the ‘zone of desired effects’.

Disappointingly, the reader of Hattie's (2009) work must do the calculations themselves in order to find the effect size for drama. Hattie's (2009) study is very limited when it comes to arts-based research: He included 10 studies on 'Drama/Arts programs,' one study on Dance, five studies on Music and no studies about Media Arts or Visual Arts and ten studies on creativity. Of the five Music related studies, the average effect is  $d = 0.34$ , which places Music in the medium zone according to Hattie's scale. In contrast, when exploring the impact of phonics (only one aspect of English/literacy) he analysed 14 studies and five when examining the impact of calculators. Indeed, he needed to undertake more research into the impact of The Arts, particularly Drama in claiming his study to be so influential.

A more significant meta-analysis by Winner and Cooper (2000) exploring the impact of The Arts concluded:

... that we have as yet no evidence that studying the arts has a *causal* effect on academic achievement. We cannot draw any inferences about transfer from the correlational studies that we have reviewed and that are so often cited in the press, since correlational studies do not prove causation. (p. 65, emphasis added).

Winner and Cooper (2000) called for more experimental studies in order to prove causation between The Arts and academic achievement; however, this kind of study is problematic in education given there are so many variables that cannot be excluded. Winner and Cooper did comment that their five meta-analyses did "converge to demonstrate that a positive relationship between studying the arts and academic achievement does exist" (2000, p. 58). However, Winner, Goldstein and Vincent-Lancrin (2013) later found that:

An extensive body of correlational data in the United States reveals that students who participate in a large number of arts courses (these studies do not specify type of arts courses and are likely to be a mixture of kinds of arts courses) have higher educational attainment levels (as measured by grades in school and scores on verbal and mathematical standardised tests) than do those who take fewer or no arts courses, and one study showed that this relationship exists for students at both the high and low ends of the socio-economic spectrum. (Winner et al., 2013, p. 6).

However, they also state that “These correlational findings should not be taken as showing that the arts courses cause the higher educational attainment. Plausible non-causal explanation cannot be ruled out” (p. 6). Yet, the research reported that within theatre and drama education, “strong evidence shows that theatre education in the form of enacting stories in the classroom (classroom drama) strengthens verbal skills” (Winner et al., 2013, p. 7). Clearly further research is needed in this area.

In the same research for the OECD’s Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, Winner and her colleagues (Winner et al., 2013) highlighted a particularly interesting case study that resonates with elements of *School Drama*. Winner et al., (2013) detailed an example of arts-based pedagogies being used across the curriculum at Singapore’s School of the Arts that was established in 2008 by the Ministry for Information, Communication and the Arts. “This independent high school offers a 6-year education programme in and through the arts [...] Students study their selected art forms for more than 10 hours per week but also learn regular academic subjects” (Winner et al., 2013, p. 25). It is the way that these ‘regular academic subjects’ are taught that is of particular note. At Singapore’s School of the Arts, students are learning through the Arts in their non-arts subjects. “For example, students learn about physics principles through sculpture; chemistry principles through glazing and pottery; and mathematical principles through music. Moreover, practising artists work with students in the school setting so that experimentation, expression and discovery are emphasised [...]” (Winner et al., 2013, p.25). The results reported in the research are staggering. “In 2013, the first cohort of students of the School of the Arts all passed the International Baccalaureate diploma examination, and almost 44% students obtained a score of 40 or above (which places them in the top 5% students taking the examination)” (Winner et al., 2013, p. 25). There are two aspects of the School of the Arts example that strongly relate to the *School Drama* program. The first is the use of learning *through* an artform in a ‘regular academic subject’ like English. The second is the way in which the teaching artists employed on the *School Drama* program emphasise the sharing of their artistry within the classroom with both the students and the classroom teachers.

Recently, Thomson and Hall (2018, 2019), from University of Nottingham, worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company and Tate in the United Kingdom on a large longitudinal study that identified common qualities of arts professional learning programs. The five common elements they identified were:

1. The experience is immersive
2. Teachers work with highly skilled professionals whose disciplinary norms and identities are different from their own
3. The professionalism of both teachers and artists is recognised and respected
4. There is an investment in building sustained relationships
5. The importance of place is recognised. (Adapted from Thomson, 2019).

While the fifth point is not particularly relevant to *School Drama* (as the program is largely delivered in the teachers' own classrooms) the other four principles strongly reflect the *School Drama* approach. The *School Drama* program is immersive for both the classroom teacher, their students and indeed the teaching artist too; the classroom teachers work with skilled process drama-based practitioners who can share their skills and knowledge; the professional knowledge that both the teacher and teaching artist bring to the co-mentoring relationship is respected and acknowledged and is central to the success of the program; and the program aims for sustainability by providing the teacher with experience and expertise to continue to use the drama-based pedagogy long after the teaching artist has concluded the intervention.

### Drama and Literacy

The literature concerning Drama (particularly drama-based pedagogy) and its relationship to literacy is extensive and space constraints mean that only a snapshot can be included here. Booth (2005) suggested that Caldwell Cooks' *The Play Way* (1917) was the first record of the use of drama-based practices to teach literacy; however and more recently, O'Toole (2010) noted that English educator, Harriet Finlay-Johnson's *The dramatic method of teaching* (1907) documented her work using drama as a pedagogical method with a particular focus on the teaching of History (O'Toole, 2010). As Flynn (1997) pointed out, a growing list of Drama academics advocate for drama-based pedagogy to be employed across the curriculum to meet non-drama curriculum outcomes. This is perhaps, as Cremin (2014) notes, because: "the key features of creative literacy practice are evident in improvisational drama: it fosters play, collaborative engagement and reflection, is often based on a powerful text and harnesses children's curiosity and agency" (Cremin, 2014, p. 25).

Defining literacy, or what it means to be literate, can be very difficult as it has continued to change throughout history. "Literacy is not a single global skill that once mastered will be there for life" (Ewing & Saunders, 2016, p. 18). As Kempe (2000) notes: "literacy involves a lot more than simply ascribing

sound to marks on a page” (p. 23). Ewing and I (2016) have suggested: “At one time you were considered literate if you were able to sign your name; at another, only if you could read Latin, or at still another, if you could read the Bible” (p. 14). Kempe (2001) argues that “to be literate involves considering the context in which words exist and interpreting them into coherent meanings, that is meanings which make sense in the situation” (p. 14). The “controversies about the most effective ways to help children’s literacy development have raged for the last century” (Ewing & Saunders, 2016, p. 19) and continue today with the increasing prominence of synthetic phonics in Australian schools (Ewing, 2018). Despite the fact that “research has shown that employing a repertoire of strategies and approaches shaped to meet the learning needs and strategies of individual children is the most effective approach to the teaching of reading” (Ewing & Saunders, 2016, p. 19), we continue to see a disproportionate focus on developing phonics skills.

Three definitions of literacy are included here. The first is from the national body, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) who developed a national curriculum where literacy is included as General Capability to be included across all learning areas.

Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyse and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas and opinions, interact with others and participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school. (ACARA, 2019b).

The second definition is from the state education authority, NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) who define literacy as:

A synthesis of language, thinking and contextual practices through which meaning is shaped. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and involves interactions in a range of modes and through a variety of media. (NESA, 2012, p. 207).

Finally, the definition which resonates most with me as an educator is from *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, developed by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). This definition was included in Chapter 1.

Literacy is the capacity, confidence and disposition to use language in all its forms. Literacy incorporates a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance,

storytelling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, listening, viewing, reading and writing. [...] In an increasingly technological world, the ability to critically analyse texts is a key component of literacy. (DEEWR, 2009, p. 41).

The DEEWR (2009) statement on literacy includes the traditional four pillars of literacy; listening, speaking/talking, reading and writing, but also includes The Arts. This definition explicitly recognises that each of The Arts are forms of meaning-making, literacies in their own right. Each are modes of language and communication.

It is important to note the difference between arts literacies and using the arts for traditional literacy learning. The latter is the focus of *School Drama* and this research. As Kempe (2000), Livermore (1998, 2003, 2019), Nicholson (1998), Pascoe (2002, 2003, 2019), Stinson (2015, 2018), and others have argued, the Arts develop arts literacies within each of The Arts subjects. “Literacies in the arts involve the ability to communicate and interpret meaning in the arts disciplines” (Pascoe, 2002, p. 64). However, The Arts, particularly Drama (both as a discipline and a pedagogy) can also be used to develop more conventional elements of literacy, such as inferential comprehension, prediction, verbal communication/oracy, creative/imaginative writing, non-verbal communication, to name a few.

Process Drama (Haseman, 1991; O’Neill, 1995), Educational Drama (Heathcote, 1984; Heathcote & Bolton, 1995), drama-rich pedagogies (Ewing, 2019), classroom drama (Grainer & Cremin, 2001), or creative drama (McCaslin, 1996) as a teaching method (as it is commonly referred to in the US) has a long history of being used as a pedagogical approach to improve English and literacy. Wagner (1976) introduced the use of drama ‘as a learning medium’ or pedagogy by describing the work of pioneering drama educator, Dorothy Heathcote to teachers who were unable to see her workshops in person. Wagner (1976) also captured Heathcote’s approach to using drama to work with literature and develop language where Heathcote used her technique in “help[ing] a class realise that a text is much more than words” (p. 195). She also noted that Heathcote encouraged students to write from the drama experience; however, “Heathcote never asks a class to write anything that is meaningless, that has no purpose, that is simply a test that the teacher can use in judging the children” (p. 200). Heathcote’s work is reflected within the *School Drama* approach as the program uses many of the drama-based strategies either developed or popularised by her. Heathcote’s work was, in essence, the first recorded form of process-based drama, before the term had been developed, as there was no performance outcome with students. Rather her work was about exploring a story and making meaning *through* drama-based processes.

As mentioned earlier, O'Neill (1995) introduced the notion of a 'pre-text', as something that stimulates and commences the dramatic world of the process drama. She suggested that the pre-text could be "a word, a gesture, a location, a story, an idea, an object, or an image, as well as [...] a character or a play script" (p. 19). O'Neill also used 'episodes' as a structural tool when organising a process drama; however, her use of 'episodes' is different from what I have referred to as the 'episodic text model' (discussed in Chapter 1) as a way of capturing the approaches used by Ewing, Baldwin, Miller and Saxton and others and central to the *School Drama* program. Traditional process drama often uses a pre-text in its entirety as the starting point. For example, the use of a story or play is often read in its entirety during the first phase of the learning experience. The process drama then leaps off following that story or text into the unknown. However, when using picture-books or novels in the way that Baldwin, Ewing, Miller and Saxton and others do, it is not 'story drama' as Booth (2005) called it, or a re-enactment of the story. Rather, I argue this can lead to a superficial comprehension activities rather than developing critical literacy skills (Lankshear, 1994). Booth (2005) defined story drama as "improvised role play stimulated by a story" (p. 8) and although he used many of the same drama strategies as the *School Drama* approach, we find the term 'story drama' problematic. Other colleagues have claimed that process drama can only exist if it contains particular drama strategies, such as Teacher-in-Role. Thus, I define the work that *School Drama* does as 'process-based drama' as it is not a 'pure' process drama, nor is it story drama. It is something different. It employs the use of a text as a kind of pre-text, but explores that text in quite a different way to O'Neill's (1995) approach. In *School Drama*, often the text is not introduced at all during the first workshop. Rather, other texts are often used to start building the context and the world of the drama, and students are encouraged to predict what the drama and story might be about.

Several significant studies are worthy of note regarding drama and literacy. Firstly, the 1987 meta-analysis by Kardash and Wright deserves investigation due to its inclusion in Hattie's (2009) analysis. Kardash and Wright (1987) investigated the benefits of 'creative drama' in elementary (or primary school students) in Kindergarten to Year 7. However, the "meta-analysis was restricted to journal articles and dissertations produced between 1965 and 1984" (Kardash & Wright, 1987). Even more limiting are the journals they reviewed: the two journals are from the US and neither specifically focuses on education, the *Children's Theatre Review* and *Theatre Journal*. Kardash and Wright found 29 journal articles and 28 dissertations that related to their topic; however, of the 57 studies, only two were used in their meta-analysis. Despite this limited meta-analysis and description of the actual drama work that occurred in the studies, Kardash and Wright found that the "meta-analysis



demonstrates that creative drama activities have a moderate, positive effect on elementary school children's achievement in a variety of domains" (p. 17).

A more recent meta-analysis from Lee, Patwall, Cawthon and Steingut (2014) investigated the effect of drama-based pedagogy on primary and secondary school students. They analysed data from 47 studies with research conducted between 1985 and 2012 (Lee et al., 2014). The meta-analysis concluded that drama-based pedagogy "has a positive effect on achievement and a variety of related psychological and social outcomes" (p. 36). The researchers note that "these positive effects were not evident under all sets of statistical assumptions, effect sizes types, sampling, or circumstances" (p. 36). Lee et al., acknowledge the limits of their study by summing that many of the studies they analysed "used a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent control group design, which provides a weak basis for drawing causal conclusions" (p. 36). Generally, academic achievement was a strong positive outcome of studies when comparing students who engaged in drama-based pedagogical experiences over those students who did not. They note that "the average student who received DBP [drama-based pedagogy] as part of the curriculum would score better than 67% to 70% than the students who did not receive DBP as part of curriculum" (p. 36). Importantly, Lee et al., (2014) found that students who take part in drama-based pedagogical experiences have 'more positive attitudes towards academics'.

[...] the meaningful use of DBP in the classroom not only raises student academic achievement but also improves students' attitudes towards that academic discipline. In other words, students do learn and enjoy learning when teachers use DBP to teach the curriculum. (Lee et al., 2014, p. 37).

Based on their research, Lee and her colleagues suggested further research, particularly into non-academic impacts of drama-based interventions, chiefly motivation (of the 47 studies used in this meta-analysis, only six included motivation; Lee et al., 2014). The researchers also found that lower achieving primary school students had the most significant shifts in academic scores through drama-based pedagogy. In contrast, those students in upper primary or middle school were more likely to have stronger shifts in '21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and motivation' (Lee et al., 2014). The length of the intervention was also a factor in the strength of the outcomes and Lee et al. (2014) found that programs spanning from 12 weeks to 12 months had a stronger effect.

The experience of the facilitator (or leader) was also a factor in interventions with positive effects, according to study (Lee et al., 2014). They explored the differences in impact when the drama-based intervention was led by the classroom teacher or a teaching artist. Their research suggested:

[...] that when classroom teachers use DBP to teach curriculum, they have a positive effect on the students, no matter the outcomes. Alternatively, interventions led by teaching artists may have a positive effect on students when the outcomes address attitudes and self-perception outcomes. Ideally, teachers understand the content and their students, but teaching artists may be able to pique student interest and motivation toward the curriculum. When coupled with the classroom teacher's expertise in content, the teaching artist may help improve the attitude and motivation of students. This also suggests that teaching artists may need more extensive training in pedagogical context knowledge and content knowledge to be more effective in the classroom. (Lee et al., 2014, pp. 38-39).

This extensive meta-analysis also noted that interventions in the field of English and Language Arts and science curriculum areas had larger impacts than interventions in other learning areas (Lee et al., 2014).

Another study Hattie included in his 2009 research (Podlozny, 2000) analysed the use of drama specifically on the development of verbal language skills. Drama was found to be an "effective tool for increasing achievement in story understanding [comprehension], reading achievement, reading readiness, and writing" and "not only helps children to master the texts they enact, but also often helps them to master new material not enacted" (Podlozny, 2000, p. 268).

Research has also reported on the impacts of a drama specialist working with non-drama teachers to use drama-based pedagogical approaches across the curriculum with a Grade 5 Reading/Language Arts class (Flynn, 1997). Flynn, like me, was the drama specialist and researcher in her study. Flynn worked with her generalist colleague for eight months on an almost daily basis involving 19 'creative drama sessions' (or units of work) and using 'creative drama strategies' (or process drama strategies, conventions and devices). The study involved collaboration between the drama teacher and non-drama teacher in planning and delivery of lessons. The study explored the experience from the participating teachers' perspective, and not from the students' academic and non-academic outcomes. While Flynn found "creative drama to be a viable, valuable and motivational instructional tool in reading/language arts instruction" (1997, p. 67), the researcher also called for more research

in the area of collaboration for professional learning between drama specialists and generalist teachers.

An evaluation of drama programs for primary school students in the United Kingdom (UK) delivered by The Royal National Theatre in London (known as The National Theatre) over a three-year period found positive shifts in student self-esteem and confidence, ability to collaborate, increased enjoyment of school, shifts in creativity, positive increases in aspects of literacy, particularly in speaking and listening (Turner, Mayall, Dickinson, Clark, Hood, Samuels, & Wiggins, 2004). The report also acknowledges that “drama promotes and supports children’s agency and engagement in educational processes” (p. 57).

In Australia, Hunter (2005) analysed the findings from a range of arts-based projects and found they enhanced the literacy ability of students. Even though “improvements in literacy were apparent, no statistically significant results were found” (p. 28). She noted that the perceptions from teachers and students about literacy shifts were:

- Students perceived that their ability in reading, spelling and story writing had improved.
- Students attempted more items on literacy tests than prior to the period of arts participation.
- In one study, students who had participated in an arts program showed an average improvement in reading age of 1 year, 8 months over a 8-month period. (Hunter, 2005, p. 28).

The above research has largely focused on specific studies exploring Drama and literacy development. The following section of this literature review explores the skills, dispositions and capabilities that intersect with different elements of this research.

### Skills, Dispositions and Capabilities

In my previous research (Saunders, 2015) I labelled skills, dispositions and capabilities as ‘non-academic’ outcomes. However, as mentioned previously, I now believe this is a false dichotomy as these skills, dispositions and capabilities can impact on the academic outcomes. Further, these skills, dispositions and capabilities are sometimes referred to as ‘soft skills’ and this is a problematic label,

as, I believe, it devalues their importance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning. The term 'soft skills' is not new: according to Armstrong Melser (2019) the term "was first introduced in 1972 in an army training manual [from the US] that focused on the competencies needed for leadership and training, especially effective communication and working well with others" (2019, p. viii). Many of these 'soft skills' are deeply embedded in The Arts, as evidenced in this chapter.

A brief review of literature on the following areas that intersect with this research is provided in the next section. While collaboration; imagination and creativity; confidence; empathy and emotion; embodiment, cognition and engagement are discussed separately, they need to be understood holistically, particularly as much of the research overlaps.

### Collaboration

Drama is a highly collaborative discipline and pedagogy as participants work together to make meaning (in process-based work) or develop performance (in discipline-based work). Norman (1999) defines drama as:

... an enactive learning process which derives from our unique ability to imagine, empathise and project. It is a **collaborative medium**, accessible to all, the purpose of which is to explore past, present and future experiences, our own and others, in an attempt to make sense of the world in which we live. (Norman, 1999, p. 9, my emphasis).

The enacted and collaborative elements to learning in drama that Norman privileges resonate with his more recent work about drama and the brain (Norman, 2002). Enactment and collaboration are central elements to process-based drama as a pedagogical approach. The importance of collaboration is increasingly recognised. It is, for example, included as one of the 4Cs (NEA, 2013) discussed earlier in this chapter; in Harris's (2016) conceptualisation of a creative ecology within schools, placing value on learning collaboratively; and, Robinson with Aronica (2015) place high value on collaboration and discuss it as fundamental in their 8Cs list of competencies for creative schools. Robinson explains that collaboration is "the ability to work **constructively** with others" (p. 138, my emphasis). They continue: "in many schools, young people largely work on their own; they learn *in* groups but not *as* groups. Enabling young people to work together can enhance self-esteem, stimulate curiosity, heighten creativity, raise achievement, and foster positive social behaviour" (Robinson with Aronica, 2015, p. 138, original emphasis).

As Hunter (2005) noted in her Australian analysis of arts programs, as a result of arts participation, students and teachers observed improved collaboration and group work, and teachers observed that this had a flow on impact in the playground. She also found that through arts engagement, students developed more positive relationships, and increased empathy (Hunter, 2005).

### Imagination and creativity

Chapter 4 explores Vygotsky's work on drama, imagination and creativity, so this section of the literature review concentrates on other literature linking the arts, particularly drama to imagination.

Greene (1995) wrote extensively about imagination and the 'social imagination,' describing imagination as central to education because, "imagination is the capacity to look at things as if they could be otherwise" (Greene, 2007, pp. 1-2). Greene suggested that developing or appreciating alternative perspectives might enable us to break with fixed and one-dimensional points of view.

This imagining of 'otherwise' is fundamental to drama-based pedagogy with using quality children's literature in the *School Drama* program. Students engage in the drama, consider different perspectives and imagine the 'otherwise' as they infer to create multiple meanings. Drawing on Greene's work, Jefferson and Anderson (2017) link imagination in creative learning to a notion of 'playing with possibility' in learning. They argue that while imagination is predominately an individual capacity, it feeds collaborative creative processes so necessary for learning" (Jefferson & Anderson, 2017, p. 81).

Conceiving that imagination is initially an individual property that feeds a collective or creative imagination, resonates with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development and Moll and Whitmore (1993) and Ewing's (2015) re-conceptualisation (discussed in detail in Chapter 4) of a collective Zone of Proximal Development.

Creativity, like many other capabilities explored in this research, is difficult to define (Sawyer, 2012). While Robinson with Aronica (2015) provide a simple definition by stating, "Creativity is the process of having original ideas that have value" (p. 118) and "Imagination is the root of creativity. [...] Creativity is putting your imagination to work. It is applied imagination" (p. 118). Sawyer (2012) suggests a more complex definition. After reviewing the literature on creativity, he suggests two types of definitions; individualist definitions and sociocultural definitions: "Individualist definition: creativity is a new mental combination that is expressed in the world" (p. 7); and "Sociocultural definition: creativity is the generation of a product that is judged to be novel and also to be appropriate, useful,

or valuable by a suitably knowledgeable social group” (p. 8). The idea of value in the sociocultural definition is, of course, highly subjective.

de Bruin and Harris (2017) note that “the development of creativity has been identified as one of the three most significant generic skills across all subject curricula, spanning from pre-primary education to lifelong learning” (p. 26). The ‘creative ecologies’ framework developed by Harris (2016), while being specific to Australasian secondary schools, has broader value across education and certainly resonates with practices in primary classrooms. Harris’s analysis of Australian and international theory about creativity found 10 skills and capacities associated with creativity. They are (in order): “curiosity; collaboration; problem-posing/problem solving; divergent thinking; motivation, confidence and persistence; innovation; discipline/mastery; risk-taking/mistake-making; synthesising; and critical thinking” (Harris, 2016, p. 44). This conceptualisation of the skills and capacities associated with creativity resonates with my opening statement for this chapter about the false dichotomy between so-called academic and non-academic areas of learning. Many of Harris’s skills and capacities are closely associated with a range of other areas within this literature review, not solely creativity, again reflecting Harris’s notion of the ecology.

de Bruin and Harris (2017) also suggest that cross-disciplinary or trans-disciplinary learning is central to schools becoming creative ecologies. In their research, de Bruin and Harris found that:

Cross-disciplinary learning was articulated by teachers as an aspect of curriculum organisation that could have a positive effect on student understandings of creativity. The breaking down of discipline silos and exploring creative ways of conducting and presenting on projects allowed focus on cross-disciplinary problem solving and investigatory divergent thinking that reflected on other domains and possibility thinking. (de Bruin & Harris, 2017, pp. 33-34).

They articulate that “investing in cross-disciplinary measures that enhance creativity do so by increasing student engagement and achievement because students access ideas in multiple ways that hold attention, engagement, and inquisitiveness” (de Bruin & Harris, 2017, p. 35). This reflects one of the primary intentions of the *School Drama* program, as it aims to empower teachers first to use drama-based pedagogy in their English and literacy classrooms and later, across the primary curriculum.

Bryce, Mendelovits, Beavis, McQueen and Adams (2004) evaluated a range of arts programs in Australian schools. Of particular note is their evaluation of *Arts@Direk*, a program at Direk Schools in South Australia. The program had some similarities to *School Drama* as it was also a professional learning program for the classroom teacher, focusing on drama. *Arts@Direk* “was part of a collaborative teacher research programme: Mentoring to enhance professional understanding of literacy learning through the expressive arts” (Bryce et al., 2004, p. 11). The research investigated the outcomes of ‘arts rich’ and ‘non-arts rich’ programs for Year 4 students at the school. Scores were measured for literacy, numeracy, writing, and four key competencies: problem solving, planning and organising, communication, and working with others (Bryce et al., 2004). The study found that of the two groups, the arts-rich students outperformed their non-arts rich peers across the three academic areas and four key competencies (mentioned above). The research also listed nine “enabling skills and attitudes acquired by students that appeared to be related to the experience of drama mentoring in the school” (Bryce et al., 2004, p. 21). These were:

- reflecting on learning
- becoming used to a disciplined approach to learning
- learning how to plan
- developing confidence in themselves as learners including those who were disadvantaged or disabled
- learning how to work together
- learning perseverance
- acknowledging skills or ‘intelligences’ in addition to the traditional logico/deductive, verbal/ numeric, and
- viewing the classroom as a safe climate to take risks.

(Adapted from Bryce et al., 2004, p. 21).

Further, the evaluation notes that the program was “integrated into the school curriculum, rather than being an ‘add on’ – this may have assisted the ready transfer of features and processes to other subject areas” (Bryce et al., 2004, p. 21). This project has many resonances with *School Drama*, with the key differences of time as the *Arts@Direk* program was a 12-month program and *School Drama* is a 10 session program (1 pre-program workshop, 2 pre-program planning meetings and 7 in-class workshops). However, as the researchers note, the research design was problematic given that the research was conducted retrospectively.

## Confidence

Being a 'confident citizen' is one of the core aims of the *Melbourne Declaration's* (MCEECDYA, 2008) goals for Australian students, and confidence and self-confidence are often cited as outcomes of arts and drama-based interventions in schools (Bryce et al., 2004; Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012; Hunter, 2005). Hunter's analysis of several Australian projects found that "arts participation enhances confidence in learning" (2005, p. 27). Indeed, within the previous research on the *School Drama* program, aside from literacy development, student confidence or self-confidence have been cited as outcomes in much of the existing research and evaluations.

Drawing on the work of Blackwell, Trzeniewski and Dweck (2007) and Yeager and Walton's (2011) research, Jefferson and Anderson (2017) argue that the "nurturing of confidence in a collaborative learning environment is essential for a learner to believe they are able to learn" (p. 59). A balance of challenge and affirmation is central to developing student confidence: "Supporting, guiding and affirming learning through scaffolding aids confidence in the learner but over-scaffolding stifles improvisation and creativity in thinking and learning" (Jefferson & Anderson, 2017, p. 59).

In *School Drama*, students (and sometimes their teachers) are often challenged by the new approach to learning. They are sometimes pushed outside their comfort zones as they take risks, work collaboratively and present their ideas and understandings in embodied experiences. However, through the drama-based strategies and devices employed in *School Drama*, students and teachers report marked shifts in student confidence, perhaps because of the balance between challenge and affirmation built into the program.

## Empathy, emotion, connection and perspective taking

Although a central notion to drama is the idea of 'stepping into the shoes of someone else' and hence developing empathy, surprisingly little has been written about the relationship between drama and empathy. However, the connection between drama and emotion, connection and taking on the perspective of another is more frequently made.

Catterall (2015) explored empathy in his research and summarised that a well-established standpoint (drawing on the work of Gruhn, Rebucal, Diehl, Lumle & Labouvie-Vief, 2008) is that:

Empathy as a human trait is considered in the psychological literature to be developmental. A typical view is that very young children do not exhibit empathy, that empathic behaviour



emerges in children, and empathy grows more or less steadily until early adulthood. (Catterall, 2015, p. 124).

In arts education, particularly drama education, empathy is linked to imagination. Greene (2007) who argued for the importance of an aesthetic education through The Arts and the centrality of imagination stated:

To be enabled to activate the imagination is to discover not only possibility, but to find the gaps, the empty spaces that require filling as we move from the is to the might be, to the should be. **To release the imagination too is to release the power of empathy, to become more present to those around, perhaps to care.** (Greene, 2007, p. 4, my emphasis).

Greene's (2007) comments reflect the unique power of drama to provide an opportunity for students who take on role to consider the world from another perspective. This connects with research in the area of empathy, particularly that of Wiseman (1996), a nursing scholar, who undertook a concept analysis of empathy. Exploring the existing literature, she suggested that empathy had four attributes:

1. Seeing the world as others see it
2. Non-judgmental
3. Understanding another's feelings
4. Communicating the understanding. (Wiseman, 1996, p. 1165).

Wiseman's four attributes of empathy resonate with the use of drama-based pedagogical approaches with quality children's literature to improve literacy skills, particularly inference and comprehension. In drama, students take on the role of another and attempt to 'stand in their shoes' or 'see the world as others see it'. The second attribute, 'non-judgment,' connected with acting teacher Stanislavski's method approach which requires an actor not to judge the character they are inhabiting (Stanislavski, 1936/1989). Wiseman also argues that this attribute is not essential if all others are present. She acknowledged that "one could understand but still be judgmental" (p. 1165). To understand another's feelings is an aspect of comprehension in literacy. To 'communicate with understanding' is evident in drama work when a student takes on a role or character, does not necessarily judge them, attempts to see the world as that character sees it, has an understanding of the character's feelings and attitudes, and then communicates those feelings through the drama-based strategy, device or convention being employed by the facilitator. O'Mara's (2004) case study demonstrated that through

process drama strategies for literacy teaching, students can develop the ability to consider alternative perspectives. Consistent with O'Mara's research, Cremin (2014) notes that "drama provides meaningful contexts for writing, both individual and collaborative. In-role work can lead to emotive writing from different stances and perspectives, and can make a real contribution to children's development as writers" (p. 34).

Strongly echoing Wiseman's (1996) findings are Catterall's (2015) four components of empathy and empathic behaviour. He theorised that:

One is *comprehending* the feelings of another individual – a fundamentally cognitive process. The second is the act of *feeling* the emotions of another, and a third is the capacity to distinguish self and others' feelings, and a fourth is inclination to act on behalf of the other's situation. (Catterall, 2015, p. 123, original emphasis).

Catterall's (2009, 2015) research also examined whether a relationship existed between high arts engagement "during adolescence and the cultivation of human empathy by early adulthood" (2015, p. 116). The research tracking young people for 12 years found that indeed there was such a relationship (Catterall, 2015). He noted that "where students [were] deeply engaged in the visual and performing arts during middle and high school [they] reported significantly more pre-social or empathetic behaviour as young adults than comparison students who had few or no experience with the arts" (Catterall, 2015, p. 117). Catterall (2015) and Roberts and Strayer (1996) argue that empathy was a predictor to pro-social behaviour in young children (Roberts & Strayer, 1996) and in adolescence (Catterall, 2015).

Recently researchers from Griffith University have continued to investigate the role of empathy and emotion in drama. Dunn and Stinson (2012) reflect that "although not currently a popular topic for exploration within the drama education literature, close connections between drama and emotion were the subject of careful consideration by three pioneers of the field: Dorothy Heathcote, Gavin Bolton and Richard Courtney" (p. 206). Bolton (1978, 1984, 1986, 2010) investigated emotion in drama education and introduced a fundamental concept pertaining to drama and emotion, that of protection.

The notion of 'protection' is not necessarily concerned with protecting participants *from* emotion, for unless there is some kind of emotional engagement nothing can be learned, but rather to protect them *into* emotion. (Bolton, 2010, p. 87, original emphasis).

Further, Bolton proposed three modes of which to 'protect students into emotion' which were: performance mode, indirect handling of the topic, and projection mode (Bolton, 2010).

Dunn and Stinson (2012) investigated the impact of emotion in process drama on primary children's oral and written language. The intervention occurred daily over one week. Although Dunn and Stinson call for more research in this area, they do note that "what is significant about these emotions [concern, disappointment, worry, relief, eagerness], however, is not that they existed, but the impact they had on the children's thinking, speaking and writing" (p. 216). Dunn, Bundy and Stinson (2015) have continued to research the concept of emotional connection in drama with a particular focus on how emotion is linked to connection and commitment within the process drama experience (Dunn, Bundy, & Stinson, 2015). They developed a framework examining the relationship between connection and emotion in process drama experiences for participants.

Miller and Saxton (2016), however, argue that empathy by itself is not enough. They draw on the work of Goleman (2006), who believed that compassion was part of the empathetic process, and Woodruff (2008), who advocates that action must take place, otherwise "without action, what would be the use of caring?" (Woodruff, 2008, p. 158 in Miller & Saxton, 2016, p. 7).

Elements of Duffy's (2012) summative definition of empathy and also Vygotsky's notion of Dual Affect (1933/1966) (see Chapter 4), are also acknowledged by Pfeifer and Dapretto (2011) who argue that:

... Probably the least controversial position to take is that empathy involves both affective and cognitive aspects. Affective component(s) may include some kind of sharing feeling or emotional resonance, which may or may not be conscious. Importantly, this affective response might result in, result from, or be concurrent with cognitive component(s) of empathy, including explicit reasoning about another individual's emotional state as well as maintaining the distinction between oneself and others. (Pfeifer & Dapretto, 2011, pp. 185-186).

Debates about the ability to teach and learn empathy has been vast; however, Deitch Feshbach and Feshbach (2011) assert that “although the ontogenetic pattern of empathy development is unresolved, it is now generally accepted that empathy can be learned and therefore that empathy can be taught and trained” (p. 89).

In the following chapters, I explore how the use of process-based drama with quality children’s literature can impact on empathy, perspective taking, and connection to character through drama-based strategies. I also investigate whether there is a connection between these processes and increased comprehension in terms of understanding character.

### Embodiment, cognition and engagement

Much of the research about the body and the brain regarding drama has focused on cognitive literary research suggesting that engaging in literature (particularly quality literature) has a positive impact on cognition (Phillips, 2015). Berns, Blaine, Prietula and Pye (2013) have explored the effects of engaging in literature (specifically a novel) and found that there were “measurable changes in resting-state connectivity of the brain” (Berns et al., 2013, p. 590) and found short-term and some long-term impacts. Norman (2002) suggests that:

One of the most important elements of brain based learning concerns the role of emotion and feeling. It is very clear that feeling is not peripheral, to be ignored or suppressed as has been the tradition of cognition based education. [...] We cannot learn what we do not feel to be true, relevant and personal. (Norman, 2002, p. 34).

Drama and neuroscience researcher, Duffy (2012) argues that “embodiment is one of several cognitive domains rife with research potential for theatre artists and neurosciences alike” (p. 121). Despite this, and perhaps because the neuroscience research is fairly new, only a small pool of papers explore the relationship between drama and neuroscience. This research has been articulated largely by Miller and Saxton (2011), Baldwin (2004, 2012), Duffy (2012) and Norman (1999, 2002) from a drama perspective. Research and understanding of how the human brain works and the implications for education are constantly developing.

Gazzaniga’s (2008) compendium of neuroscientific research studies illustrated “findings that allow for a deeper understanding of how to define and evaluate the possible causal relationships between arts education and the ability of the brain to learn in other cognitive domains” (p. v). Significantly, the research indicated “an interest in performing art leads to a high state of motivation that produces the

sustained attention necessary to improve performance and the training of attention that leads to improvement in other domains of cognition” (Gazzaniga, 2008, p. v).

In defining embodiment, there are many and varied perspectives. Duffy (2012), drawing on Strack, Martin and Strepper (1988) and Berkowitz and Troccoli’s (1990) work, asserts that “having a primed embodied response to a stimulus will influence our interpretation of that stimulus” (p. 121). He has identified two broad categories that most definitions adhere to: “(1) embodiment is how our central nervous system translates our interactions with our environment into our perception of it, and (2) embodiment relates to how we physically interact with our environment and how that interaction prepares us for action” (pp. 122-123). He concludes that “at its core, however, is the recognition that our brains are not the sole locus of all things cognitive” (2012, p. 123).

Miller and Saxton (2011) and Baldwin (2004, 2012) introduced the concept of ‘mirror neurons’ to drama education, explaining the work of Italian neuroscientist, Giacomo Rizzolatti. The relationship between mirror neurons and drama is strong through the imagined and embodied processes associated with process-based drama. Baldwin summarises Rizzolatti’s work discovering the concept of mirror neurons with monkeys in a lab:

Some of the same motor command neurons, which he refers to as ‘mirror neurons’, are fired when a monkey watches an action as when the monkey actually carries out the action. In a sense, the monkeys are rehearsing the action in the mind, getting ready to carry out the action, without actually carrying it out. (Baldwin, 2012, p. 33).

As Pfeifer and Dapretto (2011) contend, mirror neurons are also linked to empathy, which they define as “a shared emotional state” (p. 191). This ‘shared state’ connects to the idea of mirror neurons, as an individual mirrors and rehearses the feelings of another, as if it were them. A simple way of explaining this is by considering watching a play or film and recalling a moment when one was moved. We are moved often because we imagine what it would be like to be that other person, to stand in their shoes and go through what they are going through. This is a ‘shared emotional state’ possible in a dramatic space, either by participating in a process-based drama experience, performing as a character or watching a drama experience unfold onstage or onscreen.

I argue that embodiment in drama education is, or should be, strongly associated with the aesthetic. I concur with Nicholson (1999), that the term aesthetic can be difficult to understand.

Perhaps what has come to be described as the power of the aesthetic is most readily recognised by its opposite – to live, metaphorically, anaesthetically would be to lack all consciousness, sensation, emotions, thoughts and movement. By contrast the aesthetic is about feeling fully alive, not just existing, following familiar routines and patterns of existence – but a particular kind of knowing and feeling which allows us to be both fully ‘present’ in the moment and also conscious of its past and future significance. (Nicholson, 1999, p. 81).

I define the aesthetic as using the brain, the body, the senses and the emotions working together to construct meaning. This, I believe, is the essence of drama pedagogy.

Much has been written about embodied cognition (Adams, 2010; Anderson, 2007; Clark, 1997; Gibbs, 2005; Sharpiro, 2011, 2014; to name a few). Recently, Jefferson and Anderson (2017) articulate well accepted conceptualisation of the embodied learning or embodied cognition in drama education explaining that:

Learning through embodiment can improve student imagination through play, movement and breathing exercises, role-playing characters from stories and history, painting a portrait, measuring and calculating space, or undertaking a science experiment. The premise of putting learning in the body is that human cognition is acutely connected to kinaesthetic bodily experiences (Gibbs, 2005; Sharpiro, 2014). Cognition is linked to processes that are internal and mental, physical and bodily. (Jefferson & Anderson, 2017, p. 111).

Embodied learning or cognition, strongly connected to the aesthetic, plays a role in what Greene (2007) calls a ‘wide-awakeness’ which may be linked to shifts in student motivation and engagement in school.

Fleming, Gibson and Anderson (2016); Mansour (2013); and Martin, Mansour, Anderson, Gibson, Liem and Sudmalis (2013), shared findings about the impacts of arts-based learning on motivation and engagement. Fleming et al., (2016), Mansour (2013) and Martin et al., (2013) all drew on the same data collected through an Australian Research Council (ARC) project on arts participation. Martin’s (2004, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010) work has centred around motivation and engagement being academic factors, that students become motivated and then more engaged in school through The Arts and then perform better academically (Martin et al., 2013). To define engagement, Martin, Collie and

Evans (2016) explored a range of theories drawn together by Bohnert, Fredricks and Randell's (2010) framework that suggests engagement has three domains: cognitive, behavioural, and affective. He ties motivation and engagement together by stating that:

Motivation refers to one's energy and drive to learn and perform to potential. Engagement is often referred to as the behaviours that follow this motivation. Motivation and engagement are central to one's interest in and enjoyment of what one does. (Martin, Collie & Evans, 2016, p. 167).

The simplest version of Martin's Motivation and Engagement Wheel (Martin, 2007, 2009b, 2010) has four areas, each with individual elements:

Positive Motivation: learning focus, valuing school, self-belief

Positive Engagement: Planning, study management, persistence

Negative Engagement: Disengagement, self-sabotage

Negative Motivation: Anxiety, failure avoidance, uncertain control. (Adapted from Martin, 2019).

This brief overview of Martin's conceptualisation of motivation and engagement is useful in considering the individual elements within such broad terms.

Morgan and Saxton (1987) analysed and extended Heathcote's work on student engagement. They developed a taxonomy of personal engagement which falls within the meaning frame of drama. Morgan and Saxton argue that "drama operates in two frames: the expressive frame (the outer manifestation) and the meaning frame (the inner understanding)" (p. 21). As Morgan and Saxton note, Heathcote attested that:

I must first attract their attention. If I have their attention, I can gain their involvement. Then I have a chance for their investment and from that their concern. If I have their concern, I have hope for obsession. (Heathcote in Morgan & Saxton, 1987, p. 22).

Morgan and Saxton (1987) outline six levels of student engagement in their taxonomy. They helpfully include a brief summation of the different levels of taxonomy as:

- Interest: we have used this term rather than ‘attending’ because developmental psychologists consider that interest is an emotion in its own right and one of the earliest to appear.
- Engaging: being involved in the task.
- Committing: the development of a sense of responsibility towards the task.
- Internalizing: the recognition of the relationship of the task to the self, revealed as a ‘change of understanding’.
- Interpreting: the need to communicate that understanding.
- Evaluating: the willingness to put that understanding to the test. (Morgan & Saxton, 1987, p. 22).

Learning in process-based drama is largely an embodied experience. As the above research has pointed out, embodiment is linked to students’ cognition and also linked to students’ engagement and to some degree, their motivation to continue to learn and do well. Embodiment, cognition and engagement intertwine in process drama-based learning as students move in and out of role, consider texts, characters and situations from different perspectives, and become deeply engaged in their learning.

In the following chapters I make this intertwined and interconnected concept of embodiment, cognition and engagement even more explicit as I believe these are essential elements for deep and authentic learning.

## Conclusion

Chapter 2 has reviewed the literature that informs this research. It examines, albeit briefly, the research impacts of quality Arts processes and experience for students; drama and its relationship to literacy; and the skills, dispositions and capacities developed through drama including collaboration, imagination and creativity, confidence, empathy and emotion, and embodied cognition and engagement.

The following chapter shares the story of the *School Drama* program from initial inception and pilot in 2009 to its current reach in 2019. Chapter 3 also details all previous research investigating and interrogating the *School Drama* program over the past ten years.



## Chapter 3 - The *School Drama* Story and Research

“Drama, more than any other form of creation, is closely and directly linked to play, which is the root of all creativity in children. Thus, drama is the most syncretic mode of creation, that is, it contains elements of the most diverse forms of creativity.” (Vygotsky, 1930/2004, p. 71).

### Introduction

Chapter Two reviewed the literature associated with this research particularly focusing on the role of The Arts and particularly drama in learning. Chapter Three explains the *School Drama* story, how the program came about in the context of the Sydney Theatre Company (STC), and then outlines its growth from 2009 to 2019. It then reviews the substantial literature and research investigating different aspects and outcomes of the program. In addition, this chapter aims to provide important context about how such programs are developed and incubated, piloted, evaluated, refined and taken to scale.

### STC Education

Sydney Theatre Company’s Education department (previously known as STC Education or STC Ed and now known as STC Education and Communities) has been a part of the company since its inception in 1978. The original Memorandum of Association of Sydney Theatre Company Limited listed Powers and Objectives which were later incorporated into subsequent Constitutions of STC. The relevant objectives of STC include:

- c) to establish and conduct schools’ lectures, courses, seminars and other forms of education in drama and other arts of the theatre;
- d) to teach, train, and instruct persons and promote education and research in drama and other arts of the theatre;
- e) to award scholarships, bursaries and financial assistance to persons interested in drama and arts of the theatre. (Sydney Theatre Company, 2001, p. 2).

The first Artistic Director of Sydney Theatre Company, Richard Wherrett initiated the *Schoolsdays* (now ‘Schools Days’) program in 1981 as one of three new initiatives aiming to build stronger connections with the community (STC, 1982) marking the first chapter of STC Ed. Wherrett reflected that the *Schoolsdays* programme were:

designed to be a lively and exciting addition to the study of literature and drama, and to be an introduction to the enjoyment of live theatre for years 10, 11 and 12. The students arrive at the theatre by 10:30 a.m. for the introductory talk by the director or leading actors and a demonstration of the set and costume designs, lighting and other technical aspects of the production. After a lunch break, the students see the entire production which is then followed by a discussion with the actors. (Wherrett, 1982, p. 4).

While, the Schools Days program remains a central element of the existing STC Ed program, over the past three decades the Education program at STC has had distinctive chapters reflecting the priorities and philosophical approaches from both the Education Teams and the Artistic Directors. Each Artistic Director has brought their own experience and views to the Education program. A list of STC's Artistic Directors (including the first Artistic Advisor and Administrator) is below.

1979	John Clark (Artistic Advisor)
1978 – 1979	Elisabeth Butcher (Administrator)
1979 – 1990	Richard Wherrett
1990 – 1999	Wayne Harrison
1999 – 2007	Robyn Nevin
2009 – 2012	Andrew Upton and Cate Blanchett
2013 – 2015	Andrew Upton
2016	Jonathan Church
2016 – present	Kip Williams

The chapters of the STC Ed story are not always distinctive and sometimes one chapter bleeds into the next. STC's education offerings grew quickly during the 1980s with the introduction of Youth Series (an evening program for under 23 year olds), School Tour Program, Work Experience Program, Training Attachments, Theatre Arts Course and the development of Teachers' Notes.

In 1986 Paul Weingott was seconded from the NSW Department of Education to the role of Education Officer for a 12 month period to "develop and co-ordinate a variety of strategies that should provide the community of schools in N.S.W. with access to the facilities and expertise of the personnel of the Company" (Weingott, 1987, p. 1). This statement indicates how serious both STC and the NSW Department of Education were about the company's investment in education. Due to the bicentennial year in 1988, however, the NSW Department of Education was unable to sustain the secondment.

This secondment marks the second chapter and an increase in programs including Summer School (a summer vacation course), Subscriber Briefings Plus (subscriber briefings which included career advisers, drama and English teachers and students), STC Open Days, Young Playwrights Developmental Workshops and Readings. Also during this time the Young People's Theatre Season was established, which saw "at least three productions per year to be mounted specifically for school age children, both primary and secondary" (Weingott, 1987, p. 2).

In his final Artistic Director's Report in 1989, Wherrett reflected that there were two 'vital' areas where he believed he had succeeded in his time leading the company. One was the "major role in contributing to the development of contemporary Australian dramatic literature" (Wherrett, 1989, p 5). He continued:

The second area is more elusive, even peripheral, but as I say also certainly vital. In the attempt to develop wider audience appreciation AND greater artistic involvement we initiated and developed a whole range of programmes and projects that go largely unsung and somewhat unappreciated, except by those they touch. Some of these are talked about at length elsewhere in this report and I list them, only here: our subscriber briefings, our Schoolsdays programme, our EXSTCE newspaper, our HSC programme, our Masterclasses, our Wharf tours, our signed performances for the aurally impaired, our performances for the visually impaired, our secondments and work experience services, our play commissions and workshops and readings, our Qantas Fellowships, our affiliated directors scheme.

(Wherrett, 1989, pp. 5-6).

Wherrett's vision is often used by the company as the guide to artistic programming, but his reflections also indicate that he saw the education offerings by the company as 'vital'.

During Wayne Harrison's (1990-1999) and Robyn Nevin's (1999-2007) artistic directorships, education programs continued to grow and become more targeted, marking the third chapter of STC Ed's life. STC became a leading force in arts education during this time, largely because of the extraordinary leadership within the department from Education Officers and Education Managers such as Annabel Scholes (currently Commercial Program Manager at Canberra Theatre Centre), Marion Potts (former Artistic Director of Malthouse Theatre and current Director of Theatre with the Australia Council for The Arts), Bridgette Van Leuven (currently Head of Children, Families & Creative learning at Sydney Opera House), and Katherine Hoepper (current Executive Director at La Boite Theatre).

### *The School Drama story begins*

The fourth chapter in STC Ed's history starts in 2006 when Helen Hristofski joined the company as Education Manager. Hristofski, who has qualifications in Education and Arts Management, originally worked as a primary teacher before following a trajectory in Arts Management. She worked with Performing Lines, Bell Shakespeare and then came to the Sydney Theatre Company to head up the Education team. Hristofski is now the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Executive Producer of Barking Gecko Theatre Company.

During the early phase of Hristofski's tenure at Sydney Theatre Company, a landmark research project focused on young people's engagement with theatre. The project, TheatreSpace, combined teams of researchers from The University of Sydney, The University of Melbourne and Griffith University through an Australian Research Council Linkage grant to work with theatre companies or venues in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. There were thirteen participating companies (Sydney Theatre Company; Sydney Opera House; Bell Shakespeare, Arts New South Wales; The Australia Council; The Arts Centre, Melbourne; Malthouse Theatre; Melbourne Theatre Company; Arena Theatre Company; Arts Victoria; Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Brisbane Powerhouse; and Queensland Theatre Company (O'Toole, Adams, Anderson, Burton, & Ewing, 2014). During this collaboration, one of The University of Sydney's Chief Investigators on the TheatreSpace Project, Professor Robyn Ewing and Hristofski worked closely together on the Sydney Theatre Company case studies. They found common ground easily as both had started their careers as early childhood and primary teachers.

Early into the TheatreSpace project, Hristofski and Ewing started discussing the possibility of another collaboration. At the same time, newly appointed Co-Artistic Directors, actor Cate Blanchett and playwright Andrew Upton were keen to make Education (and environmental sustainability) key priorities at the company during their leadership reign. They were "desperate to find a way to bring theatre alive for young audiences" (Blanchett & Upton in Ewing & Saunders, 2016, p. vii). Ewing had developed a way of working with process-based drama strategies and devices combined with quality children's literature to enhance students' understanding of English and literacy. She would work alongside primary teachers over a term, a semester or a year in what she called a 'co-mentoring model' (Ewing, 2002), where Ewing and the classroom teacher both shared their expertise with each other and mentored each other while co-teaching/team-teaching the class. Ewing worked alongside primary teachers at Curl Curl North Public School over 17 years (Ewing, 2002, 2006).

Hristofski arranged for Blanchett and Upton to meet with Ewing. Blanchett and Upton were keen to employ more artists in meaningful and sustainable ways and having primary aged children at the time, they were interested in developing a program for the primary years of schooling, which is often neglected by theatre companies. Blanchett reflected in an interview on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's (ABC) 7.30 program that:

Becoming parents made us revisit our own sense of our own primary school education ... and we were very influenced by the theatre and education programs. We have two [children] in primary school, and you realise how different children are and the way they don't always learn in a conventional way. And it's often a left-of-field approach that will open up the important questions that are going to develop that child's personality and their love of learning. (Blanchett in Johnson, 2011).

Around the same time, Australia had elected the Australian Labor Party, led by Kevin Rudd, to form government. Early into his prime ministership, Rudd announced the *Australia 2020 Summit* and "he invited 100 Australians in 10 strands to help shape a long-term strategy for the nation's future, to tackle the long-term challenges confronting Australians by thinking in new ways" (Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, 2008). Of the 10 strands, one was dedicated to The Arts, creativity and culture and titled *Towards a Creative Australia*. This strand was co-chaired by Blanchett, Professor Julianne Schultz (Griffith University) and Peter Garrett (Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts 2007 - 2010). Ewing, who was Acting Dean of the Faculty of Education and Social Work at The University of Sydney at the time, was a delegate in the 'Towards a Creative Australia' strand. The final strand report illustrates the priority areas of investment, and included in-service teacher education in creativity and The Arts and artist-in-residence programs in schools (Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, 2008).

Blanchett, Upton, Hristofski and Ewing continued to meet and consulted with primary teachers and principals. They developed a model where a teaching artist (from an acting background) would work as Ewing had done, using process drama-based strategies with quality children's literature in a co-mentoring model. The artist would mentor the teacher and the teacher would mentor the artist. This would be a more sustainable model: investing in teacher professional learning to improve students' English and literacy outcomes. It was hoped the teachers would continue to use what they had learnt long after the teaching artist had left the classroom. The partnership between the Faculty of Education and Social Work at The University of Sydney and Sydney Theatre Company (STC) was formalised and

an initial pilot was scheduled for 2009. A group of primary principals and teachers were invited to STC to introduce the proposed model. At this point, there was one big problem - funding. STC Education did not have the budget to subsidise the program. The company felt that the program should be subsidised during the pilot phase (which lasted four years) while the model was developed, tested, researched and refined. Paying for the teaching artists was (and still is) the most substantial expense of the program. STC's Director of Private Support (2008 to present), Danielle Heidbrink was responsible for finding funding for the program. She recalled:

We can give most of the credit to Ian Darling who was Chairman of STC at the time. Cate [Blanchett] and Andrew [Upton] discussed the project with him and he immediately became a huge force in advocating for the program at a board level and within the philanthropic community, both because he believed strongly in education but also because, as Chair, he was backing his Artistic Directors and their vision for the company. (Heidbrink, personal communication, April 3, 2018).

From Darling's initial donation, four other individuals and foundations came on board to support the program during its first few years; Ian Darling AO and Min Darling, The Caledonia Foundation, The Johnson Family Foundation, Catriona and Simon Mordant AM and The Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation. Without this philanthropic leadership, *School Drama* would never have become a reality. Heidbrink continued, "it was a breakthrough moment for *School Drama* but also for STC's approach to engaging with major patrons from the ground up" (personal communication, April 3, 2018).

### The pilot phase 2009 - 2012

Two teaching artists were appointed to deliver the six-workshop program across five inner city disadvantaged schools (including Gungahlin Public School<sup>1</sup>). During the 2009 pilot, teachers decided on their own literacy foci and designed their own pre- and post-program benchmarking tasks. No standard rubric or tasks were used. Teachers would look at the pre- and post-tasks and rubrics, and make some comments about any shifts they had noticed.

An evaluation report (Campbell, Ewing & Gibson, 2010) of the initial pilot year explored two areas:

---

<sup>1</sup> Pseudonym

the role of a professional learning partnership, between artists and educators, in using drama to enhance students' academic achievement; the role of drama in improving literacy outcomes. (Campbell et al., 2010, p. 7).

The evaluation reported on the benefits of the Actor/Teacher partnership and found that there was increased confidence in the participating teachers following the intervention. There were “varying degrees of perceived success with literacy” (Campbell et al., 2010, p. 8).

The Campbell et al., (2010) report made seven recommendations as follows:

- The program's success indicates that it needs to be widened to include more schools across all three sectors
- More planning time needed for both teachers and actors
- Increased sharing of responsibility by participating teachers
- Longer intervention in school
- A resource is needed so teachers can revisit the strategies in their own time
- Enhance structure of each session – less games/warm-up activities more literacy/drama strategies
- More teacher awareness of the professional learning aspect of the project. They need to make the most of the time with the actors in the classroom. (p. 14)

Many of these recommendations were actioned by STC, most notably the increase from a six-week intervention to a seven-week program and the duration of the action workshops from 60 minutes to 90 minutes.

As one of Blanchett and Upton's priorities was working with more actors, the impact on the actors involved in the intervention was also discussed in the evaluation. One artist commented, “I feel useful and that I am doing something worthwhile ... on the whole I have found it stimulating, engaging and satisfying” (teaching artist in Campbell et al., 2010, p. 13). The report also raised concerns about the duration of the intervention as “the vast majority of teachers suggested that 6 weeks was not long enough to reveal any real evidence of transformative literacy learning” (Campbell et al., 2010, p. 13).

Gibson (2011) led the 2010 evaluation of the program and noted its increased reach (see Figure 3). She summarised the 2010 delivery by saying “overwhelmingly, the participant teachers reported on a

range of positive outcomes both in terms of their students' literacy development and their own professional learning" (p. 4). The year saw the introduction of an expression of interest (EOI) process for schools wanting to be involved, where teachers and principals were required to outline the reasons driving their potential engagement with the program.

Gibson also noted that there were non-academic improvements in students as reported by their class teachers. "Many [teachers] comments referred to improved confidence and/or social skills especially related to those students who were perceived as 'shy, 'disengaged' or marginalised by ability with language and/or other disabilities" (2011, p. 2). These improvements in non-academic outcomes continued to be noted in following evaluations and I explored these in my Masters research (Saunders, 2015).

The 2010 evaluation also recommended that, as the program was entering its third year in some schools, exploring how the practice was being sustained within schools would be a beneficial focus of future research (Gibson, 2011).

During 2010, Robertson (2010) investigated the program through her Honours thesis focusing primarily on how the involvement in the *School Drama* program "contributed to the professional learning of the classroom teacher" (2010, p. 2) and secondly, how involvement in the program contributed to development in descriptive writing for the participating students in her case study (Robertson, 2010). Robertson researched the impact of a teaching artist working with a single Year 3/4 class at a metropolitan Sydney school, Bayside Public School<sup>2</sup> (BSP). The class had a significant number of the students (27%) who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 50% of students were from English as an additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) backgrounds (Robertson, 2010). Robinson collected data during Term 2, 2010 using a range of data collection strategies including interviews with the teaching artist and classroom teacher, focus group discussions with students, and observations of two of the in-class workshops. The benchmarking data of the student work samples prior to and post-intervention were unavailable for analysis because they had been sent home for parents to view and many were not returned.

Robertson asserts that, from her analysis, five indicators contributed to the impact of professional learning on the classroom teacher:

---

<sup>2</sup> Pseudonym



1. The active participation of the teacher in their own learning,
2. Improvement of student learning outcomes to initiate change in practice,
3. Developing confidence to use drama as pedagogy,
4. The formation of a positive co-mentoring relationship, and;
5. Sharing the experience across the school learning environment. (Robertson, 2010, p. 19).

Positive shifts in student learning were also observed in the literacy focus area of descriptive language. Robertson (2010) concluded that these positive academic shifts were as a result of four key attributes:

1. The development of students' confidence to write,
2. The ability to sustain role,
3. Drama as a facilitator of language development, and;
4. Increased engagement in their learning. (p. 27).

Robertson (2010) concluded, "it appears that participation in SD [*School Drama*] significantly contributed to the development of the descriptive writing of students" (p. 34) and recommended that further research should analyse the benchmarking data. She asserted that through the *School Drama* experience, "Teachers are set in good stead to persist with this ambition [of using drama as critical, quality pedagogy] as participation in the SD program provides a strong foundation for the adoption of drama as pedagogy and is of significant benefit to students" (Robertson, 2010, p. 35).

Gibson continued to evaluate the program in 2011 (Gibson, 2012) making similar findings and recommendations. Of note, however, was a positive shift in the way benchmarking was managed with recommendations about providing more support for teachers in how to benchmark and analyse the pre- and post-program student data in future (Gibson, 2012).

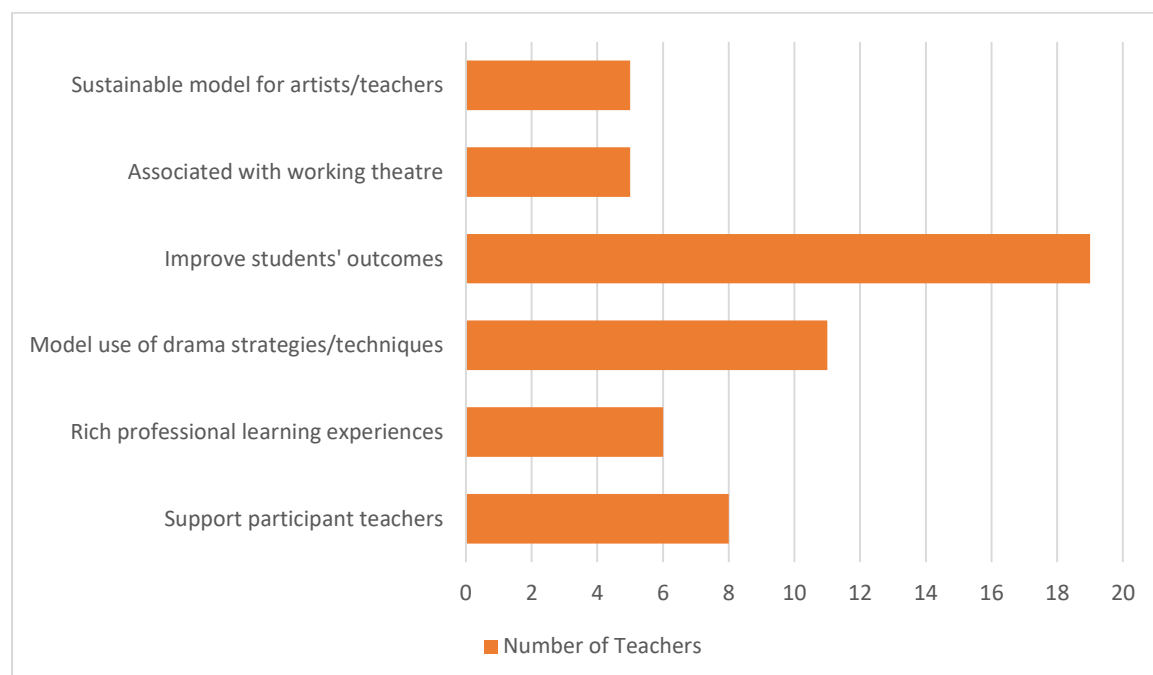
In the 2012 program evaluation (Gibson, 2013) again highlighted problems with the benchmarking process. Gibson noted that "teachers identified both a wide range of literacy outcomes and texts" (p. 9) for *School Drama*, however, "in most cases the outcomes were expressed in general and broad terms" (p. 9). She noted that due to the lack of consistency and the broadness of the outcomes and tasks, it was difficult for the researchers to evaluate the benchmarking data in a way that could enable some comparison across participating schools (Gibson, 2013). Refining the benchmarking process became a key priority in 2013 and a new process was implemented in 2014 (more detail below).

Teachers involved in the 2012 program were asked to rate the importance of the six aims of *School Drama* which were to:

- support participant teachers to use drama with quality literature,
- provide rich professional learning experiences,
- model use of drama strategies/techniques,
- improve students' outcomes,
- associate with a working theatre,
- provide sustainable model for artists/teachers.

“Nineteen teachers identified ‘improving student outcomes’ as the most important aim of the SDP program while ‘model use of drama strategies’ received eleven first preferences” (Gibson, 2013, p. 12). Figure 1 (below) from the 2012 evaluation illustrates that the participant teachers’ priority was not on their own professional learning, but rather on improving student outcomes.

*Figure 1 Importance of School Drama aims for teachers (2012)*



Gibson (2013) also found that “overwhelmingly, teachers indicated that they expected to benefit from “one-to-one learning opportunities with a mentor” above other aspects of the program.

Student gains as reported by participant teachers in the 2012 evaluation identified non-academic outcomes such as self-confidence, positive peer relationships, increased class cohesion and enjoyment and engagement in learning (Gibson, 2013). Gibson reiterated the non-academic student outcomes by saying: “these included increases in confidence, creative thinking, risk taking as well as social and teamwork skills” (2013, p. 27). However, Gibson also critiqued the limitations of the self-reported data. She commented that “while self-reported data is useful, conclusions regarding student gains would be more validated if there were stronger systematic evidence that reinforced teachers’ self-reports” (p. 28). This advice from the evaluator was part of the catalyst for my initial Masters research (Saunders, 2015) and subsequently more broadly through this current study.

Although the concerns around benchmarking continued, teachers in 2012 who participated in the benchmarking of student literacy achievement reported positive academic shifts. For example:

It should be strongly emphasised that students who demonstrated the largest growth were those with language difficulties and from non-English speaking backgrounds. Such results are strong indicators of the power of drama activities to enhance the learning of students often categorised as those learners who are ‘disadvantaged’ and require greater learning support. (Teacher SC in Gibson, 2013, p. 41).

Another teacher commented: “From the results it can be seen that students have greatly improved their skills in interpreting and inferential comprehension” (P. 43) further iterating the positive impacts of the program on students’ literacy development.

The 2012 Evaluation also analysed teacher perception of drama as a vehicle for literacy learning and whether there were reported benefits to their professional learning. Comparing the pre- and post-program teacher survey, Gibson stated:

There is more than a 100% increase in ‘strongly agree’ responses regarding the importance of drama strategies in both literacy and other KLAs [Key Learning Areas]. More important, the biggest shift in positive responses is in teacher perceptions relating to both their confidence and creativity in relation to planning and using drama in the classroom. (2013, p. 49).

These findings resonate with the primary aim of the program, to increase teacher confidence and capacity in using drama-based strategies in English and Literacy and across the curriculum. Gibson

continued: “These post-SDP-engagement results from teacher self-reports are a very strong indication of the success of the SDP regarding its impact on teacher professional beliefs” (2013, pp. 49-50). Importantly, the evaluation recommended that a study of the sustainability of the program in schools be undertaken as “currently there is no evidence of sustained change after the SDP has been completed” (2013, p. 62). The recommendations of Gibson (who with Smith would later go on to conduct a meta-analysis) were actioned by STC and a sustainability case study was undertaken by Smith in 2014.

In March 2010, Patrick McIntyre was appointed Executive Director of STC and between 2010 and 2012 developed a new structure in which to organise the company. In late 2012, Paul O’Byrne was appointed Director, Communities at Sydney Theatre Company, a newly formed portfolio that included STC Education, STC Communities, Greening The Wharf, and STC Archives. McIntyre tasked O’Byrne to look at each of the existing STC Education programs and analyse them against three criteria: clarity, sustainability and impact. STC Education had grown and the department’s resources were stretched. O’Byrne analysed each program and made suggestions of some programs that could be retired and others that could be taken to scale. *School Drama* was one of the latter. This indicates the slow transition over several years between the fourth and the fifth and current chapter of STC Ed. The year 2012 also marked the end of the pilot phase.

### The growth phase 2013 - 2019

At this point Hristofski left the company and I was appointed as Professional Learning Specialist in 2013. After a few months I was granted an expanded remit across the department as Education Manager (2013 to 2018). During this transition phase, many of the existing STC Ed programs were retired so that resources (human and financial) could be invested in *School Drama*. Part of my role included being a teaching artist for one or two *School Drama* classes each term.

### A meta-analysis

Following the 2012 evaluation (Gibson, 2013), STC commissioned, funded in part by the Origin Foundation, a meta-analysis to analyse the evaluations between 2009 and 2012 (Gibson & Smith, 2013). The meta-analysis proved the efficacy of the co-mentoring model. It found that the program did increase teacher confidence and capacity in using drama strategies to enhance student English and literacy. Gibson and Smith noted that:

The co-mentoring model of the professional working relationship between teaching artist and teacher is probably the most important and powerful element of the SDP. Evidence has

demonstrated that this model has become more successfully developed and more effective from the programme's inception to 2012. (2013, p. 10).

Gibson and Smith concluded that the other "element of the SDP for which there is unanimous, strong and continuing evidence of success is that of teacher professional learning" (2013, p. 10). This conclusion is drawn from data including the pre- and post-program teacher survey and interviews with teachers. The changes in professional learning included increased teacher knowledge and teacher confidence in using the drama strategies (Gibson & Smith, 2013). Regarding student learning, the meta-evaluation noted that there was strong anecdotal evidence from teachers that they saw increases in student confidence as a result of the program. This also included positive social skills and teamwork or collaboration skills (Gibson & Smith, 2013).

Gibson and Smith (2013) also noted elements of the program that required stronger evidence or more research in order to make stronger conclusions. They advised that:

... while there is some strong explicit evidence of increased student learning from student work samples and the majority of teacher reports there is a requirement of further evidence for this issue. This evidence needs to be not only explicit from a greater number of teachers, but, especially, needs to be systematic and evidenced by significant comparative changes in student work samples gathered prior to the SDP intervention and after its completion. (p. 13)

This was an important recommendation, as up until this point (and including throughout 2013) teachers had designed their own benchmarking tasks and marked these against a rubric (criteria) that they had developed. Sometimes the task and rubric did not match the specific literacy foci or were not the most appropriate way to measure learning in a designated area. During late 2013, Ewing and I worked to develop tasks and rubrics based on the newly released K-10 NSW English Syllabus (NESA, 2012). We decided on four literacy focus areas given that these were the four areas that were most commonly selected by teachers between 2009 and 2012:

- confidence in oracy
- descriptive language
- inferential comprehension, and
- narrative writing and structure.

These were implemented for the first time in 2014 and adjusted slightly each year as a result of feedback from teachers and teaching artists. We also developed a document to support teachers analyse any shifts between the pre- and post-program benchmarking samples; however, this data had not been evaluated beyond a single case study (Saunders, 2015). An analysis of the 2017 benchmarking data can be found in Chapter 5.

The meta-evaluation proved the efficacy of the co-mentoring teacher professional learning model and made suggestions and recommendations about improving data collection.

Also during 2013, a second Honours project was completed at The University of Sydney researching *School Drama* (Sze, 2013). This project investigated the sustainability of the program at Fortress Hill Public School<sup>3</sup> (FHPS), a large public school with approximately 700 students located in Sydney's North West. Sze (2013) noted three key findings regarding the sustainability of the program at FHPS:

1. Co-mentoring Arts partnerships have benefits for the specific teacher and their students;
2. A positive school culture, especially the support from the principal and other staff, increases the likelihood of the suitability of PD [professional development];
3. Insufficient time and resources threaten the sustainability of the SD program. (p. 12).

Sze's (2013) case study echoed Gibson's (2011, 2012, 2013) evaluations pertaining to the need for further research into the long-term sustainability of the practice in schools following the *School Drama* intervention.

### *Investigating sustainability*

Smith (2014) was commissioned to investigate whether or not the practices from the *School Drama* program were being continued in a school after the program had concluded. STC had surveyed teachers and principals who had participated in the program between 2009 and 2012 asking if they were continuing to use drama strategies across their English and literacy programs. The survey responses painted a very positive picture of the landscape post-intervention, with most teachers reporting that they were indeed continuing to use some drama strategies after the teaching artist had left the school. However, Smith went deeper and explored one school, Everton West Public School<sup>4</sup> (EWPS) through the lenses of intentional and actual evidence.

---

<sup>3</sup> Pseudonym

<sup>4</sup> Pseudonym

Smith (2014) defines ‘intentional’ evidence as that which “resides in documentation for activities that are planned but not able to be observed” (p.2). Examples include outlines of teaching units, both implemented and planned. ‘Actual’ evidence is that which “the researcher can actually observe to verify that the intention has actually been realised. Actual evidence includes student work samples and classroom observations of teaching and learning” (p. 2). Smith collected a range of data from Everton West Public School including interviews with teachers and the school principal, and observations of lessons. Smith also collected and analysed artefacts from the school (including units of work and learning experiences illustrating the implementation of drama strategies; photographs of students developing Freeze Frames etc.). This rigorous approach provided a clear picture of how the pedagogical approach from *School Drama* was being continued, shared and extended within EWPS. Smith highlighted six interrelated factors that contributed to the sustainability in the school:

- antecedents to the SDP (the school has a history and culture of innovation and change);
- leadership (from the principal);
- established professional learning culture;
- teachers committed to the ideas and ideals of the SDP;
- strategic decisions (teachers who participate in the program are strategically chosen to ensure the learning is shared); and
- opportunities provided by systemic educational mandates. (Smith, 2014).

This case study reported that not only had the *School Drama* approach been continued, it had grown within the school and was embedded across the school’s English and literacy program, but that it had also had an impact on the HSIE (History, Society and its Environment), Science, and CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts) learning areas (Smith, 2014). As an aside, with burgeoning student enrolments this school has continued with the *School Drama* program to upskill its new teachers every year.

### *The teaching artist*

During Gibson’s evaluations in 2010, 2011 and 2012, the impact and learning of the teaching artists was also investigated. Gibson (2011, 2012, 2013) and Gibson and Smith (2013) consistently noted the impact of the program on the teaching artists, particularly that they enjoyed the work and using their skills in a different way. As one teaching artist reflected: “I feel useful and that I am doing something worthwhile ... on the whole I have found it stimulating, engaging and satisfying. It’s something I would like to continue doing” (teaching artist in Campbell et al., 2010, p. 13). Throughout the teacher pre-

and post-program surveys, teachers were asked to consider what they thought the teaching artist might take away from working with them and this was repeated at the conclusion of the intervention. Gibson (2011) asserted that “despite their [the classroom teachers’] uncertainty regarding the benefits the actor would gain from their involvement in the SDP, the teachers themselves acknowledge the importance of a strong teacher/actor relationship if the proposed outcomes were to be realised” (p. 16).

Ewing and I (Ewing & Saunders, 2014; 2019) also explored the impact of the *School Drama* program on the teaching artists more deeply when preparing to present a paper at the second International Teaching Artist Conference, Brisbane, Australia. We surveyed all teaching artists during 2014 and reported these findings. Typical comments from teaching artists reflecting on what they had learnt from working with the class teacher included:

The relationship is collaborative and focussed on both the teachers’ needs and their understanding of their students. Reinforcing the fact that the teacher also has a skill set that I don’t have as an actor really helps to level out our interactions and I am able to check my ideas against what the teacher wants to achieve with the students. (Gina<sup>5</sup> – Teaching Artist 2009 to present).

Collaboration is key to the co-mentoring partnership designed by Ewing as explained by Robert<sup>6</sup>, another teaching artist:

*School Drama* is a much more collaborative environment for everyone involved compared to other programs I've been involved in. It is not about the teaching artist showing the students and Teacher how they can do something that they could mimic. It is about discovering things together and for the teaching artist to offer ways of making those discoveries. (Robert, Teaching Artist 2014 to present).

However, there were challenges in the relationship too:

The challenge is making sure that neither person (particularly the teaching artist) oversteps the other person's boundaries. As far as the classroom teacher is concerned, you are entering

---

<sup>5</sup> Pseudonym

<sup>6</sup> Pseudonym



their space, environment and it is (I believe), up to the teaching artist to respect the already established standards whilst not ignoring their own. (Jillian<sup>7</sup>, Teaching Artist, 2013 to present).

Jillian and other teaching artists reflected on the challenges of working in “someone else’s space” and having respect for the classroom teacher and what they brought to the co-mentoring relationship. Artists found facilitating the transition of the teacher assuming more responsibility in leading some of the drama strategies during the final few weeks of the program a key area that they knew they needed to work on. Another common challenge was negotiating quality literature to use in working on the program. Teaching artists felt that they learned much from working with the classroom teachers. Interestingly several artists have left the program to pursue further study as primary or secondary teachers.

More recently, Campbell (2018) commenced a new phase of research investigating the experiences of teaching artists to further explore whether there had been personal and/or professional impacts on the teaching artists while working on *School Drama*. Campbell interviewed five teaching artists from a range of training backgrounds who had been working on the program for different lengths of time (between one and seven years). Drawing on the work of Rabkin, Reynolds, Hedberg, & Shelby (2011), Campbell found that *School Drama* teaching artists saw themselves as having ‘hybrid identities’ as both artists and educators, and this made them “uniquely powerful educators” (Rabkin, et al., 2011, p. 42 in Campbell, 2018, p. 3).

STC currently brings all teaching artists working on the program from across Australia to Sydney for an intensive week of professional learning at the beginning of each year. The content changes each year depending on the needs of the teaching artists and what the data collected from teachers and students suggests may need to be a focus or area of improvement. This regular investment in professional learning for teaching artists was seen as a very strong benefit of working with Sydney Theatre Company, particularly because it was responsive to teaching artists’ needs (Campbell, 2018). Campbell’s research suggests that *School Drama’s* support and investment in teaching artists’ professional learning is “a best practice model - (nationally & international)” (2018, p. 12). Teaching artists are paid for their time, and flights and accommodation are covered by STC for those teaching artists who reside outside of Sydney. This is a significant financial investment each year. The data from Campbell (2018) acknowledges that this investment is crucial in supporting teaching artists in their ‘hybrid’ work on the program. However, the research also identified two challenges that

---

<sup>7</sup> Pseudonym

teaching artists face; the dual focus of the teaching professional learning and student learning; and engaging the teachers they are working with in a co-mentoring model (Campbell, 2018).

### *Funding*

As part of disseminating findings from the program, Ewing, Gibson, Campbell, Saunders and Hristofski (2015) discussed the research and process of the partnership and outlined the professional learning approach and the co-mentoring model. Ewing et al., (2015) noted that “it is of concern, however, that the ongoing potential of such an effective professional learning model is dependent on continued funding by philanthropists and foundations rather than education systems” (p. 45). The *School Drama* program is expensive to deliver and costs \$2,500 AUD per teacher involved. Schools cannot afford this cost, so Sydney Theatre Company fully subsidised the program during its pilot phase (2009 to 2012). Since then most schools have made a contribution towards the program (STC subsidises between 50% to 75% for most schools and fully subsidises disadvantaged schools). Over the past ten years, Sydney Theatre Company has raised over \$2,000,000 AUD to subsidise the program thanks largely to philanthropists.

### *The impact of School Drama on students: Saunders, 2015*

As mentioned earlier, my Masters research (Saunders, 2015) aimed to explore the gap within the existing literature on *School Drama* through investigating the academic impact of the program on students. I was both the researcher and teaching artist and worked with a Year 6 class at Connie Beach Public School<sup>8</sup> located on the northern beaches of Sydney. Working alongside the class teacher, Linda O'Connor<sup>9</sup> we followed the *School Drama* approach over seven workshops. O'Connor and I explored a short novel, *The Burnt Stick* (Hill, 1994) which tells the story of a young Aboriginal boy who is forcibly removed from his community as part of the Stolen Generations. During this research, I also named the way that we were using our pre-text as an ‘episodic pre-text’ (Saunders, 2015) as described in Chapter 1. We would read an ‘episode’ of the text and use the drama strategies and devices to dive into the book and explore the critical moments, gaps and silences within it.

All students participated in the pre-program and post-program benchmarking tasks (during the first week of the term and after the holidays following the intervention) exploring two literacy areas; inferential comprehension and descriptive language. O'Connor marked both tasks and analysed them. Data was collected using a range of methods including focus groups with students throughout the intervention, whole class debriefs, interviews with O'Connor and through my research journal. In the

---

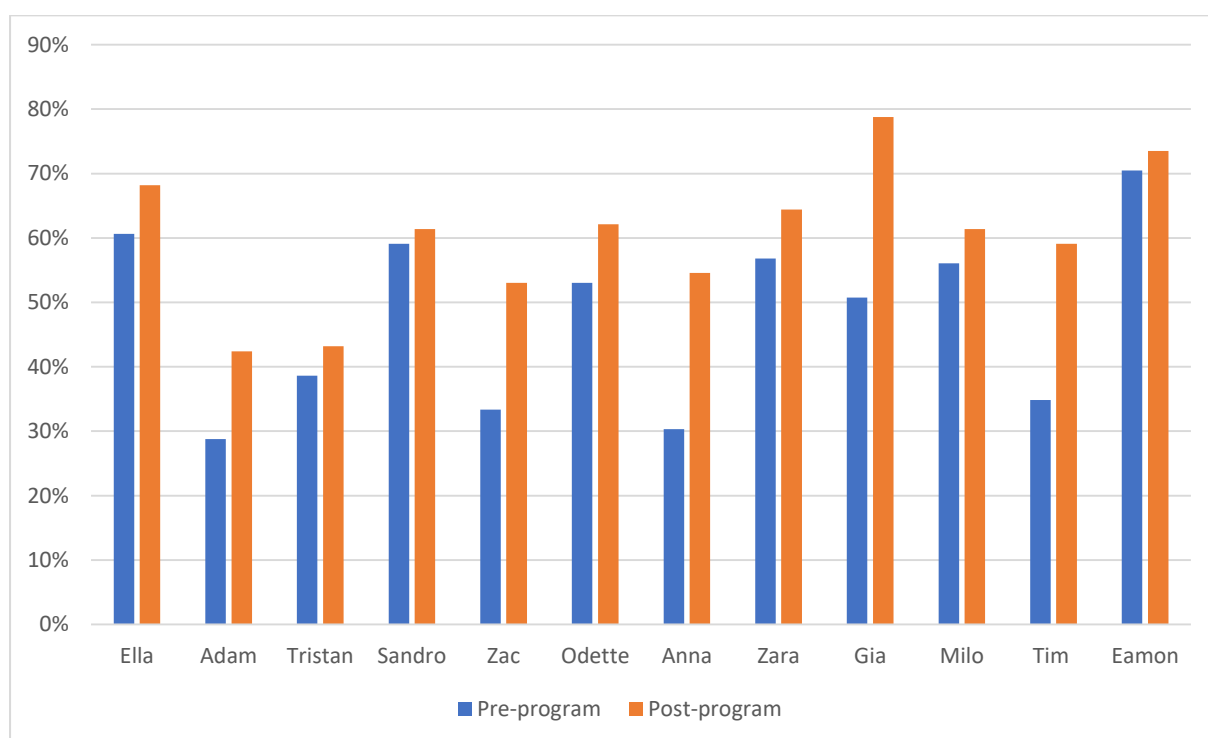
<sup>8</sup> Pseudonym

<sup>9</sup> Pseudonym

2015 research, I used crystallisation (Richardson, 1997) when analysing the data to paint a clear picture of the different perspectives emerging from this case study.

The research aimed to pursue Gibson's (2011, 2012, 2013) and Gibson and Smith's (2013) recommendations pertaining to benchmarking and student academic achievement in a specific literacy area. Figure 2 (Saunders, 2015) depicts the students' pre- and post-program benchmarking results. The blue bar represents the pre-program result and the orange bar represents the post-program results. Those students who were in the bottom to mid-range of the pre-program results demonstrated the greatest shifts. All students showed some increase in academic achievement in the literacy areas (in this case both inferential comprehension and descriptive language), indicating that the program had a positive influence on student literacy learning over a short period of time.

*Figure 2 Student pre- and post-program benchmarking*



There were unanticipated findings, specifically reported shifts in the students' non-academic outcomes. Students and the class teacher consistently commented on the non-academic gains that emerged from using drama with literature. In focus groups, the students described feeling more engaged in the learning and more motivated when involved in drama. Students also discussed empathy and emotion and reported that they had a stronger connection to the characters in the book and felt more empathetic after the drama experiences, and that this was significantly different to

when they would simply read a text in class. Unlike Gibson's (2011, 2012, 2013) evaluations which continued to suggest student confidence increased through the intervention, this was not highlighted in my 2015 research.

The Masters dissertation concluded by reiterating the limited nature of a single case study and suggesting that "a large scale, mixed method, longitudinal study investigating student academic and non-academic outcomes of the *School Drama* intervention" (Saunders, 2015, p. 67) would be beneficial to expand the portfolio of existing research findings about the *School Drama* program and contribute to the field more broadly.

Ewing and I have contributed to a range of scholarly publications. For example, we co-authored (Ewing and Saunders, 2018) a chapter exploring *School Drama's* contribution towards Biesta's (2017) notion of 'grown-up-ness'. We drew on Greene's (1995) work pertaining to poetic and social imagination with a particular focus on how process-based drama experiences can support young people to develop empathy using two practical examples from our own work; Ewing's drama unit based on the picture-book *The Duck and the Darklings* (Millard & King, 2014), and my unit based on *The Burnt Stick* (Hill, 1994). We concluded by asserting that "if we truly want to develop children's communicative, collaborative and problem-solving skills and help them become resilient and productive individuals, we must put creative pedagogy at the heart of the classroom experience" (Ewing & Saunders, 2018, p. 104).

### *Teacher resources*

In 2016, Ewing and I addressed teachers' request for *School Drama* resources (Ewing & Saunders, 2016). The resource book captured the research and theory of the *School Drama* approach as well as outlining 22 units of work based on quality children's literature. While not reporting on new research, this publication enables teachers who have participated in the *School Drama* program, and those who have not participated directly, to develop teaching and learning in English and literacy using process-based drama with quality children's literature. Blanchett and Upton reflected that "we always hoped that this program would become a national phenomenon, and perhaps this book can facilitate something akin to that" (Blanchett & Upton in Ewing & Saunders, 2016, p. vii). An interactive *School Drama Companion* was also developed to explain and model the drama strategies visually.

### *Expansion of School Drama and different modes*

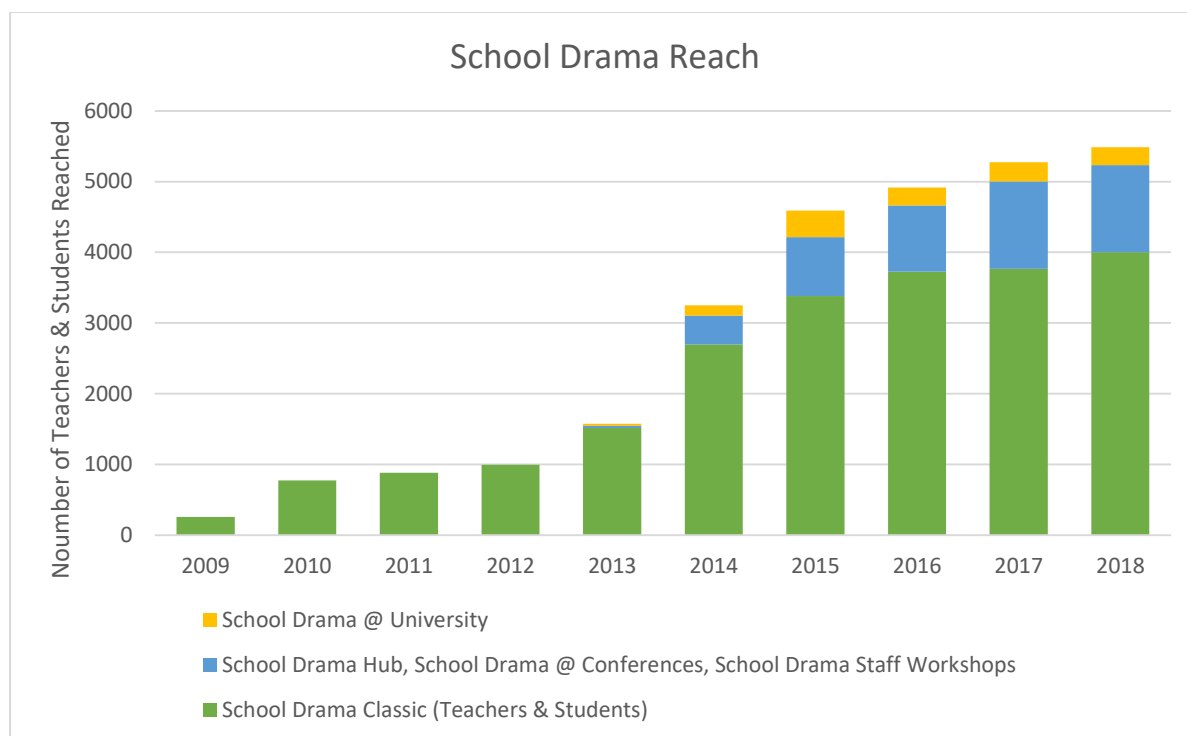
By 2017 there were a number of different versions of *School Drama* developed to meet the needs of different teacher groups:

- *School Drama Classic* (the original seven-week artist-in-residence model) At the time of writing, 2019, the Classic program is being delivered in Sydney, Wollongong and the Blue Mountains (NSW), Albury Wodonga (regional New South Wales and Victoria), Darwin (Northern Territory) Perth (Western Australia) and Canberra (Australian Capital Territory). *School Drama Classic* was delivered in partnership with the State Theatre Company of South Australia and Flinders University from 2013 to 2016 and ceased due to significant cuts in staffing at the State Theatre. *School Drama Classic* will begin in Auckland in August.
- *School Drama Hub* an action learning model of the program delivered by Ewing, Saunders and others for teachers who have completed the classic program and wish to continue their professional learning (a series of five twilight workshops for teachers over a semester). *School Drama Hub* commenced delivery in Melbourne, Victoria in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 and this has extended to Sydney, NSW in 2017, 2018 and 2019 and Brisbane, Queensland in 2018 and 2019.
- *School Drama @ Conferences* (presenting keynotes, workshops and papers at English, literacy, drama and education conferences).
- *School Drama @ University* (presenting lectures, tutorials and workshops for pre-service teachers at University of Sydney, Western Sydney University, Australian Catholic University, Charles Sturt University).
- *School Drama Staff Workshops* (providing a professional learning workshop to a group of staff from the same school, often the entire staff).

### *The future phase: 2019 and beyond*

Since 2009, *School Drama* has reached over 27,000 teachers and students. Figure 3 depicts the reach of the program from 2009 to 2018.

Figure 3 School Drama Reach 2009 to 2018



Although Blanchett and Upton had initially aimed for the program to be replicated across Australia in partnership with other state theatre companies and universities, this has not happened due to resourcing and capacity limitations. However, since 2009, *School Drama* has continued to be refined and expanded, because of the successful and authentic partnership between Sydney Theatre Company and The University of Sydney's School of Education and Social Work. Adaptations of the concept are now being used with secondary EALD students (Mcatamney, 2018), secondary history students (Hankus, 2016), adult refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants (see Campbell & Hogan, 2019; Jacobs, 2019) as well as in juvenile justice contexts. It has also been modified and is being piloted in preschool contexts (Karaolis, in press) and primary EALD students (Beaumont, in press).

## Conclusion

This chapter has provided context to the development of the *School Drama* partnership and documented the history, development and growth of the program. It has also reviewed and

summarised the key findings of the existing research. Since its inception in 2009 the *School Drama* program has generated a growing body of evidence (Beaumont, in press; Campbell & Hogan, 2019; Campbell, 2018; Campbell et al., 2010; Ewing et al., 2011; Ewing, 2015; Ewing et al., 2015; Ewing & Saunders, 2014, 2016, 2018; Gibson, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015; Gibson & Smith, 2013; Hankus, 2016; Karaolis, in press; Mctamney, 2018; Robertson, 2010; Saunders, 2015; Smith, 2014; Sze, 2013) indicating the strong outcomes of the *School Drama* program on teacher professional learning and student learning. There are still gaps remaining in the existing research around the rigorous exploration of the outcomes for students. The current research aims to address part of the gap.

The following chapter outlines the theoretical framework, research methodology and design that has been employed for this research.

## Chapter 4 – Art is the Social Within Us: Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Design

“Art is the social within us, and even if its action is performed by a single individual it does not mean that its essence is individual ... Art is the social technique of emotion, a tool of society which brings the most intimate and personal aspects of our being into the circle of social life.” (Vygotsky, 1925/1971, p. 249).

### Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework, the research methodology and design of the project. Initially the theoretical framework is discussed introducing the sociocultural and constructivist approach that underpins this research. Five central Vygotskian concepts are considered in relation to this research project. The chapter then argues the appropriateness of a qualitative case study approach. An outline of the data collection methods and analysis tools employed follow.

### Theoretical Framework

A sociocultural framework (Vygotsky, 1978) and constructivist approach within the qualitative paradigm underpin this research. Vygotsky described sociocultural theory pertaining to education by stating that “Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first *between* people (*interpsychological*), and then *inside* the child (*intrapsychological*)” (1978, p. 57, original emphasis). Vygotsky theorised that children’s learning first happens socially and was socially mediated before it was internalised by the individual child. His theory is particularly relevant to research and teaching in drama education (as made explicit by Davis et al., 2015), as drama (and play as the root of educational drama) is socially constructed first and then understood and internalised by the individual.

To understand Vygotsky’s sociocultural philosophy, one must note his own sociocultural and sociohistorical context. Lev Vygotsky was born into a Jewish family in 1896 in Golem, Belarus. “His upbringing was quite unique” argue Rubtsova and Daniels (2016).

On the one hand he was shaped by Jewish tradition, in which his family was deeply rooted, and on the other hand he was influenced by the culture of the Russian ‘Silver Age’ - the period



before the revolution of 1917 that was characterised by cultural boom – particularly in art and theatre. (Rubtsova & Daniels, 2016, p. 190).

The influence of culture, art and theatre is evident in Vygotsky's work and this is perhaps why his theorising of learning is so potent for arts and drama education. As John-Steiner (2015) remarks:

Drama is an excellent lens through which to view Vygotsky's theories of learning, development, language and creativity. As a young man, he was deeply involved with the theatre [...] His first publication, *The Psychology of Art* (1925), deals extensively with *Hamlet* within the context of a broader theory about the transformative value of art. Central to this theory, first developed in this early work, was his understanding of drama, film, painting and writing as deeply social processes. (p. XV).

Vygotsky's involvement in theatre is well documented (see Mitchell, 2015). He reviewed theatre, during an influential time in theatre history with the rise of Russian theatre practitioners such as Mayerhold and Stanislavsky. What is even more interesting is that Vygotsky was not only familiar with Stanislavsky, but that Stanislavsky's system (Stanislavsky, 1936/1989) had a significant influence in informing Vygotsky's theories, particularly that of *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1934/1994; discussed later in this chapter). In Vygotsky's *The Problem of the Psychology of the Actor's Creative Work* (1932/1999), he explicitly discusses Stanislavsky's work and there are clear resonances with Stanislavsky's central principle of 'living on stage' rather than 'playing a role'. However, as Grainer Clemson (2015) asserts, while similarities between key concepts from Stanislavsky and Vygotsky were being developed concurrently, "it is unclear how often, if at all, they might have met and discussed their ideas" (Grainer Clemson, 2015, p. 40). Mitchell (2015) analyses the links between theatre (and drama) and Vygotsky's work, summarising it by stating: "Drama is represented in Vygotsky's work in two complementary ways: as unfolding stages of personal development (ontogenesis) and as conflictual interactions driving development (sociogenesis). Underpinning both is a dialectic drama of development involving sociocultural agency, transition, transformation and generativity" (pp. 34-35).

### Five Vygotskian concepts that frame the current study

Five Vygotskian concepts frame this study:

1. Play and Drama (Vygotsky, 1930/2004)
2. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978), and its subsequent extensions into the Collective Zone of Proximal Development (CZPD) by Moll and Whitmore (1993) and later

by Ewing (2015) and its relationship to 'scaffolding' by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) and 'guided participation' by Rogoff (1990)

3. Creativity and Imagination (Vygotsky, 1930/2004)
4. *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1934/1994)
5. Dual Affect (Vygotsky, 1933/1966).

Each concept is outlined below and its connection to the practice of *School Drama* outlined. Examples of these concepts in action are then outlined in the subsequent chapters that explore each of the three in-depth case studies.

But first, examining Vygotsky's thinking about the relationship between Play and Drama provides an important beginning.

### Play and drama

Vygotsky wrote extensively about drama and its links to a child's play and how this is directly related to creativity and imagination. He argued:

Drama, more than any other form of creation, is closely and directly linked to play, which is the root of all creativity in children. Thus, drama is the most syncretic mode of creation, that is, it contains elements of the most diverse forms of creativity [...] The children themselves compose, improvise, or prepare the play, improvise the roles or sometimes dramatize some existing piece of literature. (Vygotsky, 1930/2004, p. 71).

Although the work of Heathcote would come decades after Vygotsky died, his philosophical assertions about how children learn through play and drama would become widely accepted and celebrated through the rise of educational drama in the 1960s and 1970s. Interestingly, Vygotsky noted that children must engage in dramatic work that was appropriate for their age and that process was all important. He commented that an:

... attempt to directly reproduce the forms of adult theatre are not suitable for children [...] plays written by the children themselves or created and improvised by them as they are played are vastly more compatible with children's understanding [...] It must not be forgotten that the basic law of children's creativity is that its value lies not in its results, not in its product of creation, but in the process itself. **It is not important what children create, but that they do create**, that they exercise and implement their creative imagination. (Vygotsky, 1930/2004, p. 72, my emphasis).

This glorious argument resonates with the work of many educational drama pioneers such as Heathcote (1984), Heathcote and Bolton (1995), Haseman (1991), O'Neill (1995), Booth (1994, 2005), Morgan and Saxton (1987), Miller and Saxton (2011, 2016), O'Toole (1992), and Wagner (1976) to name a few. As mentioned previously, in *School Drama*, we employ 'process-based drama' as it is not constrained by pure process drama (see definitions in Chapter 1), or story drama (Booth, 1994), but rather sits as a unique combination of both forms. *School Drama* uses an authentic literary text (quality children's literature) and an episodic text model (see Chapter 1 for definition and discussion) to play, to explore, to embody, to consider, to delve deeply into the story. Through this approach we create meaning about the text, and about how the text relates to us and our own sociocultural context. We also play with the 'spaces' (Williams, 1987) such quality texts provide.

There is strong resonance between Heathcotian drama and Vygotsky's notions of drama and play. As Davis (2016) confirmed when researching the Dorothy Heathcote archives, although Heathcote did not often cite or reference Vygotsky, or indeed other educational theorists, she knew of Vygotsky's work.

It is apparent that Heathcote had specific knowledge of the work of Vygotsky and was influenced by it throughout the 1980s and 1990s. [...] While Heathcote did not necessarily know about the full breadth of Vygotsky's work, there is much that is pertinent from his work in relation to learning and development, art, drama and creativity that resonates strongly with Heathcote's work. (Davis, 2016, p. 12).

### The zone of proximal development

Perhaps Vygotsky's most well-known concept is the Zone of Proximal Development, which he described as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). The more capable peer, parent or teacher acts to facilitate or mediate or 'guide' the development of the learner to their next level of learning.

Walker, Anderson, Gibson and Martin (2015) explain how the ZPD can be realised within a drama learning environment where collaborative and group activities are emphasised:

These collaborative drama practices, and the associated scaffolding provided by drama teachers, provide students with contexts in which identities and motivational standards, beliefs and expectations can be transformatively internalized and subsequently externalized. Collaborative and group activities, along with teacher scaffolding, create zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). (Walker et al., 2015, p. 125).

Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) famously introduced the term ‘scaffolding’ using the metaphor of scaffolding a building to describe the ZPD function of the teacher in facilitating student development. When constructing a building, scaffolding is sometimes temporarily erected for support and to enable the builders to reach higher levels as the construction continues. Once the building has reached its tallest point and the building is sturdy, the scaffolding is slowly removed as it is no longer needed. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) emphasise that:

More often than not, it [learning] involves a kind of “scaffolding” process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts. This scaffolding consists essentially of the adult “controlling” those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner’s capacity, thus permitting him [or her] to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his [or her] range of competence.” (p. 90)

The concept of scaffolding makes explicit the importance of the teacher, peer or parent role in the learning or development process for students.

In the past, many have conceptualised the ZPD as an individual experience but more recently there has been discussion around the potential for a more collaborative experience, which connects to development and learning within a drama environment. Vygotsky did note that the ZPD can exist both “under adult guidance or in **collaboration** with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86, my emphasis). Moll and Whitmore (1993) contend that the interpretation of ZPD should be much broader and a “more dynamic and encompassing notion” (p. 19). They argue that a “collective” zone of proximal development is a truer conception of the theory:

... it is incorrect to think of the zone [of proximal development] as solely a characteristic of the child or of the teaching, but of the child engaged in collaborative activity within specific social

(discourse) environments. From our perspective, the key is to understand the social transactions that make up classroom life. (Moll & Whitmore, 1993, p. 20)

Ewing (2015) built on Moll and Whitmore's (1993) notion of a collective ZPD (or CZPD) and used the *School Drama* program as an example of the theory in action. She notes the combination of process drama strategies with quality children's literature can "encourage adults and children to work in a collective ZPD and enhance children's language and literacy development, as well as their collaborative skills and their understanding of others" (p. 149). Ewing also theorised that the co-mentoring relationship, which underpins the professional learning aspect of the *School Drama* program, as another example of a CZPD being developed between the classroom teacher and the teaching artist.

I have previously suggested (Saunders, 2015) that this collective ZPD in the *School Drama* context can further extend the relationship between the students, teacher and teaching artist to include also the literary text being explored through the program. Moll and Whitmore (1993) suggest that "the materials in the classroom form part of the collective zone, serving as cultural mediators, helping to extend the amount and type of learning possible for any child" (p. 37). The quality children's literature selected for *School Drama* is often pitched at a slightly higher level than the children are actually working at individually. This realises Meek's (1998) argument about *How Texts Teach What Readers Learn*. Meek (1998) claims that readers learn through the words and illustrations of a quality text:

Understanding authorship, audience, illustration and iconic interpretation are part[s] of the ontogenesis of 'literary competences'. To learn to read a book, as distinct from simply recognizing the words on the page, a young reader has to become both the teller (picking up the author's views and voice) and the told (the recipient of the story, the interpreter). This symbolic interaction is learned early. It is rarely, if ever, taught, except in so far as an adult stands in for the author by giving the text a 'voice' when reading to the child. (Meek, 1998, p. 10).

Drawing on Meek's work, I am arguing here that the author and illustrator and the quality text are part of the ZPD or CZPD in the *School Drama* workshops, where the author and illustrator's work allows the students to move to another zone of development. Students, as Meek suggests, take on the role of the 'teller' and the 'told' as they make meaning from the words and illustrations in the text.

Vygotsky also articulated that a student can learn from story:

... because he [sic] can imagine what he has not seen, can conceptualize something from another person's narration and description of what he himself has never directly experienced. He is not limited to the narrow circle and narrow boundaries of his own experience but can venture far beyond these boundaries, assimilating, with the help of his imagination someone else's historical or social experience. (Vygotsky, 1930/2004, p. 17).

Although Vygotsky was discussing imagination, this statement lends itself to a broader concept of CZPD, one which can include a text or author of a text explored in the *School Drama* experience as it is "another person's narration and description" of an experience different from that of the student.

Rogoff (1990), a sociocultural theorist and disciple of Vygotsky, has expanded on the ZPD through her term, 'guided participation' stating that "children's cognitive development is an apprenticeship - it occurs through guided participation in social activity with companions who support and stretch children's understanding of and skill in using the tools of the culture" (Rogoff, 1990, p. vii). Edmiston (2015) clarifies that Rogoff's conceptualisation is "widely accepted as promoting cognitive development in a ZPD" (p. 84). Guided participation can be useful in conceptualising the role of the facilitators in process drama-based learning experiences, such as the *School Drama* experience (Saunders, 2015). The teaching artist facilitates through initial leadership of the drama-based activities while co-teaching with the classroom teacher. They team-teach and 'guide' the students' participation "from cognitive dependence to cognitive independence" (Smidt, 2009, p.38).

### Creativity and imagination

Some of Vygotsky's most pertinent work about drama has only recently been translated into English and this includes his work on creativity and imagination (1930/2004). He wrote:

Any human act that gives rise to something new is referred to as a creative act, regardless of whether what is created is a physical object or some mental or emotional construct that lives within the person who created it and is known only to him. (Vygotsky, 1930/2004, p. 7).

Vygotsky believed that imagination was the basis for all creativity and conceptualised the role of imagination as a cycle (1930/2004). Bundy, Piazzoli and Dunn (2015) describe this cycle exploring "the relationship between 'imagination' and 'reality', with the cycle being understood as a two-fold, mutual interdependence between imagination and experience" (p. 147). Vygotsky argued that this 'two-fold' cycle of imagination had a strong relationship with drama as:

... the dramatic form expresses with greatest clarity the full cycle of imagination [...] Here the image that the imagination has created from real elements of reality is embodied and realized again in reality ... (Vygotsky, 1930/2004, p. 70).

He added that the “full cycle of this process will be completed only when imagination is embodied or crystallised in external images” (1930/2004, p. 28). Vygotsky conceived that “every construct of the imagination has an effect on our feelings, and if this construct does not in itself correspond to reality, nonetheless the feelings it evokes are real feelings, feelings a person truly experiences” (1930/2004, pp. 19-20). As discussed earlier, the significance of feelings is often overlooked in education, but Vygotsky, perhaps influenced by his relationship with theatre as a young man, acknowledged feelings and emotions as central to learning.

### *Perezhivanie*

*Perezhivanie* is a Russian word which does not have an exact translation into English but essentially means “lived emotional experiences” (John-Steiner, 2015, p. xix) and was first introduced in Vygotsky’s initial thesis, *The Psychology of Art* (1925/1971). Vygotskian expert, John-Steiner (2015) explains that:

*Perezhivanie* was a notion Vygotsky encountered in the work of the Russian theatre director Stanislavsky in his interactions with actors [...] *Perezhivanie* is linked to imagination which builds on lived experiences - both direct and fictional. It combines and recombines aspects of these experiences as they are expressed in creative outcomes in everyday problem solving, artistic products, dramatic dialogues and scientific results. (p. XIX).

Drama engages students in roles, relationships, situations and contexts that are both internal and external. Dunn, Bundy and Stinson argue that: “a defining feature of participatory drama, as an aesthetic medium, is the simultaneous provocation of both the cognitive and affective domains and the view that the experience of emotion is critical to meaning making” (2015, p. 2). Literacy and drama are both meaning making activities and the use of emotion is central to understanding meanings, particularly with a focus of developing comprehension and inference as a literacy focus.

Another Vygotskian concept relating to emotion and experience is that of Dual Affect.

## Dual affect

The final Vygotskian concept discussed here is that of Dual Affect (1933/1966). In drama education, the concept of Dual Affect is connected to Plato's notion of metaxis, being defined as 'a state of in-betweenness' where a student or participant in a drama is both simultaneously inside relating to the character and outside the dramatic action analysing the feeling. O'Toole and Dunn (2002) discuss Vygotsky's Dual Affect in relation to drama and play by explaining:

A child (or any other actor) involved as a character in dramatic play or performance will be simultaneously 'inside' the role (identifying and empathising with the character and their situation) and 'outside' (enjoying or analysing the sensation). In the words of the learning theorist Lev Vygotsky, who coined the term, 'the child simultaneously weeps as a patient and revels as a player'. (O'Toole & Dunn, 2002, p. 166)

In relation to process drama, Bundy et al., (2015) asserts that "a participant is capable of having two different affective responses simultaneously, one being generated by the actual world while the other is generated by the dramatic one [world]" (p. 156). The notion of Dual Affect sheds light on the experience of students within process-based drama learning experiences, as an extension of play.

## A Qualitative Approach

A qualitative approach is appropriate "for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 27) and has therefore been selected for this research. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) note, "The process of [qualitative] research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants' setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (p. 27). Eisner (2017) argued for the importance of qualitative inquiry as a way of understanding education more deeply. He writes:

If qualitative inquiry in education is about anything, it is about trying to understand what teachers and children do in the settings in which they work. To achieve this aim [...] it is necessary to "get in touch" with the schools and classrooms we care about, to see them, and to use what we see as sources for interpretation and appraisal. (Eisner, 2017, p. 11).

This research aims to investigate, richly describe, interpret and appraise the *School Drama* intervention in three classrooms across three different schools using a qualitative approach to gain



multiple perspectives and meanings. As Nastasi and Schensul (2005) argue, qualitative research is suitable when “documenting the adaptations necessary for application of interventions to real-life contexts and for identifying core intervention components which are related to desired outcomes” (p. 187).

In discussing the value of the qualitative paradigm for teachers as researchers, Kincheloe (1991) describes the tensions between addressing those areas that need understanding rather than merely collecting metrics.

The information that social sciences collect may include observed behaviour, documents, and artefacts, but these source materials cannot be separated from the meanings granted them by past, present and future human agents. The qualitative dominion of research attempts to appreciate this human meaning. (Kincheloe, 1991, p. 143)

Within the qualitative paradigm, a constructivist (or constructivist-interpretive) worldview is adopted for this project. A constructivist-interpretive worldview is based on the belief that human beings seek to make meanings from their experiences. “These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meaning into a few categories or ideas” (Creswell & Creswell, p. 30). In addition, the research goal depends on the participants’ views of the situation being studied as much as is feasible (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

This study is underpinned by a constructivist approach as it “assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 20). The relativist ontology is present through the multiple realities or perspectives of the research participants, the teacher, students and teaching artist/researcher in each case study. A subjective epistemology is evident in the manner in which the researcher works with the students and classroom teacher to ‘co-create understandings’. And finally, the three case studies adhere to the ‘naturalistic’ set of methodological procedures as the research takes place within the classroom investigating the phenomena as they occur.

## Research question

As mentioned earlier, the major questions that this research aimed to address are:

What are the experiences and outcomes of students engaged in the *School Drama* program?

Do the drama-based pedagogical practices and processes contribute to positive shifts in student outcomes? If so, how?

### Case study

Case study methodology, commonly used within the qualitative research paradigm (Stake, 2005), is appropriate for this research as it is a form of “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). The contemporary phenomenon in this research is the drama-based intervention, *School Drama*, in three case study classrooms in 2017. Drawing on the work of Stake (1995) and Yin (2009, 2012, 2014), Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that case study methodology allows the researcher to develop:

an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 36).

Case study is therefore appropriate for this in-depth multi-site research in three classes involved in *School Drama* during the 2017 school year (Chapters 6, 7 and 8). Additionally, case studies allow for the researcher to not only discuss the outcomes but document the research process (O’Toole, 2006). As Blackmore (2015) asserted, there is no such thing as a “like” school. Similarly, no two classes are ever the same. Three cases were therefore identified from three different schools. Yin (2009) explains that the “potential vulnerability of the single-case design is that a case may later turn out not to be the case it was thought to be at the outset” (pp. 49-50). Further, Yin suggests that “even with two cases, you have the possibility of direct replication. Analytic conclusions independently arising from two cases, as with two experiments, will be more powerful than those coming from a single case (or single experiment) alone (2009, p. 61). My aim was to identify consistencies and resonances across the three case study sites (explored in Chapter 9) that may then also be applied across the program more generally (without generalising the findings). As Yin explains:

“How can you generalise from a single case?” is a frequently heard question. [...] Consider for the moment that the same question had been asked about an experiment. [...] In fact, scientific facts are rarely based on single experiments; they are usually based on a multiple set of experiments that have replicated the same phenomenon under different conditions. The same approach can be used with multiple-case studies [...]. The short answer is that case

studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universals. (Yin, 2009, p. 15)

Further, Yin (2009) suggests that “most multiple-case designs are likely to be stronger than single-case designed” (p. 24). Given that, as O’Toole (2006) notes, “Drama is by its very nature a negotiated group art form and is therefore a non-reproducible experience” (p. 46), learnings from these three case studies are not generalisable.

In addition, this multi-site case study extends the portfolio of case study research on the *School Drama* program (Beaumont, in press; Hankus, 2016; Karaolis, in press; Mcatamney, 2018; Robertson, 2010; Saunders, 2015; Smith, 2014; Sze, 2013). Each has developed a thick (Geertz, 1973) or rich description (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) about the impact of one or more aspects of the program. They allow us to hear multiple teacher and student voices. As O’Toole (2006) suggests:

Because of the complexity of the interactions, the **whole** creative sequence needs to be studied. The case study honours the agency of the participants and positions them as experts rather than merely a source for data analysis. (O’Toole, 2006, p. 46, original emphasis).

This research investigates, describes, interprets and explains three *School Drama* interventions and explores both the unique and common outcomes across these three sites. The three case study sites were chosen for three key reasons. First, each was undertaken in a different school term so this research captures a complete school year of the program (*School Drama* is delivered in terms 2, 3 and 4 of the 2017 school year). As the researcher and teaching artist, I worked with a single class each term.

Second, the multi-site case studies engaged a range of schools. Schools who choose to engage in the program are from all sectors (public, independent and to a lesser extent, Catholic) and include students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Two public schools (Gungahlin Public School and Wentworth Public School) and one independent school (Waratah Grammar School) were selected in this study and are from different socio-economic contexts. Australian schools are provided with an Index of Community Socio-Education Advantage (ICSEA) value because:

Research shows that there is a strong relationship between the educational advantage a student has, as measured by the parents’ occupation and level of education completed, and

their educational achievement. The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is a scale that represents levels of educational advantage. A value on the scale assigned to a school is the average level of all students in the particular school. (ACARA, 2014, p. 2)

The ICSEA value is between 800 (extremely disadvantaged background) and 1,200 (extremely advantaged background) with a mean score of 1,000 (ACARA, 2014). Case Study One at Waratah Grammar School (Waratah or WGS) is an elite independent school with an ICSEA score of 1,159 (ACARA, 2017a). Case Study Three at Wentworth Public School (Wentworth or WPS) is a public school located in Sydney's East with an ICSEA score of 1,196 (ACARA, 2017c); and Case Study Two at Gungahlin Public School (Gungahlin or GPS) has lower socio-economic status with an ICSEA value of 1,019 and a high proportion of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander students and students from EAL/D backgrounds (ACARA, 2017b). In contrast to the assumption that independent schools attracted the most advantaged students, in this series of case studies, Wentworth Public School had the highest ICSEA score (1,196) indicating that Wentworth's clientele is from the most advantaged educational background. The ICSEA score for Gungahlin Public School is closer to the national mean.

The third key reason for three case studies is to enable a cross-case synthesis (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) argues that when the research consists of multiple cases "the analysis is likely to be easier and the findings likely to be more robust than having only a single case [and] having more than two cases could strengthen the findings even further" (p. 156).

### The research sites and participants

In this section each site is briefly introduced<sup>10</sup>. A richer description of each site, the school, classroom teacher and students begins the three case study chapters (Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

#### *Case One – Waratah Grammar School*

Waratah Grammar School (WGS) is a non-selective, co-educational, secular, independent school catering for primary (K to Year 6) and secondary (Years 7 to 12) students on the one campus located in an inner-city suburb of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. School fees range from \$17,900 AUD to \$24,930 AUD per year. In 2017, there were 1,129 students enrolled in the primary years of schooling. Only 2% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander while 26% of students identified as being EAL/D (WGS, 2017). The class was taught by Mr Dane Everhart, a 31 year old teacher who

---

<sup>10</sup> Pseudonyms are used for the name of the school, the name of the suburb and the name of the teacher and students.

had been at the school for 6.5 years at the time of the study. The class consisted of 26 students, 13 girls and 13 boys. No students identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; however, four students identified that they spoke languages other than English at home (French, Dutch, Italian and Spanish).

### *Case Two - Gungahlin Public School*

During term 3 2017, I worked at Gungahlin Public School (Gungahlin), situated in the inner-west of Sydney within several hundred metres of Waratah Grammar School, but catering for a very different group of children. Gungahlin has a student population of only 260 students from Kindergarten to year 6. Gungahlin, as a suburb, is a culturally and linguistically diverse area and this is reflected in the demographic of the students who attend the school. Forty-one percent of students are EAL/D and 18% of students at the school identify as Aboriginal. The school's ISCEA value of 1019 has steadily increased since 2008 (when the ISCEA values commenced) when the school received a value of 937, under the mean score (ACARA, 2017b). I worked with a group of 26 Year 5 students, comprising 14 girls and 10 boys, and their teacher, Mr Jacob Lockyer who had been teaching for five years.

### *Case Three – Wentworth Public School*

The final case study in this research study was a Year 4/5 composite class at Wentworth Public School (Wentworth), located in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. I worked with this class during term 4, 2017. The class included 26 students, 12 Year 4 students and 14 Year 5 students. There were 14 girls and 12 boys in the class. I worked with an experienced teacher at Wentworth, Mrs Leanne McPhee who had been teaching for 32 years and has been at Wentworth for the past 26 years. No students at the school identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; however, the school does have 43% EAL/D students.

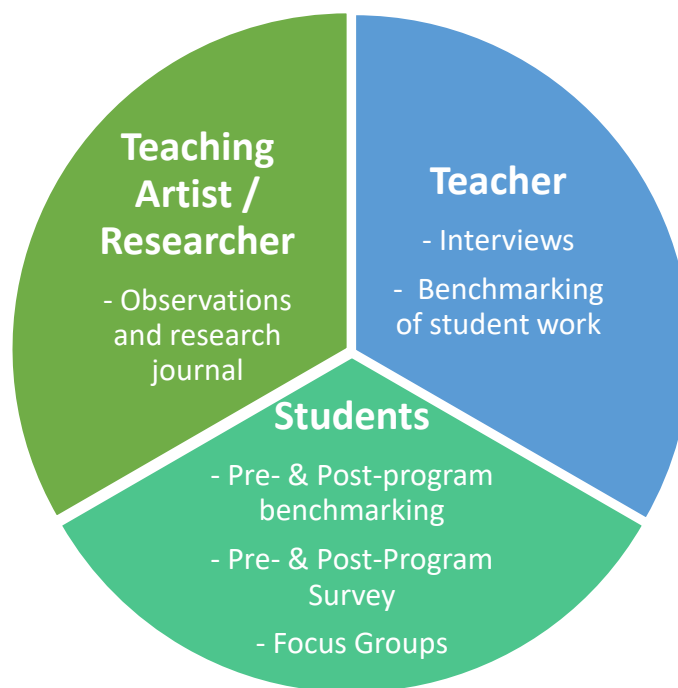
All students from each of the three cases participated in the research.

## Data Collection Methods

A key principle in case study research is the use of multiple sources of evidence given that “the various sources are highly complementary” (Yin, 2009, p.101). As mentioned previously, this research involved multiple data collection methods, which are important in ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings through crystallisation (discussed below). Figure 4 (below) illustrates the multiple data sources used during this research.

Evidence collected included benchmarking student literacy achievement in one or more of the four English/literacy focus areas outlined in the *School Drama* program (confidence in oracy, creative/imaginative writing, descriptive language, and inferential comprehension as defined in Chapter 1). Students were benchmarked before the program began and after the program concluded (weeks one and nine of the school term). Students were also involved in focus groups during and after the program regarding: their learning in literacy; confidence; motivation; engagement; and empathy. The researcher interviewed the class teachers to explore the students' experience through the lens of the teacher and to document their perceptions of the academic and non-academic impacts of the program on their students. The researcher also used a research journal (examples of reflections can be found in appendices A, B and C).

*Figure 4 Data Collection Methods*



The teaching artist/researcher observations and research journal, teacher interviews, student pre- and post-program survey, and student focus groups are interpretive data. As Morse (2018) explains, these are forms of data that consist of “reported perceptions, experiences, feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and responses” (p. 810). The student pre- and post-program benchmarking are, however, descriptive data that “may be checked and validated with an external source” (Morse, 2018, p. 810). As discussed

below, these benchmarking tasks were administered and assessed by the classroom teacher rather than the researcher/teaching artist.

## Interviews

Interviews were an important source of data in this research and “are an essential source of case study information” (Yin, 2009, p. 106). At least two interviews were conducted with each of the participating teachers; one during and one after the final workshop was completed. In addition, another interview was conducted with each of the participating teachers in 2019 to enable each teacher to verify (Richards, 2005) that the data analysis was accurate.

The schedule of data collection for each case study is recorded in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 and differs slightly. The interviews with each class teacher were semi-structured in nature. As Brinkmann (2018) argues, this form of interview is particularly useful because rather than pre-determined interview questions it:

can make better use of the knowledge-producing potentials of dialogues by allowing much more leeway for following up on whatever angles are deemed important by the interviewee, and the interviewer has a greater chance of becoming visible as a knowledge-producing participant in the process itself. (Brinkmann, 2018, p. 579).

The second (and when conducted, third) interviews with the classroom teacher immediately followed workshops in the middle of the seven-week intervention and the final interview was conducted after the program had concluded. This interview focussed on reflecting on the entire program and discussing the student benchmarking data. For Case Study 1 and 2 (Waratah Grammar School and Gungahlin Public School) the interviews took place in the term following the intervention, and as the intervention at Wentworth Public School occurred during the final term of the school year, before a substantial holiday period, the final interview was conducted in the final week of the school year.

Interviews with the class teachers were an integral data collection method in this study in order to ascertain the teachers’ perceptions of the impacts the program was having on their students’ outcomes. They followed similar patterns and structures but were more ‘guided conversations’ rather than following a rigid formula (Yin, 2009). Each class teacher’s observations provided a unique and important insight into whether the teacher saw any benefits of the program. At times the teachers took on the role of “an ‘informant’ rather than a respondent [...]” (Yin, 2009). Such persons provide case study investigators with insights into the phenomenon and also can initiate access to

corroboratory or contrary sources of evidence” (p. 107). This is particularly important when the main subjects of this study were the students themselves, and it was important for the teacher, who knew their students better than the researcher, to add corroboratory or contrary insights and explanations of student comments, attitudes and behaviours.

### Focus groups

Focus groups were employed to gain insights into the drama-based intervention experience from the participating students’ perspectives. This formed a core part of data collection. O’Toole (2006) argues that focus groups can provide “rich and profound insights and observations from the interviewees” (p. 114). Groundwater-Smith, Dockett and Bottrell (2015) recommend that focus groups and interviews are appropriate when researching with children and young people as an important way of capturing the student voice during the research process.

At least two focus groups were conducted during each of the three in-depth case studies. As the researcher and teaching artist led these, sometimes the teacher also observed the focus group interviews (particularly at Wentworth Public School). At other times the teacher conducted a reflective learning experience with the majority of the class while I led a focus group with a small number of students. O’Toole (2006) reminds researchers that there is a danger of missing the ‘silenced voices’ within the group and ensuring that those students who have a different opinion or observation are encouraged to share their thoughts during the focus groups. I also had to be very mindful during these focus groups to avoid any perceived hierarchy between the adults (teacher, teaching artist/researcher) and children (students) (Morgan, Gibbs, Maxwell & Britten, 2002). At the start of each focus group, I asked students to be as honest as they could be and to try to avoid students trying to tell me what they thought I might want to hear.

On several occasions during the workshops, I recorded whole class debriefs which I have considered as additional focus groups to the case study. These were an opportunity for the entire class to comment on the intervention at that point in time. The themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the student focus groups led to the key themes outlined in each of the three case study chapters.

Selection of students who participated in the focus groups within the three case studies varied. Sometimes students volunteered to be a part of the focus group. At other times the classroom teacher suggested particular individuals might like to participate.



Interviews, focus groups, and comments from surveys have been tagged using the following formula as shown in Table 1.

*Table 1 Activity Name and Tag*

<b>Table 1</b> <b>Activity Name and Tag</b>	
<b>Activity Name</b>	<b>Tag</b>
Focus group	FG date
Pre-program student survey	PrePSS
Post-program student survey	PostPSS
Pre-program teacher survey	PrePTS
Post-program teacher survey	PostPTS
Teacher interview	I date

### Artefacts: Student work samples and Benchmarking

Throughout each year of the *School Drama* program, STC asks that one class from each participating school take part in benchmarking student work before and after the intervention. These benchmarking artefacts are usually written work samples from students. In 2014 I designed the task templates and the rubrics that outline criteria on an A to E scale based on the NSW English Curriculum outcomes. Administering these benchmarking assessment tasks to each case study class allowed both the teacher and I to see what growth in the selected literacy area, if any, had taken places during the *School Drama* intervention.

The pre-test was based on a text that the students had just studied and the post-test on the text that was explored through the *School Drama* experience. As mentioned previously, there are four focus areas of English/literacy that have benchmarking tasks and rubrics:

- confidence in oracy
- creative/imaginative writing
- descriptive language, and
- inferential comprehension.

It is important to note that the pre- and post-tasks were both marked by the classroom teacher, not the researcher, to ensure there was no bias in the assessment of the student work. All teachers in this study selected the same literacy focus area, inferential comprehension. The student benchmarking tasks and rubrics were designed to align to the Australian Curriculum: English and the NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum, English K-10 Syllabus (NESA, 2012). The rubric (see Appendix J) explicitly links to NSW Syllabus outcomes and the criteria provide elaborations focusing on inferential comprehension that are also consistent with the Australian Curriculum: English and the National Literacy Learning Progressions (NESA, 2018).

### Filmed recordings of workshops

Holding the dual roles of researcher and teaching artist, I initially intended to film all workshops to aid in later reflection. However, prior to commencing the research, I decided not to film the workshops as I wanted them to be authentic in reflecting the regular *School Drama* process. I was concerned that filming the workshops would add a distraction for the students. Instead, I used audio recordings of whole class reflections at the end of some workshops and I kept a research journal to document my reflections about each workshop.

### Student survey

The student survey was informed by research undertaken by Martin et al., (2013) and Mansour's (2013) doctoral research. I designed and implemented a pre- and post-program survey which aimed to capture student observations about their learning and attitudes before and after the intervention. The pre- and post-program student survey had 47 identical questions and the post-survey had an additional section (section five) with an additional 15 questions asking students to reflect on the *School Drama* experience. The majority of questions in the survey are original although several were adapted from existing surveys including Mansour's (2013), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD; 2000 and 2006) student surveys, and Martin's (2007, 2008, 2009b) Motivation and Engagement Scale (MES), a 44 item instrument that measures student motivation and engagement. Due to copyright restrictions, Martin's (2007, 2008, 2009b) MES was not used as an analysis tool in this research.

Some questions in the student survey were open ended and others used a 10-point scale Likert scale (ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'). The pre- and post-survey can be found in Appendix D. Although most Likert scales have between three and eight points, "more points are able to capture a finer degree of discrimination on the continuum" (O'Toole, 2006, p. 121). The survey allowed the researcher to capture responses from all students, not just those who participated in

focus groups and to track any shifts in student responses following the intervention. Students did not have access to their pre-program responses when completing the post-program survey.

Descriptive statistics and graphing have been used to represent the data from teacher and student surveys. Graphs (Figures) have been employed to visually represent the data and descriptive statistics accompany these in discussing the data.

### Research journal

As both the researcher and the teaching artist, I was able to keep a reflective journal following each workshop. These have formed part of the brief reflections in each of the appendices A, B and C which provide a detailed outline of the drama workshops used in each of the three case studies (Chapters 6, 7 and 8).

### The position of the researcher and reflexivity

The position of the researcher is particularly important in qualitative research as they are often the collector and the analyser of that data. Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2018) provide a useful explanation of reflexivity in qualitative research.

Reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the “human as instrument” (Gube & Lincoln, 1981). [...] It is a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the process of research itself (Alcoff & Potter, 1993). (Lincoln et al., 2018, p. 143).

In this study, I have been both the researcher and teaching artist in the three case studies. While this does open the research up for scrutiny about potential or perceived bias, as Rudduck and Hopkins (1985) argue, it is important to place teachers at the centre of educational research. Certainly my work as Director of Education and Community Partnerships at Sydney Theatre Company managing the *School Drama* program and being the teaching artist in the three case studies can be perceived as a potential bias; however, it also allowed me a unique opportunity to reflect on my own practice as a teacher and investigate the impacts (both positive and negative) that this approach to student learning can have.

My own background as a secondary Drama, English and Social Science teacher has certainly shaped the research process and the *School Drama* program more broadly. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest, writing personal notes or observations during the research process can be useful to the researcher in developing codes and themes in the research. This was certainly true in my research process. Appendices A, B and C outline the drama-based learning experiences for each of the in-depth case studies and include examples of my reflections as the researcher/teaching artist. Many of the themes and codes that have been used when analysing the data emerged from the interviews and focus groups with the students and teachers and I noted these throughout the process. During the research process, I continued to discuss the process with my supervisors and my role as researcher and teaching artist. I made my dual roles explicit to the students involved in the three case studies. “Sufficient reflexivity occurs when researchers record notes during the process of research, reflect on their own personal experiences, and consider how their personal experiences may shape their interpretation of results” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 180.) My personal experience as a primary school student who found learning difficult, particularly learning to read and write, certainly heightened my interest in how the use of drama-based pedagogy might have the potential to transform learning and improve student outcomes, particularly for students who, like me, were receiving low literacy scores or who were having behaviour issues within the classroom environment.

Reflexive thinking is further discussed in the following section on data analysis. Briefly, as a reflexive researcher and practitioner, I have looked critically at all the data collected to present accurate findings. Negative findings are just as useful to a reflexive practitioner as they provide opportunities for further learning and investigation. As Freebody (2003) notes in discussing the complex role of an educational researcher:

[...] research is an intervention into ongoing activities in the world, not a passive portrait of them [...] Researchers are necessarily, and therefore should self-consciously be, agents of social and educational change, however we perceive that role. These concerns lead us to reconsider the role of the qualitative researcher as, at the one time, a commentator, a collaborator, and an educational activist. (p. 67).

In addition to being reflexive in this research process, my dual roles of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ as a qualitative researcher need to be acknowledged. As the researcher I must be aware of how my status potentially impacts on the research. In their seminal article, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) propose advantages in ‘the space between’ being an insider and outsider as a researcher. This ‘space between’

or sitting 'between' the two dialectical positions is where I see myself in this research project. I was an insider as I was the teaching artist working with the classroom teacher and students over the course of a school term. They knew that I held the dual roles as researcher and teaching artist. I was also an insider as I managed the *School Drama* program and the team of teaching artists, so I possessed a deep understanding of the program in its entirety, its history, what has influenced the program, and its particular pedagogy. This can be seen as a positive, as I can look at the 'whole' with a deeper understanding than if I was an outsider without this knowledge. This may also be perceived as a negative, as I can be seen to be too close to the program. However, I was also an outsider when I held the role of a teaching artist as I was not fully part of the class community. Falling into the 'space between' allowed me some distance and detachment at different times during the research process.

Dwyer and Buckle (2009) also argue that within qualitative research, the researcher is "not separate from the study" (p. 61). Rather, they suggest, qualitative researchers:

[...] are firmly in all aspects of the research process and are essential to it. The stories of participants are immediate and real to us; individual voices are not lost in a pool of numbers. We carry these individuals with us as we work with the transcripts. The words, representing experiences, are clear and lasting. We cannot retreat to a distant 'researcher' role. (p. 61).

## Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was sought and approved by the University of Sydney's Ethics Committee (see Appendix E). In addition, as case studies 2 and 3 occurred in NSW public schools State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP) was required and approved (Appendix F) by the New South Wales Department of Education (SERAP 2017333). A requirement of any research involving children also required me to have a current NSW Working With Children Check (WWCC).

The principal from each site/school was approached formally and provided a letter consenting to the research. Participation in this study was voluntary and all participants (teachers, parents/carers and students) were provided with information statements prior to the study commencing. The three teachers, all students and their parents agreed to take part in the research project and signed the appropriate consent forms (Appendices G and H). Anonymity was essential, and pseudonyms have been used for the names of the schools, teachers and students to protect their identities.

## Limitations

There are two main limitations to this research: the researcher as teaching artist; and, the inability to generalise the research findings.

As articulated earlier in this chapter, the researcher was also the teaching artist and this may present a potential or perceived bias in the research. As addressed above, however, this may also be viewed in a positive light. The researcher has used multiple data collection points and reflected carefully on the findings to ensure the findings are trustworthy, credible and authentically represented (Creswell & Miller, 2000). As mentioned above, due to the nature of this qualitative case study research, the findings cannot be generalised.

Each method of data collection has advantages and limitations and these issues are further discussed in the subsequent section on analysis.

## Data Analysis

Analysing qualitative data is an “iterative process and begins as soon as the researcher begins to make sense of the data within the interview itself” (Kvale, 2008, in Gardiner, 2014, p. 57). This occurred in the first workshop where I made observations of the class in action. This continued during each interview with the classroom teacher and the focus groups with students. My semi-structured interviews and focus groups allowed me to follow up on key ideas or points raised by participants and prompted me to probe more deeply or ask for explanations about themes raised.

The analysis began by exploring interviews with the teacher and students to see what themes were present. I have followed five questions suggested by O’Toole (2006) succinctly paraphrased and captured by Gardiner (2014) as:

1. What did I see as positive data?
2. What did I see as negative data?
3. What did I find interesting?
4. What ideas seemed to be emerging in more than one place?
5. What ideas seemed to be absent? (p. 58).

I explored the data neutrally and critically and left time between the collection of data and analysis of data (O'Toole, 2006). The first analytical tool I used was coding, which is the use of "a word or a short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldana, 2009, p. 3). I used Tesch's (1990) eight steps in the coding process and Creswell and Creswell's (2018) concept of the "expected codes, surprising codes and codes for unusual or of conceptual interest" as a guide (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, pp. 187-188). Following the coding of interviews, I explored the key themes against the pre- and post-program student survey data, teacher interview data, and teaching artist/researcher journal in order to crystallise the data by seeing the nuances in the different perspectives.

Richardson's (1997) concept of crystallisation is central to the analysis of this research project. Richardson and Adams St Pierre (2018) explain that "In triangulation, a researcher deploys different methods – interviews, census data, documents and the like to 'validate' findings. These methods, however, carry the same domain assumptions, including the assumptions that there is a 'fixed point' or an 'object' that can be triangulated" (p. 822). In contrast, they argue for crystallisation, employing the metaphor of the crystal which:

combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, and are altered, but they are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns, and arrays casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose – not triangulation but rather crystallisation. (Richardson & Adams St Pierre, 2018, p. 822).

The different data sources provided different perspectives or lenses on the *School Drama* process from the points of view of the teachers, students and the researcher/teaching artist, therefore crystallisation is the central prism used in analysing and interpreting the data. Crystallisation must also include the negative data, as O'Toole (2006) observes: "A true crystal shows its impurities in its areas of cloudiness and the seams and fault-lines of alien compounds that run through it" (p. 148). I consciously looked for and included negative data.

Through the use of the crystal metaphor and Richardson's 'angle of repose', the research experience was explored through different lenses or different 'angles': from that of the researcher; the teaching

artist; the classroom teacher; and the students. Crystallisation honours these lenses by including each perspective in the interpretation and analysis of the data.

To ensure the trustworthiness, authenticity and credibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000) of this research data, I have followed Creswell and Creswell's (2018) suggested series of processes for validity and reliability in qualitative research. Member checking, which involved taking the initial findings back to all three teachers at the end of the process (2017), was employed following an initial analysis and first draft of the case study chapters. Member checking occurred again in 2019 with all three teachers being re-interviewed after reading the final draft and full analysis of the data. It was not possible to complete member checking with the participating students. Another element in assuring trustworthiness was the use of "rich, thick description to convey the findings" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 191) in each case study allowing the reader to understand the process.

Following the analysis of each individual case study, I undertook a cross-case synthesis which "applies specifically to the analysis of multiple cases" (Yin, 2009, p. 156). This involved looking for commonalities, resonances and differences across the three cases.

## Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the sociocultural framework and constructivist approach used to frame this qualitative study as well as five Vygotskian concepts that underpin the research. The chapter argues that a qualitative approach was most appropriate for this research, as was case methodology. Each case study site was briefly introduced. This section concluded by outlining the data collection methods used in this study; how the data was analysed; the position of the researcher; and the ethical considerations.

The following chapter reports on data collected from teachers in 2017 who participated in the pre-program and post-program teacher survey and a selection of schools who participated in student benchmarking during 2017.



## Chapter 5 – *School Drama* 2017: A Broad Overview

“The arts enable us to have experience we can have from no other source and through such experience to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling.”

(Eisner, 2000, p. 14).

### Introduction

Before exploring the three in-depth case studies in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, this chapter provides a broad overview of the *School Drama* data collected throughout 2017. As part of the ongoing research and evaluation process, Sydney Theatre Company and The University of Sydney ask one teacher from each participating school to participate in the benchmarking of their students. Teachers also complete a pre-program and post-program survey or questionnaire which provides feedback on the program and invites reflection on each teacher’s own professional learning growth and their students’ development. This chapter presents an analyses of the 2017 student benchmarking and teacher survey data.

### Student Benchmarking

In 2017, 147 classes in 52 schools participated in *School Drama Classic* (the seven-week artist-in-residence model described in Chapter 3). Several schools submitted benchmarking samples for a student who had only participated in a pre-program or post-program task, and as they cannot be compared, these incomplete samples have been removed from the analysis. In addition to the three classes who were specifically identified for this research as in-depth case studies a further 9 classes participated in the benchmarking option (representing a total of around 17% of take up of the benchmarking process). Two different classes, one involved in the in-depth case study research and the other completing the regular program, participated in benchmarking at both Gungahlin Public School and Wentworth Public School.

As mentioned earlier, teachers are asked to benchmark a range of students in one of the four English and literacy focus areas: confidence in oracy; creative/imaginative writing; descriptive language; or inferential comprehension. Individual teachers identify which students will participate in the benchmarking exercise. Sydney Theatre Company encourages teachers to purposefully select students from a range of achievement levels. At times teachers choose to benchmark the whole

student cohort. For the purposes of the three in-depth case studies, all students were benchmarked. Teachers adapt the benchmarking task depending on the texts they use in class (see Appendix J for an example). The pre-program task is conducted during week one of the term and the post-program task is conducted in week nine after the *School Drama* intervention has concluded. Teachers mark the tasks against rubrics designed by STC and The University of Sydney reflecting the NSW English curriculum outcomes (NESA, 2012). In NSW, an A to E reporting framework is mandated and I have extended this in order to differentiate within each of the five A to E grades. Hence, a 15 point A+ to E- scale is used (see Table 2 below) and for the purposes of analysis, each grade (e.g. B) is correlated with a numerical mark (e.g. a grade of a 'B' is represented as 11 marks).

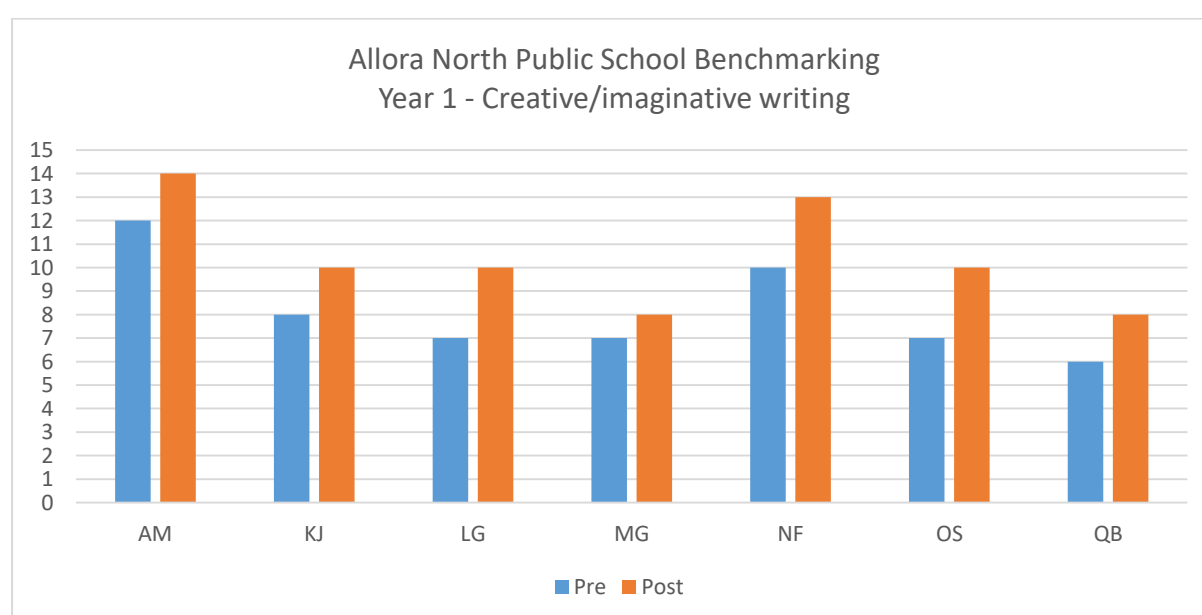
*Table 2 Grade and Mark Value*

Table 2 Grade to Mark Value														
E-	E	E+	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

Each of the 12 classes who participated in the benchmarking are identified below (using pseudonyms). A figure presents the pre-and post-program benchmarking data and a brief analysis is included below the figure. The blue bar represents the pre-program benchmarking mark and the orange bar represents the post-program benchmarking mark.

### Class A: Allora North Public School

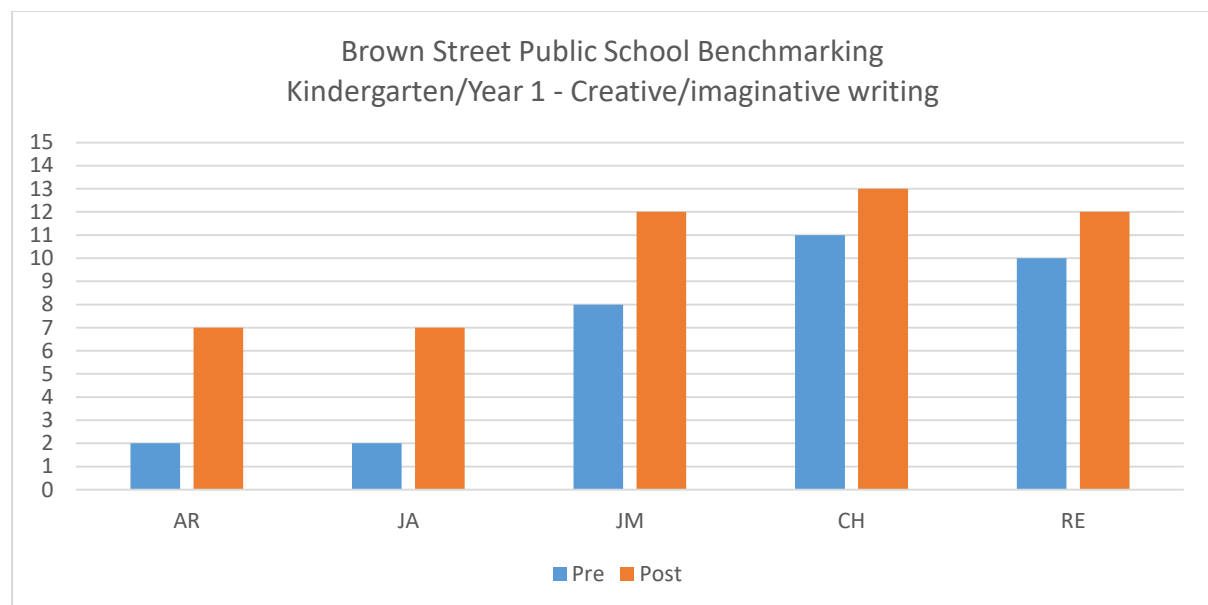
*Figure 5 Allora North Public School Benchmarking*



Seven Year 1 students participated in the pre- and post-program benchmarking tasks that focused on creative/imaginative writing as the English/literacy focus. The average pre-program score was 8.1 (C grade) and the average post-program score was 10.4 (B- grade), with an average positive shift of 2.2 marks. All students improved from the pre- to post-program task.

### Class B: Brown Street Public School

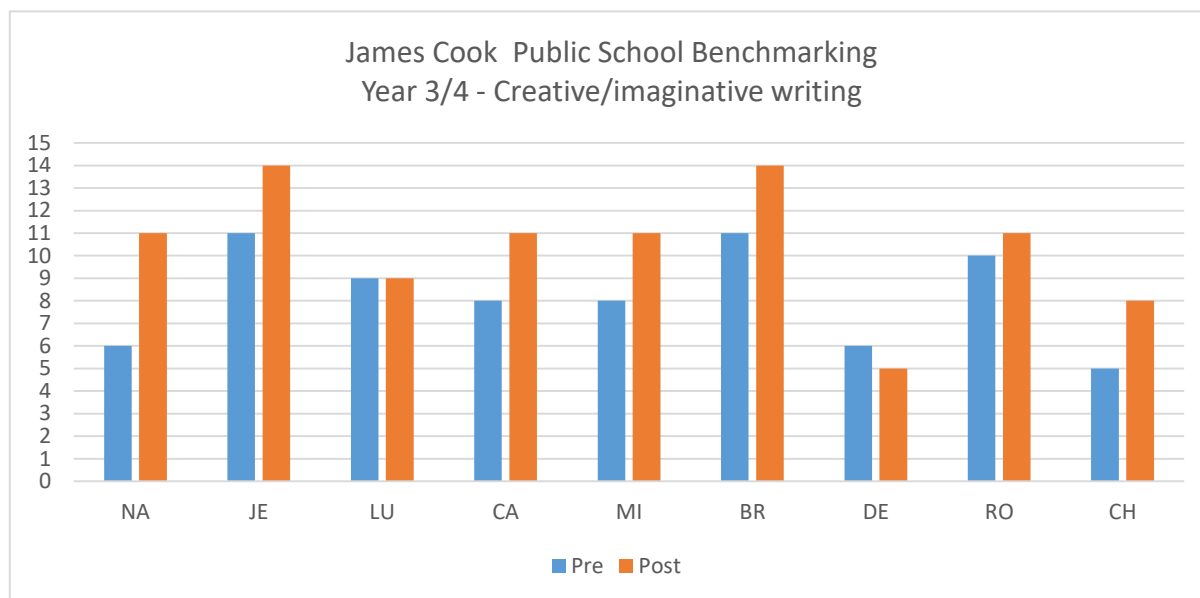
*Figure 6 Brown Street Public School Benchmarking*



Five Kindergarten/Year 1 students were benchmarked from Brown Street Public School in the area of creative/imaginative writing. The average pre-program score was 6.6 (D+ grade) and average post-program score was 10.2 (B- grade), with an average shift of 3.6 marks (representing more than a full grade of shift). Two students (AR and JA) moved from an E to a C-, representing that they now passed the benchmarking task. All 5 students improved their literacy achievement comparing the pre- and post-program tasks.

### Class C: James Cook Public School

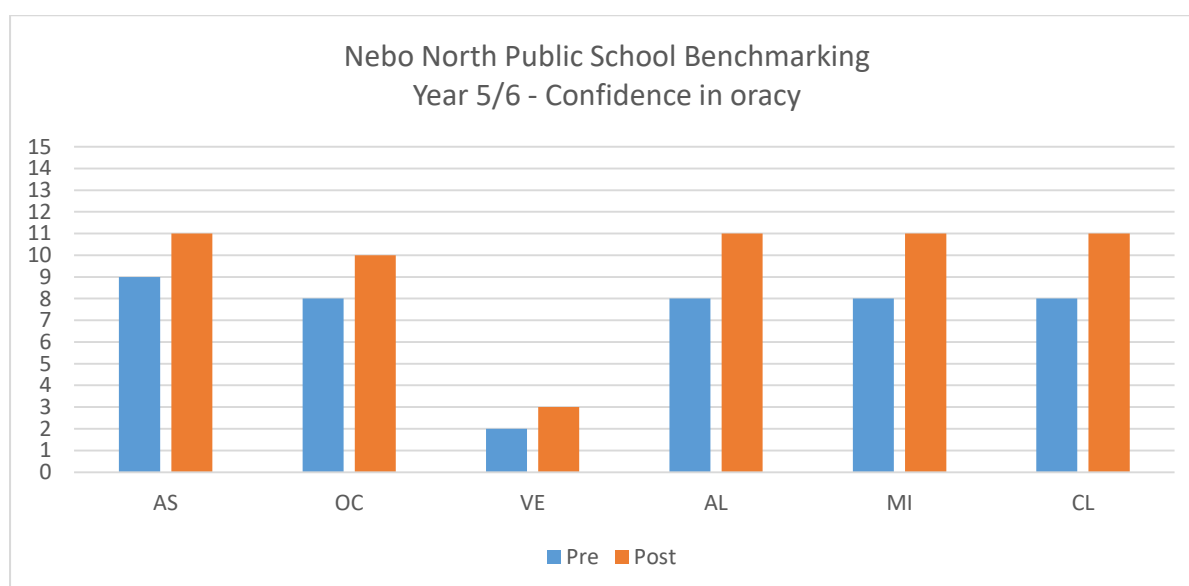
Figure 7 James Cook Public School Benchmarking



Nine Year 3/4 students participated in the benchmarking at James Cook Public School. The average pre-program score was 8.2 (C grade) and average post-program score was 10.4 (B- grade), with an average shift of 2.2 marks. Students in the lower range in the pre-program task (NA and CH) generally had the greatest movement in their pre- to post-program shifts. One student had no shift (LU) and one student slightly decreased their literacy score (DE) from a D+ to a D.

### Class D: Nebo North Public School

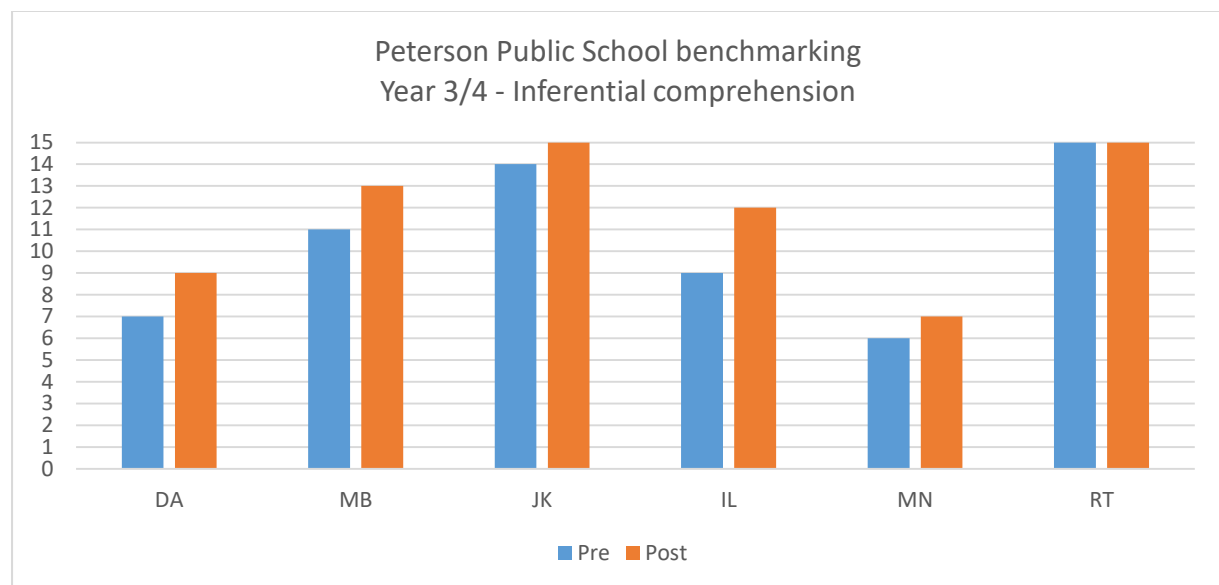
Figure 8 Nebo North Public School Benchmarking



Six students in the Year 5/6 class at Nebo North Public School were benchmarked in the area of confidence in oracy. An average pre-program score was 7.1 (C- grade) and average post-program score was 9.5 (C+/B- grade), with an average shift of 2.3 marks. Of the 6 students, 5 received pre-program scores in the C range and all of these students increased their mark to the B range. All students showed improvement when comparing the pre- and post-program tasks.

### Class E: Peterson Public School

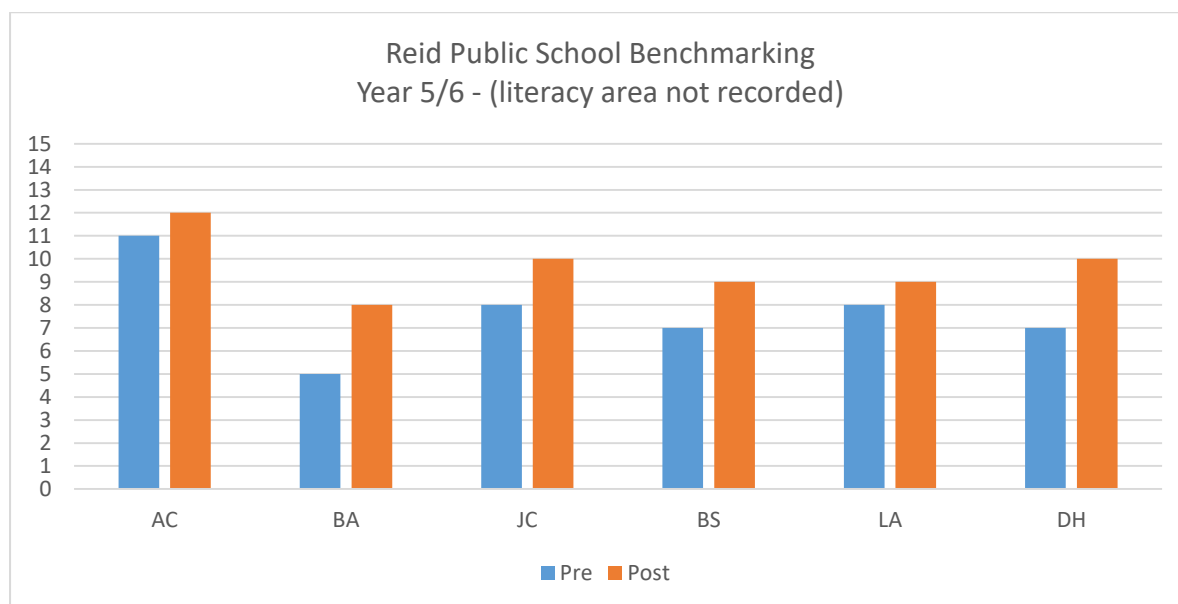
*Figure 9 Peterson Public School Benchmarking*



Six students were benchmarked in the Year 3/4 class at Peterson Public School focusing on inferential comprehension. An average pre-program score was 10.3 (B- grade) and average post-program score was 11.8 (B grade) with an average shift of 1.5 marks. One student did not move (RT); however, they were a high achieving student who received an A+ for both tasks. The remaining 5 students all had positive shifts in their literacy scores.

## Class F: Reid Public School

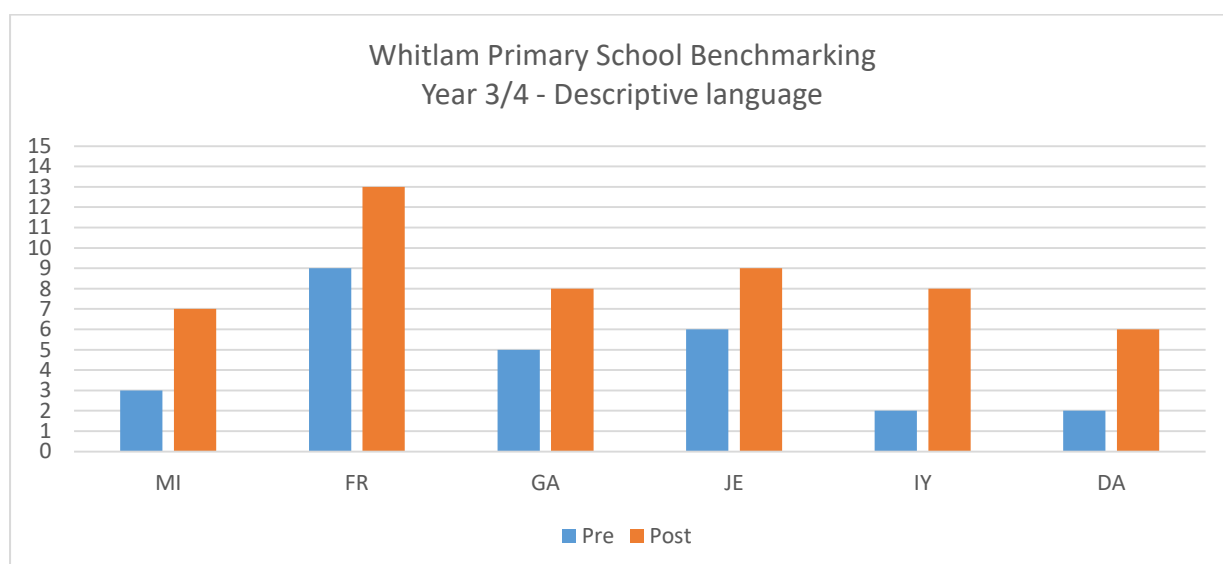
Figure 10 Reid Public School Benchmarking



Six students were benchmarked in the Year 5/6 class at Reid Public School; however no literacy area was recorded. Average pre-program score was 7.6 (C- grade) and average post-program score was 9.6 (B+ grade) with an average shift of 2 marks. All students improved their literacy scores.

## Class G: Whitlam Public School

Figure 11 Whitlam Public School Benchmarking

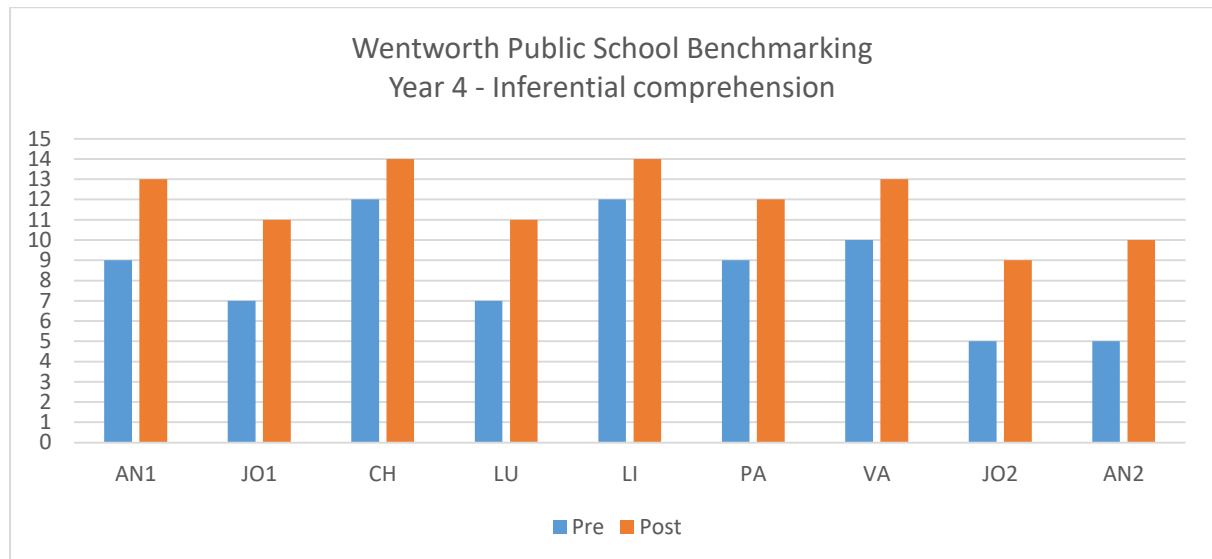


Six students were benchmarked in the Year 3/4 class at Whitlam Primary School. An average pre-program score was 4.5 (D+ grade) and average post-program score was 9 (C+ grade) with an average

shift of 4 marks (representing more than a full grade of shift). Four of the 6 students (GA, JE, IY and DA) received a D or E range grade in the pre-program and these students moved to pass the post-program task receiving mainly C grades in the post-program. All students improved their literacy score in descriptive language.

#### Class H: Wentworth Public School

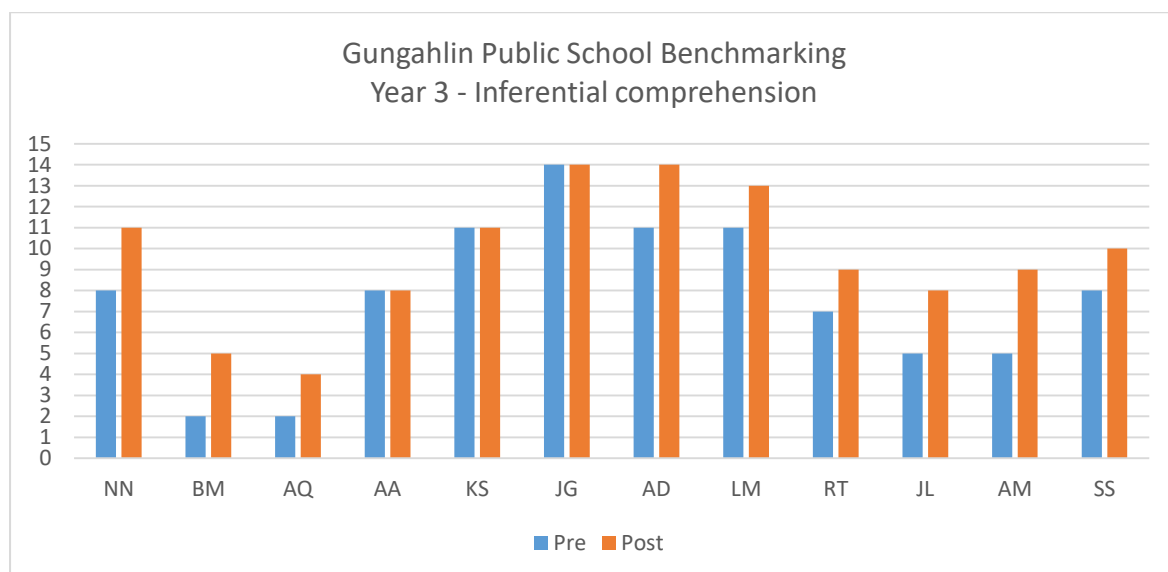
Figure 12 Wentworth Public School Benchmarking



Nine Year 4 students participated in the benchmarking at Wentworth Public School. An average pre-program score was 8.4 (C grade) and average post-program score was 11.8 (B grade) with an average shift of 3.4 marks (representing more than a full grade of shift). Two students (JO2 and AN2) received D grades for their pre-program task and shifted to a C+ and B- respectively moving between 4 and 5 marks. Three other students (AN1, JO1 and LU) moved four marks comparing pre- and post-program data. All students had positive shifts in their inferential comprehension.

## Class I: Gungahlin Public School

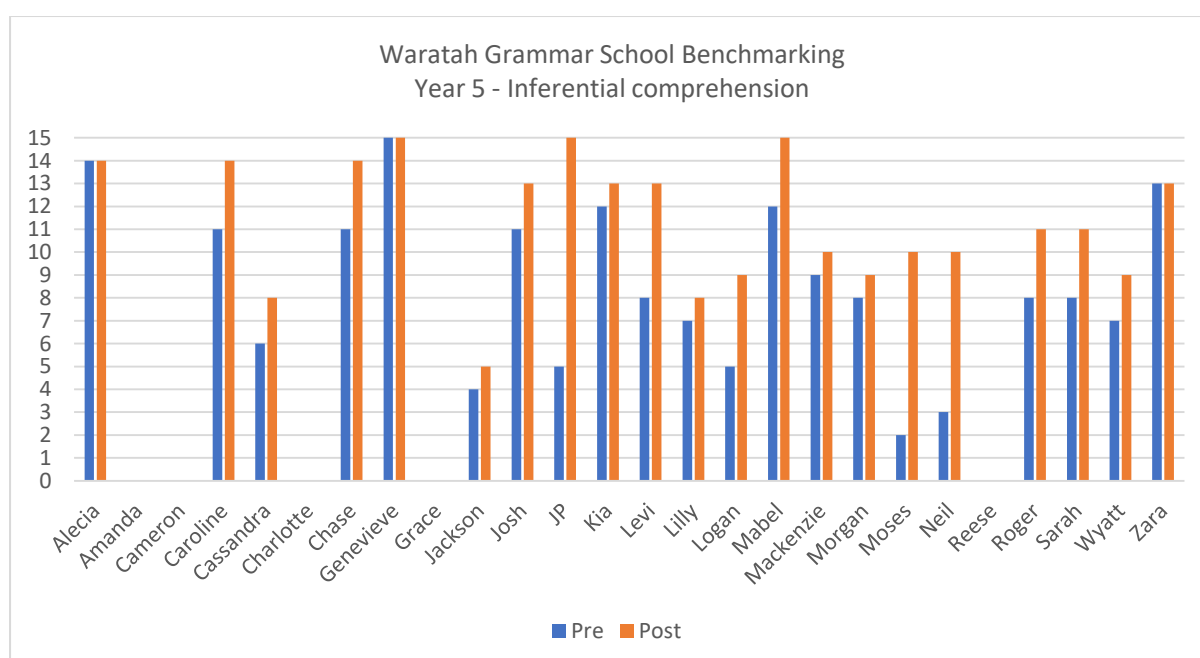
Figure 13 Gungahlin Public School Benchmarking



Twelve students from the Year 3 class at Gungahlin Public School were benchmarked in the area of inferential comprehension. An average pre-program score was 7.6 (C- grade) and average post-program score was 9.6 (C+ grade) with an average shift of 2 marks. Three students (AA, KS and JG) maintained their scores of C, B and A respectively; however, the remaining nine students improved in the area of inferential comprehension.

## Class J: Waratah Grammar School (Case Study 1)

Figure 14 Waratah Grammar School Benchmarking (Case Study 1)

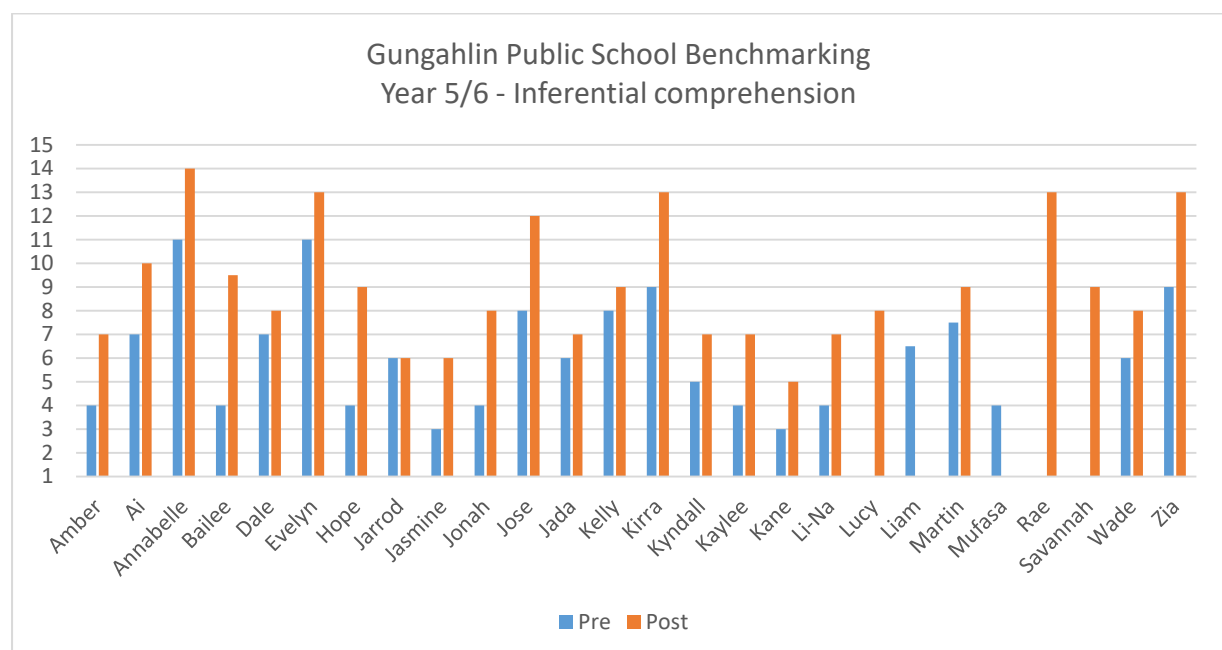




Twenty-one students were benchmarked from Waratah Grammar School Year 5 class in the area of inferential comprehension (this is explored in detail in the following chapter). An average pre-program score was 8.5 (C grade) and average post-program score was 11.3 (B grade) with an average shift of 2.8 marks. Three students (Alicia, Genevieve and Zara) did not move from the pre- to post-program tasks, receiving grades of A, A+ and A-; however, all remaining 18 students improved in their literacy. JP moved 10 marks, the most significant shift in the entire 2017 cohort.

### Class K: Gungahlin Public School (Case Study 2)

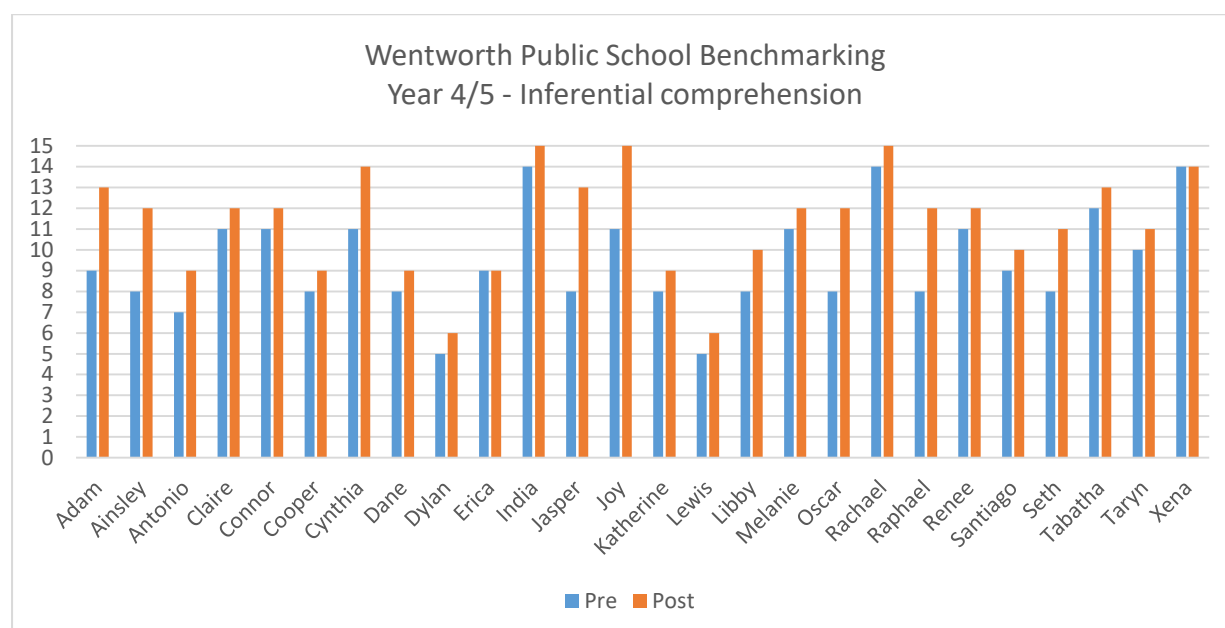
Figure 15 Gungahlin Public School Benchmarking (Case Study 2)



Twenty-one students were benchmarked in the Year 5/6 class at Gungahlin Public School in the area of inferential comprehension. An average pre-program score was 6.2 (D+ grade) and an average post-program score was 8.9 (C/C+ grade) with an average shift of 2.7 marks. Four students (Li-Na, Mufasa, Rea and Savannah) did not complete either the pre- or post-program benchmarking. This data is analysed in more detail in Chapter 7.

## Class L: Wentworth Public School (Case Study 3)

Figure 16 Wentworth Public School Benchmarking (Case Study 3)



Twenty-six students were benchmarked in the Year 4/5 class at Wentworth Public School focusing on inferential comprehension (which is explored in detail as Case Study 3 in Chapter 8). An average pre-program score was 9.2 (C+ grade) and average post-program score was 11.3 (B grade) with an average shift of 1.8 marks.

The following is a breakdown of literacy focus areas of the 12 classes who participated in benchmarking in 2017:

Table 3 Breakdown of literacy foci identified in 2017 benchmarking

Breakdown of literacy foci identified in 2017 benchmarking	
Literacy Foci	Number of classes and percentage of classes
Confidence in oracy	1 of 12 classes / 8%
Creative/imaginative writing	3 of 12 classes / 25%
Descriptive language	1 of 12 classes / 8%
Inferential comprehension	6 of 12 classes / 50%
Unknown/not identified	1 of 12 classes / 8%

The following is a breakdown of stages (year level groupings) of the classes who participated in student benchmarking in 2017:

*Table 4 Breakdown of 2017 benchmarking into Stage and Year Level*

Breakdown of 2017 benchmarking into Stage and Year Level	
Stage/ Year Level	Number of classes participating in 2017 benchmarking and percentage
Early Stage 1 & Stage 1 / Kindergarten, Years 1 & 2	2 of 12 classes / 16%
Stage 2 / Years 3 & 4	5 of 12 classes / 41%
Stage 3 / Years 5 & 6	5 of 12 classes / 41%

There were positive shifts in the post-benchmarked literacy outcomes across the different stage/year levels participating in the *School Drama* program.

*Table 5 Breakdown of 2017 Benchmarking Stage/Year level Average Shift*

Breakdown of 2017 Benchmarking Stage/Year Level Average Shift	
Stage/ Year Level	Average Shift in Marks
Early Stage 1 & Stage 1 / Kindergarten, Years 1 & 2	Average shift of 2.9 marks
Stage 2 / Years 3 & 4	Average shift of 2.62 marks
Stage 3 / Years 5 & 6	Average shift of 2.32 marks

The total average shift of all data is 2.5 marks (just under a full grade of change) and there is no discernable difference between the benchmarking shifts across the three stages (Early Stage 1/Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3).

An examination of the literacy foci chosen explored whether there are similarities or differences in shifts across the 4 English/literacy focus areas.

Table 6 Breakdown of 2017 benchmarking into literacy foci

Breakdown of 2017 benchmarking into literacy foci		
Literacy Foci	Number of classes	Average Shift in Marks
Confidence in oracy	1 class	Average shift of 2.3 marks
Creative/imaginative writing	3 classes	Average shift of 2.6 marks
Descriptive language	4 classes	Average shift of 4 marks
Inferential comprehension	6 classes	Average shift of 2.3 marks

It is difficult to read too much into these results as the number of teachers who chose to benchmark is very low. However, across the K-6 continuum similar positive shifts were evident when comparing the pre- and post-program *School Drama* intervention benchmarked tasks.

## Teacher Survey

Teachers are invited to participate in a pre-program and post-program survey before the program commences and after the program concludes (Appendix I). Of the 147 teachers who participated in *School Drama Classic* in 2017, 90 (61%) participated in the pre-program survey and 59 (40%) participated in the post-program survey. An analysis of the post-program survey data follows.

The post-program survey consists of 24 questions, some open-ended questions and some multiple-choice questions. Only a selection of questions relevant to this research have been included in this analysis. Other questions relate to internal aspects of the program, such as quality assurance.

Question 4 asked: “What has been your experience of taking part in *School Drama*, in regard to your professional learning?” This was an open-ended question and the Word Cloud below (Figure 17) provides a summary of responses. The larger the word appears on the Word Cloud, the more times it was mentioned in the survey responses.

Figure 17 Response to PostPTS Question 4

Q4 What has been your experience of taking part in School Drama, in regard to your professional learning?



A range of responses were provided by participating teachers. The teacher responses below (and in the remainder of this chapter) are only a selection of quotes and were chosen to represent the range of perspectives articulated. (The tag 'PostPTS' denotes comments made by teachers in the Post-Program Teacher Survey).

The experience of working with a drama specialist has been very helpful to my professional learning. In particular, I have appreciated the safe and nurturing environment that the drama specialist created to help me learn. (PostPTS).

It has helped me to use more drama strategies in my classroom and working with another teacher was a great experience. (PostPTS).

An uplifting experience that enriched teaching and learning through fun, relevant and communicative self-expression for all. (PostPTS).

Wow! This was an experience very beneficial to my teaching practices of drama and linking this unit to our English and Geography units. This experience has given me the confidence and ideas to use with the students. Even the more reserved students were enjoying the program after the first couple of lessons. The program was very inclusive and engaging. (PostPTS).

I loved watching the children come to life during these drama sessions and especially watching their understanding of a character expand through drama activities. (PostPTS).



The students were engaged, they gained confidence and built their self-esteem. Learning was fun! (PostPTS).

I believe students have increased their confidence, creativity and imaginative skills. And their literacy skills have also gone beyond just text. They were given tools to be imaginative. (PostPTS).

They were very engaged and they applied this to their writing. (PostPTS).

Confidence building for sure. Building positive relationships with one another. (PostPTS).

Love for English and the arts. (PostPTS).

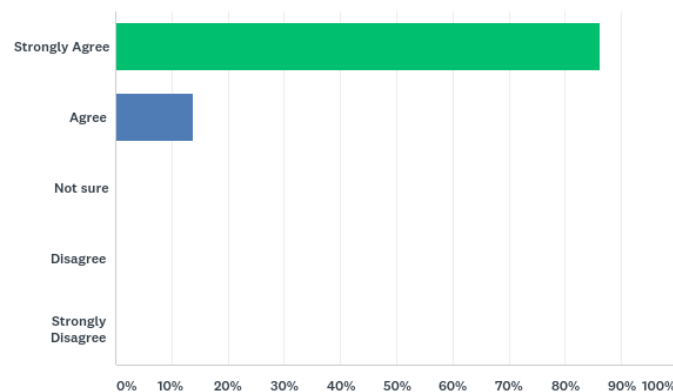
Students have been able to bring a book to life with their imagination and own interpretation. (PostPTS).

These teacher observations about their students' gains from the program indicate that there are a range of outcomes. Student confidence continued to be one of the most frequently cited outcomes, in addition to deeper literacy learning. Other outcomes cited by teachers included: creativity and imagination; positive relationships; and enjoying or being engaged in learning.

Question 8 asked teachers to provide a response to the statement: "Drama strategies should be embedded in literacy teaching in the primary classroom." Teachers could respond with: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'not sure', 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'.

Figure 19 Response to PostPTS Question 8

Q8 Drama strategies should be embedded in literacy teaching in the primary classroom.



Below are several responses indicating a range of comments provided with this question.

It makes it easier for students of all abilities to understand concepts and to communicate their understanding. (PostPTS).

Drama enables students to delve deep and respond creatively to texts. (PostPTS).

Some very quiet students find this quite difficult in the beginning. Behaviour management was difficult with some of the activities. (PostPTS).

Drama enhances understanding of literacy concepts. (PostPTS).

I think it is very beneficial to get a better understanding of the character/setting/context. (PostPTS).

They are invaluable across a range of subject areas. (PostPTS).

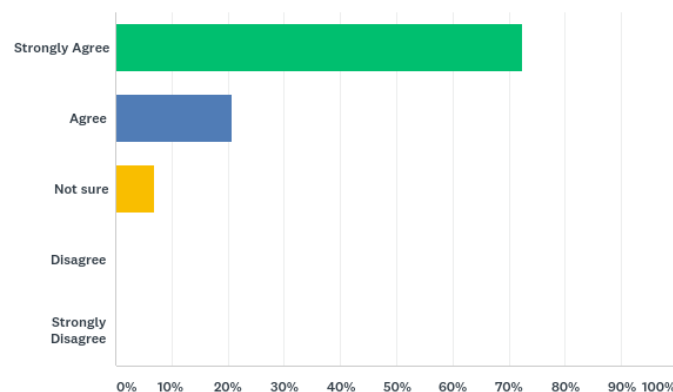
Of the 59 teachers who responded (n=59) 86% (or 51 individuals) strongly agreed and 13% (or 8 individuals) agreed with the statement. No teachers indicated that they were unsure or disagreed with the statement. However, classroom or behaviour management was cited by one teacher as a challenge during the drama strategies.



Question 9 asked teachers to respond to the statement: “Drama can enhance student learning in other Key Learning Areas.”

Figure 20 Response to PostPTS Question 9

Q9 Drama can enhance student learning in other Key Learning Areas.



Some comments made by teachers regarding this question included:

It's not restricted to any subject. (PostPTS).

In our class we have integrated it well with our geography and English units. (PostPTS).

As an integrated unit of work. (PostPTS).

I can see how drama can be incorporated into some KLAs [Key Learning Area], such as literacy, health, music, etc, but I would like to see how this can be incorporated into everyday maths. (PostPTS).

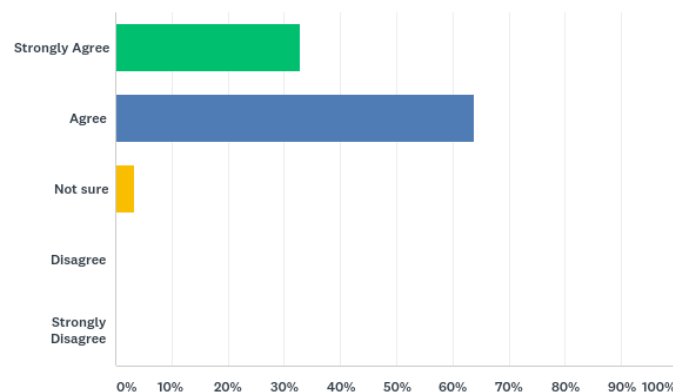
Not only did we just connect with Arts subjects but were able to refer it to different lessons like Literacy components and grammar etc. (PostPTS).

Of the 59 responses (n=59) 72% (or 43 individuals) strongly agreed, 20% (or 12 individuals) agreed and 6% (or 4 individuals) were unsure whether drama could enhance student learning in other areas. Teachers cited other learning areas that could be enhanced by drama including health, music, maths, other components of literacy and geography.

Question 10 focused on teacher confidence in the teaching of drama and asked teachers to respond to the statement: “I feel confident in teaching drama to primary students.”

Figure 21 Response to PostPTS Question 10

Q10 I feel confident in teaching drama to primary students.



Comments from teachers included:

Still learning but I now feel confident. (PostPTS).

I now have a range of strategies that I feel I can confidently employ. (PostPTS).

I feel confident teaching certain parts of drama to my students. I would still be nervous about teaching drama to any other groups. Also, it depends on the activity as to how confident I feel. (PostPTS).

I feel there will always be something for me to get better at. But I definitely came out of this program feeling so much relief and joy to see my students learning with so much intent. (PostPTS).

This experience has given me a great deal of confidence to teach drama within my classroom. (PostPTS).

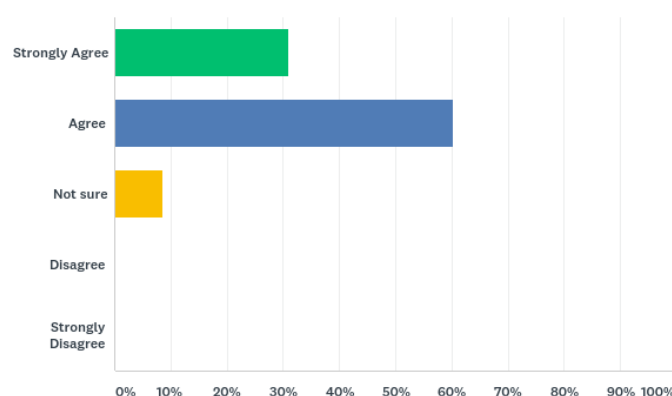
Of the 59 responses (n=59) 33% (or 20 individuals) strongly agreed. Sixty-two percent (or 37 individuals) agreed and 3% (or 2 individuals) were unsure. These results may be due to the question

implying that the teaching of drama is a discipline, rather than teachers feeling more confident in using drama as a pedagogical approach.

Question 11 focused on teachers seeing themselves as creative when planning drama activities and asked teachers to respond to the statement: “I see myself as creative when planning drama activities to enable students to respond to literature.”

*Figure 22 Response to PostPTS Question 11*

Q11 I see myself as creative when planning drama activities to enable students to respond to literature.



Comments included:

I can use my creative fun side to develop authentic and purposeful lessons that inspire me and others. (PostPTS).

I have definitely learnt and improved my capacity to plan and teaching meaningful learning experiences with embedded drama strategies to enhance learning. I am currently reflecting on my learning and looking at how to incorporate the skills learnt into other Learning Areas. (PostPTS).

I can see myself using the strategies from the text book and embedding them into my teaching practice into the future. It has given me so much confidence to approach literature in a different way. (PostPTS).

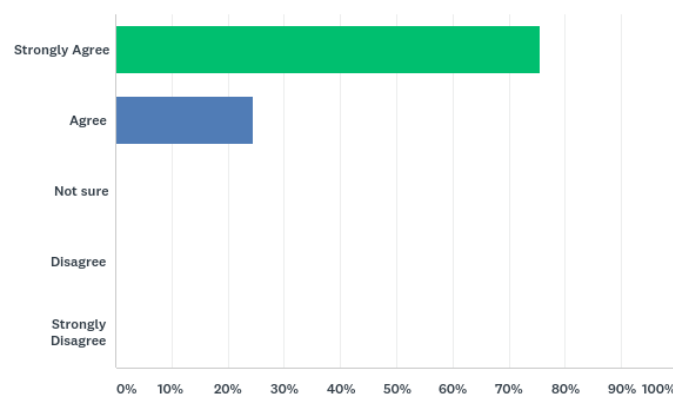
Of these responses (n=59) 32% (or 19 individuals) strongly agreed, 59% (or 35 individuals) agreed and 8% (or 5 individuals) were unsure of whether they saw themselves as creative when planning drama

experiences. Many of the teachers responded here about their own shifts in confidence and capacity in using drama.

Question 12 explored teachers' confidence in using drama strategies in their English classrooms and asked teachers to respond to the statement: [I have] "developed increased confidence in using drama strategies in English."

*Figure 23 Response to PostPTS Question 12*

Q12 Developed increased confidence in using drama strategies in English.



Commented included:

My confidence was quite low prior to starting the program. (PostPTS).

The students were engaged. Some of the activities needed to be adjusted for the behaviour of some of the students. (PostPTS).

Yes, as I had a limited understanding prior to this, especially introducing books episodically. (PostPTS).

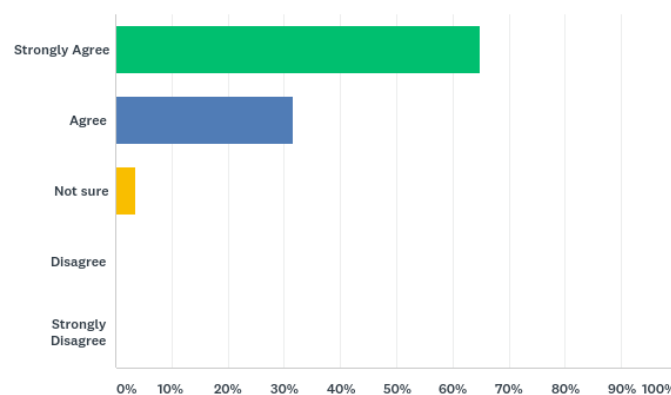
Yep. I have learnt a variety of quick and simple, yet effective drama techniques to teach English using quality picture books. My confidence to have a go and let the students take some control in the activities has been wonderful for me to watch and experience. (PostPTS).

Of the teachers who responded to this question (n=58 as one teacher skipped this question) 75% of teachers (or 44 individuals) strongly agreed and 24% (or 14 individuals) agreed that they had developed confidence in using drama strategies in English, which is the primary aim of the program.

Question 13 goes further, asking teachers about their confidence in using drama strategies to improve student literacy.

*Figure 24 Response to PostPTS Question 13*

Q13 Developed increased confidence in using drama strategies to improve students' literacy.



Several comments included:

I would like to further develop my skills to apply to other literacy texts for my year level. (PostPTS).

Students with ESL [English as Second Language] were not shying away from speaking and voicing out their ideas in circle activities and hotseats etc. (PostPTS).

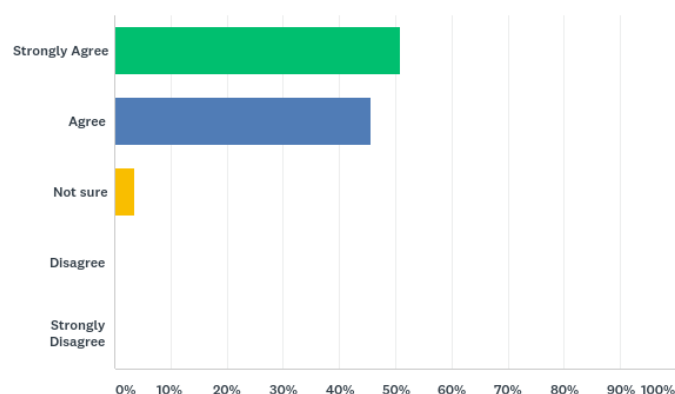
Being able to get children to speak and express themselves as a character was extremely beneficial in helping improve literacy. (PostPTS).

One teacher skipped this question (n=58); however, 65% of teachers (or 38 individuals) strongly agreed, 31% (or 18 individuals) agreed and 3% (or 2 individuals) were unsure. No teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Question 14 explored teachers' creative capacity in planning drama with children's literature.

Figure 25 Response to PostPTS Question 14

Q14 Increased my own creative capacity in planning drama activities with literature.



Several comments included:

I needed the ideas to be able to instigate them in the classroom. This was beneficial for me. (PostPTS).

I had an absolute blast learning and teaching the program. (PostPTS).

*The School Drama Book* is also an excellent resource - and this has helped us with our planning of other units across the school. (PostPTS).

Sometimes activities go to places you didn't imagine but there is still benefit. (PostPTS).

I would not call myself naturally creative so the skills I have learnt through this program have been invaluable. (PostPTS).

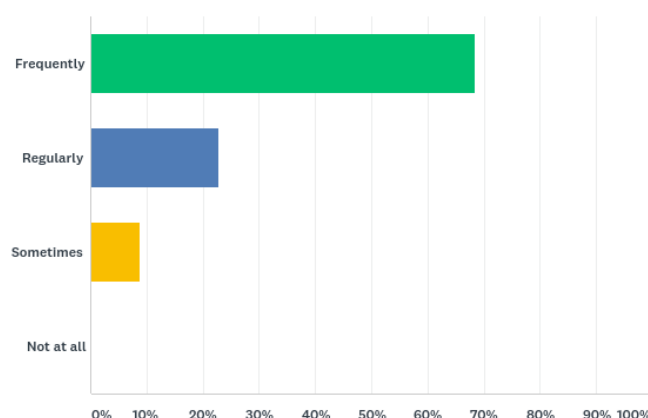
I feel I have a "toolbox" of great ideas to use with my students now. (PostPTS).

Fifty-eight individuals responded to Question 14 and 51% (or 30 individuals) strongly agreed, 44% (or 26 individuals) agreed and 3% (or 2 individuals) were not sure if their own creative capacity in planning drama with literature had improved.

Question 16 refers to the sustained impact of the program and how likely teachers are to continue to use drama in their English and literacy lessons.

*Figure 26 Response to PostPTS Question 16*

Q16 How likely are you to continue to use drama in English and literacy lessons?



Several comments include:

We have written it into our programs for 2018. (PostPTS).

It will be a part of my school revised CAPA [Creative and Performing Arts] Scope and Sequence. (PostPTS).

Our stage [group of teachers] are planning to embed the drama lessons throughout our yearly plan to complement our units of work. We ensured that the stage 2 teachers tried as many texts as possible to provide a range of drama programs. (PostPTS).

I will use it when I can. (PostPTS).

It will be daily integrated into reading and writing - I have designed a team teaching program to ensure it is used by other teachers across the grade. (PostPTS).

Of the 58 teachers who responded to Question 16, 68% (or 40 individuals) reported that they would 'frequently' use drama in their English/literacy lessons, 22% (or 13 individuals) responded that they would 'regularly' use drama and 8% (or 5 individuals) reported that they would 'sometimes' use drama. No teachers reported that they would not use drama at all.

Analysing the 2017 post-program teacher survey data indicated very positive shifts in the areas of teacher capacity and confidence and the likelihood of teachers continuing to use drama as a pedagogical tool in their English/literacy lessons, with many participants seeing its relevance across the primary curriculum.

## Conclusion

Data collected through the 2017 student benchmarking and 59 teacher surveys indicated positive results for both teachers and students. Across the 12 teachers who chose to complete the student benchmarking process, inferential comprehension was the most popular English/literacy focus area selected. Analysis of the data suggests that there was no discernible difference across English/literacy focus areas or across year levels. An average shift of 2.5 marks (just under a full grade change of 3 marks) was noted in the 2017 data. However, the number of teachers opting to be involved in the benchmarking was low and an increased number of teachers participating in benchmarking will be sought in future cohorts.

Fifty-nine teachers participated in the post-program teacher survey, and data analysis highlights very positive feedback from teachers. Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that drama strategies should be embedded in literacy teaching, and they reported increased confidence in using drama strategies in their English classes through the program. A large majority of participant teachers indicated they would continue to either regularly or frequently use drama in their English and literacy lessons.

The following chapter is the first of the three in-depth case studies, Waratah Grammar School. The case study site and participants are introduced followed by an outline of the *School Drama* unit of work, an analysis of the data and a discussion of the findings.



## Chapter 6 - Case Study One: Waratah Grammar School

“The arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer.” (Eisner, 2000, p. 14).

### Introduction

This chapter outlines the school and class context, participants, intervention activities/strategies and the outcomes from Case Study One, Waratah Grammar School<sup>11</sup> with a particular focus on student outcomes. The analysis in this chapter commences with a highlighting of the key themes from the student focus groups and interviews with the classroom teacher.

### Background

As briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, Waratah Grammar School is a non-selective, co-educational, secular, independent school located in an inner-city suburb of Sydney, NSW, Australia. As an independent school, the school fees range from \$17,900 AUD for Kindergarten to \$24,930 AUD for Years 11 and 12. Waratah caters for both primary (Kindergarten to Year 6) and secondary (Years 7 to 12) students on the same campus. The total primary enrolments in the primary school in 2017 were 1,129 students, 528 girls and 601 boys. A very small number of students (2%) identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander at the school (WGS, 2017). Waratah has a large teaching staff of 110 and non-teaching staff of 41. The school has an emphasis on globally-focused bilingual education, and attracts a large cohort of students (26%) for whom English is an additional Language or Dialect (WGS, 2017). The school offers six languages in addition to English.

The campus has a relatively small geographic footprint, less than one block, but due to its close proximity to the Sydney Central Business District (CBD), the campus has several connected multi-storey buildings. The school feels like it has reached capacity and is almost bursting with students in a small space. The campus is clean and tidy, with bright colours and feature walls playing a role in identifying different areas of the school. The classroom I worked in was in a basement area of the school. The room itself was not originally designed to be a classroom, but as the school has grown, every available space has been used for students. The classroom was dark, with very little natural

---

<sup>11</sup> Pseudonyms are used for the name of the school, the name of the suburb and the name of the teacher and students.

light. A huge concrete pillar occupied the centre of the room, reinforcing the building above. Two windows opened to a narrow space between the buildings.

Waratah Grammar School was selected for the study following their engagement in the *School Drama* program commencing in 2016. As a relatively new school to engage in the program, the school's involvement as an advantaged independent school was of interest to the researcher, enabling a comparison with the two public schools in case studies two and three (see Chapters 7 and 8). WGS was the first case study undertaken for this research project and the program took place during Term 2, 2017 from April to June.

The Year 5 class involved in the study was taught by 31-year-old Mr Dane Everhart who has been working at the school for 6.5 years. Initially trained as a secondary Mathematics and Health and Physical Education (HPE) teacher at The University of Sydney, Dane worked mainly in primary schools in London, England following graduation and then accepted a teaching position at WGS. Dane also works with pre-service teachers at a nearby university tutoring in primary mathematics education. In 2017, Dane was also the Acting Student Coordinator and Head of Wellbeing K-6.

The Year 5 cohort involved in this research included 26 students, 13 girls and 13 boys. No student identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and four students identified that they spoke languages other than English at home (French, Dutch, Italian and Spanish). One student (Cassandra) had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). Dane suspected that several other students may have had learning disabilities; however, these had not been officially diagnosed at the time of the intervention (Everhart, personal communication, 15 January 2018).

Dane and I had worked on the *School Drama* program in 2016 and developed a positive rapport working together. Due to Dane's background in Health and Physical Education at university, he and I shared an interest in embodied learning and he expressed a keen interest in participating in this research.

Following Dane's participation in *School Drama Classic* (the seven-week, artist-in-residence model) in 2016, he decided to enrol in *School Drama Hub*, a series of five twilight workshops for Sydney-based teachers who had experienced *School Drama Classic* and were keen to further develop their skills during 2017. During this course, I led a workshop based on *The City* (Greder, 2010) and when Dane

and I discussed book choices for this intervention, Dane was excited by the possibility of exploring this text with his class. Dane chose inferential comprehension as the literacy focus.

## The Intervention

A detailed explanation of each workshop in the unit is located in Appendix A. Due to space restrictions, only a brief outline of each workshop session is included below. The seven-week unit itself was adapted for this specific class from a version published in *The School Drama Book* (Ewing & Saunders, 2016).

The Intervention began with a range of warm ups in order for me to ease the students into the drama space and let them become comfortable with the embodied nature of drama. During the first workshop we explored some key themes within the text through Word Banks, Freeze Frames and Sculpting in order for students to start making connections and predictions about the text. The text was introduced in the second workshop. Firstly, the cover image was used and I invited students to ask “I wonder” questions about the city. We visualised the setting in the text and mapped the journey of The Mother leaving the city and finding a place to raise her son. In groups, students thought of a reason why The Mother might want to leave the city and depicted these in Freeze Frames.

My experience with this text has been that students easily connect with The Boy, so I tried to provide opportunities for the students to also connect with The Mother, perhaps in this story a more distant character compared with their own experience. In Workshop Three, we used a Conscience Circle to explore The Mother’s inner thoughts, her hopes and fears. We then Hot-Seated The Mother using Teacher-in-Role. We continued reading the story and created Tableaux in small groups of the moment the travellers come by. I asked the students to include The Boy in their Tableaux, as he is not depicted in the illustrations. I then Tapped In and asked each group a different question.

Workshop Four started with a Mirroring warm up to focus the students. In small groups, students devised Freeze Frames of what immediately happened following the moment the travellers left The Mother and The Boy. In pairs, students rehearsed and shared a “two line conversation” between The Mother and The Boy after the travellers left. We Hot-Seated The Boy and I asked Dane to be one of the four people in the Hot-Seat.

We began Workshop Five with a Role Walk, trying to find the physicality of each of the characters we had been introduced to. This was followed by a Word Circle/Adjective Call Out of adjectives describing

these two central characters. I used a blanket role for a Gossip Mill where all students went into role as the travellers, sharing gossip about their perspective of what they had witnessed. Proximities were employed so that students could have an opportunity to critically think about The Mother's choices and how these had impacted on her son. We read the following pages up to The Mother's death - then we Hot-Seated The Mother. As a follow up, students wrote a letter in role as The Mother to her son.

Workshop Six commenced with several students sharing the letters they had written as part of the follow up activity. We then re-read the text to the point where The Boy was cold. I used a Dream Sequence to allow students to whisper a hope or a piece of advice from The Mother to The Boy. The Boy then has a decision to make: should he stay in isolation or go back to the city? To explore this moment, a Conscience Alley was used. We then Hot-Seated The Boy as a class, and in small groups students created three Freeze Frames predicting how the story could end. To conclude, we read the final pages of the book and created a Postcard image of The Boy entering the city, imagining what the city was really like.

The final workshop explored a re-telling of the story via Readers' Theatre. I divided the text into six sections and gave a section to each group. Students used the conventions of Readers' Theatre to share the story.

## The Data

### Student benchmarking

The pre-program benchmarking task was conducted in week one, term two and required students to write a diary entry as Rosa, a character from the novel studied in term one, *A Banner Bold* (Wheatley, 2000) after she watched the Eureka rebellion take place in Ballarat. The post-program task required students to write a diary entry as The Boy in the story *The City* (Greder, 2010) at the close of the book as he enters the city for the first time.

Both benchmarking tasks required the students to write in role using inferential comprehension skills to develop a response, given that neither event is depicted explicitly in the texts. Five students were absent on the days the class completed the pre- and/or post-benchmarking tasks (Amanda, Cameron, Charlotte, Grace and Reese).

## Student surveys

During week one, students also participated in the student pre-program survey. Four students (Alecia, Lilly, Sarah and Wyatt) were absent on the days that the class completed the survey so 22 of the 26 students completed both the pre- and post-program student surveys.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the student pre- and post-program surveys (see Appendix D) were designed to probe students' responses on a range of outcomes and areas before and after the drama-based intervention.

## Interviews, focus groups and reflective journal

Interviews were conducted with the classroom teacher at different points throughout the intervention. Students were interviewed through focus groups (with small groups of students) and several as large focus groups with the entire class.

I kept a reflective journal as the teaching artist and researcher.

Table 7 (below) illustrates the schedule for the intervention, the workshops, and the data collection points during Term Two, 2017.

*Table 7 Schedule of intervention and data collection points at Waratah Grammar School*

<b>Table 7</b>	
<b>Schedule of intervention and data collection points at Waratah Grammar School</b>	
<b>Week No. and Term No.</b>	<b>Event and Date</b>
<b>Term Two 2017</b>	
<b>Week 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial face to face meeting with Mr Dane Everhart about the process and text selection (01/05/2017).</li><li>• Students completed the pre-program survey in class with Mr Dane Everhart (02/05/2017).</li><li>• Students completed the pre-program benchmarking task in class with Mr Dane Everhart (04/05/2017).</li></ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workshop 1 (08/05/2017).</li><li>• Research journal entry.</li></ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workshop 2 (16/05/2017).</li><li>• Research journal entry.</li></ul>

<b>Week 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 3 (23/05/2017).</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 4 (31/05/2017).</li> <li>• Whole Class Reflection/Focus Group (31/05/2017). Tag FG1.31/05/2017.</li> <li>• Focus Group 2 (31/05/2017). Tag FG2.31/05/2017.</li> <li>• Teacher Interview 1 (31/05/2017). Tag I1.31/05/2017.</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 5 (06/06/2017).</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 6 (13/06/2017).</li> <li>• Focus Group 3 (13/06/2017). Tag FG3.13/06/2017.</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> <li>• Students complete post-program survey (16/06/2017).</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 7 (21/06/2017).</li> <li>• Focus Group 4 (21/06/2017). Tag GF4.21/06/2017.</li> <li>• Focus Group 5 (21/06/2017). Tag GF5.21/06/2017.</li> <li>• Focus Group 6 (21/06/2017). Tag GF6.21/06/2017.</li> <li>• Whole Class Reflection/Focus Group (21/06/2017). Tag FG7.21/06/2017.</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> <li>• Teacher Interview 2 (22/06/2017). Tag I2.22/06/2017.</li> <li>• Last week of term 2 for Waratah Grammar School (longer holidays over winter break).</li> </ul>
<b>Term Three 2017</b>	
<b>Week 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-program benchmarking task conducted by Mr Dane Everhart (20/07/2017)</li> </ul>
<b>Term Four 2017</b>	
<b>Week 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-program interview with Mr Dane Everhart (10/08/2017). Tag I3.10/08/2017.</li> </ul>

## Analysis

Data analysis processes are outlined in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4). The same process was employed across the three case studies.

Firstly, student benchmarking outcomes as marked by the class teacher were collated and analysed. Following transcription and coding, a thematic analysis of the data collected in the student focus groups and teacher interviews was undertaken. I also summarised the data collected from the student surveys and coded key reflections made by the teachers during their observations as well as those in my research journal.

Findings about each of the key aspects of the program are reported and discussed below. Data from different data-gathering methods (teacher observation; teacher-researcher interviews; teaching artist/researcher observations; student benchmarking samples; student surveys; student focus groups) have been interrogated in light of the emerging themes and outcomes. The process of crystallisation has enabled a fine-grained analysis of the nuances among the evidence gathered from the different schools.

### Literacy: Inferential comprehension

Normal practice in the *School Drama* program is for the class teachers to conduct the post-program benchmarking task in the week following the final in-class workshop. However, this did not happen at Waratah Grammar School due to time restrictions. Dane instead conducted the post-benchmarking on 20/07/2017 at the end of Week One, Term Three following a three week holiday. This provided a unique opportunity in the series of case studies in this study to explore if there are longer term benefits to literacy following the drama-based intervention.

In our post-program interview, I spoke with Dane about this:

John: I wondered ... because normally the benchmarking will happen in the last week of the school after the final workshops, as everything is finishing, and I wondered with the holidays and the start of term, how much would have been retained from umm it [the drama-based intervention]. But this is really interesting. (13.10/08/2017).

Dane mentioned that he was cognisant of the timing issue with the benchmarking and commented:

Dane: Yep, and I was quite mindful of that as well, because we didn't get a chance to do that at the end of term, the post-test. So, I thought about that and that they are going to forget everything, so I did a little bit of a discussion about what we did last term and what some of the drama things ... activities, that we did with John, all that sort of thing and then to make it a little bit more umm ... alive, we did that last drama activity where we did that Postcard and we put each of the ... the kids walked into the city and were a person in the city, so they could actually embody it before they had to do the writing. (13.10/08/2017).

Figure 27 WGS Pre- and Post- Benchmarking Results

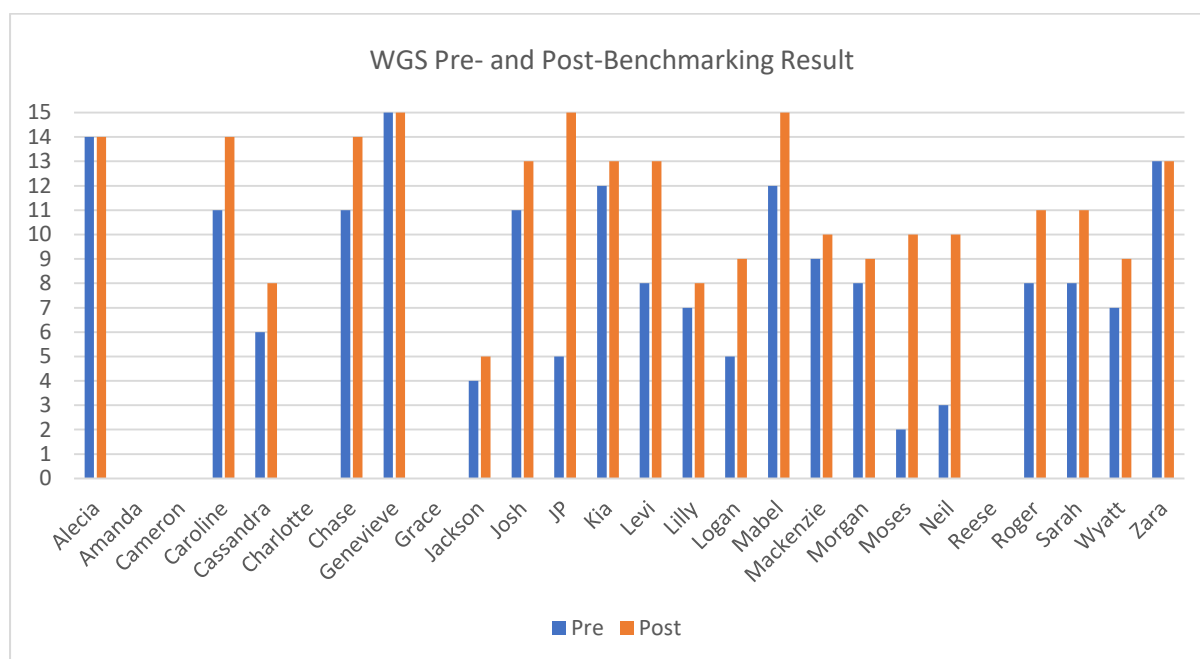


Figure 27 illustrates the shifts from the pre-program (blue bar) to post-program (orange bar) benchmarking tasks focused on inferential comprehension. In analysing the benchmarking data, I have given each mark a numerical value from 1 (an E-) to 15 (A+) (please refer to Table 2, Grade and Mark Value in Chapter 5). Several students did not receive a grade of C- (7 marks) or above, which means that they are in the lowest two bands (Band E and D). These students were JP, Cassandra, Jackson, Logan, Moses and Neil (5 out of 6 are male students). In the pre-program benchmarking, female students received an average grade of 10.7 (B-) and this increased to an average grade of B+ (12.1 marks) for the post-program task, a shift of 1.4 marks. This contrasts significantly to the male students in the class who received an average grade of D+ (6 marks) in the pre-task and B- (10.5 marks) in the post-task, an average increase of 4.5 marks. Figure 28 and Figure 29 separate male and female students' pre- and post-benchmarking results.



Figure 28 WGS Male Students Pre- and Post-Benchmarking Results

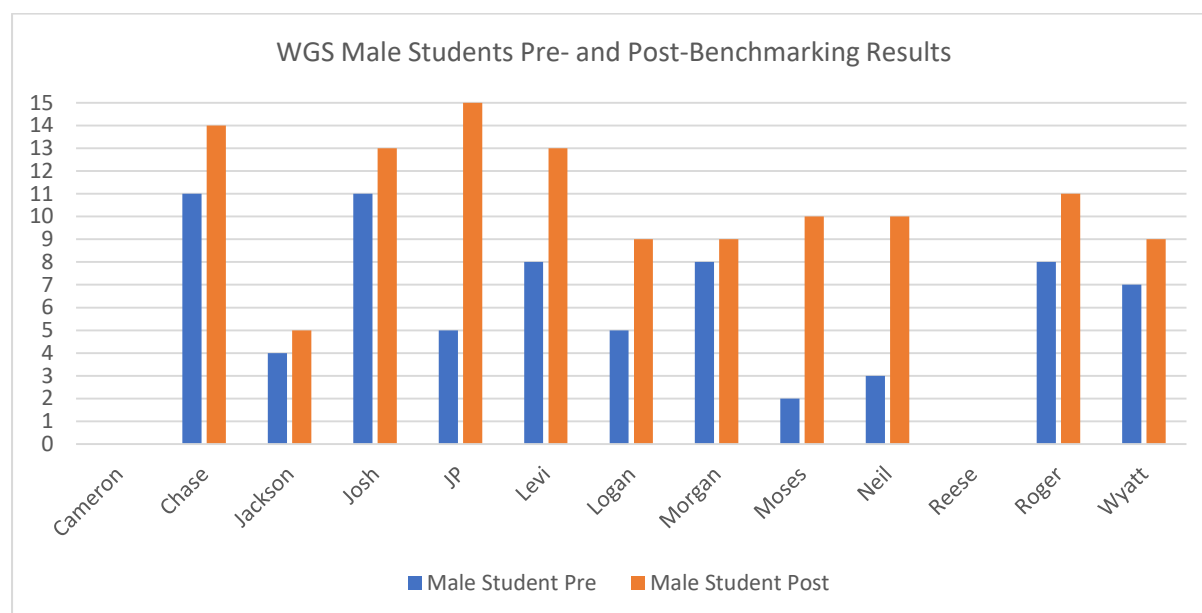
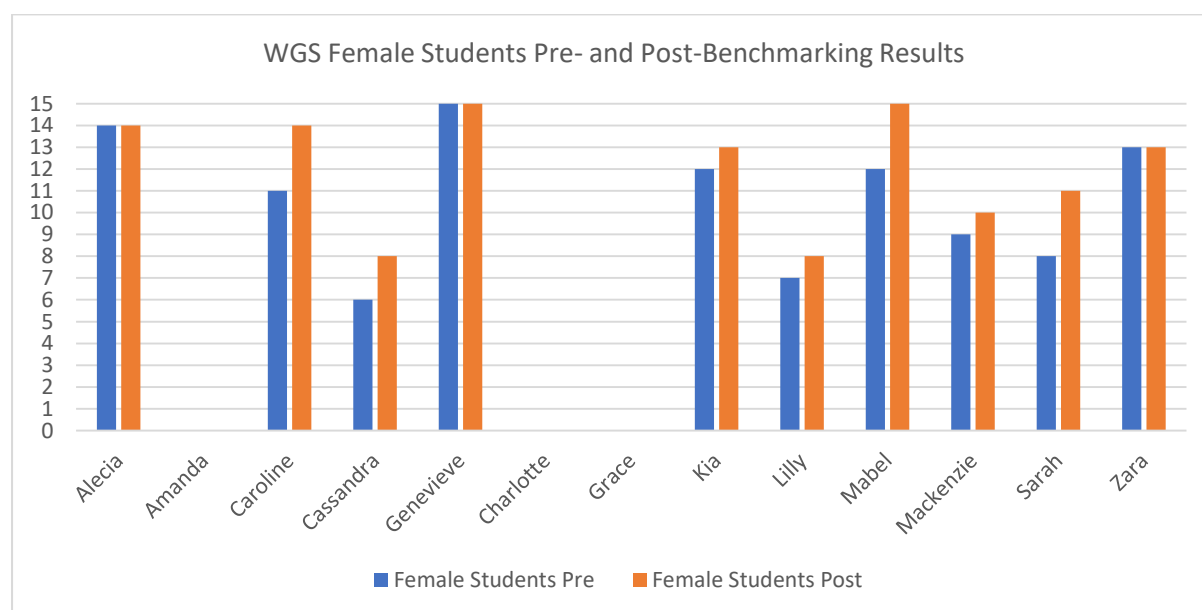


Figure 29 WGS Female Students Pre- and Post-Benchmarking Results



The gender difference in student academic achievement has not been noted in previous research into *School Drama*. However, this gender imbalance in literacy achievement is not a new phenomenon, as Limbrick, Wheldall and Madelaine (2010) drawing on Pickle’s (1998) research, reflect that “as early as 1910 it was found that up to 85 per cent of children struggling with reading were boys” (p. 109). The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training (HORSCET) in Australia

conducted an inquiry in the education of boys due to concerns about male student underperformance (HORSCET, 2002). The inquiry found that “Poor achievement in literacy and numeracy is linked with early school leaving and this association is stronger for boys than for girls” (HORSCET, 2002, p. xix). The report noted that “High school students without sound literacy skills are more likely to become alienated and disengaged from learning” (HORSCET, 2002, p. 129). There is ongoing debate, however, about boys and the ratio of poor readers with behaviour and attention seeking being cited. Further, Limbrick et al. (2010) state that “... researchers have identified a number of potential explanations for a greater prevalence of boys who are poor readers, including neurobiological (Clements et al., 2006; Shaywitz et al., 1995), genetic (Hawke, Wadsworth & DeFries, 2005), environmental (Olson, 2002) and motivational (Martin, 2004)” (p. 109). Limbrick et al., (2010) investigated the national literacy results in Australia through analysing NAPLAN testing data and found that male students were more frequently in the lowest or second lowest achievement band than their female peers. They comment that their data ratios “are consistent with a large body of evidence including that there are more boys than girls who are poor readers” (Limbrick et al., 2010, p. 206). This research motivated analysis of the student survey to identify if boys reported shifts in their engagement and motivation through the drama-based intervention to help explain the significant shifts in boys’ literacy levels over the seven-week period.

Analysis of the student pre- and post-program survey, particularly the three questions relating to participation (Question 10 illustrated in Figure 30), motivation (Question 13 as illustrated in Figure 31) and engagement (Question 14 as illustrated in Figure 32), indicated small shifts when comparing the pre- to the post-program survey data. There was a 2.8% positive shift in the average participation ranking, a 2.25% shift in increased motivation rankings and a 7.57% increase in engagement rankings. The shifts were, however, similar in male and female students at Waratah. While only very small positive shifts in participation and motivation were reported, there was a considerable shift in engagement scores, consistent with findings from Fleming et al., (2016) Martin et al., (2013), Hunter (2005) and Turner et al., (2004).

Figure 30 WGS Question 10

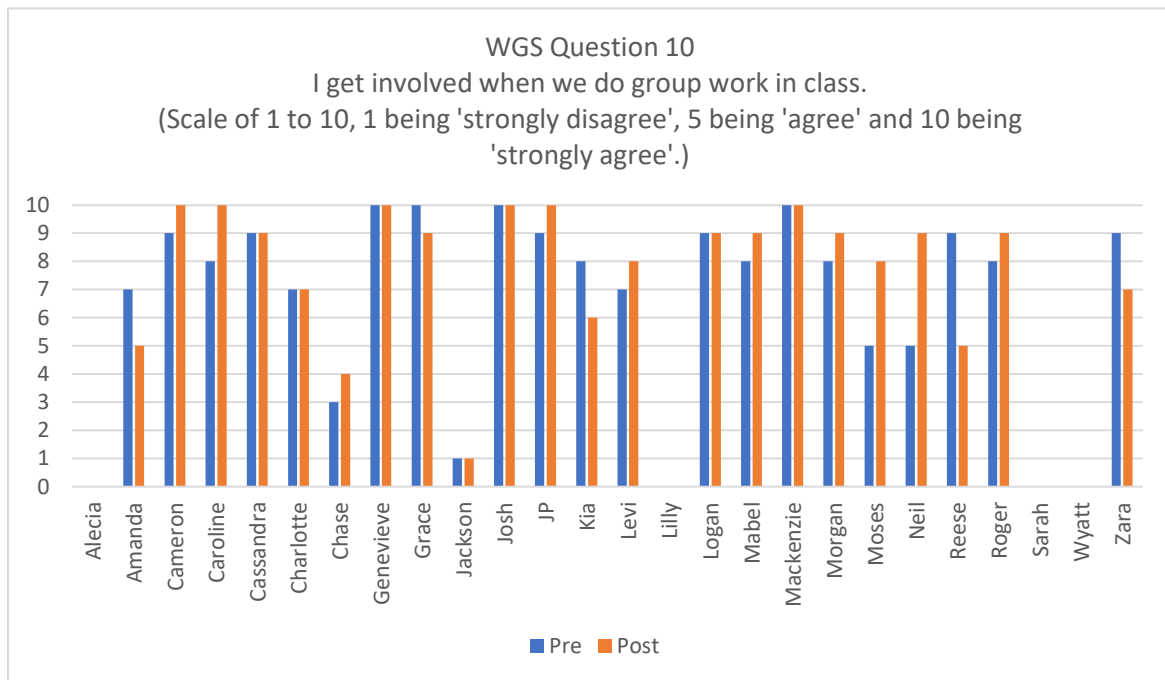


Figure 31 WGS Question 13

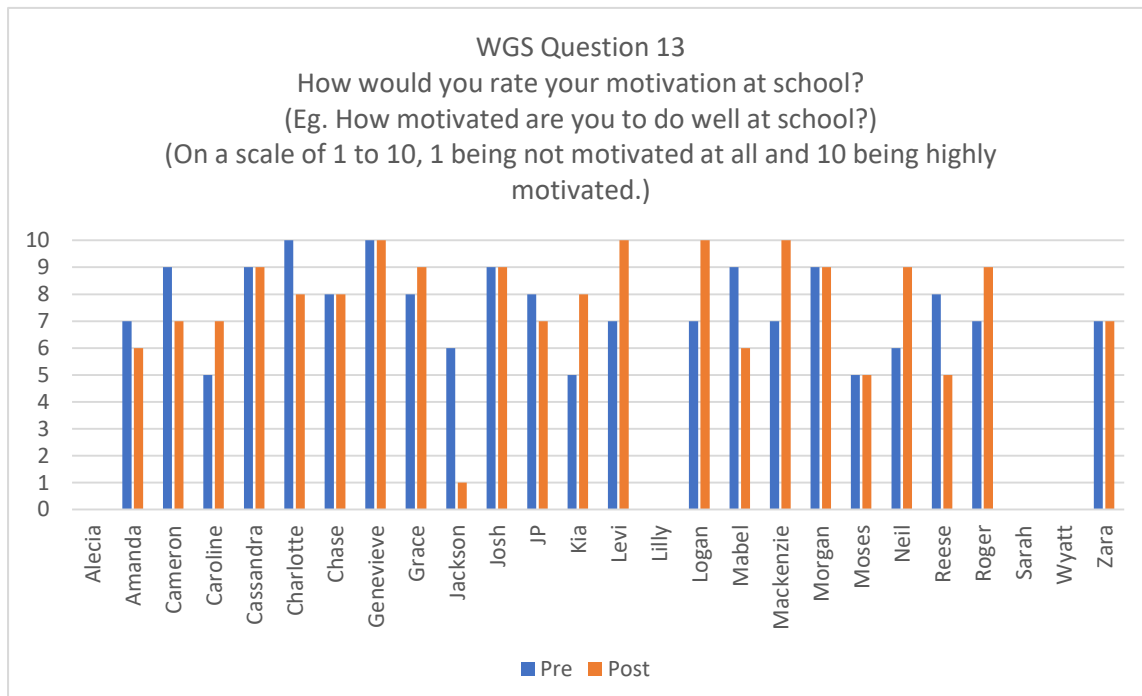
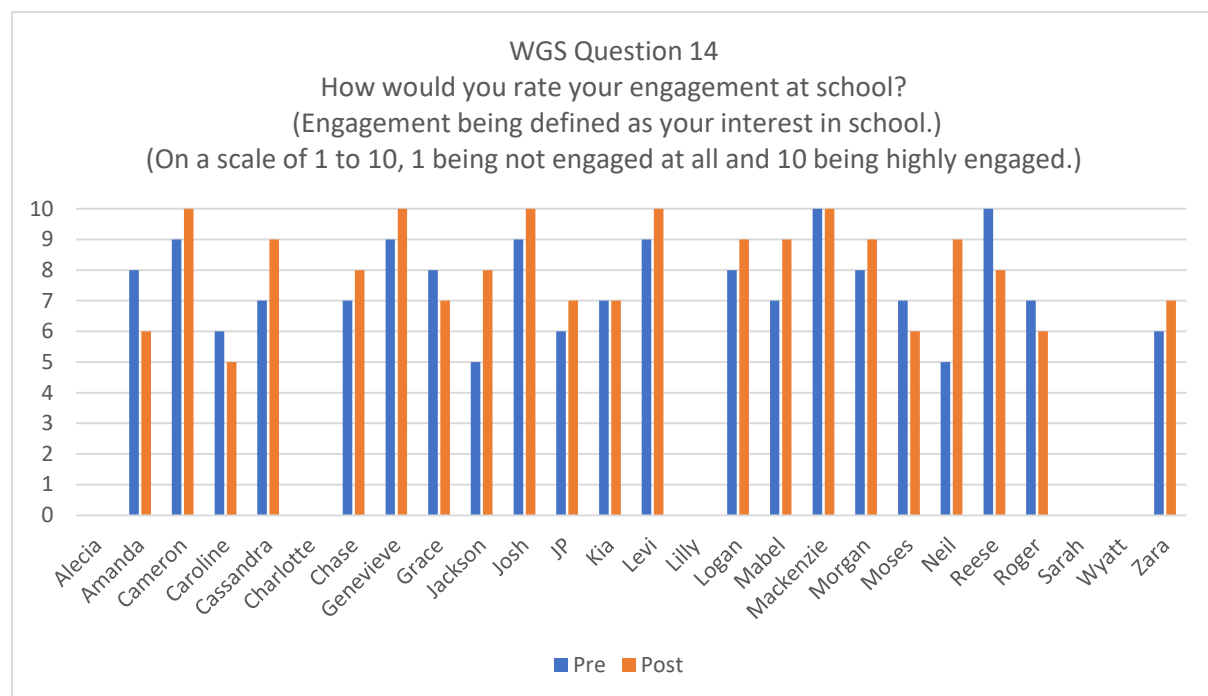


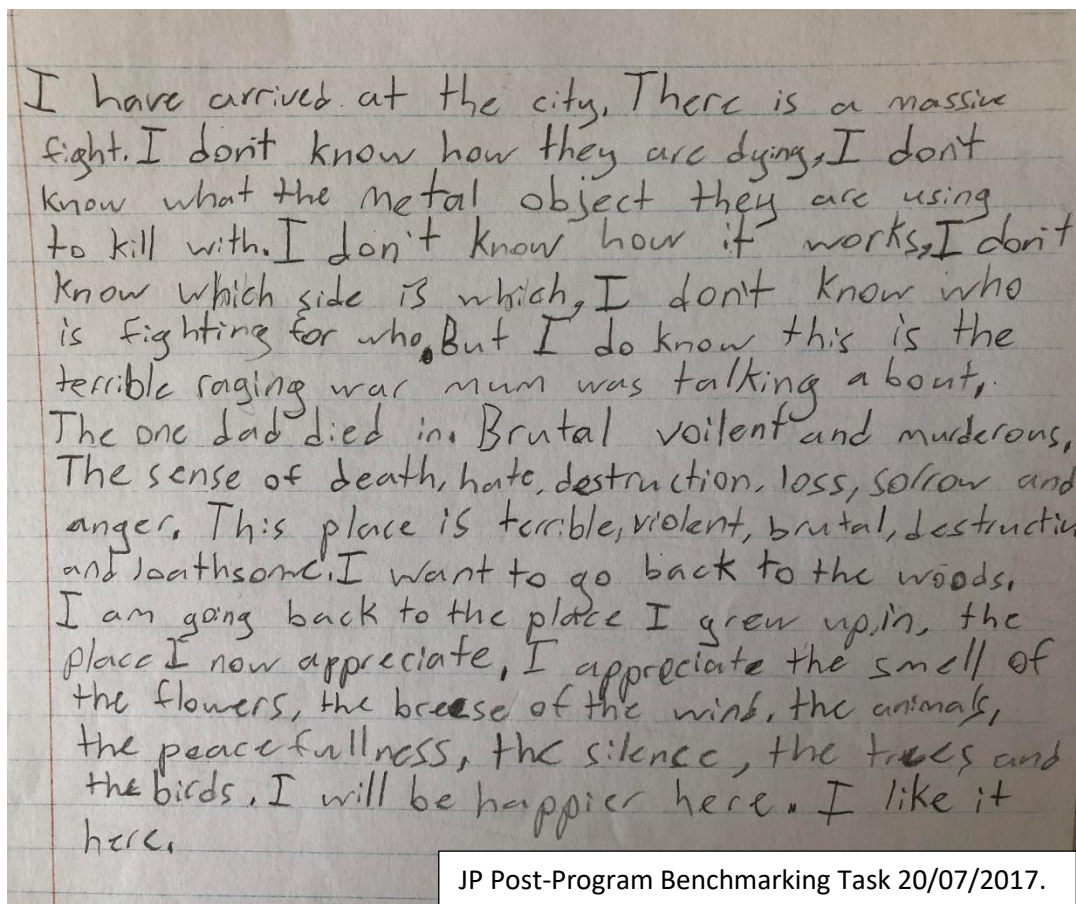
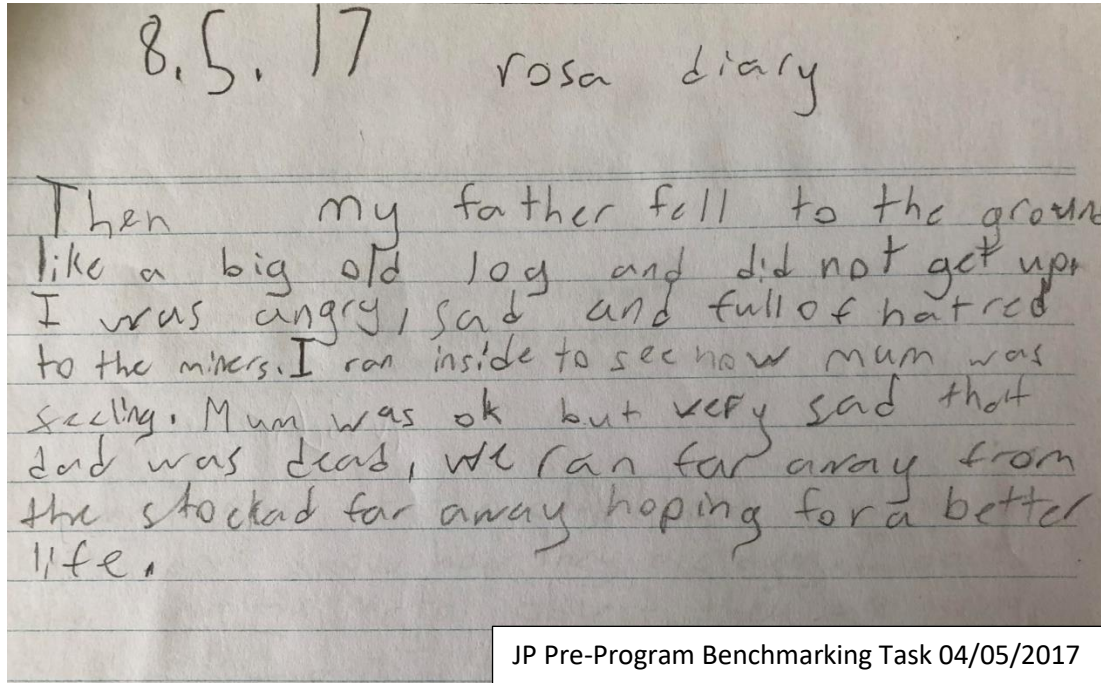
Figure 32 WGS Question 14



As reported above, male students had the more marked gains in their literacy through the pre- to post-program benchmarking tasks, so it is important to examine the writing of those students who had the most pronounced shifts; JP who moved 10 marks, Moses who moved 8 marks, and Neil who moved 7 marks. This is in contrast to the three female students, Sarah, Caroline and Mabel, who made the most significant shifts with an increase in 3 marks each. What is it about JP, Moses and Neil's work that is so different? In the pre-test, JP received a grade of D (5 marks), Moses received a grade of E (2 marks) and Neil received a grade of E+ (3 marks).

Comparing JP's pre- and post-program writing (see below), there are several notable differences. The length of the post- passage of writing is longer (14 sentences with 149 words) compared with the pre-task containing (five sentences, 59 words). The connection to the characters was also quite different. JP writes in role as Rosa in the pre-task describing seeing the character (Rosa's) father die. However, there is limited language to address this situation or the character's feelings in the diary entry with words used such as 'angry', 'sad' and 'hatred'. The post-task illustrates a deeper connection to the character, a description of the city including ideas that were visualised during the final workshop (Workshop Seven) in the Postcard and in the second workshop in the Visualisation strategy. JP also considers seeing the city through the eyes of The Boy by describing guns as a 'metal object' that he doesn't understand, inferring that The Boy has never seen such objects before. JP describes the city and uses a range of vocabulary including by saying there is a "... sense of death, hate, destruction, loss,

sorrow and anger. This place is terrible, violent, burial, destructive and loathsome." The student compares the city to the place where he grew up (the country), saying that he now appreciates the country and wants to go back there, drawing on the inferences in *The City* that The Boy was curious about the city and wanted to leave the isolated countryside where his mother had settled.

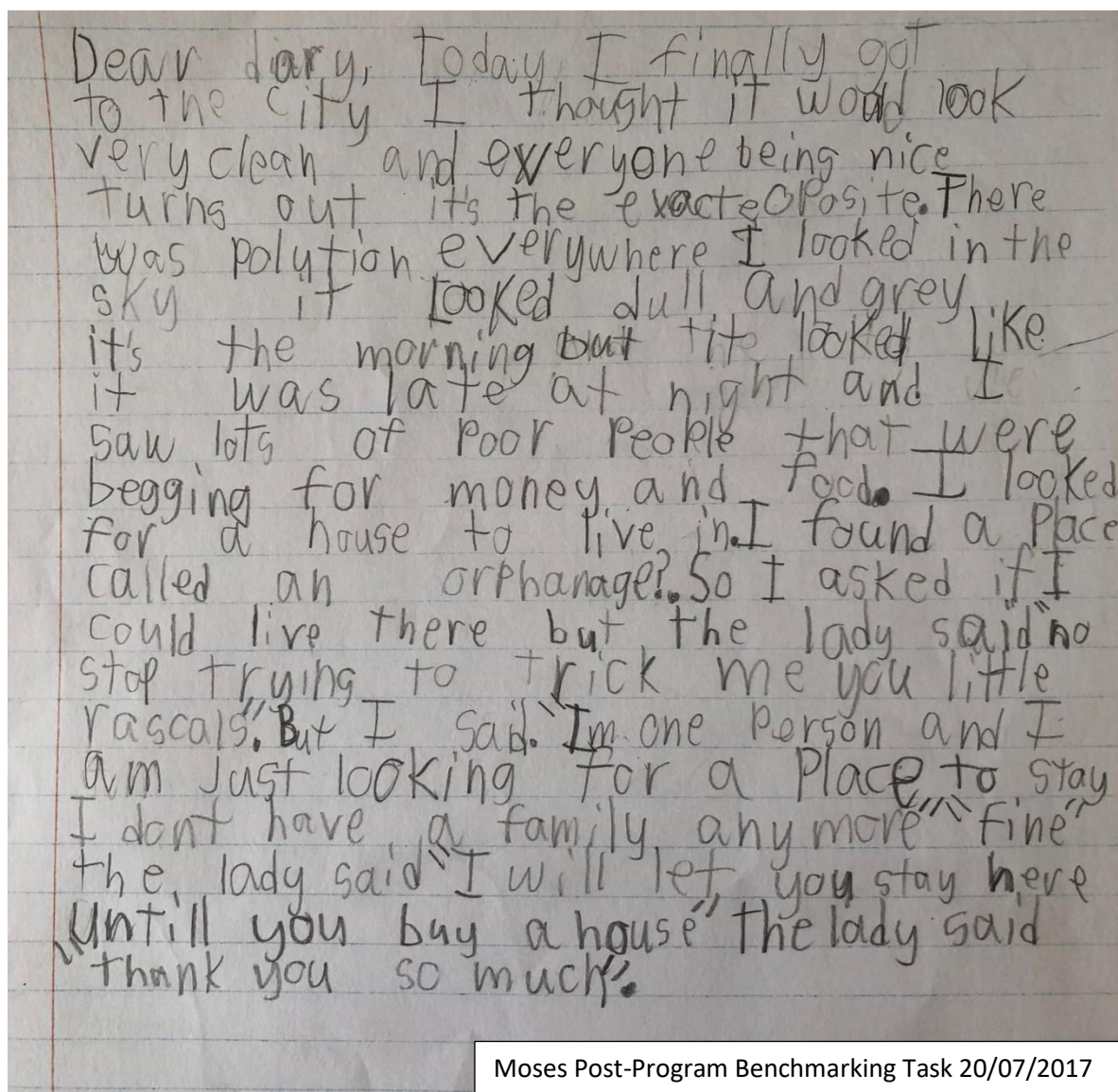


JP did not participate in any of the focus groups, but did make two comments during the whole class debriefs. The first comment was in the whole class debrief following Workshop Four where JP said: “At the end of drama possibly the last lesson, can you read the whole book all at once?” (FG1.31/05/2017), and during the final debrief at the end of Workshop Seven; “I liked playing Spoon” (a warm up strategy; FG7.21/06/2017). JP did make some comments in the post-program student survey that support his earlier comments. Question 18 asked “How easily does writing generally come to you?”: students provided a numerical value between 1 (being writing does not come easily to me) to 10 (being writing comes very easily to me). JP did indicate a positive shift from 5 in the pre-survey to a 7 in the post-survey, indicating that JP identified that he found writing easier at the end of the term, following the intervention. Question 41 in the post-program survey asked students “Do you feel like doing *School Drama* has helped you with your English and literacy? Why/why not?” JP responded: “I do not think it helped at all and I think it just became annoying that we were stopping and starting the book” (PostPSS). Interestingly, despite his considerable improvement in his post-benchmark writing, JP indicated that he had not found doing drama helpful and reported feeling less motivated and less engaged in school in the post-program survey.

Moses also didn’t participate in any of the focus groups, so his responses in the survey need to be analysed in relation to his pre- and post-program benchmarking task to develop an understanding of his perspective of *School Drama*. In the open-ended questions, Moses described drama as ‘very fun’ (PostPSS). Like JP, Moses did not show positive changes in motivation (staying at a level 5 in the pre- and post- ranking) and he reported feeling less engaged (going from a 7 to a 6 ranking in the post-program survey). However, Moses noted an enormous shift in his perception of his own creativity. Question 16 asked students to rank on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being ‘not creative’ and 10 being ‘highly creative’). Moses reported a 1 (‘not creative’) to a 10 (‘highly creative’) in pre- to post-program survey, indicating a huge shift. Moses’s pre- and post-benchmarking tasks are of similar length (144 words and 147 words respectively); however, there is certainly greater care taken in the writing of the post-program task which is visible in the precision of his handwriting. For example, Moses has, similarly to JP, used language to describe and create a visual picture of the city for the reader, contrasting the reality that he sees as The Boy to the way that he imagined it would be. There is a much stronger connection with the character in the post-program task, as well as a very clear understanding of the character’s thoughts, feeling, context and situation and the writing builds on the existing narrative and infers what the character might do when he enters the city.



as soon as I peeked through  
I saw a ragoon and tried to tell  
it that I need to get out but he was stuck  
with me because he thought that  
he was going to get shot but then  
I had an idea to get out we could  
dig out there was a little gap  
and closing the gap was dirt  
so we dug the dirt and put it in a  
hole I made and once I got out  
I yelled stop and said why  
are you doing this and a soldier  
said its because we soldiers want  
our gold back and I said why do  
you need to care about that its  
everyones gold \*sigh\* fine we  
will share the gold with  
the miners the soldiers said yay  
Rosa said and then always  
shared gold with the miners and  
they never fought again



Neil's pre-program task was extremely basic. He wrote 34 words over a 40 minute period in the pre-task compared to a full page consisting of 179 words in the post-task. Neil's post-task provides evidence he has taken on the character of The Boy. It illustrates inferencing about the city and The Boy's perspective and experience. He discussed that the city isn't how he imagined it would be and explained the experience of tasting ice-cream for the first time.

Following the final workshop and before Dane had marked the post-program tasks, he commented about Neil:

Dane: I think about Neil, because he is quite a reluctant writer, so trying to get him writing is quite difficult ... In the pre-test, the pre writing task that you gave them that they did, he didn't do very well, so it will be interesting to see how he progressed and how much he



actually got from the drama. Because he was participating and it looked like he did enjoy it and he told me 'are we doing drama?', and he likes doing it. (12.22/06/2017).

Analysing Dane's comments and comparing Neil's pre- and post-work suggests that drama has helped Neil become a less reluctant writer. After Dane had marked the post-program tasks, we spoke again and Neil's benchmarking task instantly stood out for Dane.

Dane: ... like overall, like outstandingly they went beyond what they previously did. So pretty impressive really. Some of the writing that I was reading, I was like quite blown away by some of the stuff. It was really quite insightful and the descriptive language and ... It was really quite cool. It was quite nice reading them, especially Neil actually. He made huge improvements.

John: Oh my gosh. Yes! How great!

Dane: And he seemed quite umm removed from the drama in some ... he decided he would sit out of some of the drama activities, but um, he must have always been aware and kind of tuned into what was happening because his writing has just improved so much. And he is quite a reluctant writer. He finds it very difficult. I mean [pulls out the pre-program writing sample], that was what he did in the previous, in the first one, which was just rubbish...

John: And is that quite typical?

Dane: Yes.

John: It's very short.

Dane: Aha. Like in a 40 minute period he would sit there and we would try to do some planning with him and that sort of stuff, but he can't get the ideas. He can't get that creativity going. So this is kind of like what he would do.

John: And do you think like partly, it's the engagement – or that's motivated him a bit to write more or?

Dane: He has got more ideas I guess and he is more inspired than if you had just asked him to pull something out of mid-air. (13.10/08/2017).

Dane observed that Neil had more ideas and that his work was more imaginative. Neil himself did rate feeling more motivated (6 to 9) and engaged (5 to 9) in the pre- and post-program survey. He also noted feeling more creative (5 to 9). Following the program Neil indicated that he strongly agreed with statements that *School Drama* had helped his confidence, engagement, motivation, and taking on others' perspectives.

The Waratah Grammar School case study thus suggests that drama can support those students who find literacy learning difficult and help reduce the gap between high performing students and low performing students. There is, however, one exception, Jackson. Jackson moved from a D- to a D in the post-program. His post-program writing had very little to do with the text or the characters in *The City*, other than being set in 'a city'. When I discussed this with Dane he suggested:

Dane: It had nothing really to do with the character in the story. He kind of went into this world of this tree and then they had elevators that went into the ground and he just sort of went into the journey that was creative in his own right but had nothing really to do with the story. So it wasn't within the context. He loves writing and telling stories and he is actually quite good at telling stories, but in terms of linking it to the text that we were studying ... That's the way he is normally. He's on his own plane. He does his own thing. (13.10/08/2017).

On the other end of the continuum, three students, Alecia, Genevieve and Zara, demonstrated no movement when comparing the pre- and post-program benchmarking tasks. These three girls received relatively high marks. Alecia maintained a score of an A (14 marks), Genevieve topped the class and maintained an A+ (15 marks) and Zara continued on an A- (13 marks). These girls were already in the top band (A standard) for their writing, but did perceive that there were shifts in their own learning and outcomes over the seven weeks. I interviewed Dane in May 2019, showing him the analysis of the data. During this interview Dane suggested that:

You see the kids who are already scoring highly on these tests, to begin with, the pre-test, they are less likely to have much more growth ... because there is not as much space to grow. (14.30/05/2019).

Alecia did not participate in the focus groups; however, Genevieve and Zara did. When asked if they thought that the drama work we had been doing in class had helped in any way, Zara suggested: "It also like lifts up your imagination cos you have to think in your head and then say it. So you can express yourself a little more" (FG3.13/06/2017). The notion that drama supports imagination was again picked up at the end of that focus group, with Zara adding:

I think drama is a pretty good idea for children with less imagination than other people, so it brings up their imagination level, up top, and for their expression word for the top too, so once you are kind of imaginative, you are never going to stop being imaginative. You are

always going to have a bit of imagination in you and drama is a pretty good way to let that imagination out and keep growing it. (FG3.13/06/2017).

Zara thus observed that the drama intervention had increased her imagination and supported her ability to express herself.

Expression was also a theme that arose from the comments in separate focus groups with top performing girls. In the entire class debrief at the end of the final workshop, Genevieve asserted that: “... umm, like sometimes just writing doesn’t really express what ... all ... what you are feeling, so it’s easier to express your feelings through actions” (FG7.21/06/2017). Genevieve also already enjoyed her regular English and literacy lessons, commenting in the post-program survey that she would “learn a lot of new things in fun ways” (PostPSS) in her regular English and literacy lessons.

One of the key themes that arose from the focus groups relates to the concept that is explored in more detail below, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978) and the Collective Zone of Proximal Development (CZPD; Moll and Whitmore, 1993). Genevieve’s comments in the pre- and post-program survey answering the question ‘how would you describe the best way to learn new things?’ is very interesting. Her initial response in the pre-survey was “by doing your best, listening to an adult or teacher’s advice and keep trying/practising” (PrePSS) while her response in the post-survey was “I think the best way to learn new things is to work in groups so that you can have a sense of other people’s ideas and listen to feedback given from others” (PostPSS). Her perception perhaps is that the collaborative nature of drama has supported her as a high performing student. Zara also made positive comments, describing the best way to learn in the pre-survey as ‘practice’ and ‘doing’. Like Genevieve, Zara enjoyed her regular English and literacy lessons, but during the post-survey when asked if she felt that *School Drama* had helped her with her English and literacy, she responded “yes because it helps activate your brain” (PostPSS). This idea of drama ‘activating’ the brain or imagination is also another key theme further discussed below that continued to arise during the focus groups.

### Inference, process drama and episodic text

Students at Waratah discussed inference, process drama and the episodic text model together when reflecting on this experience. The following is an excerpt from a focus group after Workshop Six:

Reese: If I read it straight through, I don’t think I would have even enjoyed the book. But when we were reading it really slowly, I loved it. It was really interesting. Yeah. And the characters, yeah. They are very different and you can tell how they feel about the different things. Like

The Mother, she didn't like the city at all, and The Boy was very curious about different things and he wanted to go.

John: And the book doesn't tell us all of that?

Reese: Yeah it doesn't say that, you just notice it by how they look and what they are saying, even though they aren't saying what you are figuring out. (FG3.13/06/2017).

Later in that same focus group, another student raised the issue of this approach, however, with a different observation:

Zara: Ahh so, following on from Reese's answer, so the thing is, when you, even though it was a bit frustrating when you wouldn't finish the book instantly, it did make me think, what would happen next, so the next drama lesson you read another page ... and when I was curious and then you read it and I was happy, but then I was like 'what's going to happen next'. So when you go to the end of the book, it made me wonder why did it end like that and what happened next? Will he go to the war? Is the war still going on? So you can kind of imagine the rest of the book ... which makes you more imaginative afterwards. (FG3.13/06/2017).

This idea of 'frustration' was really interesting to me, and resonated with the concepts of the 'Netflix Generation' (a term used to describe young people who consume media on-demand) who need immediate gratification and can watch any television or movie at the time that they want to, not dictated by TV guides and schedules. This 'frustration' may also be a challenge for students and support the slowing down of the learning to delve deeper into the learning, rather than quickly glossing over the text. This thought was also noted by Dane in our interview at the conclusion of the workshop series:

Dane: It's great. It's a great way to draw it out and be able to really dive into the themes, but one of the things is that the kids, they didn't always like it, did they?

John: No, no.

Dane: They didn't like it being interrupted because they wanted to know what was going to be happening next. And a lot of them got quite annoyed at having to stop every page or every couple of pages ....They just have to deal with it. See, they weren't used to that sort of structure. (I2.22/06/2017).

However, the benchmarking data and data on student engagement would suggest that even though some students indicated that the use of the episodic text model was challenging, even frustrating at times, it did result in developing inferential comprehension and student engagement.

### Skills, Dispositions and Capability Outcomes

Analysing the responses from the focus groups and interviews at Waratah Grammar School, six interrelated themes emerged relating to what I have previously called “non-academic outcomes” but now describe as skills, dispositions and capabilities.

#### Engagement and embodiment

When asked to describe the *School Drama* experience, students overwhelmingly described it as ‘fun’ and/or ‘interesting’ and students linked their enjoyment of drama to ‘moving’ and ‘doing’ and embodying the learning which in turn links to student engagement in the learning taking place.

Chase: It’s been fun.

Grace: Yeah.

John: What’s been fun about it?

Grace: Well it’s just like ... it’s not like your normal writing sessions where you are like just staying still you sort of move around a lot and get active a lot.

Kia: Well you are like learning stuff in a fun way. Like you’re not just sitting down and working in a work book or something, you are actually getting up and moving. (FG4.21/06/2017).

Chase continued: “I think it’s more fun because you can move around to do everything. You don’t have to just sit there and look down the entire time” (FG4.21/06/2017).

As mentioned earlier, Morgan and Saxton (1987) have suggested that “Drama operates in two frames: the expressive frame (the outer manifestation) and the meaning frame (the inner understanding)” (p21). They assert that these two frames are interdependent and introduce “a taxonomy of personal engagement” that involves six levels; Interest, Engaging, Committing, Internalizing, Interpreting, Evaluating (Morgan & Saxton, 1987). At Waratah Grammar School, students were connecting their engagement and enjoyment of the drama to the embodiment. In process-based drama, students are continually embodying their learning, shaping it and sharing their thoughts and ideas through drama. Fiske (1999) eloquently argued that “when well taught, the arts provide young people with authentic

learning experiences that engage their minds, hearts, and bodies. The learning experiences are real and meaningful for them” (p. ix).

I asked Dane, as the classroom teacher, for his perspective and why he thought the students were largely describing the drama experience as ‘fun’.

Dane: It’s the practicality of the lessons, I think they really get a lot out of it. I mean, it is fun. Yeah, there are some really dark themes, but being able to get up and collaborate and move, kids need to move, they learn through movement and through ... and it’s so different from what they are used to as well....They get to move around, they get to talk...instead of just sitting in silence and have to write or whatever else. (12.22/06/2017).

Dane notes that the embodied nature of drama, its collaborative nature, is perhaps why students were finding the experience fun and engaging. DuPont (1992) also found this in her study when she worked with a group of fifth grade students using drama pedagogy and children’s stories to support comprehension. As Deasy (2002) noted of DuPont’s research, the idea that “creative drama can improve children’s attitudes towards reading by associating reading with a fun activity; such engagement, as theory should hold, encourages more reading and may also enhance mental imagery of written material” (p. 23).

Student comments also resonated with this analysis. Josh said:

Josh: I think drama’s really fun and it’s a much funner way to learn and we get to do better things than we get to do in class.

John: Why do you think it’s fun? What makes it fun?

Josh: Because ... you don’t like have to write a lot of things down ... you can actually talk and move and act so it’s more um interactive and interesting. (FG1.31/05/2017).

In another focus group interview, Charlotte also determined that the drama was fun, explaining:

Charlotte: ... I think that it’s like no rules and you get to move around and you can learn new things. Like if you do an English lesson you learn things but with no brightness in them, but when we do drama, it’s kind of bright, not dark. (FG3.13/06/2017).

In a third focus group, Cameron raised ‘movement’ as the key to his enjoyment of drama:

Cameron: I’ve enjoyed all the movement. Like I’ve never really thought that I would get to move this much. But I’ve really started to enjoy moving around a lot more. (FG6.21/06/2017).

These comments are consistent with Jefferson and Anderson’s (2017) assertion that “learning through embodiment can improve student imagination” (p. 111).

Reese: ... I think it’s more engaging and everyone has a go and you get to work with different people that you haven’t worked with before and yeah, it’s very interesting.

John: And what makes it engaging do you think?

Reese: Um probably cos just um, cos not just talking to like one person or something, the making sure that everyone is included and it makes it fun for everyone. (FG3.13/06/2017).

### Collaboration and the collective zone of proximal development

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, recently Ewing (2015) built on Moll and Whitmore’s (1993) concept of a ‘collective Zone of Proximal Development’ in the *School Drama™* program. Ewing (2015) argued that a collective ZPD occurs for students, teaching artists and teachers involved in the *School Drama™* program as “Dramatic play and process drama can encourage adults and children to work in a collective ZPD and enhance children’s language and literacy development, as well as their collaborative skills and their understandings of other” (p. 148). Ewing linked collaboration and the collective Zone of Proximal Development (CZPD) and this is indeed one of the key findings of the WGS case study. In both the focus groups and post-program survey, students commented that they felt it was often better to work collaboratively and that this helped develop their own ideas and learning. As Grace reflected:

... I found it easier to learn about literature because we are not just sitting down with a pen and writing. Like we can bring *other people’s thoughts* into it or you’re getting pretty much anyone else’s opinion and not just getting your own. So I mean you get to act things out and like in your mind so maybe someone else has done something that you didn’t think of. So it’s a great way to do things. (FG1.31/05/2017, original emphasis).

Grace again raised this point in a separate focus group during the final workshops and said “*It’s better because you get to hear other people’s opinions and yeah, it’s really fun ... and you can take on other people’s thoughts*” (FG4.21/06/2017). Grace continued later in the focus group:

And normally you just have your own idea and you put it down and you don't get other people's opinions. Like say, someone thought that The Mother never wanted to leave, and someone else thought that she wanted to leave... (FG4.21/06/2017).

Other students agreed with Grace's perception of learning collaboratively through drama. In a separate focus group during the final workshop, Reese said:

Yeah, I think it is a better way because like it's definitely easier to read between the lines. I also think that ... listening to other people's ideas was very good because, like at the beginning of this, I sort of had a bit of an imagination but not as much and hearing different people's ideas is making me come up with more and more ideas. It's just getting better and better, the scripts and making our different scenes and seeing what's happening is, I think, much better. (FG5.21/06/2017).

Charlotte added to Reese's analysis by stating: "We are expressing our feelings instead of writing it and getting it checked and getting it back and redoing it. Doing it once [in drama] there's no right or wrong, there's listening, there's no 'you can't do this'" (FG3.13/06/2017). This comment is particularly interesting. Charlotte compared learning literacy in a traditional way, with the teacher as the "knower" and the student as the "learner" (the teacher tells, the student responds, the teacher assesses, the student receives a result) with something different happening through drama. The "checking" that Charlotte referred to happens collaboratively, both within small groups in particular drama strategies (for example when asked to devise a Freeze Frame) and again on a larger scale when sharing the outcome of a drama strategy with the rest of the class (for example, each group showing their Freeze Frame to the rest of the class). There is a perception from students that there is no correct answer. This isn't a happy accident. Through the instruction in the class, Dane and I purposefully tried to value different ideas. If we were short on time (and we often were with this group due to the bell times), I would sometimes ask for one group to share their work (e.g. several Freeze Frames predicting what could happen next) and then ask: "is there another group that had a different idea who would like to share their Freeze Frames?" It is interesting that this idea of 'no right' answer is picked up by students when they are constantly told that there is one right answer on a multiple-choice test.

Mackenzie: It's kind of interesting to see, because you are re-enacting the characters from the book, it's interesting to see what everyone else has to show ..." (FG3.13/06/2017).



Mackenzie also explained that “we did it so slowly and because we’ve already expressed ... like at the start it was like about our own ideas, but then we got to the point where we were like ‘well I like this person’s idea, this is cool and I’m going to go with their idea’.” (FG3.13/06/2017).

However, not everyone agreed, particularly after the Readers’ Theatre exercise during Workshop Seven. One student was having a particularly hard time working collaboratively with her group, and during that workshop she was interviewed in a focus group.

Sarah: ... but like this particular bit with the script [Readers’ Theatre] is like really hard because everybody has different ideas and nobody listens to you, they just think ‘oh well I have this idea so I’m going to want to do this’ and that’s really annoying.

John: So the script is ...

Sarah: Hard!

John: Tricky, yeah, yeah. Do you think it’s becoming easier to work in groups though?

Reese: (Jumps in) I think so!

Sarah: I don’t know. I’ve never been really good at working in groups.

John: Ok, do you think that as we’ve done, well lots of it has been in groups or in pairs, umm do you think that that practice is making it easier, Reese?

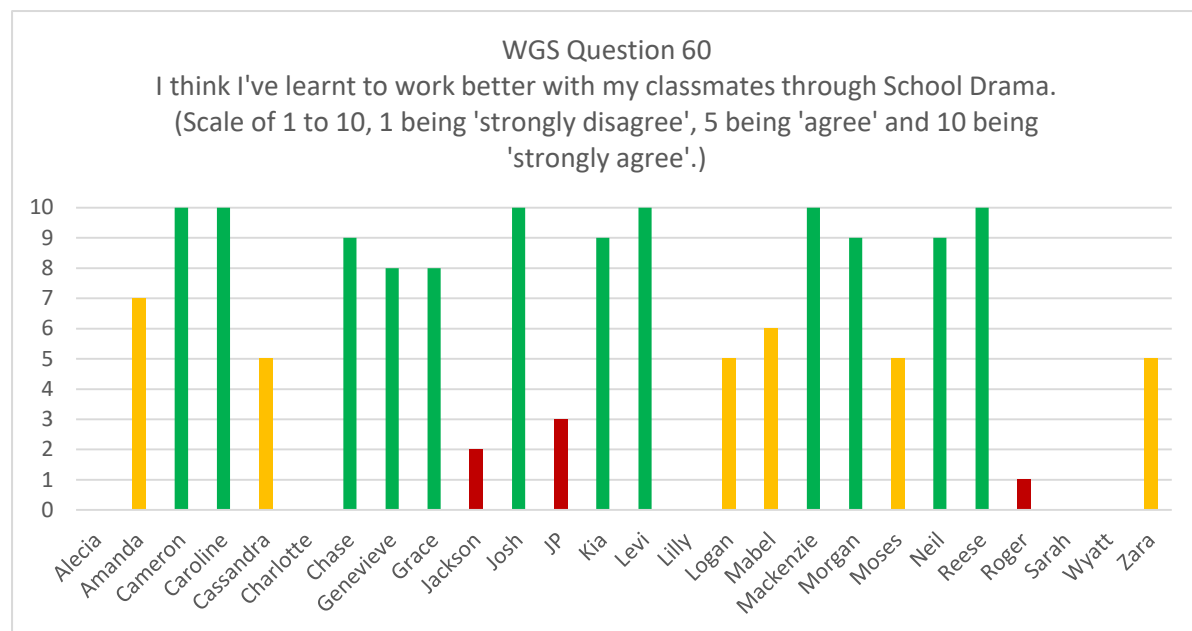
Reese: I think it is a bit easier but also just working by myself as well.

Sarah: Well it’s not exactly easy. It’s easier than it was, but it’s still not easy.

(FG5.21/06/2017).

Unfortunately, Sarah didn’t complete either of the surveys, so analysis of her perception of drama is limited. Three questions in the survey related to collaboration. Question 60 (represented in Figure 33) in the post-program survey asked students to respond to the statement: “I think I’ve learnt to work better with my classmates through *School Drama*” using a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being strongly disagree and 10 being strongly agree with 5 being neutral). Out of the 21 students who responded, 12 (57%) responded in the strongly agree (ranking of 8 to 10), 6 individuals (28%) indicated that they were more neutral in agreement (ranking of between 4 and 7) and 3 students (14%) responded in the strongly disagree (ranking of between 1 and 3).

Figure 33 WGS Question 60



Question 39 asked students an open-ended question; “If you had the option of working by yourself or with a group, what would you choose? And why?” Of the 22 respondents, only two students changed their response from the pre- to post-survey, suggesting that the students didn’t necessarily see that the drama intervention had changed their preferences about how they liked to work. Sixteen students (72%) responded that they preferred to work in a group, and an additional student, Morgan, changed his answer from ‘self’ to ‘group’ in the post-program. Only four students (18%) preferred working by themselves, Roger, Neil, Mackenzie and Caroline. Again, one student, Jackson, changed his mind and moved from ‘group’ to ‘self’ in the post-survey.

Question 10 asked students to respond to the statement “I get involved when we do group work in class (see Figure 30 earlier in this chapter). Overall, there was a very small average positive shift of 2.86% when comparing the pre-survey to the post-survey in this question. However, several students indicated that they became less involved when comparing the pre- and post-program survey data: Zara (9 to 7); Kia (8 to 6); Grace (10 to 9); and Amanda (7 to 5). Several other students moved the other way and indicated in the post-program survey that they got more involved in group work. Those students were Reese (8 to 9), Neil (5 to 9), Morgan (8 to 9), Mabel (8 to 9), Moses (5 to 8), Levi (7 to 8), Chase (3 to 4), Cameron (9 to 10), Caroline (8 to 10) and JP (9 to 10). In process drama-based work, students do need to participate in group work and it is interesting to see the changes and shifts in this group of students and to note that the large majority of students prefer working in a group and

perceive that they were more involved in group work following the drama-based intervention. Several students made particularly insightful comments regarding collaboration and learning from their peers.

Kia: It's definitely better because you get around and you have more fun than just sitting down and working and you get other people's opinions and you ... you like ... go into the characters' shoes so you like think about how they feel and what they do and stuff like that. (FG4.21/06/2017)

Reese: John, it like makes you like ... if you are just handing it in [writing] and putting it in a pile or something it makes you more worried like 'oh God like what if this is wrong', but if you're like in a group, you know like that you are all thinking the same thing as you from the start. (FG5.21/06/2017).

Grace: Ah when you are like sitting down and writing you only get your opinion, but when you're like with other people, not just your friends, like other people in general, you get their opinions, not just yours. (FG7.21/06/2017).

Morgan: It's not just one topic. Everyone has different ideas and you can learn from those different ideas and you can be a happier person I guess, because um it's not so stressful, it's fun to do. (FG3.13/06/2017).

I asked Dane whether he had noted any changes in collaboration following the final workshop:

Dane: From yesterday's task [Readers' Theatre], no.

(John and Dane laugh)

Dane: ... I don't know if it's the age of the kids or the dynamics between them but ... there is a handful of kids who find it very difficult to work with a range of different students in the class. And that's been really evident to me. And on one hand I do want them work with the people that they choose because they may be inclined to work better with them; however, that can also work against, because then there are issues with being separated from their friends and then they are upset that they aren't working with this person ... So I thought, you know what, we might be better off just making the groups myself. Making sure they are mixed ability. So that, especially for the Readers' Theatre, you've got those children who are able to take a little bit more charge with the literacy aspect and then you've got maybe the creatives who can do a bit more with the movement or whatever it is. So that was my idea. Did it work in practice? Not really.... It's so difficult to try and work it all together from a teacher's perspective, but at the same time, they need to learn to work together with a whole bunch of different children,

regardless, and different types of people. So um, I think there needs to be a little bit more work on that sort of front. And how to listen to other children and take on the perspectives of others. And some of the kids are great at it, it's just that handful ... (12.22/06/2017).

Another conversation looked at collaboration from a different perspective:

John: ... when I had them outside in the little focus groups, lots of them were talking about umm you know, I was saying 'what do you think is the benefit' and they were saying it's hearing from other people ... I thought that was really interesting as well. You know, that learning collaboratively is also helping with their inferencing.

Dane: Because you are seeing different perspectives and that's a part of inferring as well, isn't it? Being able to see it from somebody else's point of view. And if, when the children are getting an opportunity to share how they are responding to a particular text with the rest of the class, then yeah, the other children can see it from a different point of view. Umm which isn't something that we do very often, so it absolutely will build their skills in inferring in that sense. Because, I mean, the way we share, normally when we are doing a writing task, is that they will do a piece of working and then they will, only a few kids will get to read it out so only a part of the class will get to share their ideas and their perspectives of how they are writing but the rest of the class just stay silent, which umm ... but with the drama it gives all the kids an opportunity to share in one form or another, um, how they are responding to a certain text. (12.22/06/2017).

### Activating imagination

Preparing for this research, I predicted that creativity may be a key theme in the focus groups; however, it wasn't mentioned once by students at Waratah. Instead they talked about imagination and how their imaginations were activated and developed through the *School Drama* experience. At the end of a focus group that went over time and students were rushing to school photos, Chase insisted on making a final comment:

Chase: I think that some drama helps with my imagination.

John: Yeah how so?

Chase: And my imagination, I'm able to use my brain a lot better and I can do work a lot easier 'cos I can focus on it. (FG2.31/05/2017).

That ended the focus group. However, as Dane and a handful of students were not required at the photos, I decided to use the opportunity to interview Dane, and Chase was still in the classroom, so I asked him to expand on his earlier thoughts about drama and imagination as this had not come up in previous *School Drama* research.

John: Can you expand on that?

Chase: So you can focus, much, much easier, so you can get more done.

John: So can you give me an example from one of the drama lessons?

Chase: So um like sometimes when we get into the statues, I find it a lot easier now than when we first started, because umm, since I've done it a lot of times, my brain knows how to do it and it's more imaginative.

John: So do you go deeper into the world of the drama?

Chase: Yes.

John: Rather than thinking more about how you do a statue or how you do a frozen image, because you've had more practice, you then forget about that ...

Chase: And your imagination just expands. The more I do it. (FG2.31/05/2017).

Again the in final focus groups during Workshop Seven involving Grace, Kia and Chase, the theme of imagination arose again.

Grace: Yeah well like what Chase said before [in class], it's like you have an imagination switch, and you can turn it on or off. Like normally if you are doing a persuasive text or something like that or you are like persuading someone, your imagination turns off. Like completely off. Um but when you are doing drama you get to think and you get to imagine what other people feel like and that like clicks on in a way.

Chase: Yeah, it's harder to think ... it's harder to think of ideas when you are sitting down. It's easier to make stories and things in drama.

John: Ok, why do you think that is?

Chase: Because you are actually like moving around with the story. (FG4.21/06/2017).

The battery died on my recording device, so part of the conversation was missed. When we realized that the battery had died, we swapped devices and continued to talk about imagination:

Kia: Like when I read or draw, my imagination switch flicks on because when I draw I feel like I can draw anything and when you read, you are in the book. You are not just sitting with the book, you are actually in the story. And also with drama your imagination switch goes on and you also feel like you, you can be anything ... become anything ... like you could be a unicorn or something.

John: Did you have anything else that you wanted to say about learning in drama?

Grace: Yeah, well it's been really fun because you are getting active in a way. Like normally people just like slap bang ... like the only thing that's getting active when you are writing is your hand pretty much, and so like when you are doing drama, like everything is being active in a way. (FG4.21/06/2017).

Reese also commented about imagination and linked this to the episodic text model:

Reese: Um being imaginative, I think like every two pages you stopped it. And then we did an activity about it that made us really think about what's happened so far. And I think that really helps our imagining a lot. (FG3.13/06/2017).

The concept that imagination was 'activated' by drama through the movement comes back to Vygotsky's (1930/2004) concept of the cycle of imagination, as mentioned earlier. Vygotsky noted that "... the dramatic form expresses with greatest clarity the full cycle of imagination [...] Here the image that the imagination has created from real elements of reality is embodied and realized again in reality ..." (Vygotsky, 1930/2004, p. 70). The students' reflective comments resonate with Vygotsky's theorising about imagination and particularly the importance of the 'real elements' and the 'embodiment' that occurs within the drama experience.

## Confidence

Echoing earlier research during the pilot phase of *School Drama* (Gibson, 2015; Gibson & Smith, 2013), student confidence was another key theme in the Waratah Grammar School case study. Gibson (2015) found that "overwhelmingly the teachers mentioned an increase in students' self-confidence as a desirable benefit associated with the program" (p. 85). Both the students and teacher discussed positive shifts in confidence as a result of the drama-based experiences at Waratah Grammar School.

Chase, a fairly reserved student was initially rather passive in the early drama lessons. He would very rarely contribute to the class discussion and was not confident in speaking in front of his peers or

sharing his own ideas with the class. However, he observed that this changed through the drama intervention.

Chase: I think I feel more confident in speaking and writing and sharing my ideas, actually in everything I do. (FG1.31/05/2017).

At the end of Workshop Four where Chase had made the above comment I spoke to Dane who also commented on Chase's confidence:

Dane: Actually, I was going to say that what was most surprising was Chase's response because normally he isn't one to vocally express himself very often. He's quite an intelligent kid, but he won't often speak up about his ideas and thoughts, so the fact that he was willing to do that today, was an amazing thing. And that was because of the drama. Because he was able to get up and move around and build that confidence through being ... (I1.31/05/2017).

Chase was not the only student to mention increased confidence in the focus group discussions:

Cassandra: Because I feel more confident. And I feel like I can show everyone what my imaginations are and what my emotions are. (FG1.31/05/2017).

Lilly: And I really think it's helped with our self-confidence because I used to only like, cos I was in 'Oliver' but I only went for single roles because my friends were doing it, and I didn't think about who I was, I just wanted to take it to impress my friends, and then you go for it but then you actually get stage fright and then your voice comes out weirdly low and nobody can hear you and that just makes you get bad marks, but this is really helpful with your self-confidence. (FG6.21/06/2017).

Dane also agreed that confidence was one of the key shifts in his class during the *School Drama* intervention.

Dane: ... Hearing them say that they are more confident in being able to express themselves through drama and I found that really interesting what Cassandra was saying that drama was all about being silly and trying to make people laugh and joking around, but now she's thinking that actually thinking that 'I can be a bit more serious about this' and that drama is a way that

I can express my feelings and emotions instead of something that is a bit silly. So yeah, getting that sort of shift has been really interesting. (I1.31/05/2017).

In a focus group, Reese agreed that drama was having a positive impact on his confidence:

Reese: Well when I first started this, ahh I just didn't really want to raise my hand or go in front of the class or do something, but now I find it umm actually pretty fine and it gives you like feedback and yeah I really enjoy it now. (FG5.21/06/2017).

Reese perceived that the increase in his own confidence impacted on his ability to contribute in class, receive feedback and altered his enjoyment of the drama experience. When Cameron was asked if he thought that drama had helped his confidence, he enthusiastically responded:

Cameron: I know for sure that I ... I still have stage fright now ... but before I was really scared of getting up in front of people and talking, but I've found out that this drama thing has made it much easier for me to be up in front of people and talk.

John: And why do you think that is? What have we done that's helped that, do you reckon?

Cameron: I know that getting up with other people doesn't mean the spotlight is always against you, but at the same time it's always good just to get in front of the spotlight. I know that the Hot-Seat and a few other of the other activities that I can't remember the names of, but yeah, they've definitely helped me with that. (FG6.21/06/2017).

Cameron's comments demonstrate that these findings are interrelated and part of the tapestry of drama experiences. The idea of working collaboratively as an ensemble in drama reduces the stakes and allows quieter students to build confidence with their peers, rather than being the sole person sharing. Caroline agreed with Cameron's observations:

Caroline: I think drama has helped us umm get more confident in coming out to the front and sharing our ideas in a drama way instead of writing.

John: And how do you think it has helped you become a bit more confident?

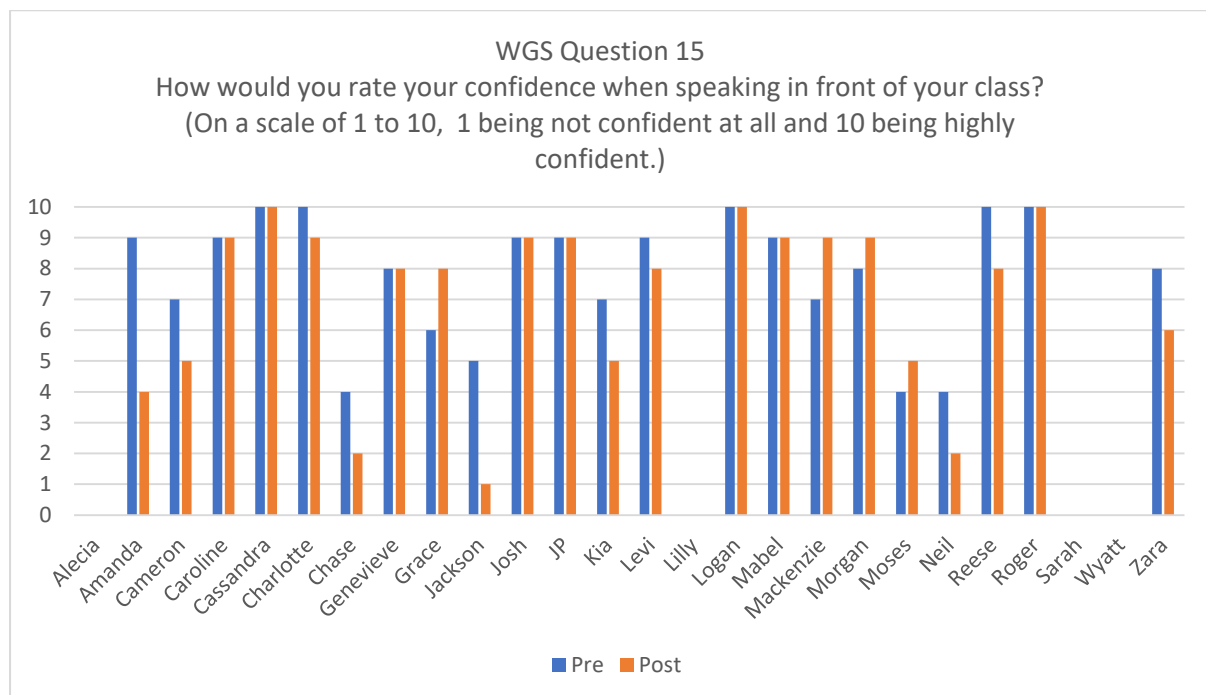
Caroline: Because you ... as you progress in the drama, you want to share it more. So you are not as scared to get up on stage and share your ideas. (FG7.21/06/2017).



Caroline linked confidence with motivation and engagement rather than (as Cameron did) working collaboratively. Caroline reflected that the further the class went into the drama and story, as engagement increased, there was an increased motivation to share ideas.

The survey interrogated shifts in confidence, as the teachers' perceptions of student confidence in the early pilot evaluations and meta-evaluation didn't include data from students themselves. Four questions in the survey addressed confidence: Question 15: "How would you rate your confidence when speaking in front of your class?" (on a scale of 1 to 10 - 1 being not confident at all and 10 being highly confident); Question 30: "I consider myself a confident person" (scale of 1 to 5 – 1 being disagree and 5 being agree); Question 53: "I feel more confident after the *School Drama* program" (post-survey only); Question 59: "I feel more confident in sharing my ideas with my class than I did last term/before *School Drama*" (post-survey only). There was almost no change in overall answers from Questions 11 and 15; however, responses to Question 30 (I consider myself a confident person) did change. The following figures illustrate the answers to each of the above questions relating to confidence.

Figure 34 WGS Question 15



Responses to Question 15 (illustrated in Figure 34) differed with many students staying the same in the top section of the graph, indicating that they maintained their high confidence (Caroline, Cassandra, Genevieve, Josh, JP, Logan, Mable and Roger). Some students indicated that they felt less confident comparing their pre- and post-program responses (Amanda, Cameron, Charlotte, Chase, Jackson, Kia, Levi, Neil, Reese and Zara). Interestingly, some of these students spoke a lot about confidence in the focus groups (particularly Cameron, Chase and Reese).

Figure 35 (below) illustrates the pre- and post-program responses regarding how confident students see themselves, with the majority of students maintaining or increasing their score (Amanda, Cameron, Caroline, Cassandra, Charlotte, Grace, Josh, JP, Kia, Levi, Mabel, Mackenzie, Morgan, Reese and Roger). Some students did indicate a reduction in confidence in comparing the pre- and post-program responses (including Chase, Genevieve, Jackson, Logan, Moses, Neil and Zara). These mixed responses could be partly to do with the survey design and may have been different if the students had been given their pre-program survey to compare. This may have made enabled students to reflect on their own pre- to post-program responses in the survey. The following two questions relating to confidence were only in the post-program survey, asking students to provide a score following the drama intervention.

Figure 35 WGS Question 30

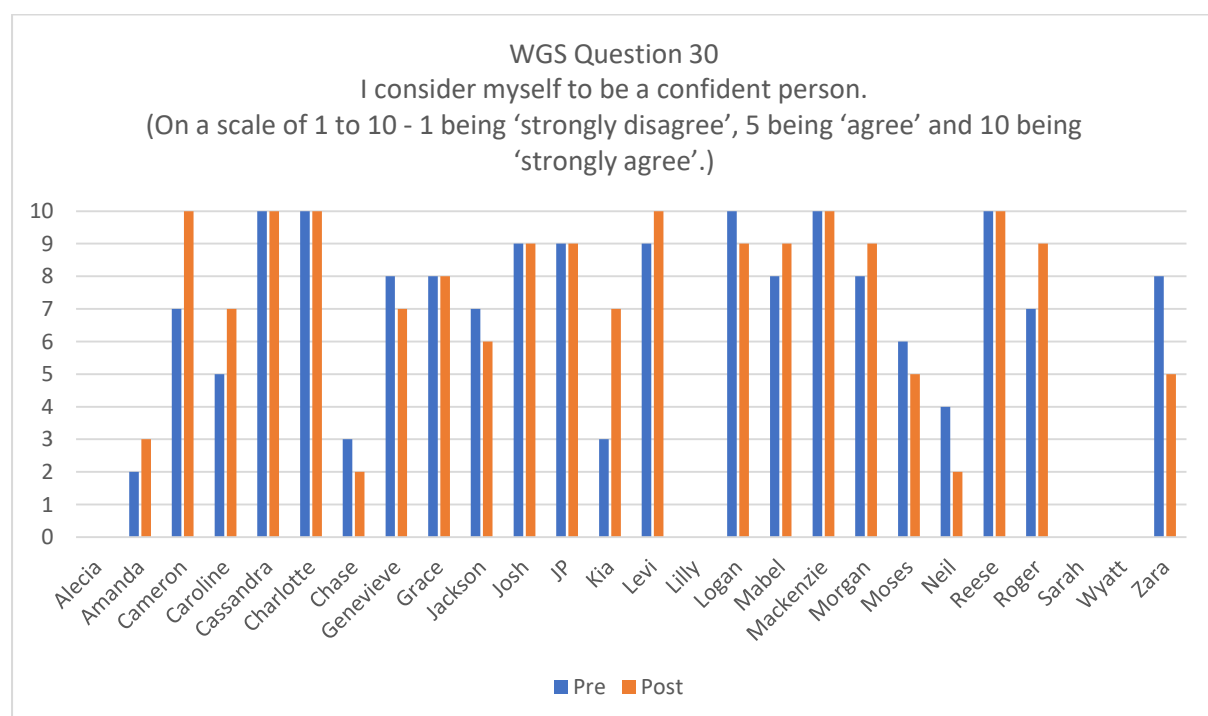
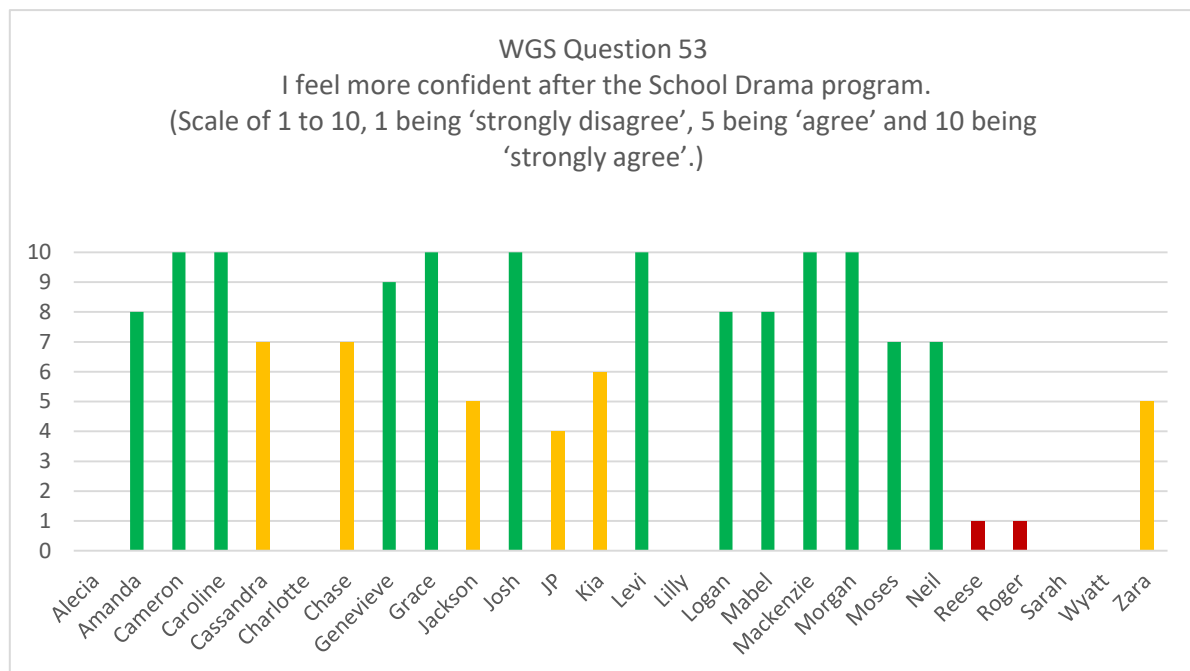


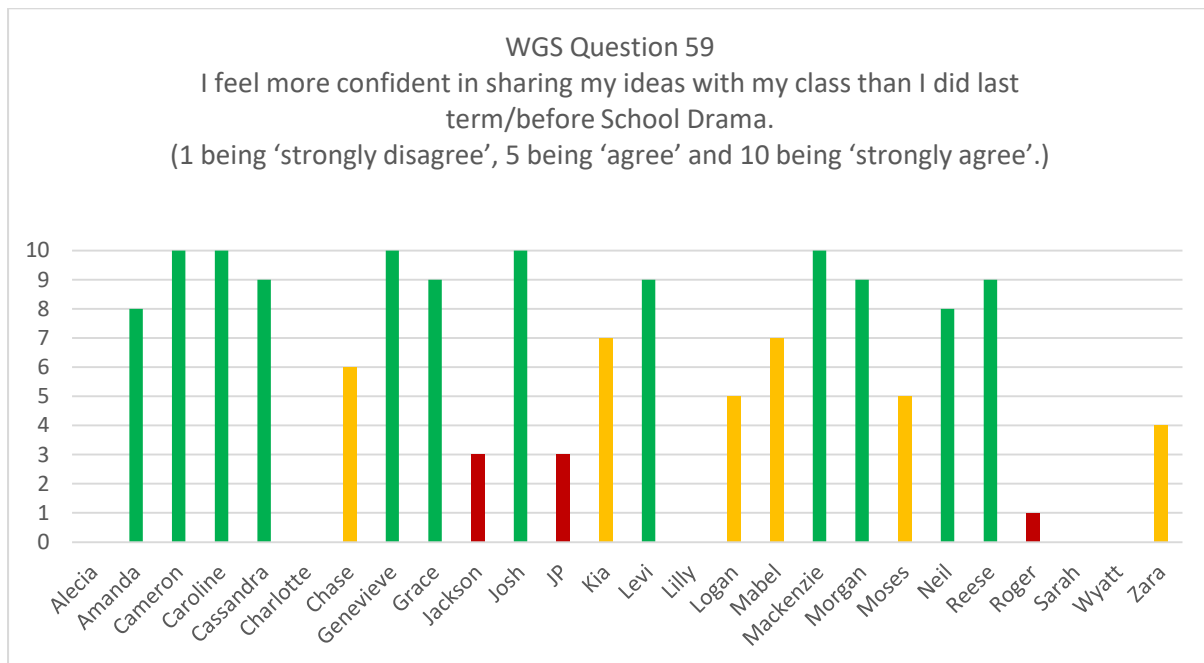
Figure 36 WGS Question 53



Post-program Question 53 (represented in Figure 36) also focused on confidence. Eleven of the 21 students (Charlotte and Sarah did not complete this question) indicated that they strongly agreed (ranking between an 8 and 10 and represented with a green bar) that they felt more confident following *School Drama*. Six students indicated that they 'agree' (ranking between a 4 and 7 and represented with a yellow bar) that they had felt somewhat more confident following the intervention and 2 students indicated that they strongly disagreed (ranking between a 1 and 3 and represented with a red bar) that they did not feel more confident following *School Drama*. Interestingly, Reese who indicated that he did not feel more confident following the program, contradicted this in the focus groups.

Responses from Question 59 are represented in Figure 37 which asked students to provide a ranking from 1 to 10 in response to the statement: "I feel more confident in sharing my ideas with my class than I did last term/before *School Drama*." Twelve of the 21 students who responded indicated that they 'strongly agreed' (ranking between 8 and 10 and represented with a green bar), 6 students responded that they 'agreed' (ranking between a 4 and 7 and represented with a yellow bar) and 3 students indicated that they 'strongly disagreed' (ranking between 1 and 3 and represented with a red bar) to the statement.

Figure 37 WGS Question 59



## Conclusion

This chapter has described the Year 5 class's experiences in *School Drama* during Term 2, 2017. Analysing the student benchmarking data and comparing the pre- and post-program tasks suggested that students in the lower bands (receiving a grade of E or D) in the pre-program task made the most improvement in their inferential comprehension throughout the term, with a stark difference between male and female students' literacy scores in the benchmarking. The *School Drama* experience may be an enabler in terms of enhancing literacy development for students who are struggling, as many of the students who failed the pre-program task moved up to grades that were similar to their high performing peers. Students discussed feeling more engaged and often linked this to the embodied learning involved in *School Drama*. This increase in engagement was also observed by the classroom teacher, Dane.

Collaboration was a key theme that emerged from the focus groups at Waratah Grammar School. Students described learning from their peers as both difficult and helpful which supports the concept of the Collective Zone of Proximal Development, the notion of learning in a collective and collaborative way. Students also concluded that the drama experiences activated their imaginations. Confidence

has been a consistent theme through much of the previous *School Drama* research and this was another strong theme that emerged from the *School Drama* intervention at Waratah Grammar School.

The next chapter details the experience of students at Gungahlin Public School who participated in *School Drama* during Term Three, 2017. The chapter follows a similar structure to this one, introducing the school and class, then analysing the data collected throughout the term.

## Chapter 7 - Case Study Two: Gungahlin Public School

“The basic law of children’s creativity is that its value lies not in its results, not in its product of creation, but in the process itself. It is not important what children create, but that they do create, that they exercise and implement their creative imagination.” (Vygotsky, 1930/2004, p. 72).

### Introduction

Chapter 7 details the experience of the drama-based unit and analyses the data gathered at Gungahlin Public School (pseudonym) during Term Three, 2017 and explores a range of student outcomes and their relationship to each other. The chapter is structured to mirror Chapter 6, starting with an outline of the school’s history and current context. A profile of the class follows with a brief summary of the workshops. The data is analysed before some conclusions are drawn together.

### Background

Gungahlin Public School is situated in an inner-western Sydney suburb within several blocks of Wentworth Grammar School; however, with a very different demographic. While Gungahlin as a suburb has gentrified over the last 20 years being only three kilometres away from the Sydney Central Business District and very close to large shopping centres and universities, it had a reputation for being a ‘rough’ and impoverished inner-west suburb following the decline in local manufacturing jobs post World War II. Many related social issues in the area were evident through the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. A large park located in the middle of the suburb (close to main roads, a Women’s Refuge and large shopping centres) was home to a homeless community. The school had a high Indigenous enrolment and faced many challenges over this period and its enrolment numbers dwindled. However, in no small part due to the work of a very dedicated principal, Gungahlin Public School has transformed itself and has become the centre of the local community. It is now a thriving school for local families.

Gungahlin Public School has a history of working collaboratively with The University of Sydney’s School of Education and Social Work and has participated in the *School Drama* program since the first pilot in 2009, due to a longstanding working relationship between Professor Robyn Ewing AM (The University of Sydney) and Veronica Patonella<sup>12</sup>, Gungahlin’s principal. In a Sydney Morning Herald article in 2011,

---

<sup>12</sup> Pseudonym

Veronica Patonella credited “thriving partnerships with elite organisations as varied as theatre companies [...] and universities have contributed to the pronounced rise in academic performance at Gungahlin Public School in recent years” (Burke, 2011, p. 16).

By 2017, the school had grown to 260 students from Kindergarten to Year 6. Gungahlin as a suburb is a culturally and linguistically diverse area, and this is reflected in the demographic of students who attend the school. Forty-one percent of students identify as having EAL/D and 18% of students identify as Aboriginal. The Index of Community Socio-Education Advantage (ICSEA) value of the school is 1019, which has steadily increased since records began in 2008 when the school received a value of 937 (under the average score of 1000; ACARA, 2017b).

The campus is made up of a series of large old buildings and the classrooms are usually generous in size with very high ceilings and large bay windows that flood the rooms with natural light. The student body is diverse and multi-cultural with high numbers of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander students as well as students who are the children of migrants to Australia. The school strongly embraces their local Indigenous community and often community members volunteer in the classroom. Due to the diversity of students, the school employs a Community Liaison Officer, a Chinese speaking Student Learning Support Officer and an Aboriginal Education Officer to support students, parents and teachers (Gungahlin Public School, 2018).

The class that I worked with for this case study was a group of 26 Year 5 students, 16 girls and 10 boys taught by Mr Jacob Lockyer. Five students spoke languages other than English at home: Lucy, Swiss German and German; Li-Na, Chinese; Jose, Spanish; Hope, English and Chinese; and Ai, Chinese, representing 19% of student in the class being from EAL/D. Nine students (34%) identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander: Jada, Jarrod, Kane, Kaylee, Kelly, Kendell, Liam, Martin and Wade.

Class teacher, Jacob Lockyer had worked at Gungahlin Public School for five years. He initially studied Drama at university in Queensland and then studied a Bachelor of Primary Education also in Queensland before moving to Sydney and working at Gungahlin. Jacob is described by his students as a ‘very cool’ teacher. Young, active, energetic, Jacob really relates to his students. Although I hadn’t worked with Jacob before this study, I had met him through pre-program workshops at Sydney Theatre Company. Jacob participated in the *School Drama* program in 2014 with another teaching artist. To continue to use the same literacy focus area as used in the first case study, I checked with

Jacob that he was happy to focus on inferential comprehension. He agreed. Using the same literacy focus meant that I could compare the three case studies more easily.

Initially I was keen to use a novel as the focus of study for this group; however, Jacob had just finished a two-term unit based on *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling, 1998), so he thought that it would be better to select a picture-book that addressed many contemporary global issues. We discussed text selection and decided to work with *Home and Away* (Marsden & Ottley, 2008). This book contains a series of diary entries from the perspective of a boy, around the age of the students. The story is set in Sydney in the present day and the text starts with introducing the reader to the boy's family and surroundings as a war gets closer to Australia and Sydney falls. The family decide to get on a boat to escape and go to a fictional country called Hollania. When they arrive, they are locked up in a refugee camp. This powerful text turns the refugee experience on its head. So often in Australia we think of refugees as 'the others' and their experience is so foreign from our own. Marsden reflects:

Everyone wants a place of safety, a place to share with the people you love. A place to relax. A home. There're only two places you can be in life: home or away. Right now, more than a billion people don't have a home – that's one in seven of the world's population. This could happen to you. (Marsden & Ottley, 2008, p. 33).

*Home and Away* is dark, harrowing, confronting and deeply shocking. It brings the refugee experience to the students in a unique way and invites the reader to think about what it might be like to be a refugee. As Greene (1977) comments, "there are works of art ... [that were] deliberately created to move people to critical awareness, to a sense of a moral agency, and to a conscious engagement with the world" (p. 120). Certainly *Home and Away* as a literary work was created by Marsden and Ottley to achieve just this, allowing the text to be an incredibly rich and powerful story for exploration through drama.

Gungahlin participated in the workshops during Term Three, 2017 (from late July to early September). As a group the students developed a profile of a fictional country that declared war with Australia, the Warwick Islands. The inhabitants were going to war with Australia because they didn't like our brand of democracy and they wanted our natural resources.



## The Intervention

A full description of each workshop in the unit, along with a selection of researcher/teaching artist reflections is located in Appendix B. Due to space restrictions, only a brief overview of each workshop is included below.

To commence the unit, I printed a range of images relating to the story; images of war and destruction, people seeking asylum, and iconic Australian buildings being bombed. I invited students to move around the room and find an image that really stood out for them and then invited them to share a question beginning with “I wonder”. We then used Clumping to represent theme words such as ‘war’, ‘home’, ‘refugee’, ‘poverty’, ‘hope’, and ‘starvation’. In pairs, students then Sculpted each other into an image of ‘being at home’ and an image of ‘being away from home’. I introduced the text and read the first few pages. I assigned each group a character from the text and they developed a Role on the Wall. Students then created a single Freeze Frame of a day in the life of this family. I continued to read the text to the point where the war starts and led a discussion of why groups and countries go to war. As a class, we created a fictional country, the Warwick Islands as they country who had declared war on Australia.

The second workshop focused on life after the war had started and I was Hot-Seated in role as Ken, the father in the story. This allowed me to provide some information about the context, the family, the Warwick Islands and the impending war. A Visualisation of the city after it has been bombed was followed by a Mime and Mapping strategy where students drew two versions of the same part of the city; one before and one after the war began.

The third workshop started with students developing a semi-improvised scene of the chaos depicted in the illustrations. A Conscience Alley was employed exploring the fathers’ inner thoughts as he hears news of a boat that would allow his family to flee Australia. We Hot-Seated students in role as the father and the younger brother, Toby (5 years old) to consider how a young child might understand what is going on in the story.

We commenced Workshop Four with students developing three images; one before the war, one after the war had started, and the third at any time. We continued to read the book and students Role Played a conversation between two of the family members not included in the text. Students imagined that they were one of the characters in the family and what they might take with them as

they fled Australia. They drew this on a post-it-note. We then engaged in a semi-structured improvisation where Jacob and I were in role as the people who captained the boat. The students were in role as one of the family members. In role, Jacob and I assessed how much each person was bringing onto the boat (for example, a photo album was thrown away as it took up too much room: if there was something valuable it was confiscated).

We began Workshop Five with a Visualisation, imagining what life was like on the boat. The students formed a Conscience Circle exploring a hope and a fear that the main character in the book (Tee) might have. Students then devised a Soundscape of 30 seconds of life on the boat.

Jacob and I presented a brief conversation between the two men who ran the boat to begin Workshop Six. We made comments like: “I don’t think these people have any idea what is going to happen when we arrive in Hollania” (the fictional country the boat was heading to). Students then developed three Freeze Frames that depicted Tee’s response to overhearing this conversation. In small groups, students created a short Mime depicting the family seeing land on the horizon. As a class, we created two Postcards: the first depicting the best-case scenario of the boat arriving in Hollania and the second depicting the worst-case scenario. We continued reading the book and then used the strategy of Tableau and Tap In to explore how different groups involved in this moment in the story might react (for example, one group were the people on the boat, another was the navy, and another were some civilians from Hollania). Students rehearsed and presented a short Role Play depicting a conversation between Tee and his younger brother, Toby.

The final workshop commenced by reading the end of the text and this was followed by a Dream Sequence where Tee dreamt that his parents provided him with some advice for the future. This transitioned into letter writing in role as Tee. Then we used a Class Poem convention. Students storyboarded an alternative ending.

## The Data

### Student benchmarking

The pre-program benchmarking task was conducted in Week One, Term Three and required the students to write a diary entry based on their previous two terms’ work, in role as a character in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (Rowling, 1998) who was arriving at Hogwarts for the first time. The task was designed and marked by Jacob, the classroom teacher. The post-program task required students to again write a diary entry as a character in *Home and Away* (the main character whom we

called Tee) as he arrived in Hollania for the first time. Of the 26 students in the class, all participated in the research study although four did not complete either the pre- or post-program benchmarking tasks (Lucy, Liam, Rea and Savannah) as they were absent from school when the tasks were completed.

### Student surveys

During Week Two of Term Three, students completed the pre-program survey; however, as the class didn't have access to computers or tablet devices, Mr Lockyer printed the survey and students completed them by hand. These were then collected and I manually entered the data into the SurveyMonkey program. The post-program survey was completed electronically on computers in Week Ten (final week of term) on Monday 19/09/2017.

### Interviews, focus groups and reflective journal

Similar to Case Study One (Chapter 6), other data was also collected during the intervention including two interviews with the classroom teacher (Mr Lockyer), my research reflections, and four focus groups with students. To provide the reader with a clearer picture of the process, below is a table that outlines the schedule of the data collection and the intervention.

*Table 8 Schedule of intervention and data collection points at Gungahlin Public School*

Table 8 Schedule of intervention and data collections points at Gungahlin Public School	
Week No. and Term No.	Event and Date
<b>Term Two 2017</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial face to face meeting with Jacob Lockyer about the process and text selection (27/06/2017).</li> </ul>
<b>Term Three 2017</b>	
<b>Week 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NA</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students completed the pre-program benchmarking task in class with Mr Lockyer (24/07/2017).</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students completed the pre-program survey in class (hardcopy) with Mr Locker (01/08/2017).</li> <li>Workshop 1 (02/08/2017).</li> <li>Research journal entry.</li> </ul>

<b>Week 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 2 (07/08/2017).</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 3 (14/08/2017).</li> <li>• Whole Class Reflection/Focus Group (14/08/2017). Tag FG1.14/08/2017.</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 4 (21/08/2017).</li> <li>• Whole Class Reflection/Focus Group (21/08/2017). Tag FG2.21/08/2017.</li> <li>• Focus Group (21/08/2017). Tag FG3.21/08/2017.</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 5 (28/08/2017).</li> <li>• Focus Group (28/08/2017). Tag FG4/28/08/2017.</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 6 (04/09/2017) (Note: visitors observed workshop)</li> <li>• Focus Group (04/09/2017). Tag FG5.04/09/2017.</li> <li>• Interview with Mr Jacob Lockyer (07/09/2017). Tag I1.07/09/2017.</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 7 (11/09/2017).</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students complete post-program survey (19/09/2017).</li> <li>• Students complete post-program benchmarking task (20/09/2017).</li> </ul>
<b>Term 4 2017</b>	
<b>Week 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-program interview with Mr Jacob Lockyer (3/11/2017). Tag I2.03/11/2017.</li> </ul>

## Analysis

The data analysis process was outlined in Chapter 4 and detailed in the first case study. The analysis for case study two follows the same pattern as the first case study in the previous chapter.

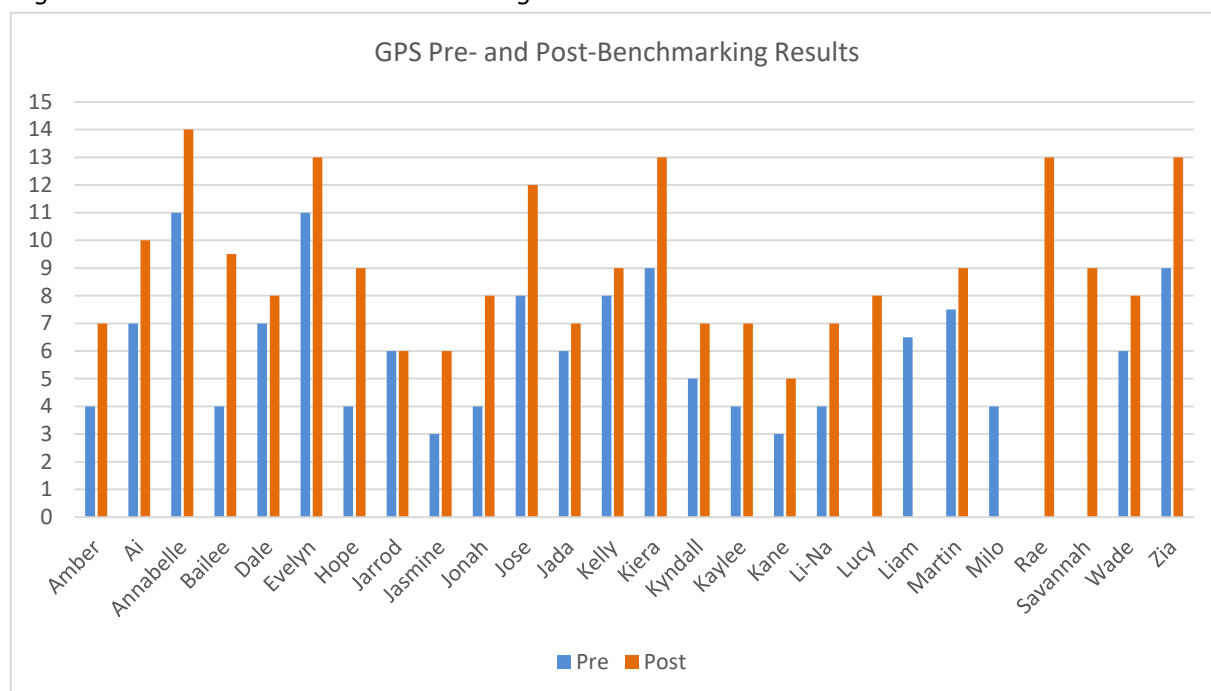
### **Literacy: Inferential comprehension**

As mentioned above, the pre- and post-tasks were designed by the classroom teacher and were administered in the normal timeframe.

Figure 38 below depicts the pre- (blue bar) and post-benchmarking (red bar) results. Out of the 21 complete sets of benchmarking tasks, 12 students (representing 57% of students) received a below C-grade (below 7 marks) indicating a fail for the task. Of these 12 students (Amber, Bailee, Hope, Jarrod, Jasmine, Jonah, Jada, Kyndall, Kaylee, Kane, Li-Na and Wade), Amber, Bailee and Jonah did not identify as either EAL/D or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; seven, Jarrod, Jasmine, Jada, Kyndell, Kaylee, Kane and Wade identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and Hope and Li-Na identified as EAL/D. In the post-benchmarking task, ten of these students (83.3%) moved above a C- (7 marks), one student (Jarrod) maintained his score of a D+, and another student (Kane) increased his score moving from an E+ (3 marks) to a D (5 marks).

Unlike Waratah Grammar School's benchmarking outcomes, the Gungahlin case study does not demonstrate a notable difference between the post-program benchmarking results for the male and female students. Girls at Gungahlin were generally receiving higher grades in literacy and these were maintained. There was a similar improvement in boys' and girls' writing in the post-program benchmarking task. On average, girls received a score of 6.5 for the pre-test (representing a D+) and a score of 9.3 for the post-task (representing C+) with a shift of 3 marks. The average boys' pre-intervention grade of 5.4 (representing a D) and post-program tasks received an average grade of 8 (representing a C) with a general shift of 2.5 marks.

Figure 38 WPS Pre- and Post-Benchmarking Results



### Drama, episodic text and literacy learning

In the first focus group following the fourth workshop, I asked students if they thought that they were engaging with the text differently because we were doing ‘drama stuff’ with it or not? Annabelle, an incredibly bright and articulate student jumped in to say that:

Annabelle: I think that we are engaging with it differently because, if you had of just read this normally, just flicking through, um you probably wouldn’t have thought about what they could be thinking at the time or what they could have said between those illustrations and speech marks that they have in the book. So yeah I think we are definitely interpreting the book differently. (FG3.21/08/2017).

She added:

Annabelle: Every single week I feel like I want to go through the book more and I don’t think I would have got that if we had of just flicked through it, cos I would have just read it all in one go and yeah, I think I would definitely want to read more of the book. (FG3.21/08/2017).

Another student also commented in the same focus group remarked:

Hope: It's like really exciting like ... like, when we stop, it's like an exciting part after, and when we get to act the characters out, you like, you don't know what's going to happen next. (DF3.21/08/2017).

This idea of interpreting the book differently and thinking critically about what happens between events and pages within the text was picked up by other students in separate focus groups. During the focus group following Workshop Five, Liam responded in this way to the same question I had asked Annabelle and Hope a week earlier:

Liam: Different, because like every week we learn about one of their problems and we have to work out what like happens to them and like what will happen next. (FG4.28/08/2017).

However, not all students responded positively to this style of inquiry. Jose, a student who had joined the school from Columbia earlier in 2017 responded with this comment during the focus group following Workshop Six:

Jose: No. I don't know, it's just that I think it takes way too long and it does make it really big and I think it's better to keep it close and then you can understand things easily. And because you can get confused about the amount of things that you have to 'get'. And you'll like over think and overload. (FG5.04/09/2017).

I was surprised by this comment, because I had thought that Jose was actually very involved in the drama experiences and looked like he was engaging in the work really positively. I asked his class teacher, Jacob about this in our mid-program interview.

John: ... Jose in the focus group on Monday, I asked if they enjoyed this sort of stop start of the drama, you know, this sort of episodic text and doing the drama or just reading it and Jose was the only student who said that he preferred to just read it. Does that surprise you?

Jacob: No, no, not at all.

John: Why is that?

Jacob: He is an avid reader and ... but he is also an avid 'disagree-er'. He is a very interesting character. He will go out of his way to disagree with whatever, like whenever there is a survey, like a school survey asking about an activity, his responses will be the exact opposite of the

way that he seemed to react. Even if he seemed to have a good time, he'll write the complete opposite. He'll write that it was worthless.

John: Yeah, I was really interested in his response and it wasn't quite what I had expected because he seemed engaged and then I wondered if he might just be quieter and preferred working by himself. I mean he talked about that he has become better at working with other people through drama, but he still doesn't like it.

Jacob: Yeah, yeah, well Jose came from in his own words, 'a very prestigious school' in Columbia, and it sounded awful, to be honest. It was like book work every day, like ridiculous amounts, hugely complex stuff for their age and a very low amount of creativity. And he's feeling like if he is doing anything that isn't book work and isn't written text and standard old fashioned education that he isn't learning enough. Yeah, so he is a very interesting boy. (11.07/09/2017).

Jose, however, was adamant that drama wasn't helping him in his English and literacy learning. In the post survey he responded to the open-ended question asking if he thought he learned more or less in Drama: 'I think that I learn less in drama because it takes too long to get a subject completely understood.' As Jacob had observed, Jose also indicated that he enjoyed reading books and preferred to work by himself. However, his written work did improve from a C in the pre-program task to a B+ in the post-program task. His pre-task was fairly short and contained 96 words. It was a superficial diary entry that wasn't well written. He also didn't take on the perspective of a character and wrote the entry in the third person, like it was a passage from the text. His post-task was very different containing 181 words (almost an entire page of text) and painted a very dark picture of September 29, the day Tee and his family arrived in Hollania. Jacob also commented on this shift during our post-program interview when he commented on Jose's post-program task, saying:

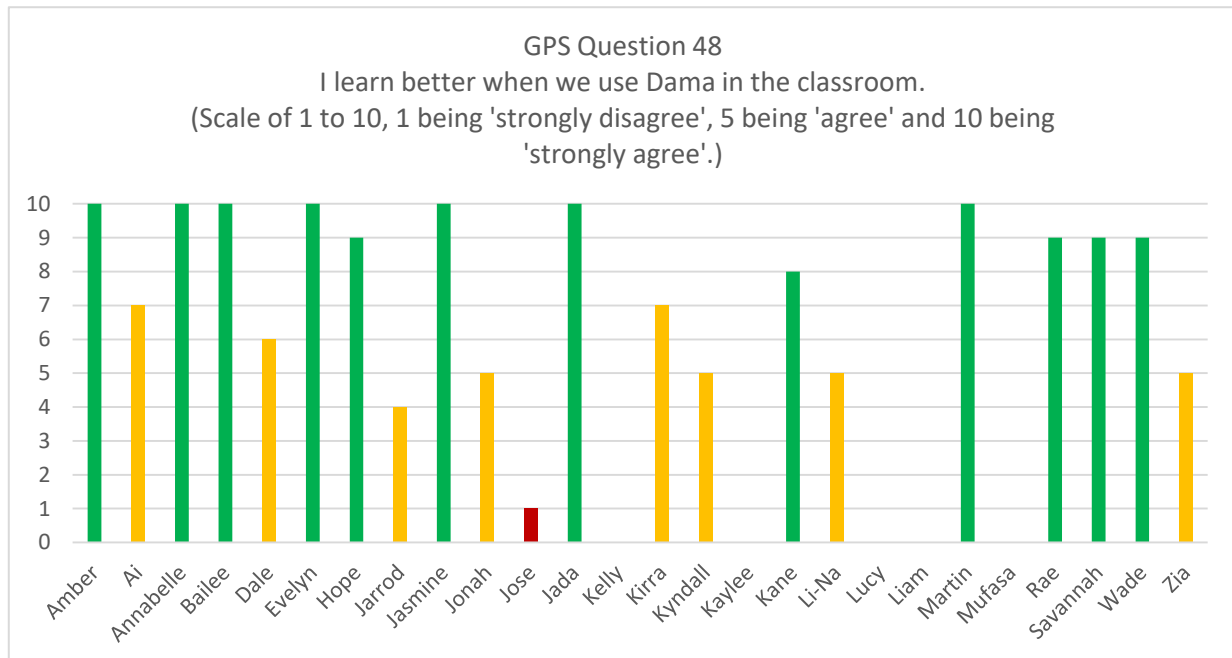
Great, I love the second half of it. He's really looking into his senses. What he's seeing, hearing, feeling. The start is just very Jose, he loves a bit of action. Action packed. He loves comic books, so that's where that would have come from. (12.03/11/17).

Jose made strong inferences to *Home and Away* in his writing, building on existing information and relationships in the text, but depicting the harrowing events of arriving at a refugee detention centre.



The survey also contained questions relating to learning and literacy through drama. Question 48 of the post-program survey asked students to identify on a scale of 1 to 10 if they strongly agreed (10) or strongly disagreed (1) with the statement “I learn better when we use drama in the classroom.”

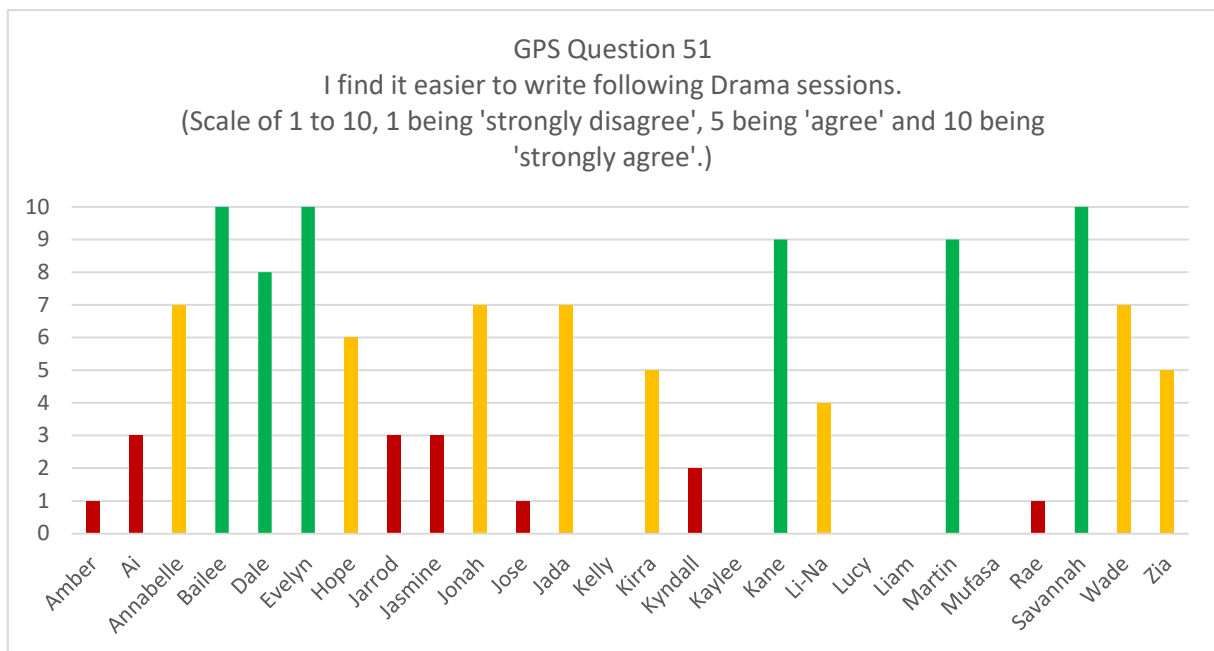
Figure 39 GPS Question 48



Of the 21 students who completed the post-program survey, Jose responded with a 1, representing that he ‘strongly disagreed,’ 8 students (38%) reported that they ‘agreed’ with the statement in the mid-level by providing a ranking of between 4 and 7, and 12 students (57.1%) indicated that they strongly agreed (ranking between 8 and 10) that they learned better when drama was used in the classroom.

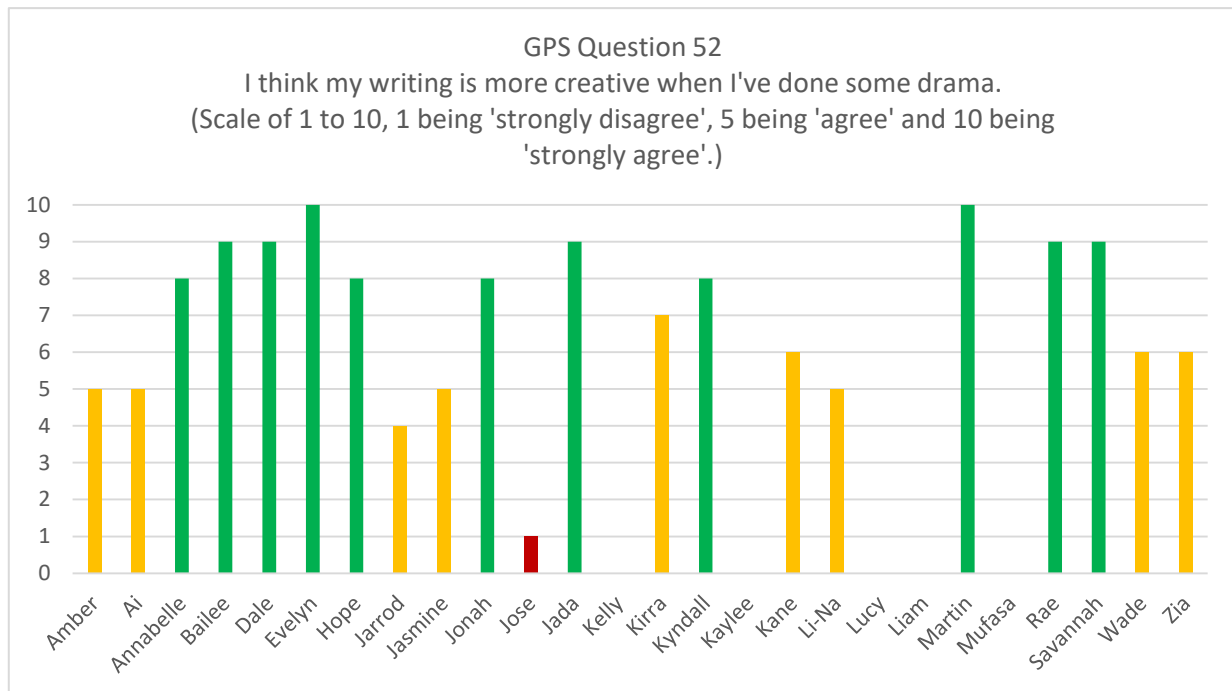
Students also responded to a statement in the post-program survey asking if they felt their writing was more creative following drama. This is represented in Figure 40 (below).

Figure 40 GPS Question 51



Responses to Question 51 (Figure 40) were quite different from Question 48 (Figure 39) and students were separating 'learning' and 'writing'. This time only six students strongly agreed that writing had become easier following drama, eight students agreed, and seven students strongly disagreed. Although students may have reported that there wasn't a shift in the ease in writing following drama, the quality of the writing was certainly of a higher standard according to the class teacher's assessment of both the pre- and post- benchmarking writing in role. Students also indicated that they generally felt that their writing was more creative following drama experiences. Question 52 (outlined in Figure 41) asked students to respond to the statement: "I think my writing is more creative when I've done some drama."

Figure 41 GPS Question 52



Jose was the only student who strongly disagreed with this statement, consistently reflecting his stated opinion during the focus group that he did not think drama had any impact on his learning. Annabelle, on the other hand, reflected on the use of the episodic text model:

Annabelle: The feeling of suspense usually brightens someone's imagination, because when you are left on a cliff-hanger, there are so many possibilities, so um, so say you were left on the cliff-hanger of 'is the little girl going to fall over' you could ... there's the possibility that she's not, the possibility that she is the possibility that an eagle is going to come and swoop her, so there are always so many possibilities when you are left on suspense. (FG3.21/08/2017).

This comment draws together the shifts in ability to be more creative, ease of writing and student engagement through the structure of the drama experiences and using the episodic text model. It also links to Jefferson and Anderson's (2017) notion of 'playing with possibility' in learning and the OCED's *Learning Framework 2030* (OECD, 2018) listing "Adaptability/Flexibility/Adjustment/Agility" (p. 17) as one of the key skills associated with the learning framework. Amber agreed by commenting:

Because like it's not just like the same as reading a book and then you're just like 'oh ok' ... you are like hooked on to see the next chapter, or like the next page I guess. And then you

get to like act it out in your own way and you get to like choose like how you act it out.  
(FG4.28/08/2017).

Kelly suggested that the episodic use of the text may have also impacted on her engagement with the book and the learning experiences:

Kelly: We really like the book, like when we read one page, we ask you if we can read another page and because we just want to keep reading and going in ... (FG4.28/08/2017).

Another student in that same focus group, Jasmine, jumped in as soon as Kelly had finished talking commenting:

Jasmine: It's an interesting book because each time you teach us we play fun games and do some different stuff ... like what's not said. (FG4.28/08/2017).

Here Jasmine is making strong connections between the 'fun games' and a 'different' way of learning to 'what's not said' which is the inferential comprehension of the text. She is also exploring the gaps in the text and the "spaces to play" (Williams, 1987) and "places to play" (Gleeson, 2006).

I did ask their class teacher about his thoughts on the episodic text and using drama in this way. Jacob commented during our mid-program interview:

Jacob: ... I think that the thing that the *School Drama* program gives that other things do not, is that it has so many engaging activities that can just ... it breaks down the text bit by bit, whereas I think that if we just sort of discussed each bit of the text, the kids would just get bored with it. So, I really feel like they've enjoyed predicting what's going to happen. They've ... really improved their ability to predict what is going to happen and then they really enjoy the reveal of what actually happens. You know, just bringing the enjoyment out of that is massive. (I1.07/09/2017).

Jacob reported that the episodic text model combined with drama-based pedagogy was enabling deeper exploration of the text, increased ability to predict, and increased enjoyment about engagement in the learning. Jacob explained that he felt that this was because students are able to take on the character.

Jacob: ... Being able to *become* a character in the book and think about their position and what's happening in their lives, now that they've gotten better with doing that, I definitely think they've been able to take on perspectives really well and consider different perspectives. (11.07/09/2017).

Later in that interview he added:

Jacob: Yeah, it just has such a range of activities, such a range of engaging activities that the students just love, that it gives them the chance that they love engaging in every single little part of the book. So, it can make something which might seem like a boring part of the book, really exciting and engaging. And yeah, the ability to be moving and be active and to use their *bodies*. (11.07/09/2017).

Jacob continued to link the academic and non-academic aspects of the experience. Rather than seeing them as silos, he observed that different aspects of the experience fed other aspects. Jacob noted that he felt it was the active, embodied nature of drama that engaged students and that because they were embodying the characters, they increased their empathy and connection and understanding of the characters and text as a result.

### Empathy, emotion and connection

Perhaps due to the content of *Home and Away* (Marsden & Ottley, 2008), emotion and empathy became central themes in the focus groups in this case study, and through engaging emotions and empathising with characters, students felt that they made stronger connections to the text. Connection is one of the Super Six Comprehension Strategies (NSWDET, 2010) as defined in Chapter 1.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, defining empathy is difficult. Hatfield, Rapson and Le (2011) assert that "... empathy requires three distinct skills: the ability to share the other person's feelings, the cognitive ability to intuit what another person is feeling, and a 'socially beneficial' intention to respond compassionately to that person's distress." In a similar vein, Miller and Saxton (2016) highlight the criticality of the compassionate response taking the empathic process one step further and eloquently argue that it is not enough to simply 'feel' as another, but out of the feeling and empathising must come action. As they say, "to stand with another – even in fictional circumstances – is the practice of compassion" (p. 7). Wiseman (1996) identifies four defining attributes to empathy:

“seeing the world as others see it, non-judgmental, understanding another’s feelings, and communicate the understanding” (p. 1163).

During whole class reflections and focus groups, students at Gungahlin Public School discussed feeling and empathising with the characters. I would argue that this ‘feeling’ and ‘empathising’ with the character then led to increased understanding of the character (comprehension) and the ability to see the world as that character might, requiring the students to infer and make connections. Even for just a moment in time it was evident the students were drawing their own real world and the world of the character closer together, realising the overlap. I see this connection-making as leading to action: empathy in drama. In Nodding’s (1984) words: “When we see the other’s reality as a possibility for us, we must act to eliminate the intolerable, to reduce the pain, to fill the need, to actualize the dream. When I am in this sort of relationship with another, when the others’ reality becomes a real possibility for me, I care” (p. 14).

Students synthesised the three areas of connection, feelings and empathy in the focus groups and whole class discussions:

Jarrold: Yeah umm because you are standing in the shoes of the characters and you get a sense of their feeling and how they would be feeling. (FG2.21/08/2017).

Bailee: [...] we aren’t just like reading the book, because we are just like pretending that we are them. And putting ourselves in their shoes and seeing how they feel and yeah. (FG4.28/08/2017).

Martin: We got to see how hard it is for them ... for that family. (FG2.21/08/2017).

In a focus group, I asked students if there was a particular moment that stood out to them:

John: Evelyn, was there something that stood out for you?

Evelyn: Umm I liked it when you tap people on the shoulder and then they say what they think or feel.

John: The Tableau and Tap In. Yep. Why did you like that?

Evelyn: Because then you can express what the character is feeling in the situation. (FG5.04/09/2017).

Evelyn went on to reflect:

Evelyn: I like it better when we are acting it out and stuff and we get to re-create the scenes and feel like what the characters feel like. And if you are just reading it inside, like in a normal English lesson, you don't really connect with the characters than when you are acting them out. (FG5.04/09/2017).

The reflections from students resonate with Wiseman's (1996) analysis of empathy, as discussed previously. At different points in the drama experiences, students were 'seeing the world as others see it' by standing in the shoes of that character. They were being 'non-judgemental' and connecting with the family in *Home and Away*. They illustrated that they 'understood another's feelings' and then that they were able to 'communicate' those feelings through drama-based strategies into their post-program written work.

The class teacher supported the students' reflections at our mid-term discussion:

Jacob: I think it's just the opportunity for them to imagine, for them to be able to use their imaginations within a story and to empathise with the characters and to become characters. I think they have a bit more of an insight into the story and I think that they feel like they have the opportunity to alter the story and to take part in it. You know, they have a role in it and I think that makes it so much more exciting for them. (I1.07/09/2017).

Unfortunately, due to the time limitations of this case study, there wasn't scope to explore if 'action' had occurred outside the drama experiences following the intervention. Despite the lack of ongoing data about the action, Miller and Saxton (2016) state that the 'action' described can be internal, a shift in personal perspective. Students did stand with another, they empathised and connected and felt what it might have been like to be this family in this book. At the mid-term conversation with Jacob, he commented that:

Jacob: I think it's because they connect with a situation and a character ... that they don't ever get to do in real life, like they haven't had any real life experience in that, so whenever you, whenever you are imagining becoming something else um it's definitely enjoyable, it's a fun thing to become something different than you are in everyday life. It's a new experience. And I think it's that new experience and trying to think about how *they're* feeling and really feeling like you are a different person is fun and exciting. (I1.07/09/2017).

And following the conclusion of the program, Jacob and I discussed and reflected on the drama experience and the post-program benchmarking writing.

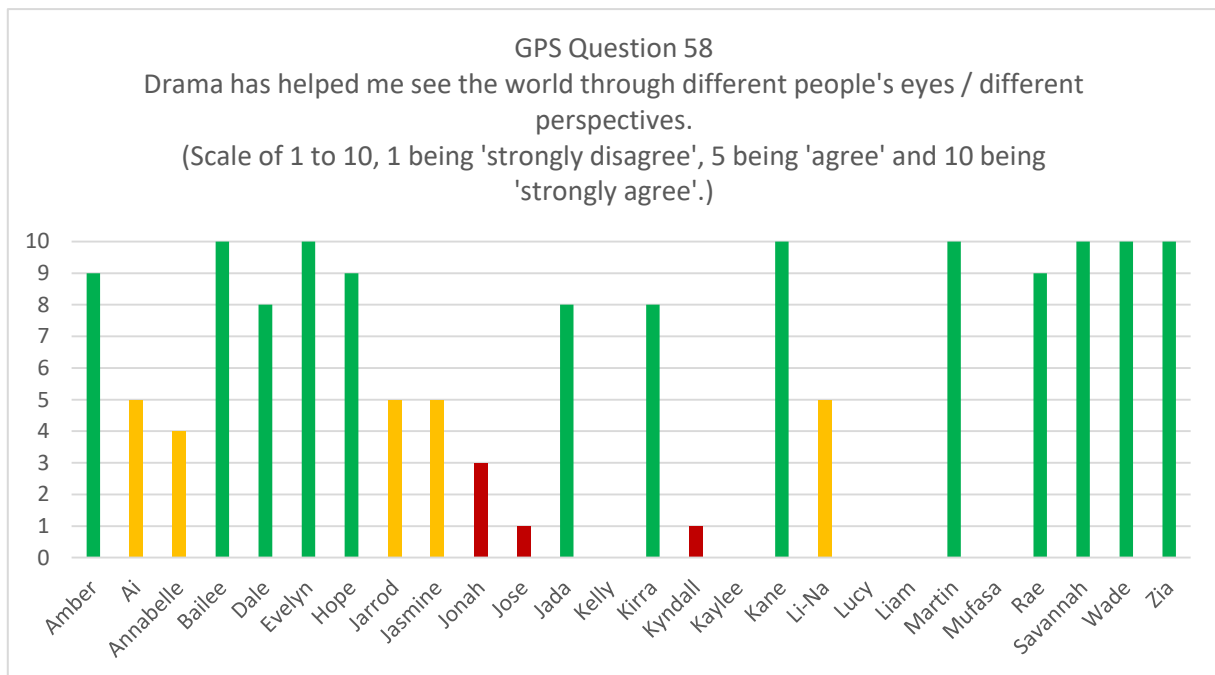
Jacob: Yeah, I definitely think so. It sounds like they've just done a lot better job putting themselves in the situation and thinking about what they're sensing and what they are seeing and definitely feelings wise, it's been a huge improvement. Because even in the Harry Potter text some of them are saying that 'I'm seeing candles hanging from the roof' and all these things that they know that we see at Hogwarts, it's more that they are discussing how it would make them feel. I suppose the text lends ... I dunno, do you think that it's easier to connect to? ... actually, I don't know if it is easier to connect to devastation. (12.03/11/07).

I think Jacob's comment is really interesting as he is questioning if it is more difficult for students to connect and empathise with a fantasy text (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*; Rowling, 1998), compared with realistic fiction that includes 'devastating' events (*Home and Away*; Marsden & Ottley, 2008).

The post-program student survey captured data relating to connection, perspective taking and empathy. Figure 42 depicts the responses from the post-program Question 58. Students responded on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being 'strongly disagree', 5 being 'agree' and 10 being 'strongly agree') to the statement: 'Drama has helped me see the world through different people's eyes / different perspectives.'



Figure 42 GPS Question 58



Of the 26 students in the class, five students (Kelly, Kaylee, Lucy, Liam and Mufasa) did not complete the post-program survey leaving 21 completed responses. The question asks students to reflect on their drama experience and consider if drama has helped them take on different perspectives (one of Wiseman's qualities of empathy). Thirteen students (61.9% of the class members) identified a 'strongly agree' response (ranking between 8 and 10), five students (23.8%) identified in the 'agree' section (ranking between a 4 and 7) and three students (representing 14.2%) strongly disagreed with the statement (ranking between a 1 and 3). This data suggests that of the 21 students, 18 (85.7%) either agreed or strongly agreed that drama had helped them see the world through other people's eyes and take on other perspectives.

Figure 43 GPS Question 61

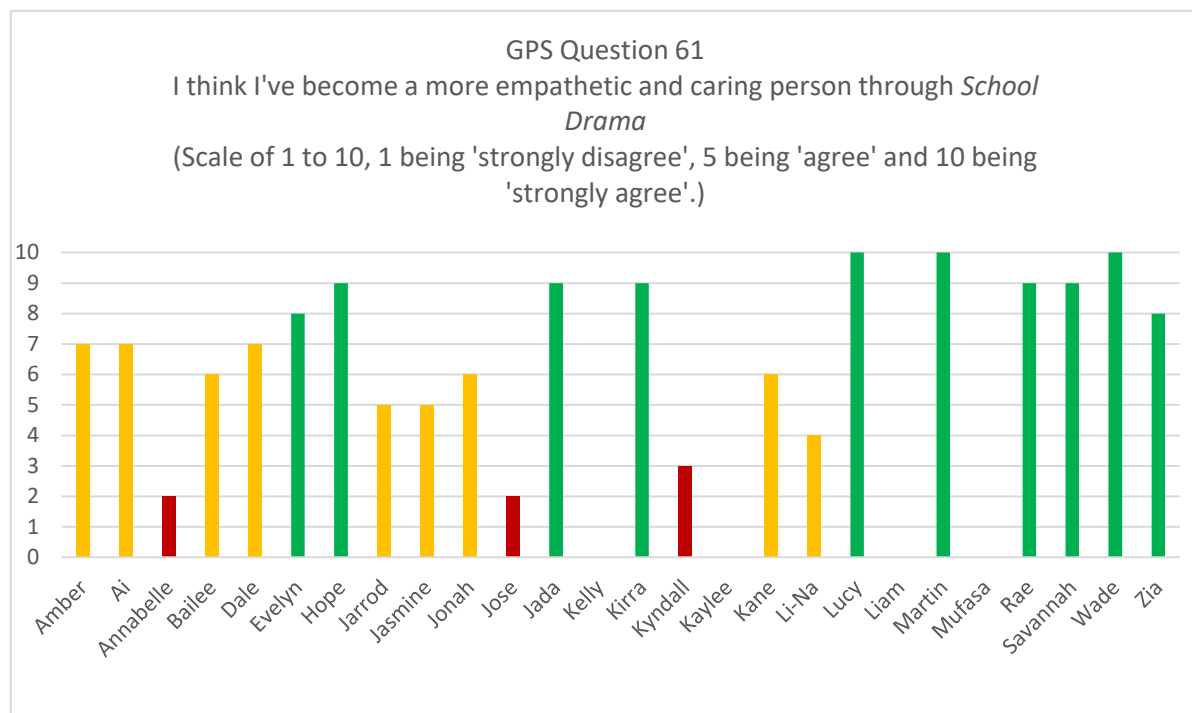


Figure 43 represents the responses to Question 61 in the post-program survey with similar results to the responses from Question 58 (Figure 42). This time, students were asked if they thought that they had become more empathetic and caring through *School Drama*. Ten (47.6%) of the 21 respondents indicated that they strongly agreed (ranking between 9 and 10) that they had indeed become more empathetic and caring through *School Drama*. Additionally, another 9 (42.8%) students indicated that they 'agreed' with the statement (ranking between 4 and 7) and as in Question 58 (Figure 42), three students (14.2%) disagreed with the statement (ranking between 1 and 3). The data suggests that 19 of the 21 students agreed or strongly agreed that they had become more empathetic and caring through *School Drama*, representing 90.4% of students. Two of the three students who strongly disagreed with both question 58 and 61 were the same students, Jose and Kyndall.

The findings from the focus groups and survey data indicate that between 85% and 90% of students reported positive shifts in empathy. This resonates strongly with the findings of Catterall et al. (1999) that students reported that engagement in quality arts experience resulted in "higher levels of empathy and tolerance for others" (p. 2).

### Embodiment leads to engagement

Engagement continued to be a strong theme in the focus groups with students in Case Study Two and as mentioned earlier, there was much more crossover between different themes.

There were familiar comments about drama being 'fun' which Liam explained was due to "learning it through the games and drawings". Nevertheless, some students went further to draw together engagement and embodiment. Kelly explained that she thought drama was fun and when I asked her to explain this this said:

Kelly: Because you get to like be in their shoes and you get to like act what they are like going through and you can make it fun, but it's still sad, but it's a bit fun to act it out. (FG4.28/08/2017).

Again this linking of engagement and enjoyment as a result of the embodied learning was really strong and it continued with other students like Hope (below) who drew together engagement, embodiment and prediction.

Hope: It's like really exciting like ... like, when we stop, it's like an exciting part after, and when we get to act the characters out, you like, you don't know what's going to happen next. (FG3.21/08/2017).

When asked to compare regular English and literacy lessons to learning literacy through drama, Bailee discussed engagement but also hinted at increased motivation.

Bailee: Well when we are doing like work it's really boring and I just don't try, but when we are doing drama, it's just so fun that I want to try and do well. (FG4.28/08/2017).

Amber also talked about engagement and commented that she kept 'playing' with the story outside of the drama-based workshops.

Amber: Me and my friends, after we do drama, we get some of the ideas from drama and make a game. You know how we got to act like one of the characters? Well me and my friends went out for recess and pretended to be the grandmother. (FG4.28/08/2017).

Their class teacher agreed that the use of drama-based strategies had supported increased engagement in the study of the text.

Jacob: I think that it's just that he is so incredibly engaged in the text that he has really enjoyed being able to put himself in the character's shoes and sort of empathise with their situation. And I think that purely that engagement in the story, has been able to bring him that um that opportunity for him to express what he wants out of the Freeze Frames and what he wants out of the story. (11.07/09/2017).

Jacob also felt that this engagement had transferred to other areas in the classroom.

Jacob: ... We've had our read-a-thon this term and I've found that most of the boys in my class have been way, way more actively keen to read books. So, they definitely seem more engaged in wanting to explore books, I think. Like I was amazed. (11.07/09/2017).

However, engagement in learning didn't seem to continue following the program for all students. Kane, a young Indigenous student who found learning challenging and wasn't particularly engaged in school, would sit right up next to me each lesson and ensured that if we were doing a warm up in a circle, that he was next to me. During the mid-program interview, Jacob commented:

Jacob: Yeah definitely and Kane seems to have come a bit out of his skin too. Like I remember at the first session I was really having to encourage him to get involved and since then I haven't had to at all. He seems really engaged as well. (11.07/09/2017).

However, at the post-program interview, Jacob noted that Kane had returned to being disengaged in school.

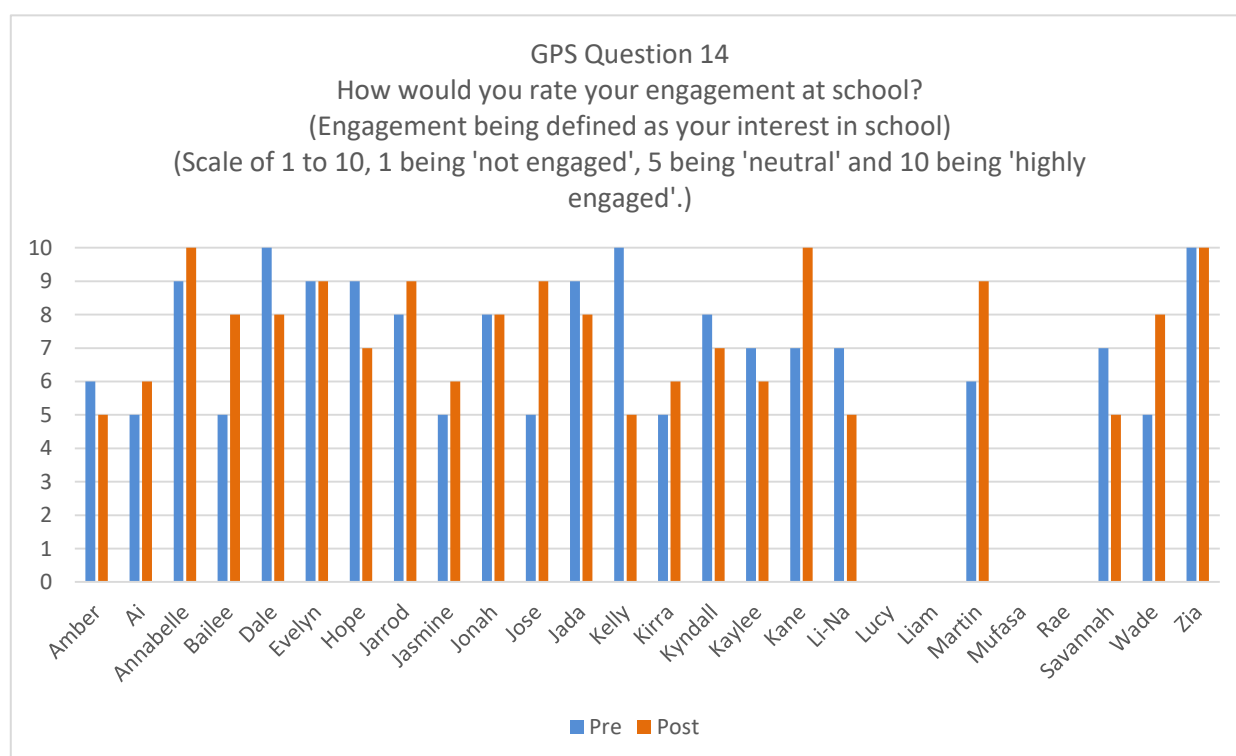
Jacob: He was great in the drama program but its back to old ways now, I think. But maybe we need to do a few extra drama activities in class to continue. (12.03/11/2017).

This is an important observation, as it may mean that for engagement to continue, quality Arts activities must also continue. Interestingly the pre- and post-program survey contained a question about engagement generally at school (not about drama). Students responded on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being 'not engaged', 5 being 'neutral' and 10 being 'highly engaged') when asked how they would rate their engagement at school. A factor in the pre- and post-program survey can also be the timing in the term. At the start of the term during weeks one and two (when the survey was conducted) students have returned from holidays, are often starting new units of work and are generally feeling

fresh and happier than at the end of the term (when the post-program survey was conducted) when students are often tired, have submitted projects and assignments for assessment and may be in need of a break from school. Other factors outside of school may also affect students' engagement in their studies.

Figure 44 represents the responses from the students to Question 14. Three students had no change in engagement from the start to the end of the term (Evelyn, Jonah and Zia); eight students (Ai, Annabelle, Bailee, Jarrod, Jose, Kirra, Martin and Wade) noted an increase in their motivation during the term; and nine students reported a decrease in engagement from the start to the end of the term (Amber, Dale, Hope, Jada, Kelly, Kyndall, Kaylee, Li-Na and Savannah). While several students reported to be 'neutral' (a ranking of 5), no student reported being 'disengaged' (ranking below a 5).

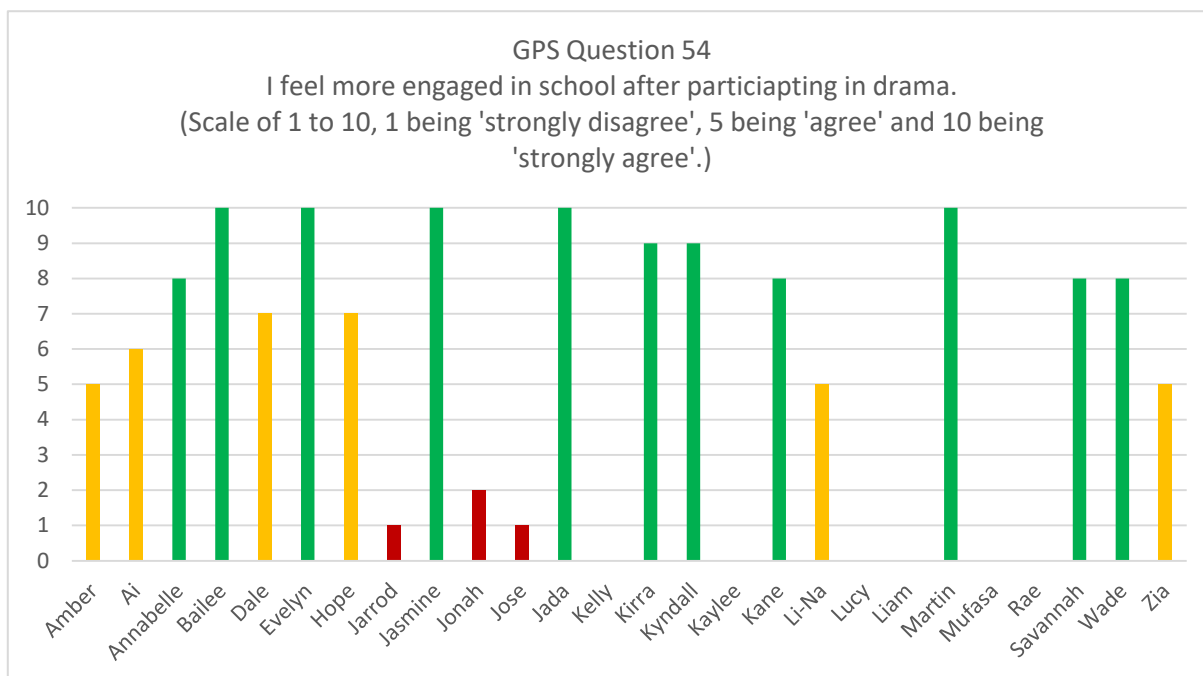
Figure 44 GPS Question 14



The post-program survey also asked students about engagement as a result of the drama-based intervention. Question 54 asked students to respond to the statement: "I feel more engaged in school after participating in drama." Students responded on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being 'strongly disagree', 5 being 'agree' and 10 being 'strongly agree'). Figure 45 (below) outlines the responses to this question. Three students (15%) indicated that they strongly disagreed that they felt more engaged in school following drama, six students (30%) responded in the mid-range 'agree' (ranking from 4 to 7) and 11

students (55%) indicated that they strongly agreed that they felt more engaged in school following drama.

Figure 45 GPS Question 54



Winner and Cooper (2000) explain the connection between arts and engagement by asserting that “when we engage in the arts, we are likely to experience states of joy, appreciation, engagement, and flow. These are important positive experiences that enrich our lives. But they are not easily assessed by standard measures” (p. 67). The above figures suggest that there may be some association between the drama-based intervention and increased engagement for some students. There is, however, no evidence that there is direct causality. Winner and Cooper also identify several ways in which the arts can be used to “stimulate motivational and attitudinal changes” (2000, p. 12) that can then impact academic outcomes. These involve using the arts as entry points to other learning areas; developing self-confidence, perseverance, high standards, bonding, positive mentoring (arts teachers spending 1:1 time with students), and stress reduction (Winner & Cooper, 2000, pp. 12-13). Several of these key strands resonate with this study.

The concept of the ‘entry point’ is strongly connected to the rationale of the *School Drama* program. As Winner and Cooper explain, “when used as entry points into an academic area, the arts may lead otherwise unmotivated or non-academically orientated students to develop an interest in the academic subject area in question” (2000, p. 12). This also resonates with Martin et al.’s (2013) research. Indeed, *School Drama*’s use of drama-based pedagogical approaches in primary English and

literacy classrooms may engage students who are less interested in English and literacy by teaching them through drama-based experiences (see Figure 45). Self-confidence, as Winner and Cooper define it (that a student might find that they can do well in a particular arts area) may not be as relevant to this study, nor perseverance (as students aren't focusing on the performance skills of drama over time). Having 'high standards' for their own work may have relevance: a Role Play or Improvisation or several Freeze Frames will be shared with the class, so students may aim to achieve a higher standard of the work because the rest of the class will see it, compared to when the work is written and the teacher is the only person to see it. 'Bonding' does connect to this study as discussed below in the section on Collaboration and Friendship). 'Positive Mentors' is an interesting concept as the teaching artist works more as a facilitator guiding participation (Rogoff, 1990) rather than using a more traditional, direct instruction approach. 'Stress reduction' was not a theme addressed in the focus groups of Case Study Two.

### Collaboration and friendship

Fiske's (1999) meta-analysis of seven independent research studies identified a range of outcomes as a result of quality arts experiences, one of which was that the arts "can connect students to themselves, to each other as well as to the world" (p. IX). This argument is certainly reflected in the Case Study at Gungahlin Public School where students discussed the idea of working together with developing friendships and feeling connected. Their teacher also observed increased positive peer relationships. Due to drama's collaborative nature, working with a range of peers is inevitable and at times, challenging. Research has cited improvements in collaboration (Catterall, 2002; Harris, 2016; Hunter, 2005; Robinson with Aronica, 2015) through arts-based interventions, while policy documents often list collaboration as a highly valued skill (see NEA, 2013 and OECD, 2018).

During a focus group following Workshop Five, Liam, Bailee, Martin, Jasmine, Amber, Kelly and I were talking about working collaboratively.

John: And sometimes working in a group can be difficult, but like this is our fifth workshop, do you think it's become easier to work in groups over the past like five weeks?

All: Yes.

John: How so? Like how has it become easier?

Liam: Well I didn't like working in groups before, like a lone wolf, but like through the drama it like makes it fun.

Amber: I made more like acquaintances like ... I've made sort of more friends and it brings the class together more.

John: Yeah, Bailee?

Bailee: Me and Martin didn't really like each other a while ago, well we did a little bit but like not much, and now we are friends.

John: And why is that? Because you've been working together in the drama lessons?

Bailee: Yeah.

Martin: And working together with like everyone as we do. (FG4/28/08/2017).

I thought this was a fairly amazing conversation to be having with a group of Year 5 students who were being incredibly open about their own peer relationships.

This was confirmed by the class teacher, during the mid-program and post-program interviews.

Jacob: In drama they also seem to be able to collaborate a lot better. Like I find in other activities, there will always be a couple of kids who are trying to avoid doing it, but it seems that in the drama program that they all want to have a say when they are doing collaborative work. And despite ... even if they are working with their mates, I find that if they are working with their friends in other things they get distracted, but if they are working with their friends in the drama program they are much more wanting to have a say in what the outcome is. (11.07/09/2017).

Later in the interview Jacob returned to this idea:

Jacob: It's definitely given them, however, a chance to work with people that they haven't worked with before, and because they are so engaged in the activity, it's so much easier to sort of build those bridges between kids who don't normally work together. So, it's not about them getting on socially, because they are so engaged in what they are doing, that they don't even think about that. I think it's really helpful. I've noticed it in class, but I haven't paid close enough attention outside the drama program. (11.07/09/2017).

And then later in the post-program interview Jacob continued this theme, but this time also introduced student confidence, suggesting that perhaps self-efficacy affects our ability to collaborate.

Jacob: Yeah I definitely think there has been a change in the class with that. I think they work better in groups now and I feel like there is less, if they get put in groups, there is less of the



'oh I'm with them' ... there is less of that. Definitely, it's been noticeable. And the class just seems closer I think. I feel, yeah. It's probably because they've had that opportunity to work with everyone and to see each other doing quite different, confidence building things. So yeah, I definitely think there has been confidence built. And when it comes to working with each other, that collaboration. Yeah. (12.03/11/2017).

In addition to the student comments in the focus groups and the teacher comments in the interviews, two questions in the pre- and post-program survey were somewhat connected to the idea of positive relationships with peers; however, it did not include any connection to working collaboratively and was rather a general question.

Question 7 (Figure 46) asked students to 'strongly disagree' (1), 'agree' (5) or 'strongly agree' (10) with the statement: "Overall, I like other students in my class." Question 8 asked students the rank on the same scale a response to the statement: "Overall, I am liked by other student in my class." A third question (Question 39) was an open-ended question that asked students: "If you had the option working by yourself or with a group, what would you choose? And why?" The figures below indicate the responses to Questions 7 and 8.

Figure 46 GPS Question 7

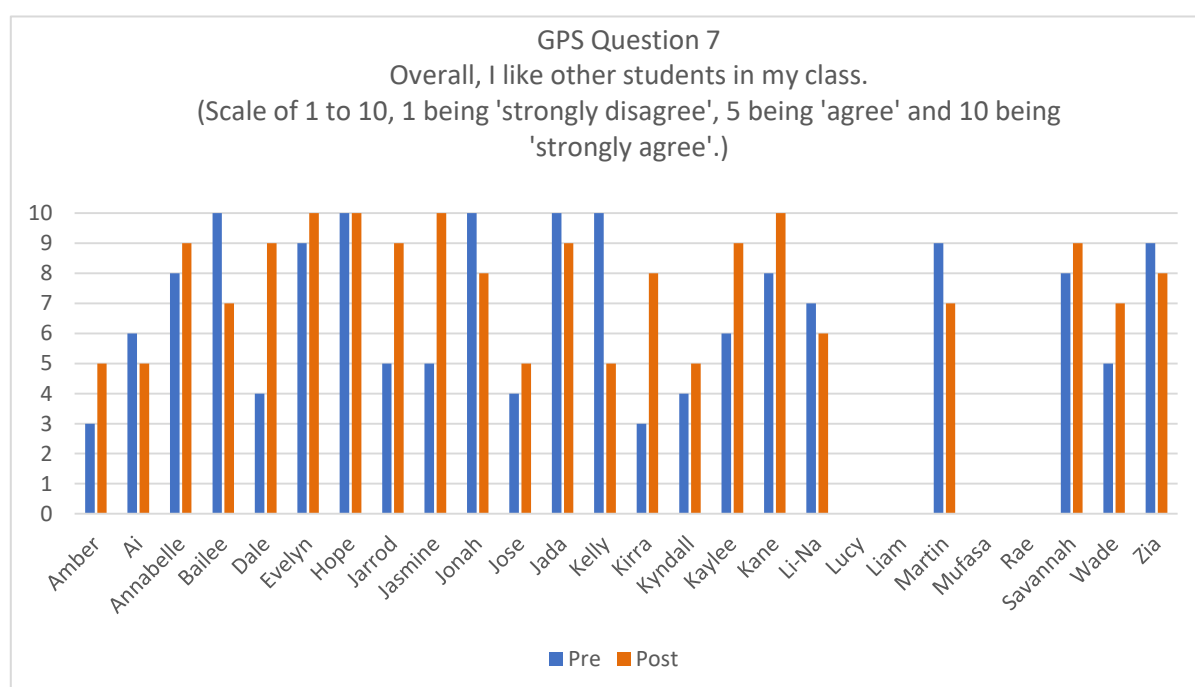


Figure 47 GPS Question 8

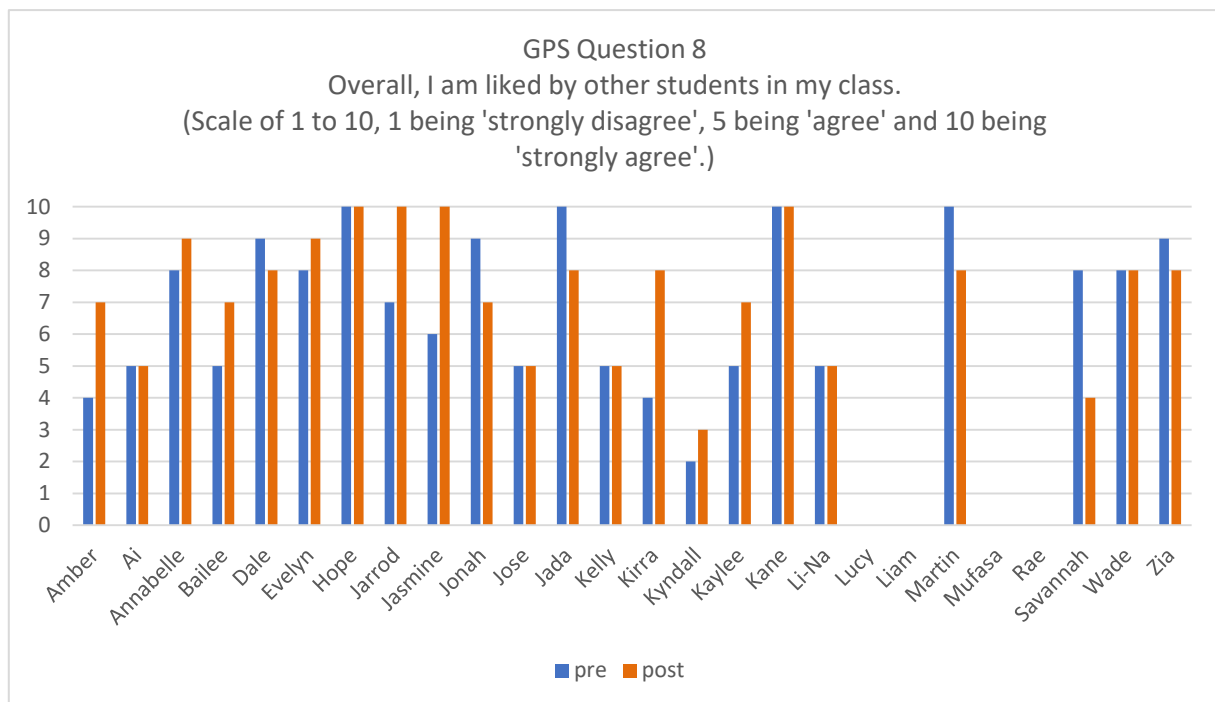


Figure 47 (Question 8) illustrate that students reported some positive and some negative shifts from the pre- to post-program survey and some students also reported no shift at all. Analysing responses to Question 7 (Figure 46) indicated that 14 students (63.6%) of the 22 students who completed this question, reported a positive shift, one student (4.5%) reported the same number in both pre- and post-survey, and 7 students (31.8%) noted a lower ranking in the post-program survey.

Responses to Question 39 (Table 9) indicate that when students responded to the open-ended question about their preference of either working alone, in a group or that that they were unsure or preferred both options, most students provided one-word responses which have been synthesised into Table 9. This data shows that there was little change in comparing the pre- and post-program responses, except that several students had moved from their preference of working alone to not having a preference or preferred both options.

Table 9 GPS Question 39

<b>Table 9</b> <b>Analysis of Question 39: “If you had the option of working by yourself or with a group, what would you choose? And why?” (Open-ended)</b>			
	Students who prefer working alone	Students we were unsure or preferred both options	Students who prefer working in a group
Gungahlin Public School Pre-Program	7 (31%)	0	15 (68%)
Gungahlin Public School Post-Program	4 (19%)	3 (14%)	14 (66%)

The responses to Question 8 (Figure 47) somewhat similar to Question 7 (Figure 46). Nine students (40.9%) indicated an increased score, that they felt they were more liked by their classmates. Six students (27.2%) reported the same score, and 6 students (27.2%) indicated a decreased score in the post-survey compared to their original response in the pre-survey. However, in both questions, only one student indicated that they ‘strongly disagreed’ (ranking between a 1 and 3) in the pre- and post-survey (Kyndall in Question 8), and the other students who reported a ‘strongly disagree’ in the pre-survey (Amber, Kirra and Kyndall) did show different levels of positive increase to both questions. Responses to Question 39 (Table 9) indicate only a small shift in students who moved in the pre-program question from preferring to work alone, to either being unsure or preferred both options in the post-program response. This data suggests that there may be some relationship between working collaboratively in drama and small positive shifts in positive peer relationships, which is consistent with existing research (Catterall, 2002; Ewing, 2010a; Fiske, 1999; Hunter, 2005).

## Conclusion

Case Study Two at Gungahlin Public school which used the refugee story of *Home and Away* (Marsden & Ottley, 2008) as the text, explored what it might be like for a family in Sydney, Australia to become refugees and flee a war-torn Australia for another country. Over the seven-week drama-based intervention several shifts were noted by students in their focus groups and surveys; by their class

teacher; by analysis of the student benchmarking samples; and through reflections and observations in my research journal.

The case study observed positive shifts in student literacy in the area of inferential comprehension through the benchmarking analysis. All students increased their literacy score after the drama intervention suggesting that drama can particularly support students who find English and literacy learning more challenging or who are lower performing students in this academic area. Gungahlin Public School students involved in this study also made connections between the use of drama, the style of the episodic text model and their ability to infer and comprehend.

The data also suggested links between increased empathy and emotion through the learning experiences alongside a stronger connection to the text, characters and story. The case study analysis also suggested that embodied learning in drama can lead to increased engagement in learning and in school. An additional finding in this case study was the observation that working collaboratively in drama can lead to more positive peer relationships in the classroom.

Chapter 8 follows the same structure as Chapters 6 and 7 to explore the final case study, a Year 4/5 composite class at Wentworth Public School.

## Chapter 8 – Case Study Three: Wentworth Public School

“A child’s greatest achievements are possible in play, achievements that tomorrow will become her basic level of real action and morality.” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 100)

### Introduction

Chapter 8 continues the same structure of the two previous chapters and explores the process and outcomes of the drama-based intervention at Wentworth Public School (Wentworth or WPS) (pseudonym) which occurred during Term Four, 2017.

This chapter firstly provides some background to the school context, the class and the teacher as well as introducing the texts used in the intervention. A brief overview of the seven workshops is then provided before the data collected is introduced and analysed.

### Background

Wentworth Public School is in the suburb of Wentworth, an affluent suburb of Sydney, about five kilometres from the Sydney Central Business District (CBD). The suburb is known for its beautifully tree-lined streets, quiet neighbourhood and elegant terrace houses. The average house price is just over \$3,000,000 AUD (REA Group, 2018). Wentworth Public School is six kilometres from Waratah Grammar School and 6.6 kilometres from Gungahlin Public School.

In 2016 the school reported the student population was 776 across 30 classes with 35 teaching staff and seven non-teaching staff, making it a large public school. Forty-three percent of students at the school are from language backgrounds other than English. The school also boasts an excellent gifted and talented program for students with Opportunity Classes (OC) for those identified students in Years 5 and 6. Wentworth holds an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score 1196 (above the average of 1000). The school also has no students who identify on the MySchool website as Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander (ACARA, 2017c).

The school’s motto is ‘excellence, opportunity and success’ and this is reflected in the school’s NAPLAN results in reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and numeracy. The school has

consistently performed 'above' or 'substantially above' the Australian schools' average since 2008 when NAPLAN commenced (ACARA, 2017c).

The school itself has undergone a physical transformation to accommodate the increased enrolments (from 580 students in 2008 to 776 in 2016). Due to the limited geographic footprint of the school's campus, the school has been heavily renovated to accommodate new classrooms. Many of the older classrooms were extremely large (around double in size of a typical classroom); however, over the past decade as the school has grown, walls have been erected to split these large spaces into two smaller classrooms. It is a busy school tucked away in a beautiful part of Sydney. When I arrived for my first meeting, the school was abuzz with activity leading up to the start of the school day. The quiet streets of Wentworth were full of families walking to school (students are often accompanied by a parent and dog) and the drop off zone outside the school is clogged with large and expensive cars. Students, parents and teachers move quickly around the footpath outside the school and open space between two of the main buildings.

The school has participated in *School Drama* since 2013. The class that I worked with at Wentworth was a Year 4/5 composite class (which in NSW is a 'split stage class' as Year 4 is part of Stage 2 curriculum [Years 3 and 4] and Year 5 is part of Stage 3 curriculum [Years 5 and 6]). The class was taught by Mrs Leanne McPhee, whom I had previously worked with on the *School Drama* program in 2013. Leanne has been teaching for 33 years and has been at Wentworth for over 20 years. She grew up in a country town in far western New South Wales and then studied a diploma of primary education at a regional university. She started her teaching career at a highly diverse school in Western Sydney before travelling to the United States of America for a few years. Upon returning to Australia, she settled in Sydney and was employed at Wentworth Public School. Over the years at Wentworth, Leanne has held a range of roles, including leadership positions. Despite this, Leanne felt that leadership roles took her out of the classroom too much, so she happily focused on her practice as a classroom teacher.

During her time at Wentworth, Leanne has often worked with upper primary (Years 4 to 6) and worked with Opportunity Classes. I have observed Leanne to be an incredibly creative teacher and a skilled visual artist in her own right. She brings this creativity and passion for visual art into her classroom in many ways. The quality of the artwork she fosters in her students is, in my opinion, extraordinary. Leanne is a very rigorous teacher and expects the absolute best from her students, but she elicits these

outcomes through what she describes as 'open ended teaching' that she feels resonates with the *School Drama* approach.

Leanne's classroom is physically unique within the school. It is the largest classroom set in one of the older buildings that has not been renovated. In an interview Leanne commented that she has been allocated this space because her principal knew she would make the most of it with her students. She has a large open space taking up about half of the floor space in front of the interactive whiteboard. There are several low tables where students can sit on the floor to lean on those tables, as well as two sets of traditional desks and chairs in another part of the classroom. Usually one expects desks to fill most of a classroom with one assigned to each student. This is not the case in Leanne's classroom. Students are not allocated desks and there are not enough desks for even half the students in the class. There are also some long benches in one corner. In another corner the benches have computers stationed on them. There are beanbags, art supplies, books and even a huge box of costumes that litter the room, as well as a bookshelf that has a tray for each student, so they can keep their books and writing equipment in one place (this is particularly important in lieu of individual desks). Thin rope weaves across the high ceiling to display artwork that has been completed by students and their teacher. Students are free to have a snack at any appropriate time during lessons and the room has a creative but calm and relaxed ambience.

At the time of our working together, Leanne had a pre-service student teacher, Miss Adrienne Bowers whom I had worked with while leading several workshops at a Sydney-based university. This was Adrienne's final practicum of four weeks, followed by a four-week internship before graduating. Adrienne has worked with Leanne and the class in the term prior, so she was very familiar with the class, Leanne and classroom culture. She was a clever and calm young teacher who embraced drama-based pedagogical approaches in her teaching and this was supported by Leanne.

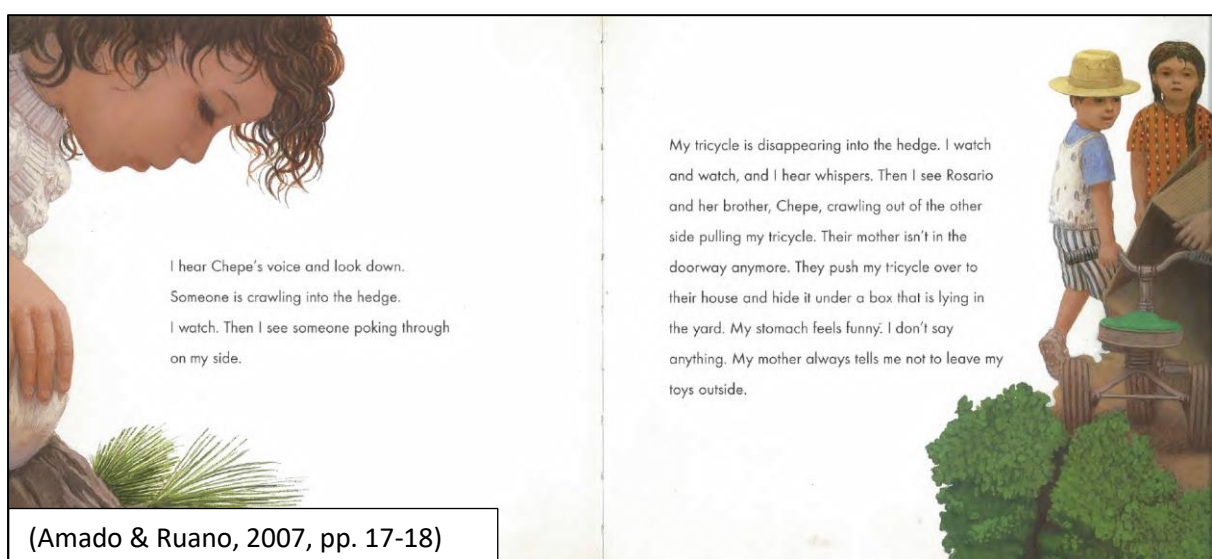
Leanne's class included 26 students, 12 Year 4 students and 14 Year 5 students, 14 girls and 12 boys. No students identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and four students identified as EAL/D. These students were: Adam, Danish; David, Russian; Oscar, French; and Taryn, Arabic. All students in the class participated in the research study, as did Leanne and Adrienne.

I found choosing a book for this class very difficult as I had initially intended to use a short novel for one of the case studies. Leanne had spent a term exploring the graphic novel *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman (2002) and this was used for the pre-program benchmarking task. After much discussion with Leanne,

we decided to use two picture-books which made this case study unique, as both case studies one and two used a single text, which is more common in *School Drama*. This choice allowed us to explore whether the use of two texts within the program made a difference to literacy shifts from students, particularly as students might demonstrate some transferable learnings from the first text to the second text studied.

In 2015 I had been introduced to the book *Tricycle* by Elisa Amado and illustrated by Alfonso Ruano (2007) by Emeritus Professor Juliana Saxton from the University of Victoria, Canada, in the closing plenary at the 8<sup>th</sup> International Drama in Education Research Institute (IDIERI) in Singapore (Saxton, 2018). In her closing keynote Saxton shared *Tricycle* and discussed the challenges that she and her colleague, Emeritus Professor Carole Miller had encountered when working with the text through drama with students. I was immediately captivated by the text, and it has become one I have chosen to use many times.

*Tricycle* is set in South America and is about a young girl, Margarita, who is from a wealthy family and lives in a large house on one side of a hedge. On the other side of the hedge is a shack where another little girl Rosario lives with her brother Chepe and their mother, Juanita. The children know each other and sometimes play together. The hedge between Margarita and Rosario's families represents a socio-economic divide between those who are "haves" and others who are "have nots". On one of the pages, Margarita's tricycle is stolen by Rosario and Chepe, and the illustrator has included a hand that is easily missed by a reader unless they look at the page very, very closely (see below).





Saxton's keynote (2018) recounted how she and Miller initially did not see the adult hand until pre-service students they were workshoping with asked about it. Horrified that this book might be encouraging poor children to steal with parent help, Saxton and Miller wrote to the publisher. The response, in part, from the publisher, Sheila Barry acknowledged that:

The arm in question belongs to one of Rosario and Chepe's parents, presumably the mother. So the mother is colluding with the children in hiding the tricycle that they stole. The intention of the story is to show a child's dawning consciousness of the great divide between the rich and poor in her community and her country. Margarita does know that her neighbours have stolen the tricycle and she knows that she does not want them to be "shot" or punished because of their actions. (Barry in Saxton, 2018, p. 8).

For me, the ambiguity of this text has so much potential for drama. Miller and Saxton published the drama unit they created (2016). Their process has some similarities and some differences to my approach at Wentworth.

I felt, however, that this text would not sustain the seven-workshop format that we use for *School Drama*, so Leanne and I paired it with a more mature and darker text by Armin Greder, *The Island* (2002). *The Island* tells the story of an island community who are afraid when one day a man washes up on the shore. He does not look like them or speak like them and the villagers do not know what to do with him. *The Island* links thematically with *Tricycle* in that both are very complex texts; follow less common narrative structure; have open endings; and, explore the idea of 'haves' and 'have nots'. Both texts explore the power imbalance and what is right and wrong when the given circumstances are 'grey'.

## [The Intervention](#)

Like the previous two case studies, only a brief overview of the unit is described here. The full unit and reflections can be found in Appendix C.

We explored *Tricycle* from Workshops One to Four and then moved onto *The Island* for Workshops Five to Seven. There was some repetition of drama-based strategies across the seven workshops to ensure consolidation of the different purposes the strategies might be appropriate for.

I commenced the first workshop with a couple of warm up activities to introduce the way I liked to work in a drama class. This also allowed me an opportunity read the room. We created rapid Clumps with theme words such as 'neighbours', 'snobbery', 'stealing', 'poverty' and 'volcano'. As the story is set in South America, I built some context using Artefacts (in this case, a range of images depicting themes from the book, particularly images of wealth and poverty in South America). Students Sculpted each other into images of "haves" and "have nots" and then looked at the cover image. We read the first pages of the book and Visualised what we could see from either side of the hedge that separates the two families in the story.

Workshop Two began with a warm up focusing on what it feels like to lose something special and then small groups Mapped where the story could take place. The maps were absolutely beautiful! Students blended oil pastels to create a vivid picture of the space where the story could take place. These same groups then created two Freeze Frames depicting 'a day in the life' on either side of the hedge. We read another page and students created a 15 second Mime depicting the three children playing together.

We started Workshop Three by re-reading the text and stopping at the page discussed earlier in this chapter, where an adult hand appears to be helping Chepe and Rosario steal the tricycle. In groups, students decided who the hand belonged to and what was going on, and then created a Tableau depicting this. I then Tapped In, asking each group a different question. I went into role as Juanita (Rosario and Chepe's mother) as students Hot-Seated me.

Workshop Four included the strategy Proximities, where students placed themselves in proximity to the mother, Juanita, to demonstrate their reaction to Juanita's decision to help her children take the tricycle. We then explored the decision Margarita needed to make, and used Conscience Alley as a vehicle to explore her dilemma. The class then Hot-Seated Margarita. We continued reading and used a Dream Sequence to imagine what might be going through Margarita's and Juanita's minds at this point in time. In pairs, students then developed a two-line conversation imagining what Margarita says to her mother and how her mother responds about the missing tricycle.

To start Workshop Five, students created two Freeze Frames depicting how the story might end. We then read the ending of the story and discussed it. I moved the class onto our second text, *The Island* (Greder, 2010). Work Banks were used to explore the themes in the text. In pairs, students Sculpted each other into an image of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'. We 'read' the cover image and then read the

first few pages of the text. Students created a Tableau of a critical moment in the text when the stranger is discovered by the island people. I Tapped In to encourage students to infer.

We re-read the start of the book in Workshop Six and then created a Gossip Mill exploring the wild rumours circulating around the island about the stranger. This was followed by a Town Meeting discussing the dilemma and possible options. Arguments about keeping the stranger and not keeping the stranger were made through a Conscience Circle. Students Visualised the island and created a Map, inferring what else might be included in the space.

The final workshop commenced with students creating two Freeze Frames to explore the scene when the stranger appears in town (the first image depicts a moment just before the island people see him and the second, their reaction). Large groups created a Soundscape depicting the 30 seconds that occurred between the two Freeze Frames. Students then Improvised a short scene where a villager argues with the fisherman about keeping the stranger. Students Hot-Seated the fisherman. We read the next section of the text and created a Postcard of the stranger being pushed out to sea. This was a very powerful moment. We read the final pages of the story and then I asked students to develop two Freeze Frames depicting the island one year after this event to see if life on the island had changed.

## The Data

### Student benchmarking

The pre-program benchmarking task was conducted in Week Two of Term Four. The students wrote a diary entry as Coraline from Neil Gaiman's (2002) novel of the same name, predicting the ending of the story. The post-program task required students to write a diary entry in role as the fisherman from *The Island* (Greder, 2002) following the day that the people of the island pushed the stranger back out to sea. Both tasks had the same conditions of five minutes planning, 30 minutes writing and five minutes editing, and both tasks required students to demonstrate their inferential comprehension skills and knowledge in the written samples. All 26 students completed both benchmarking tasks. The pre- and post-program benchmarking tasks were again designed and marked by the classroom teacher, Leanne McPhee.

### Student surveys

Year 4/5M completed the pre-program survey in class during Week Two of Term Four and the post-program survey was completed in class during Week Eight of Term Four (the week of the final

workshop). Leanne ensured that all students completed both the pre- and post-program surveys with Cooper the only exception as he was absent when the post-program survey was administered.

### Interviews, focus groups and reflective journal

As with the previous two case studies, two interviews were conducted with the classroom teacher at mid-point in the process and following the end of the program (as seen below). Two small focus groups were conducted with groups of students following Workshop Five and Workshop Six. Two whole class focus group reflections were recorded at the end of Workshop Seven. Table 10 (below) provides a schedule of the intervention, the workshops, meetings and data collection points during Term Four, 2017.

*Table 10 Schedule of intervention and data collection points at Wentworth Public School*

Table 10 Schedule of intervention and data collection points at Wentworth Public School	
Week No. and Term No.	Event and Date
<b>Term Four 2017</b>	
<b>Week 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial face to face meeting with Mrs Leanne McPhee about the process and text selection (12/10/2017).</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students completed the pre-program benchmarking task in class with Mrs Leanne McPhee (16/10/2017).</li> <li>Students completed the pre-program survey in class with Mrs McPhee (18/10/2017).</li> <li>Workshop 1 (20/10/2017).</li> <li>Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop 2 (26/10/2017).</li> <li>Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop 3 (02/11/2017).</li> <li>Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop 4 (09/11/2017).</li> <li>Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop 5 (15/11/2017).</li> <li>Focus Group 1 (15/11/2017). Tag FG1.15/11/2017.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-program interview with Mrs Leanne McPhee (15/11/2017). Tag I1.15/11/2017.</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop 6 (23/11/2017).</li> <li>• Focus Group 2 (23/11/2017). Tag FG2.23/11/2017.</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students complete post-program survey (27/11/2017).</li> <li>• Workshop 7 (29/11/2017).</li> <li>• Whole Class Reflection/Focus Group (29/11/2017). Tag FG3.29/11/2017.</li> <li>• Research journal entry.</li> <li>• Students complete post-program benchmarking task (30/11/2017).</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-program interview with Mrs Leanne McPhee (05/12/2017). Tag I2.05/12/2017.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last week of term 4 for students.</li> </ul>

## Analysis

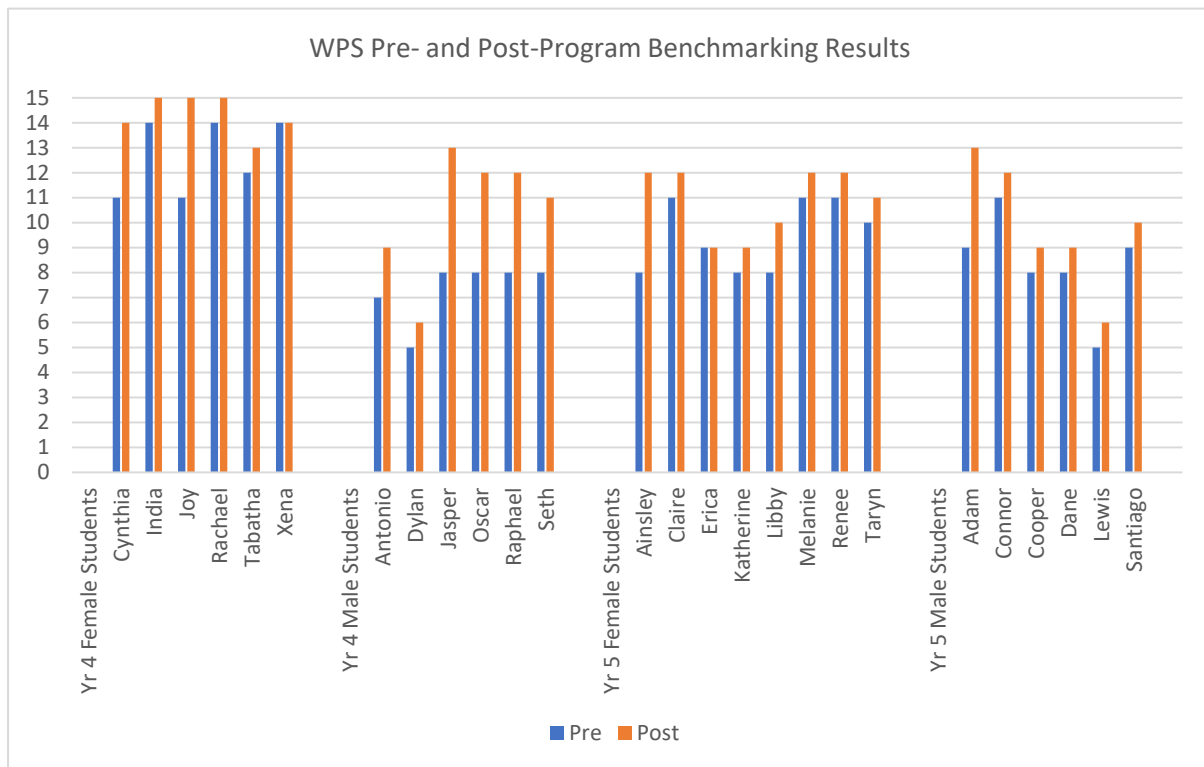
The data analysis process was outlined in Chapter 4 and detailed in the first and second case studies. The analysis for case study three follows the same pattern as the first two case studies in the previous chapters.

### Literacy: Inferential comprehension

As noted above, Wentworth Public School prides itself on academic excellence. Leanne commented in the post-program interview when we discussed the benchmarking results that her students “... were already starting at a really high spot, so it was hard to move some further” (I2.05/12/2017). Leanne also reflected that the Year 4s were better able to think creatively and laterally within the curriculum. Leanne spoke about the transdisciplinary approach to teaching that she employs and how the older students have found this more challenging than the Year 4 students. She commented: “It [the learning] all interconnects. And although it’s taken me a long while with the 5s to get to that point, the 4s have always been there” (I1.15/11/2017).

Figure 48 illustrates the benchmarking broken down into year levels and genders.

Figure 48 WPS Pre- and Post-Program Benchmarking Results



As Leanne reflected, the Year 4 Female students did outperform the rest of the class, receiving an average grade for the pre-task of a B+ (12 marks) and an average grade of an A (14 marks) for the post-program task. However, it is the Male Year 4 students who have had the most significant shifts in their literacy scores in the benchmarking tasks, moving an average 3 marks (one entire grade). The average mark for the pre-program task was C- (7 marks) and B- (10 marks) in the post-program task, representing an entire grade shift. The other three sub-groups (Year 4 Female Students, Year 5 Female Students and Year 5 Male Students) had positive shifts with a sub-group average of between 1.3 marks and 1.6 marks. The two lowest performing students were Dylan (Male, Year 4 student) who is the youngest student in the class and Lewis (Male, Year 5 student) who has frequent absences due to health issues.

The student who had the most significant positive shifts in the class was Jasper (Male, Year 4 student) with a shift of 5 points going from a C (8 marks) in his pre-task to A- (13 marks) in his post-task. Jasper's work samples show an incredible shift in his ability to infer and communicate that inference through his written work. His pre-program benchmarking task illustrates a surface level understanding of the story and character but does not indicate inferential knowledge of the text.

Jasper's Pre-Program Benchmarking Task (16/10/2017).

Class: 45mg

I thought that she was gone for good, months had went past. what I didn't know was that she had lost interest in catching me. she didnt think that was good enough. Of a punishment instead she wanted to capture and kill my family. And she wouldn't stop there she's going to kill everyone I care about.

5 months before  
what a relief I thought, after that I don't think I will ever complain about anything. I had a great dinner that night even though the chicken was dry and needed gravy and the potatoes were undercooked. After days later we had a party around the well. something was bugging me I couldn't figure it out though. its fine I thought.

Jasper's Post-Program Benchmarking Task (30/11/2017).

Class: 45mg

use  
st  
I could have done more I could have saved him but I didn't. I just sat there and watched him drown. I shouldn't of let the gossip sled. Now everyone is against me. I have even heard mothers say to their kids "don't listen to the old crazy fisherman".

no one even talks to me any more. I live with a weight on my shoulders, a weight bigger than any other, the weight of a man's death. The island is more like a prison now. I can't walk around freely without someone looking at me funny.

Rumours have spread about me now. Some think I was from the camp country as him. some say they should kick me off the island. I do not know what to do.

His post-program task, on the other hand, articulates a lot about the text, situation and characters that is not in the text. He has successfully inferred about the events in *The Island* and built on the character of the fisherman that Armin Greder created. Phrases such as "I live with a weight on my shoulders, a weight bigger than any other, the weight of a man's death" beautifully capture the inner



thoughts and feelings of the character, demonstrating inference. Although the vocabulary is much the same in the pre- and post-benchmarking samples, Jasper has demonstrated deep understanding of the text and infers about the characters' thoughts, feelings, relationships, context and situation.

Jasper also reported in the post-program survey when asked if he felt that doing *School Drama* had helped with his English and literacy: "Yes because it changes the way you think about the book and you get into the character's shoes" (PostPSS). When asked if he had any final comments in the post-survey, he enthusiastically wrote: "I love dramaaaaa" (PostPSS). Leanne described Jasper as a "boys' boy" meaning that he was someone whom other boys wanted to be like.

In a focus group I asked students what stood out to them through the drama and Jasper said:

Jasper: I really like how it makes your mind think a lot and it makes me enjoy the book ten times more than if I read it in two minutes.

John: Hmm why is that, do you think?

Jasper: (Jumps in) Because it makes me think about all the different possibilities that could happen and then I wanna see what actually happens. (FG1.15/11/2017).

And his sentiments are certainly reflected in his writing. Jasper was able to get into the 'character's shoes' and explore the 'different possibilities that could happen' in the story. Jasper later spoke about the process that we were using in drama, particularly linking this to prediction, one of the Super Six Comprehension Strategies (NSWDET, 2010):

Jasper: I think that it does help because of instead of just thinking like after you finish a book thinking 'ah I wonder what would happen' but nah I've got to do other stuff. When you sort of ... make it like something that we have to do, sort of make you do it and then you enjoy doing it. And I also like how we do it in groups so you can think of all the different ideas. (FG1.15/11/2017).

Jasper consistently expressed his liking for and enjoyment of drama in the focus groups and post-program survey, reinforcing the idea that embodiment can lead to engagement which can lead to increased academic achievement in English and literacy.



Several students had a positive shift of four marks (Joy, Oscar, Raphael, Ainsley and Adam) and two students had no movement in their achievement (Xena, receiving a grade of an A on both tasks and Erica, receiving a grade of a C+ on both tasks). The other Year 4 Male students who also moved 4 marks were Oscar and Raphael: this cluster of students had the most substantial shifts in the benchmarking comparison. Both Raphael and Oscar speak languages other than English at home; Raphael speaks English and Italian as well as some Chinese, though Chinese is not a dominant language at home. Oscar speaks English and French at home.

During the mid-program interview Leanne discussed the changes that she had observed in Raphael:

But Raphael is just shining. For Raphael, I'm just so proud ... what he is writing now, he's writing pages in his response. He's articulating precisely. (11.15/11/2017).

Leanne again returned to Raphael's positive shifts in my post-program interview, highlighting how he had benefitted from the program:

Leanne: Raphael, I think he's your success story. For a little boy who is double ESL [English as Second Language] background, who doesn't talk much, he is writing for me superbly. His involvement! He doesn't verbalise a lot, but I talked to him and he loves it. I did dance with him, he came to Year 5 dance today. Because they don't normally come with me, but he came back and said 'I'm alive'. So look, look at how much that little person, that little boy is writing. (12.05/12/2017).

Leanne also pointed out that Raphael's writing and participation had improved in class through the drama experience.

Oscar did not participate in any of the focus groups or make comments in the whole class reflection; however, in the final whole class reflection at the end of Workshop Seven, Leanne said: "Oscar, if your mum could see you in drama, you would not be able to wipe the smile off her face. You have grown so much through this time. Absolutely thrilled." (FG3.29/11/2017). Leanne was referring to Oscar's positive shift in behaviour, engagement and participation through the drama experiences. Although Oscar gave fairly brief survey responses, his final comment was: "it was very fun and definitely very engaging" (PostPSS).

## The drama processes leading to deeper thinking, shift from literal to inferential comprehension

Wentworth Public School students referenced increased understanding and comprehension and aspects of inferencing in the focus groups, whole class debrief and in the survey data. They often linked the drama process and the pedagogical approach taken to supporting deeper thinking and comprehension of the text. One of the first comments in the first focus group was from Taryn who said:

Taryn: I really enjoy doing drama because it's not really about the book, it's not like about the pictures or the words in the book, it's about how we study the book and how we take it in and understand it. (FG1.15/11/2017).

Taryn understood the purpose of the process drama-based approach that *School Drama* is uses where the drama is a way of more deeply exploring and understanding the text. Booth argues that "Drama can help students see beyond literal meaning, even subconsciously, so that an understanding of complexity and subtlety of meaning can be applied to *every* story explored" (2005, p. 14). While it is beyond the scope of this study to explore whether the drama experience had an impact beyond the school term in which the intervention occurred, students in this case study were certainly demonstrating their ability to move beyond literal meanings to inference.

Taryn returned to comprehension and understanding later in the same focus group:

Taryn: I'm usually one of those people that reads a book and sometimes I don't really take in what a book says but um when we are ... the drama that we've done with you has actually changed me a lot, like I actually do take in the book and I do understand and I don't forget what happens. (FG1.15/11/2017).

Taryn's comment about being able to make sense of the learning and recall it resonates with Hu et al.'s argument that "emotion enhances our ability to form vivid memories of even trivial events" (Hu et al., in Dunn & Stinson, 2012, p. 204). Potentially it was the use of emotion in the learning experiences that reflected Taryn's comment about improvement in understanding of the book.

Following this focus group that Leanne observed, I interviewed Leanne and I invited her to comment on the literal understanding of texts:

Leanne: And it was a very literal Year 5 group to start with. A very literal. And for Taryn, that is the biggest swing for her. She's gone from being very literal, to learning to make the inferences and to think outside the square [...] I think Taryn had a lot of trouble going from the literal to the inferential. But to see her speaking like she did today, that shows a lot about her. (I1.15/11/2017).

Jasper also reported increased comprehension and understanding of the text through the drama.

Jasper: Um I think it is fun because you understand the book a lot more. (FG1.15/11/2017).

He is suggesting that the 'fun' and engagement were linked to perhaps being able to understand the text and be a more successful learner. Xena concurred with Jasper's comments:

Xena: ... like stopping at a page and doing an activity makes you think of it a different way ... like, kinda like makes you understand what's going on. (FG2.23/11/2017).

Katherine followed Xena:

Katherine: As Xena said, when we are with you and reading books, we like think about it more. Like if I had of read that book, I would have just read a page and not think about what's actually happening. Just the words. (FG2.23/11/2017).

This comment reflects that some students felt that there was a different level of comprehension and understanding going on through the drama. In the same focus group Adam commented:

Adam: Like if I was reading *Tricycle*, I would have probably just read the page with them stealing the trike without giving a second thought and probably wouldn't have noticed the hand. But like you kept it on there and I did notice it at the corner of the page. (FG2.23/11/2017).

The idea of noticing deeply is something that Greene (2001) argued, that teachers should enable "learners to notice what there is to be noticed" (p. 6). Jefferson and Anderson (2017) built on this and argue for a '4C' model to transform schools for the twenty-first-century. They argue that "Creativity

learning starts with: *Noticing* – deep perception that flows into asking why, then digging deeper” (Jefferson and Anderson, 2017, p. 83).

This deeper noticing and comprehension were again picked up in the final focus group with Tabatha saying:

Tabatha: I think, if um we didn't have you here, we probably wouldn't have interpreted things, like the way you do. You know, with the hand, I would have never noticed it, until like the hundredth time I'd read it. Or like with this one, there's all little meanings that you bring up and it brings us a new topic which is really fun and yeah, it's really fun. (FG3.29/11/2017).

I asked Xena if she felt that learning through drama was a good way to learn about inferring. She commented:

Xena: It's like um, when you like normally miss whatever happened on the page or don't understand a sentence or something, even though it's like you understand and you can kind of like forget to understand or recognise the story. And it just really helps you like understand it. You don't want to be like stuck on a page and going 'what does that mean?' Yeah! (FG3.29/11/2017).

Xena reinforced what other students had said, that she had greater comprehension and understanding of the text through the use of the drama-based approach and episodic text model. Rachael went further to identify a particular drama strategy which she felt helped develop inference and comprehension skills:

Rachael: Well like Hot Seating is a really good example, you just like, people ask you random questions and you don't know what's going to hit you and then you meld in what the character's experiencing and what they're feeling and you have to infer everything from the text, because it doesn't say it and it makes it a lot easier to infer. (FG3.29/11/2017).

Rachael's comment not only suggests that she sees the value in strategies such as Hot Seating, but also that she can make explicit connections between that strategy and inferring. In Rachael's words: 'it makes it a lot easier to infer.'

Two of the post-program open-ended questions asked students to reflect on their experience of *School Drama* in regard to literacy and inference. Question 41 asked students to respond to the statement “Do you feel like doing *School Drama* has helped you with your English and literacy? Why/Why not?”. All 26 students responded to the question, some providing a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response and others elaborated more. Four students (representing 15%) disagreed with the statement. Dane responded: “no because English and literacy are completely different to *School Drama*” which Leanne and I found surprising after we had made explicit connections between drama and literacy during the term. India, Lewis and Seth all responded with a ‘no’. On the other hand, 22 students (representing 84%) agreed with the statement. A selection of illuminating responses are below:

Ainsley: Yes it has because it makes me read slow and go through the words right and before I use to speed read it.

Connor: Yes because it gave me more creativity.

Cynthia: I think it helped me a lot with English because drama helps you dig deeper into your perspective.

Erica: I think school drama has helped me a lot because it teaches you to go through it slowly don’t just rush through it, think of the most possible answers.

Jasper: Yes because it changes the way you think about the book when you get into the character’s shoes.

Katherine: Yes because it expanded my imagination.

Rachael: Yes, it helps me interact with characters in the books.

Raphael: Yes because it helps you focus.

Renee: Yes, I have learned so much and I can’t wait to do more of it. It made me realise there is much more to a text or a picture.

Santiago: Yes I definitely found that it has improved me to think about the characters more and dig deeper.

Taryn: Yes because reading the books that we have studied makes it easier to understand by acting out and making our literacy stronger! (PostPSS).

I think these are rather fascinating glimpses into students’ perceptions of the drama work. Some negative, but the majority are very positive and insightful: from it supporting creativity (Connor) and imagination (Katherine); focus (Raphael); developing deeper understanding and comprehension (Cynthia, Renee, Santiago and Taryn); slowing down the learning when reading a text or image (Ainsley and Erica); or developing stronger understandings of the characters (Jasper and Rachael).

The second question related to this academic aspect was Question 42: “Do you feel like doing *School Drama* has helped you infer and fill in the gaps in the story? Why/why not?” This time five students (representing 19%) disagreed that the program had helped them infer or fill in the gaps. Not surprisingly, it was the same students who disagreed with Question 41 who again disagreed with Question 42, (Dane, India, Lewis and Seth); however, on this occasion, Dylan also responded in the negative. Dylan commented: “No because I can read that book in my own time.” And Seth responded: “No because it doesn’t”. It is interesting that consistently across the three case studies there are a small portion of students in each group who have not felt that the drama work has been helpful. It is an interesting point of reflection for me.

Some of the affirmative responses in response to Question 42 were:

Adam: Yes because otherwise I wouldn’t know about Bill Fill. [An imagined character that developed through the Hot Seating in *The Island*].

Claire: Yes, it has made me think of it in a different way.

Connor: Yes I’ve always got stuck but now I flow.

Cynthia: I think it has because every time you try and focus on one picture you will always [find] one little detail that suddenly everyone wants to talk about.

Erica: I think it has helped me fill in the gap because now I am so interested in books and I think that was the gap.

Katherine: Yes because in drama I have learnt to always look for the little details because all of them could become lots of bigger ones which will make the story even better.

Libby: Yes because I now see it in different ways.

Renee: Yes. It made me realise the purpose of a book and I love all the ambiguity within all the pictures.

Santiago: Reading a story is one thing, but going through what that character feels like is another thing and I think that these drama lessons helped support this fact.

Tabatha: Yes because in drama we did fill in the gaps. (PostPSS).

I was astonished by these comments when reading them, particularly because of the deep level of reflection and insight that they shared. It was clear that they believed drama was helping them develop their inference skills.

## Agency and empowerment

Increased student agency and empowerment were unique themes in the interviews with Leanne at Wentworth Public School and with her students. The themes of empowerment and agency were first mentioned by Rachael in the first focus group with students. Rachael responded to a question (and conversation with other students) reflecting on whether they felt the drama workshops had helped them infer and 'fill in the gaps.'

Rachael: Yes, Um I think it helps me a lot just filling in the gaps cos you have a 'heads and a tails' and it's like your choice completely of what to put in the middle. So, it's just really fun cos it's not particularly hard, it's just enjoyable. (FG1.15/11/2017).

Rachael's reflection indicates that she felt ownership over the learning and that the spaces to fill in the gaps were an opportunity for her to demonstrate agency. This theme continues in a range of interviews and focus groups. Leanne raised the idea of empowerment early in the first interview after the first focus group with students when Connor said that he had changed the way he had felt about Juanita's actions (the mother of the poor children in *Tricycle*) following the proximities activity in Workshop Four. Leanne commented:

Leanne: You can change your mind if you want to. And that gives them freedom and to me, that's really empowering. (I1.15/11/2017).

Leanne continued in that interview to talking about Cooper, saying:

Leanne: Everyday now I tell him that I've noticed him being more independent, being more comfortable with making decisions on his own without having approval. (I1.15/11/2017).

The notion of having ownership over the learning, being in a position to deeply think about the characters and ones own perspective towards them and developing independence in the classroom, are aspects of giving students agency and empowering them in their own learning.

In the last focus groups, students again voiced their reflections about empowerment and agency in their own learning. Tabatha commented:

Tabatha: Um you've actually made me get into drama, cos now I'm starting drama outside of school. And cos you made it really fun for us. And it, when you make us do it you aren't like

'oh yeah just do this' you sort of twist it and make it more fun for us and then we just want to do more and more of it. Instead of just doing, like for example, um like writing, you'd make us like think of it in our own perspective, not just something that you think, just what we think. (FG2.23/11/2017).

Tabatha's words of "you'd make us like think of it in our own perspective" suggests the feeling of empowerment, that her own perspective is important in the learning, not just the perspective of the teacher or in our case, the teaching artist. Later in that focus group she returned to this theme explaining:

Tabatha: ... But they [the author and illustrator] would never tell you [who the hand belonged to], which makes you think of it in your own way and that there is no right or wrong answer. It's just what you think. (FG2.23/11/2017).

Again, there is no 'right or wrong' answer for Tabatha, her own interpretation of the text is right and perhaps this confidence that there is 'no right or wrong' answer allows space for students to feel more confident in their learning, more ownership over it, readier to take risks and leave them feeling more empowered. Renee continued this idea by saying:

Renee: Um one thing that I was like thinking about is that I was like living in the moment. Like I always loved it, because it's always very dramatic and you're always expressing your point of view on what you are seeing. Cos it's nice to see that everyone has different perspectives. (FG3.29/11/2017).

Cynthia also explicitly made connections to empowerment by saying:

Cynthia: I think empowerment is like when, it's like when you've got courage and like bravery to step up and do all of this stuff that you've never done before. Like stepping outside of your box. (FG2.23/11/2017).

Cynthia's comments resonate with the idea of confidence, a consistent theme across the case studies and at Wentworth Public School too.



Leanne made connections between her own pedagogical approach and how aspects of it resonate with drama-based learning and supporting agency and empowerment in students:

Leanne: So if I say something different, they will go 'can I?' and they know now that they don't have to do something the way that they think it should be done. If they talk to me and negotiate they can change and they can add whatever they think's important. And in drama they have that total control. And again that comes back to that empowerment. I think drama is incredibly empowering. (11.15/11/2017).

In the final focus group, Leanne again raised the idea of empowerment reflecting:

Leanne: Every person has to be empowered. And you know, all my kids have become confident, some will say over confident, but you know what, if even for a short time in their life, even if it's just for the rest of the year, I can live with that. Because I actually prefer for them to be confident voices. I don't want them to be shaking at the knees or frightened of trying things. Empowerment, I think is really important.

John: Yeah, and do you think that drama has helped that?

Leanne: Oh totally. Because you look at the Dane and the Libby's and all of those people who can't do the writing and they get out there and they can act it, and they can see it and feel it and freeze the moment and that's empowerment. And they can really feel it. I know Dane feels it, you've seen it. So I actually know that they are empowered. For those moments, they are empowered. I think definitely the drama does that. Even quiet little Melanie who can't think of a word, she's out there. Break away from the group and she would still do it. Just a quiet little bee, just got in and did it. So that's empowering. (12.05/12/2017).

Leanne also commented about how student agency and empowerment were visible through the drama workshops:

Leanne: I would say that the benefits are: everyone having a voice, at that time, of that character, from that point of view and I like the fact that people will say something and then they may come back to it later and they may have changed their mind. (11.15/11/2017).

Leanne's reflections on the collaborative nature of process-based drama work and her observations that the voices of all participants can be heard contrasts with a traditional English or literacy

classroom, where perhaps only a few voices may be shared, and sometimes, at worst, only the teacher's voice.

Much has been written about drama/theatre and agency and empowerment, from Boal's (1979) seminal *Theatre of the Oppressed* which introduced Forum Theatre, a particular applied theatre approach to empower the audience, to more recent work in schools (for example, Aitken, 2009; Cody, 2015; Duffy and Vettraino, 2010; O'Toole and Lepp, 2000; Plastow, and Boon, 2004). Tiller's (1999) discussion of drama-based projects in Europe also highlights the aim to empower young people. Aitken, Fraser and Price (2007) and Cody (2015) examined process drama (with a particular focus on Teacher in Role) pedagogical approaches in primary schools and found that the co-construction of the drama between the teacher and students increased student agency and empowerment through shifting the traditional power relationship within the classroom (Aitken et al., 2007). Certainly the traditional teacher and student relationship within the *School Drama* classroom is different from a regular lesson and students do have more choices in the direction of each drama-based strategy. While the strategy is determined by the teaching artist or classroom teacher, the content of that strategy is dictated by the students themselves, potentially providing students with more agency in the learning process.

Unfortunately, there was no question about agency or empowerment in the student pre- or post-program surveys, so only analyses of teacher and student observations during the focus groups and interviews support these conclusions.

## Engagement

Student engagement continued to be a strong theme in this case study and was the most frequently coded theme when analysing student focus group transcripts and interviews with the classroom teacher.

During the first focus group, Connor initially raised the idea of engagement and linked engagement to 'real life' and relevant themes for young people:

Connor: Um I like how you make us do some Freeze Frames of every day stuff like 'excluding' and 'pressure' and 'stress,' anything really that is related to real life problems for children. (FG1.15/11/2017).

Connor was making links between the theme words that we had explored and embodied in Sculpting and rapid Freeze Frames. Another reflection was about engagement through the use of the episodic text model.

Rachael: I really like how we ... like how you stop the book so we can actually interpret it for what actually happened. And we do Freeze Frames and we do games to like um that relate to it, so it's really creative and fun. (FG1.15/11/2017).

Another student concurred with Rachael and indicated increased engagement and agency due to ownership of the drama and the drama-based processes:

Cynthia: It's really good because like you got to read these stories that are really interesting and you got to like infer and fill in the gaps of what you think and like say whatever you think. (FG2.23/11/2017).

When discussing engagement with Leanne, a particular moment in the drama was highlighted. Referring to Lewis, a student with health issues and frequent absences from school who also finds reading difficult and will sometimes opt out of an activity in class, Leanne commented:

Leanne: But Lewis last week volunteering to be Hot Seated as Margarita and him saying 'now that's a tough question' and he will usually well go 'I don't know', but he didn't! He said it was hard and he did that and he answered a couple of questions in character and that made me see that you've got through to someone like that who is very resistant reader and a very resistant writer and dare I say it, a resistant learner.

(We laugh)

John: He was probably the only one who I sort of identified in that first week or two and he was playing hard ball. Yeah, he was going to give me a bit of a run for my money.

Leanne: And the fact that he could come and bring himself around to participate, knowing who he is and what is background is, I'm just happy with that. I'm happy for him.

John: Yeah, I was surprised. I was surprised that he put his hand up to ...

Leanne: Goes to show how successful it is then! When you get someone that resistant choosing to participate and really putting himself into that role.

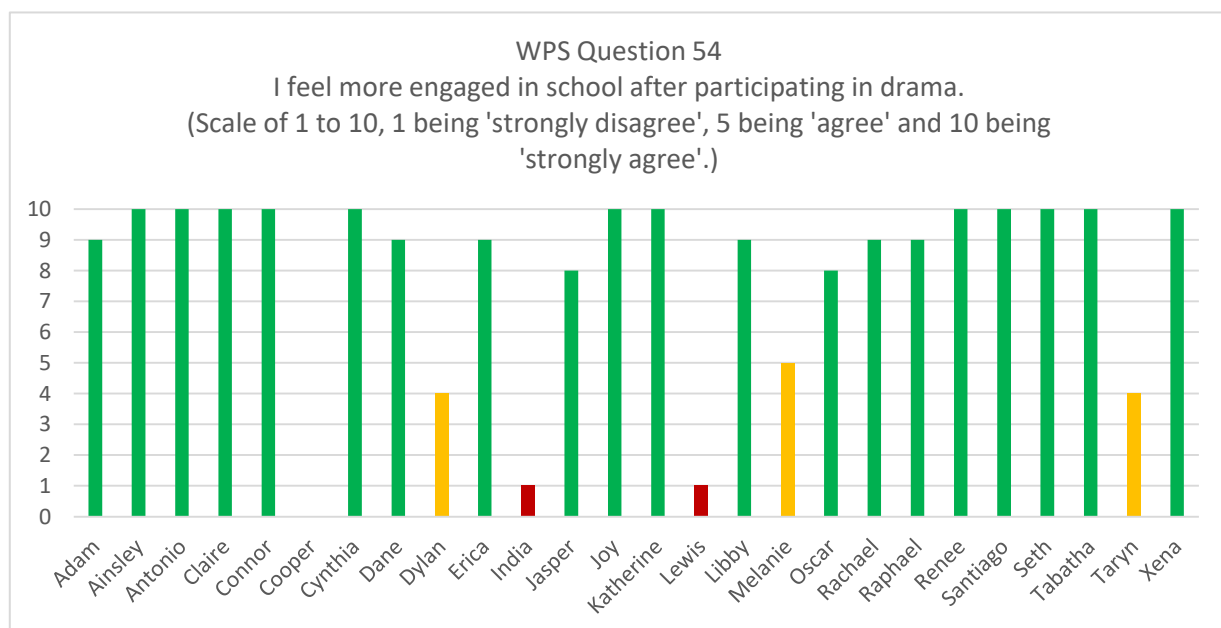
John: So a shift in engagement for him then over those four weeks then?

Leanne: Yes, totally! Totally! He won't read on his own without help but. (l1.15/11/2017).

Lewis didn't participate in any of the focus groups and missed several of the classes; however, analysing his survey results points to some interesting contradictions given Leanne's observations. In the survey data Lewis reported he did not feel confident speaking in front of his class; he did not like reading books; he considered himself to be a nervous person. Lewis's responses to the post-program questions indicated that he felt strongly that the program had no positive or negative impact on him or his learning. So, although Lewis did not report any shift in engagement, his teacher observed a marked change in his engagement.

Turning to the survey data and the questions pertaining to engagement, there are several interesting findings. Question 54 was a post-program question and invited students to respond to the statement: "I feel more engaged in school after participating in drama." Students responded on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating that they 'strongly disagreed' and 10 indicating that they 'strongly agreed'. The responses to this question are represented in Figure 49 (below).

Figure 49 WPS Question 54

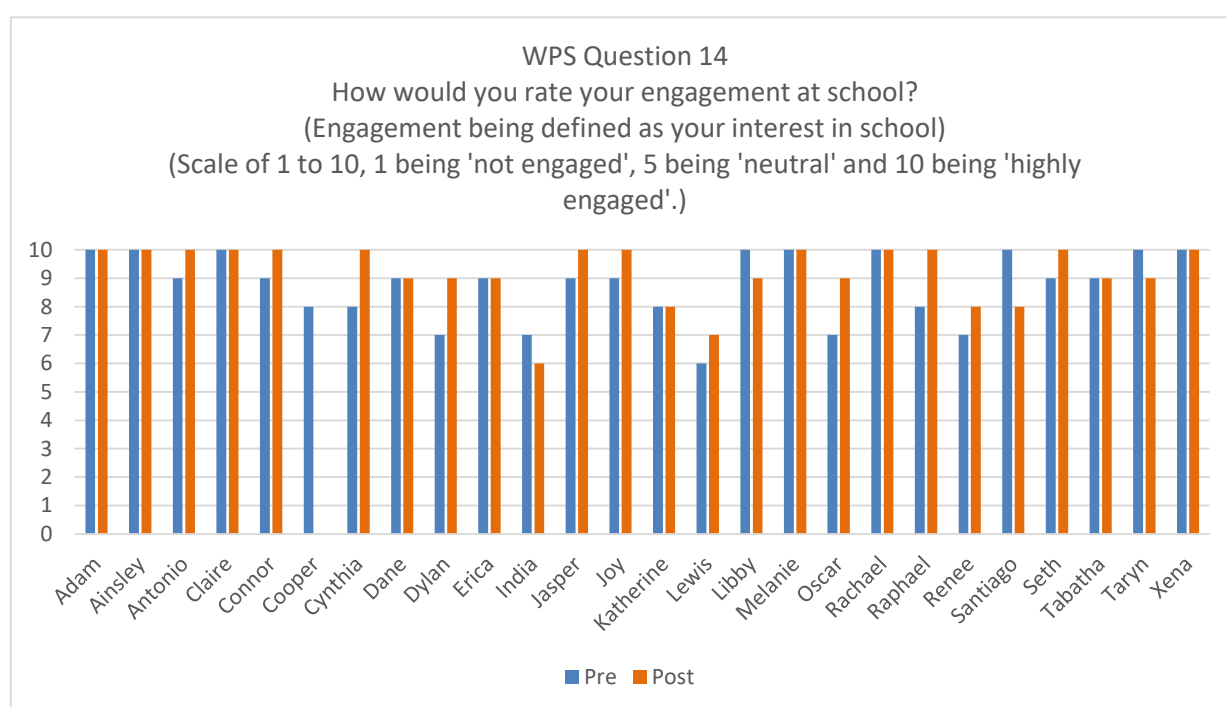


Eighty percent of the class (21 students) provided a ranking between 9 and 10, signalling that they 'strongly agreed' (represented in green) with the statement. Eleven percent of the class (3 students) provided a ranking between 4 and 7, indicating a neutral position (represented in yellow) and 7% of the class (2 students, including Lewis discussed above) indicated that they strongly disagreed with this statement, providing a ranking between 1 and 3 (indicated in red). This may mean that while Lewis

was engaged in the drama itself, he didn't feel the engagement was sustained into the rest of his school experience.

Question 14 (represented in Figure 50) reports on the pre- and post-program survey which invited students to provide a numerical response to the statement: "How would you rate your engagement at school? (Engagement being defined as your interest in school), (On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being 'not engaged' and 10 being 'very engaged'). Again, students did not have access during the post-survey to the responses they made in the pre-survey.

Figure 50 WPS Question 14



This question asks students about their general engagement in school, rather than in drama or as a result of drama. Additionally, it should be noted that this post-program survey was conducted in the final weeks of the school year, where students and teachers are often tired and less motivated. Analysing the survey data from this question indicates that the Year 4/5 class at Wentworth Public School were very engaged in school. The lowest response was a 6 (by Lewis in the pre-program survey) and 6 students (representing 23% of students) maintained a pre- and post-program response of 10 (highly engaged), 3 other students (11%) also maintained the score of 9 on both the pre- and post-responses. Twelve students (46%) reported increased engagement in this survey and 4 students (15%) reported a slightly decreased engagement at school (3 of the 4 reduced their score by one number). In summary, 46% of students reported an increased engagement at school, 34% of students

maintained a score of 9 or 10 indicating a continued very high engagement in school, and 15% of students indicated a slight decrease in engagement at school when comparing the pre- and post-program survey data. Shifts in student engagement in this case study are consistent with the previous two case studies and also consistent with existing research (for example, Fleming et al., 2016; Hunter, 2005; Martin et al., 2013; and Turner et al., 2004).

### Connection, empathy and perspective taking

As O'Mara (2004) has suggested, engagement in drama-based learning can increase students' ability to see things from different perspectives. In the data from Wentworth Public School, perspective taking was a key area in focus groups with students, particularly linked to empathy and literacy.

The following is an excerpt from the first focus group at Wentworth Public School following Workshop Five, where I asked about empathy and perspective.

John: Do you feel like you have been able to empathise with characters differently, like if we had just read the text from beginning to end, do you think you would have felt the same connection? I think of drama as being like 'standing in the shoes of people' ... what do you think about that? Santiago?

Santiago: I think like what I said before that um through the exercises, that we thought of it differently. And like otherwise, if we had of just read the book, we would have been like 'oh yeah that story is sad' but we wouldn't have thought about it as deeply or maybe what that character feels like, it wouldn't have been as good. So when we did it with you, I feel like we went deeper into the story. We dug deeper.

John: Yeah, we dug deeper. Cynthia?

Cynthia: I thought it was much easier to empathise because you don't know what's like going to hit you and once it's like thrown at you, you've got like a brain storm and you can just like blurt everything out. (FG3.29/11/2017).

I repeated the question in order for others to answer and Erica raised her hand.

Erica: Um well when like for *Tricycle*, when like you read normal books and someone steals something, you think 'well they are a bad person, why would they do something like that?' But in this situation, you have like second thoughts, like you um you are kind of on both sides. Like it's right but wrong.

John: Yes, so it's not so black and white?

Erica: Yeah.

John: Jasper?

Jasper: Ah well I think the, it ah, you sort of understand them, so you think more about why they are doing it. And then you think 'oh I would probably do that if I was in that situation.'

John: Connor?

Connor: Um I find that if I was just reading the book, I would just say, how in *Tricycle* they stole it 'Oh they are revolting people and nobody should go near them. Nobody should be like them.' But how you've made us stop and read it and like think about it, I've more had second thoughts and I've more like when we did the um, we had to stand near them and say?

John: Yep, the Proximities. Yep?

Connor: Yes, I have actually changed my mind about it and I think that now I would actually be with um Juanita in it. (FG1.15/11/2017).

This fragment of the focus group indicates the depth of understanding expressed by students in the class following five drama-based workshops. They are reflecting and observing that there are often shades of grey rather than black or white answers because they have been able to 'go deeper' into the characters' perspective and understand them more fully. Erica also indicates the moral struggle in the text and how she has considered a moral issue of stealing with a different perspective following exploring *Tricycle* with drama. Jasper points to the greater understanding, empathy and connection with the characters, particularly those involved in stealing the tricycle. Connor concurred with these sentiments and reflected that he had changed his attitude towards the children's mother, Juanita, who allegedly helped her children steal the tricycle.

I suggested that metaxis can contribute to students developing empathy and connection with characters in drama. I drew a Venn diagram of metaxis for Leanne and explained that if one circle was the students' real world, and the other circle was the world of the story. I was particularly interested in the overlap between the real and the imagined/fictional world. Leanne commented on her own pedagogical practice of asking students to consider if they would still hold the same views about a text a year or two after reading it. She explained that she suggests:

Leanne: ... but you all engage with that text in that time and I always say 'if you came back to this [text] in a year or two years' time, do you think you would have the same thoughts and the same feelings to it?' And they are getting the idea ... 'maybe I will if I still relate to that character *that way* or maybe my experiences, my environment or at home things have

changed and *they* shape me differently, and then I may form different points of view.’ I think that’s really critical. Would you try that or would you not and try something else? So, it just gets you thinking. So I think it’s huge. (I1.15/11/2017).

A big reader herself and a reflective practitioner, Leanne provided some deep insights into the metaxis experiences of students in her class and how the sociocultural perspective of each individual impacts on their own connection, attitude and perspective towards a particular character or text:

I really do think that overlap between the personal and the text helps you understand the world you are in. I read a lot of relationship books too and I think that relationships help you see yourself in some characters, and you might get strategies on how that character deals with that situation. (I1.15/11/2017).

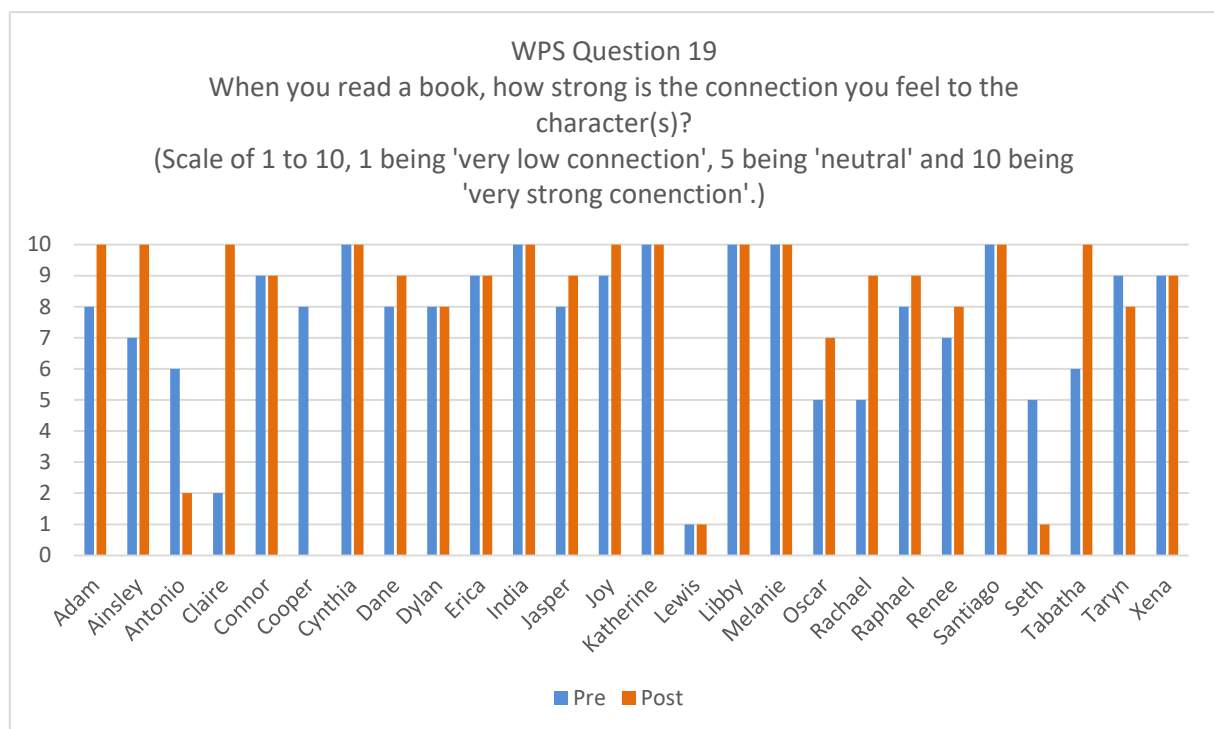
In other focus groups, students continued to comment on this theme. For example Rachael said:

Well as Renee said you are always in the moment but then again you are like mad that you are not there, whereas the stories are quite dark, and then it’s just helped us understand how different people cope with different situations. And also like each book is a cliff-hanger and it leads you to interpret the ending of the story. (FG3.29/11/2017).

Several questions in the survey invited students to comment on empathy, connection and perspective taking. Question 19 asked students to rank on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being ‘very low connection’, 5 being ‘neutral’ and 10 being ‘very strong connection’) how strongly they feel a connection to the character(s) when reading a book.



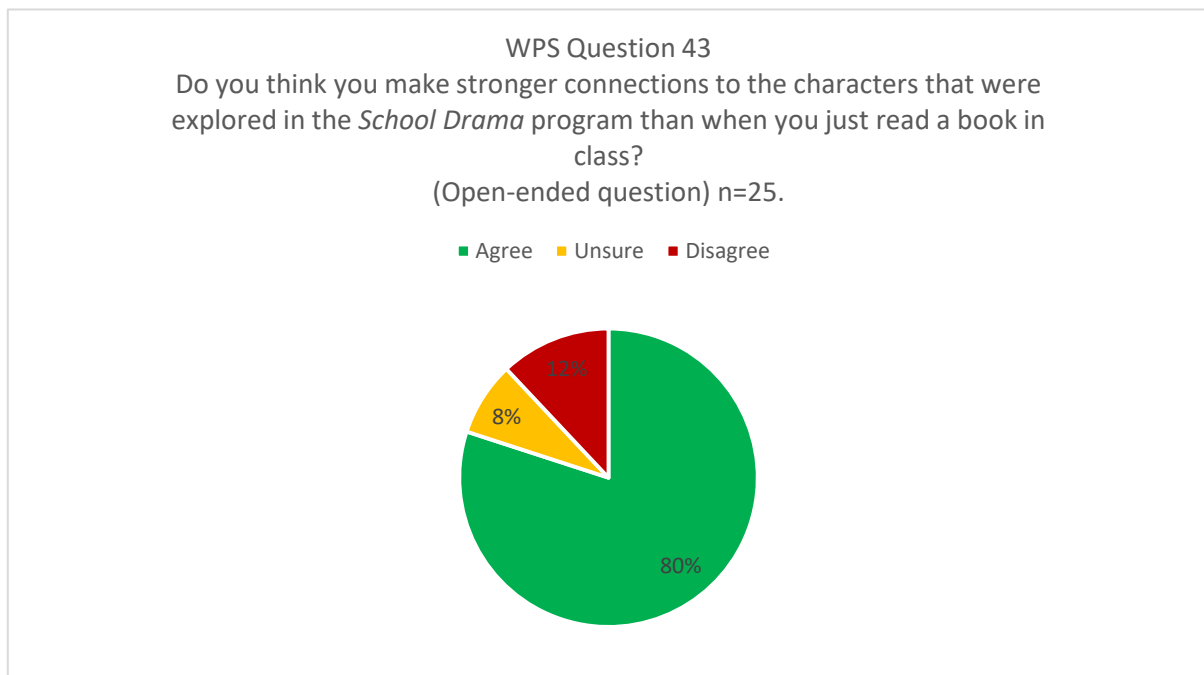
Figure 51 WPS Question 19



The data from this question illustrate that students' perceptions of the strength of connection they felt to characters when reading a book was mixed. Eleven (42%) of the 26 students reported the same level of connection and the majority of this was in a very high range (with the exception of Lewis). Twelve students (46%) reported a positive shift and three students (11%) reported a negative shift in strength of connection to the character when reading a book. So while some report that drama may shift connection to character, this is not the case for all students.

Question 43 was an open-ended post-program question which was mostly answered with one-word responses. The question was: "Do you think you make stronger connections to the characters that were explored in the *School Drama* program than when you just read a book in class?" To succinctly assess this data, a pie chart has been created (Figure 52). Green represents positive responses, yellow were responses which included "na" or "not sure" and red represented one word, "no".

Figure 52 WPS Question 43



As indicated above (Figure 52), 20 students (80%) indicated a positive response, 2 students (8%) were unsure or reported that it was the same, and three students (12%) disagreed with the statement. Of the 25 responses, only positive responses included more than a one-word answer. These were:

Cynthia: I think it has become a stronger connection with all the books I read now because all you have to do is put yourself into their shoes and then the connections are really strong.

Erica: I think I have a stronger connection to the characters now because when John brought a picture book in, I just thought it would just be another boring picture book but when he read it we stopped in bits of the book and expressed what we think about it doing freeze frames.

Jasper: Yes because some of the drama tasks make you go into the characters' shoes.

Joy: Yes I look at them more now and put myself in their shoes more often.

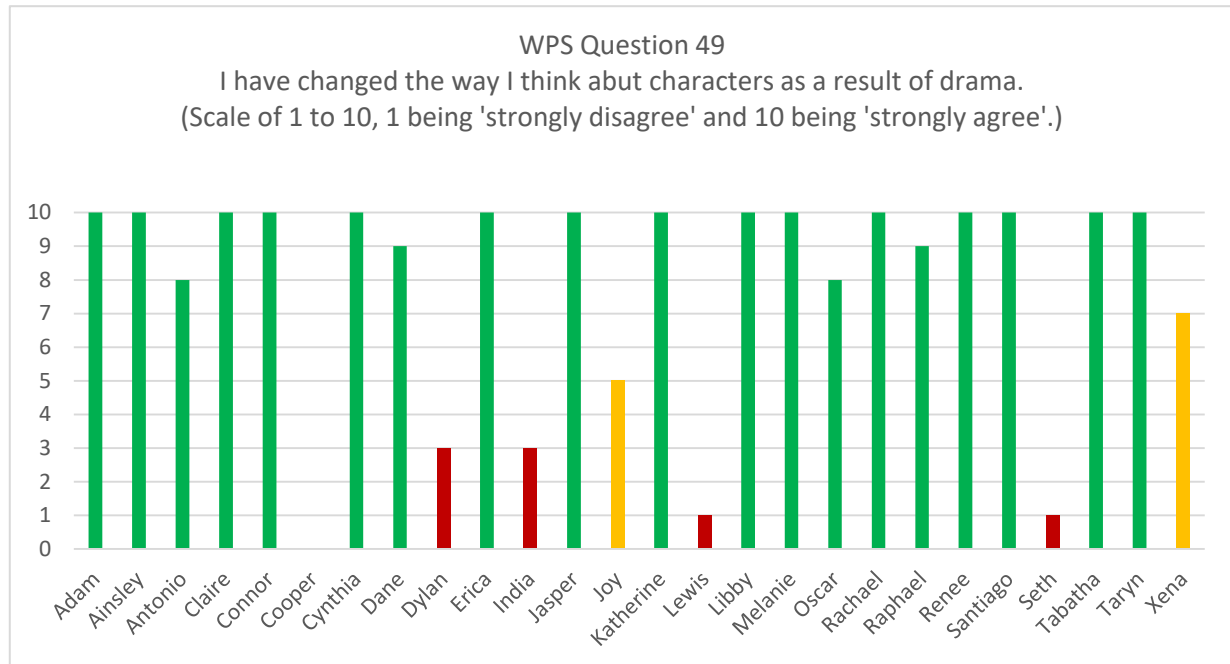
Renee: Yes, I was motivated and I was living in the moment and I felt like I was taking it to the next level.

Santiago: Of course. It was an amazing journey to go through reading these books. I felt what the character felt and went on their journey to.

Taryn: Yes because again, we act it out which makes you feel in the shoes of the character. (PostPSS).

Question 49 (Figure 52) asked students to respond to the statement “I have changed the way I think about characters as a result of drama” on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being strongly disagree and 10 being strong agree).

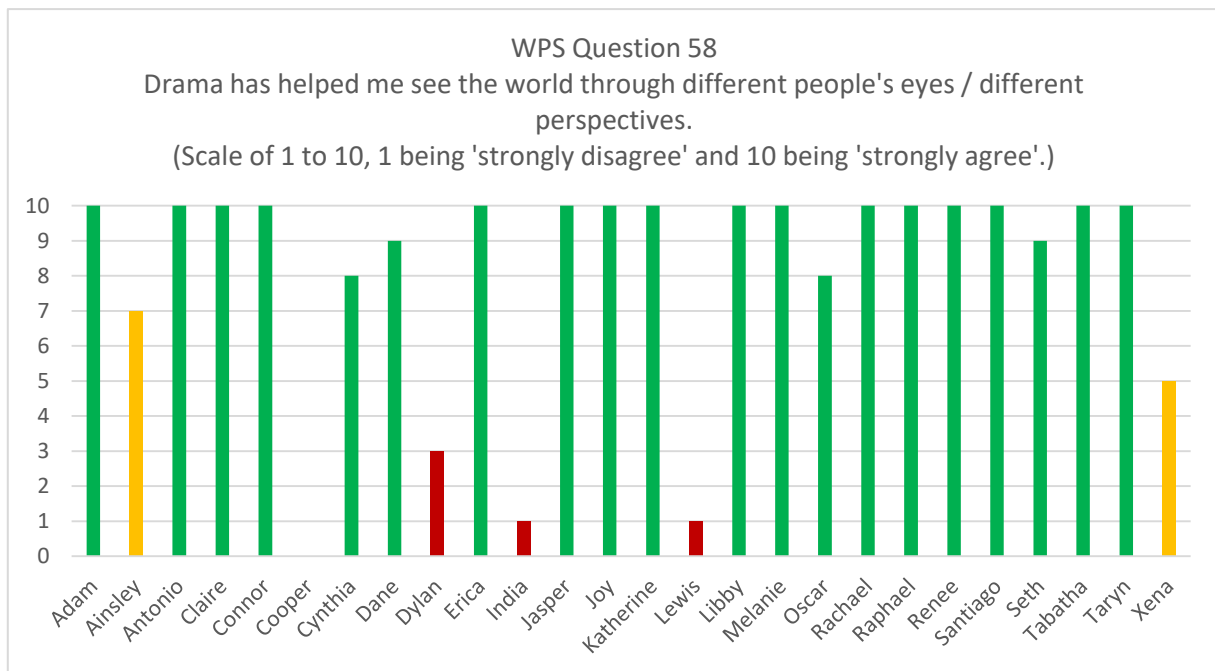
Figure 53 WPS Question 49



Of the 25 students who completed this question, 2 students (8%) (Joy and Xena) indicated they were neutral or unsure, 4 students (16%) (Dylan, India, Lewis and Seth) strongly disagreed with the statement providing a ranking of between 1 and 3, and 19 students (76%) strongly agreed with the statement.

Question 58, represented in (Figure 54) below, asked students to consider if: “Drama has helped me see the world through different people’s eyes / different perspectives.”

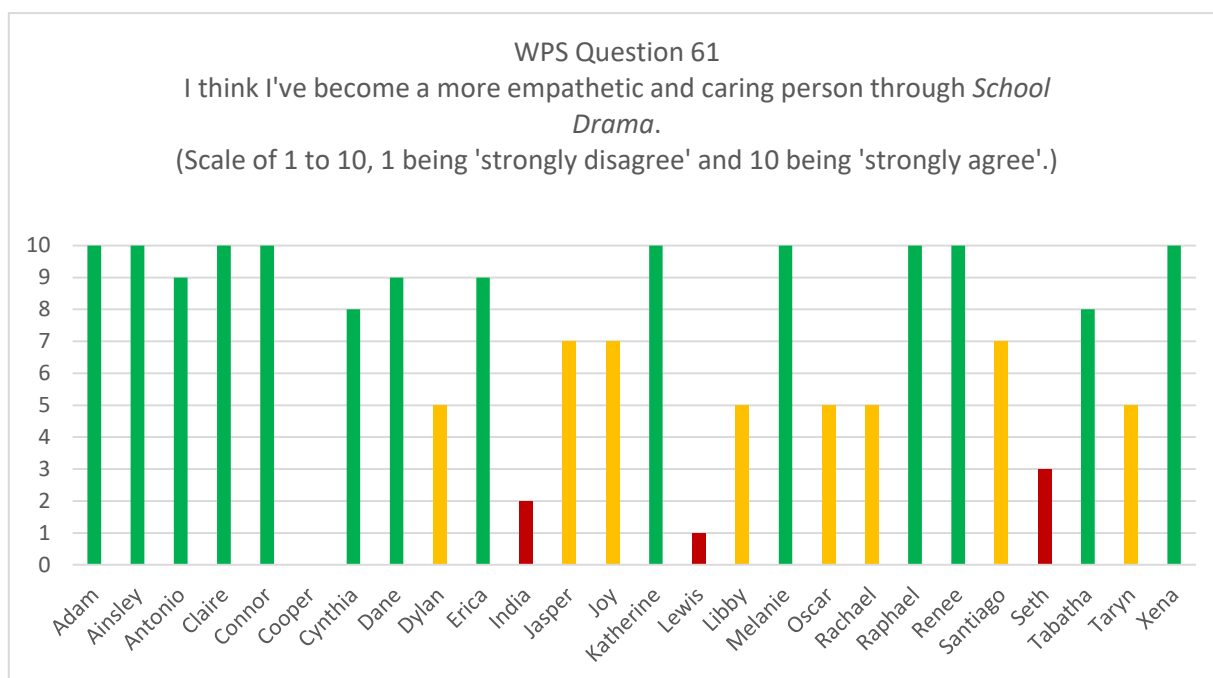
Figure 54 WPS Question 58



Twenty-five students completed this question and of the 25, 20 (80%) strongly agreed (responding with a value of between 8 and 10), 2 students (8%) (Ainsley and Xena) were closer to the middle and 3 students (12%) (Dylan, India and Lewis) strongly disagreed (responding with a value of between 1 and 3). The response from this survey question specifically asks about a shift through the drama experience, and an overwhelming majority of students (80%) strongly agreed with the statement that drama had indeed helped them see the world through others' eyes and/or see different perspectives.

A final question (Question 61) in the post-program survey asked whether students thought that they had become more empathetic and caring through *School Drama*. Figure 55 represents the responses.

Figure 55 WPS Question 61



Of the 25 students who responded, 14 (56%) strongly agreed, 8 students (32%) indicated a more neutral response in the middle of the scale and 3 students (12%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Dylan, India, Lewis and Seth continued to show more negative responses to questions relating to empathy and perspective taking.

## Conclusion

Case Study Three involving a Year 4/5 composite class at Wentworth Public School during Term Four, 2017 explored two texts rather than one, *Tricycle* (Amado, 2007) and *The Island* (Greder, 2002). The pre- and post-benchmarking data indicated that of the 26 students in the class (all of whom completed the benchmarking tasks), 25 of the students (96%) increased their literacy score in inference and comprehension when comparing the pre- to the post-program tasks. The remaining student (Erica), maintained the same grade of a C+ for both. Of the four sub-groups in the class, the Year 4 Male students made the most significant shifts.

The large majority of the students and the class teacher, Leanne McPhee, reported that the drama processes led to deep rethinking and reflection, resulting in shifts from literal comprehension to inferential comprehension. This was also supported by the survey data indicating that a large majority of between 80% and 84% generally agreed that participation in the *School Drama* program had helped inferential comprehension.

Agency and empowerment were strong themes in focus groups although there was no question on the survey connected to student agency or empowerment.

Positive shifts in student engagement continued to be a very strong theme in this case study, with students commenting on the embodied nature of drama work contributing to increased engagement or connections to 'real life issues'. Survey data also supported the focus group analysis relating to student engagement.

Finally, connection, empathy and perspective taking were distinctive in this case study. Students and teacher alike commented in focus groups and interviews about how they felt they were making stronger connections with characters in the books explored in *School Drama*. A stronger sense of empathy towards those characters and an increased ability to take on the perspectives of others was also noted and supported by the survey data.

The next chapter compares the three cases in a cross-case analysis and aims to identify and analyse the resonances across and differences between the case study findings, with a particular focus on survey data.

## Chapter 9 – Making Meaning: Cross Case Analysis, Discussion and Findings

“The Arts make vivid the fact that neither words in their literal form nor numbers exhaust what we can know.” (Eisner, 2000, p. 8).

### Introduction

The previous three chapters have explored and analysed the data from the three in-depth case studies, Waratah Grammar School (WGS), Gungahlin Public School (GPS) and Wentworth Public School (WPS). This chapter focuses on comparing the three case studies and analysing and synthesising the data to explore patterns of similarities and unique differences. As the researcher I subscribed to Stake’s (2005) proposition that multiple cases: “are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases” (pp. 445-446).

The themes highlighted in the previous three chapters were identified as the most frequently coded themes in the student focus groups and teacher interviews. The survey and benchmarking data support these themes. This chapter looks at data that can be compared across the case studies to see if there are similar or dissimilar outcomes (Stake, 2005). A stronger focus on the survey and benchmarking data in this chapter enables comparisons and cross-analyses, and crystallisation has enabled the identification of resonances and differences across the three case studies.

### Similarities and Patterns

#### Literacy: Inferential comprehension

All three teachers selected inferential comprehension as a focus for the unit. Across all three case studies, shifts in inferential comprehension was a prominent outcome observed through analysis of student benchmarking tasks, observations from the teacher, students and teaching artist/researcher. The majority of students reported in the survey and focus groups that they believed the drama had had a positive impact on their literacy skills in the area of inference and comprehension.

## Benchmarking

A comparison of the pre- and post-program benchmarking tasks graded by the classroom teachers indicated strong shifts in the selected literacy focus across all three cases. Comparing all complete sets of benchmarking data demonstrated that no student in any case study decreased their literacy score and 91% improved it. A small number of students in each school (one at GPS, three at WGS, and two at WPS) maintained the same grade for the pre- and post- program benchmarking. Of these six students, four (Xena, Alecia, Genevieve and Zara) maintained their A range score (either a A-, A, or A+), one student (Erica) maintained a C+ and one student (Jarrod) maintained a D+.

Five of these students completed the post-program survey (Alecia from WGS did not). In responding to three open-ended questions (Questions 41, 42 and 43) students were asked about their perception of using drama to learn literacy, reflecting on whether drama had helped build their inference skills and if they felt stronger connections to character as a result of drama. Positive responses were noted for all female participants while Jarrod indicated he did not believe that drama had impacted his literacy learning in any way.

Students who received achieved in the D and E range in the pre-program benchmarking tasks, had some of the largest shifts in their literacy over the seven-week intervention. Many of these were male students. Kempe (2000) points to a possible reason for this phenomenon, explaining why some are disengaged in learning, become attracted to drama. He argues:

It has often been noted [...] that children who struggle with other aspects of the curriculum often seem to enjoy and indeed excel in drama. Some would suggest that this shows simply that the subject is 'easier' or that the emphasis on 'fun' activities means that the subject isn't really 'proper work'. Accepting the proposition that different children have preferences for different learning styles though provides another insight into this phenomena in that children who are mitigated against by the emphasis on verbal conceptualisation in the classroom have more opportunity to use their own preferred learning style in drama work which includes the visual, aural and kinaesthetic. (Kempe, 2000, pp. 13-14).

Kempe's (2000) argument resonates with the data collected across the three case studies, and also possibly explains why several students across the three cases did not move in their literacy through the intervention, due to drama not being consistent with their preferred learning style.



## Gender and benchmarking data

All students identified as either male or female in this case study. A gender breakdown of students indicated a substantial difference between the shifts in male and female academic achievement between the pre- and post- program results. Table 11 provides the average mark/grade for each group of male and female students in each of the three case studies. (The mark has been rounded to the closest whole number when indicating the grade.)

*Table 11 Gender breakdown of average marks for each case study*

<b>Table 11</b> <b>Gender breakdown of average marks for each case study</b>		
	<b>Average pre-program mark/grade</b>	<b>Average post-program mark/grade</b>
<b>Female Students</b> <b>Waratah Grammar School (Yr 5)</b>	10.7 / B-	12.1 / B+
<b>Male Students</b> <b>Waratah Grammar School (Yr 5)</b>	6.5 / D+	10.7 / B-
<b>Female Students</b> <b>Gungahlin Public School (Yr 5/6)</b>	6.5 / D+	9.3 / C+
<b>Male Students</b> <b>Gungahlin Public School (Yr 5/6)</b>	5.4 / D	8.0 / C
<b>Female Students</b> <b>Wentworth Public School (Yr 4/5)</b>	10.8 / B-	12.3 / B+
<b>Male Students</b> <b>Wentworth Public School (Yr 4/5)</b>	7.8 / C-	10.1 / B-

Table 11 documents increases in literacy scores for both genders across all three case studies. Each sub-group within the study (indicated in Table 11) shifted literacy scores. This increase ranged from between 1.4 marks and 4.1 marks (over an entire grade shift, as there are 3 marks within each grade, for example a B-, a B, and a B+). In all three cases, on average, male students scored lower than female students in the pre- and post-program tasks. At both Waratah Grammar School and Wentworth Public School, male students made greater shifts in literacy than their female peers.

Table 12 illustrates the significant difference between male and female performance on the selected literacy focus. Female students, on average, started with a higher grade and shifted by an average of 1.9 marks. In contrast, some of the male students failed the pre-program task, receiving a grade of D+ (6 marks) or lower. Male students, on average, moved over an entire grade (3.1 marks) from the pre-program task to the post-program task.

*Table 12 Gender breakdown on average benchmarking scores*

Table 12 Gender breakdown on average benchmarking scores		
	Average pre-program mark/grade	Average post- program mark/grade
All Female Students	9.3 / C+	11.2 / B
All Male Students	6.5 / C-	9.6 / B-

When analysing the overall literacy shifts from the benchmarking data, I interviewed the three classroom teachers in 2019 (approximately two years after the intervention in their classrooms), asking them to read the case studies and reflect on my analysis of the findings. I asked them about their expectation of the growth in English and literacy over a seven-week period. Obviously, some growth and positive shift is expected over a term; however, I wondered if the growth and shift that was seen in the benchmarking before and after the *School Drama* intervention was what they would normally have expected.

Dane Everhart from Waratah Grammar School commented:

No, I think it's far more dramatic than I would normally expect. You see the kids who are already scoring highly on these tests, to begin with, the pre-test, they are less likely to have much more growth. And that's the same for most pre- and post-tests, because there is not as much room to grow. But even weeks, to be honest, it is not a long time, but on average, across the class, there had been quite a significant growth from pre- to post-, more so than I would normally expect. (14.03/05/2019).

Jacob Lockyer from Gungahlin Public School reflected:

It's a significant shift. And just reading Harry Potter [the pre-program text], they didn't connect as much with the characters, as actually becoming the characters and analysing the feelings [...] I do remember noticing that the depth in which they were writing and their ability to connect to the characters was hugely improved. And I don't think that's overly surprising to me, because I've been involved in the drama program before. It just gives them such an empathy towards the characters and they can understand a lot more, how they feel. So I'm not shocked by the growth during drama, but it is definitely more significant than I would normally expect. (13.08/06/2019).

Similarly, comments from Leanne McPhee at Wentworth Public School resonated with the other two case study teachers.

I'm going to be as honest as I can be, I would expect that if I was doing literacy that that is what I'm hoping for. I just think that with that group I had, particularly the [Year] 5s, it was difficult to move them. I still think I can get kids to write, that's something I can do. I think that drama moves it faster. I think it moves it much faster. I think with writing it can take time for them to find their own style. But with drama it's immediate. Because you make those inferences in it, when you say or think about how your character would feel or something. And there is no right or wrong [...] so I think it's an immediacy that normally writing, you have to put more effort over time, as the teacher, and you will get sublime writing, but it's over time. But with drama, I do think it's far more effective and it's far quicker and I'm not surprised that you can see that lift so quickly. You know, I suppose because I've worked with you before and I've done this before, and so I know that this isn't a one off or some freak thing. (13.03/06/2019).

The three teachers commented that the positive shifts in literacy were more than they would expect from regular teaching and learning, and Jacob and Leanne commented that as they had done the program before, they did anticipate these large shifts in literacy as a result of the intervention.

### Number of texts used

The case study at Wentworth Public School explored two texts during the *School Drama* intervention, *Tricycle* (Amado & Ruano, 2007) and *The Island* (Greder, 2002), while the other two case studies studied only one text. Comparing the benchmarking results from WPS to WGS and GPS, suggested there was no discernible difference between using one or two texts over the seven weeks of the *School Drama* program.

### Reported perceptions of learning shifts

Five survey questions (Questions 41, 42, 48, 51 and 52) related to inferential comprehension, process drama and the use of drama to improve literacy. Question 41 was an open-ended post-program question which asked: “Do you feel like doing School Drama has helped you with your English and literacy? Why/why not?”

At Waratah Grammar School, three students disagreed with the statement. For example, Roger responded: “No because we talk about feelings and scenarios not English and literacy” (PostPSS) and Caroline stated: “No. I feel like drama is more to help you with your confidence and stage fright when you’re giving speeches, performances and class projects” (PostPSS). Sixteen students suggested that drama had helped them with their English and literacy and suggested some of the reasons including:

Amanda: Yes because Drama helps to relax me and help me by making the activities more active and exciting.

Genevieve: I think it has because even though you’re not writing it gets your mind thinking and that can enhance your English and literacy.

Josh: Yes a lot because we could approach it in a different way and it helped my imagination.

Levi: Yes because I understand people’s actions more and some of the words we used in drama I didn’t know of, therefore when I found out what they meant it boosted my vocabulary.

Mabel: Yes it has, because I have learnt new words that I have never heard before and words that I didn’t know the meaning of.

Zara: Yes because it helps activate your brain.

Reese: Yes because it helps you think outside the box. (PostPSS).

Twenty-one students at Gungahlin Public School responded to the question. Dale was the sole student who disagreed saying: “No because we don’t really do both of them” (them being English and literacy; PostPSS). While Amber and Jose were not sure, the remaining 18 students agreed. Some of their explanations include:

Zia: It has a lot. It makes me more creative and more engaged with the characters.

Wade: It has given us imagination and helps with our English. But I don’t know about literacy.

Savannah: Yes because when I do drama I feel it more than doing literacy and we have more fun and that makes us want to listen to the teacher.

Rea: Yes, in drama you understand the character and how they feel, you break down the story and reflect. You understand what's happening whereas in a normal lesson you just read the book or text without understanding or taking time to understand what's going on.

Evelyn: I think that it has helped me explain what the characters are feeling more. It has also let me have a wider imagination when writing different and new stories.

Bailee: Yes because I can write much better because I know to put myself in the person's shows. (PostPSS).

Of the 25 students who answered this question at Wentworth Public School, four did not feel that drama had helped with their English and literacy. Seth responded: "No because it hasn't" and Dane commented: "No because English and literacy are completely different to *School Drama*" (PostPSS). In contrast, 21 students responded that they did feel that *School Drama* had helped improve their English and literacy. Some of the responses and reasons for this agreement were:

Ainsley: Yes it has because it makes me read slow and go through the words right and before I used to speed read it.

Antonio: Yes because it teaches me to infer and things.

Claire: Yes because it has made me more confident.

Conner: Yes because it gave me more creativity.

Cynthia: I think it helped me a lot with English because drama helps you dig deeper into your perspective.

Jasper: Yes because it changes the way you think about the book when you get into the character's shoes.

Melanie: Yes it has because we can express ourselves.

Renee: Yes, I have learned so much and I can't wait to do more of it. It made me realise there is much more to a text or picture book.

Taryn: Yes because reading the book that we have studied makes it easier to understand by acting out and making our literacy stronger! (PostPSS).

A large majority of students thus reflected that drama had helped them in developing their English and literary skills; however, a small group of students across the three cases studies did not agree.

A second question focused on inference rather than English and literacy more generally (as in Question 41). Question 42 was a post-program open-ended question asking students: "Do you feel doing *School Drama* has helped you infer and fill in the gaps in the story? Why/why not?" Students at

Waratah Grammar School had mixed responses. Of the 22 students who responded to this question, three disagreed (Roger, Neil and JP) remarking that: “No because the story is predictable” (Roger) or, “No because I wanted to read the whole story” (Neil) and, “I do not think it helped at all and I think it just became annoying that we were stopping and starting the book” (JP; PostPSS). Neil and JP’s comments reflect a strong dislike for the episodic form of the drama-based workshops.

Several students commented on ‘filling in the gaps’ and meaning making:

Morgan: Yes, I feel *School Drama* has helped in my learning to fill the gaps that I don’t know.

Grace: Yes, it is because when you are reading a book all at once you don’t get the right meaning of the story. (PostPSS).

Some students made links to imagination and creativity:

Mackenzie: Imaginative guess about what comes next in stories.

Levi: Yes because it makes my creative side more creative I guess and I can come up with what might happen next.

Kia: Yes it has because it gets you to think and use your imagination.

Josh: Yes because you do not physically write things down, you imagine and act it out.

Chase: Working in the group I am able to use my imagination much easier and figure out what’s going on. (PostPSS).

And others discussed prediction:

Genevieve: I think it has because we use the clues in the book to shape our ideas of what happened next in the story. (PostPSS).

Charlotte discussed perspective taking in her response:

Charlotte: I think it helps us see the perspectives in the story and see it in a new angle. I also enjoyed how instead of just reading the book in two minutes flat we carried it over the weeks which made us in a way more and more interested in the story. (PostPSS).

Finally, Moses declared:

Moses: Yes because it expands your mind. (PostPSS).

Within Waratah Grammar School, there was also a mix of responses, even from those who made positive reflections observing that they did have a positive shift in their ability to infer through *School Drama*. It demonstrates that all students learn differently, and that one approach isn't necessarily going to have the same impact on all students.

Gungahlin Public School students reflected similar responses to Waratah Grammar School in Question 42. One student (Jarrod) disagreed responding: “No because it is drama” (PostPSS). Three students (Jose, Kirra and Amber) were unsure and the remaining 17 students who responded to this question agreed through a range of responses.

Emotional connection to character and embodying the role were key themes in response to this question:

Ai: Yes because you will be acting out and on the way you can do what your character is going to do.

Annabelle: Yes, it definitely has, knowing how a character feels, what they say, what they used to do in the gaps of the book really helps you understand what they're going through.

Evelyn: I think when you act and go through different parts of the story again. You fill gaps in with your imagination, because you know the characters' personalities and things about them and you can picture what they would do in different parts and gaps of the stories. If there is [sic] missing parts you imagine what they would do in different circumstances.

Li-Na: Yes, because you have the same feeling with the book character when you are learn[ing] drama. (PostPSS).

Others made links to imagination and creativity:

Hope: Yes because my imagination went wild.

Zia: YESSSSS. Because it's the answer to creativity. (PostPSS).

And other students made connections to deeper understanding.

Savannah: Definitely because we understand the story more than a normal reader would understand.

Rea: Yes, because you get to take in what's going on and reflect. (PostPSS).

An analysis of the different student responses from Gungahlin Public School in comparison to Waratah Grammar School suggests that the context of the books explored may have contributed to the varied emphases that emerged. Gungahlin students engaged in *Home and Away* (Marsden & Ottley, 2008) which explored a Sydney-based family's challenging journey from Australia and then becoming refugees due to war. The emotional nature of this story contrasts with the more distant story from *The City* (Greder, 2010) studied at Waratah Grammar School.

Wentworth Public School students again indicated a range of responses. All 25 students responded to this question about inference. Twenty students agreed with the statement. One student commented that without drama, his class wouldn't have discovered one of the characters that they created during a hot-seating session, 'Bill Fill'.

Adam: Yes, because otherwise I wouldn't know about Bill Fill 😊.

Other comments included:

Claire: Yes, it has made me think of it in a different way.

Connor: Yes I've always got stuck but now I flow.

Cynthia's comment links to Greene's (2001) notion of noticing deeply:

Cynthia: I think it has because every time you try and focus on one picture you will always find one little detail that suddenly everyone wants to talk about.

Katherine: Yes because in drama I have learnt to always look for the little details because all of them could become lots of bigger ones which will make the story even better.

Erica: I think it has helped me fill in the gaps because now I am so interested in books and I think that was the gap. (PostPSS).



Two students referred to the Hot-Seating strategy as a particular exercise that supported inferential skills.

Jasper: Yes because when you Hot-Seat you have to fill in gaps.

Rachael: Hot-Seating does. (PostPSS).

Other students commented:

Libby: Yes because I now see it in different ways.

Renee: Yes, it made me realise the purpose of a book and I love all the ambiguity within all the pictures.

Santiago: Reading a story is one thing, but going through what the character feels like is another thing and I think that these drama lessons helped support this fact. (PostPSS).

In contrast, the remaining five students did not agree with the statement and provided short responses that did not provide any reason for their disagreement:

Seth: No because it doesn't.

Lewis: No.

India: No.

Dylan: No.

Dane: No because I can read that book in my own time. (PostPSS).

Question 48 was again a post-program question where students provided a numerical ranking on a Likert scale responding to the statement: "I learn better when we use Drama in the classroom." The colour groupings are: 'strongly disagree' 1 to 3 represented in red; 'agree' being 4 to 7 represented in yellow; and 'strongly agree' being 8 to 10 represented in green.

Figure 56 Waratah Grammar School Question 48

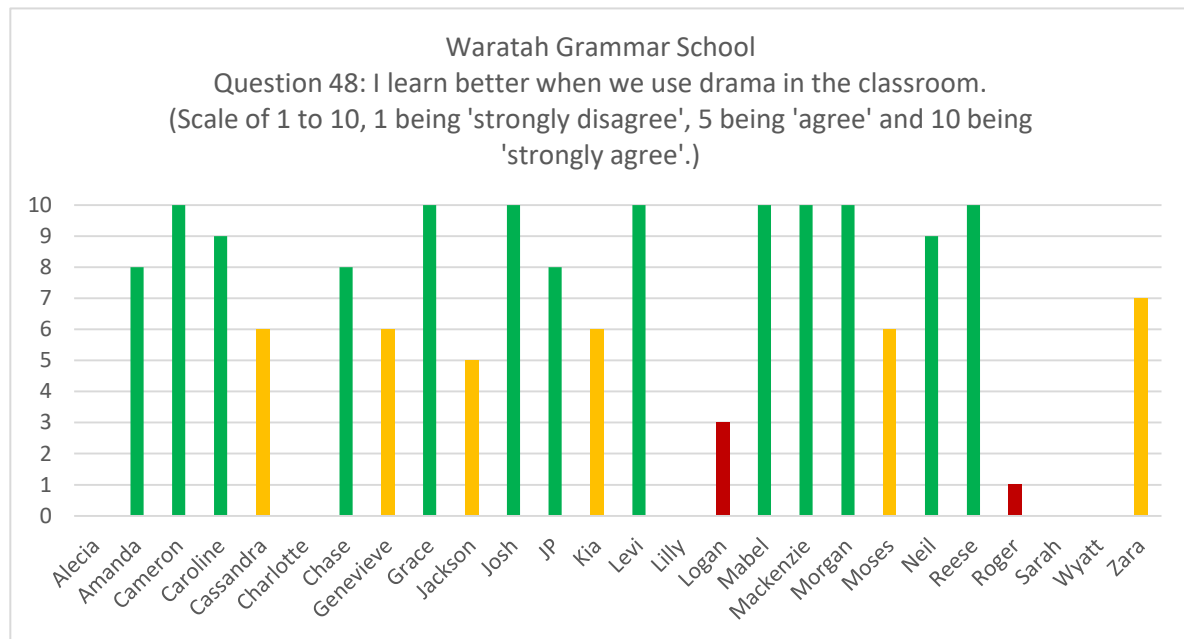


Figure 57 Gungahlin Public School Question 48

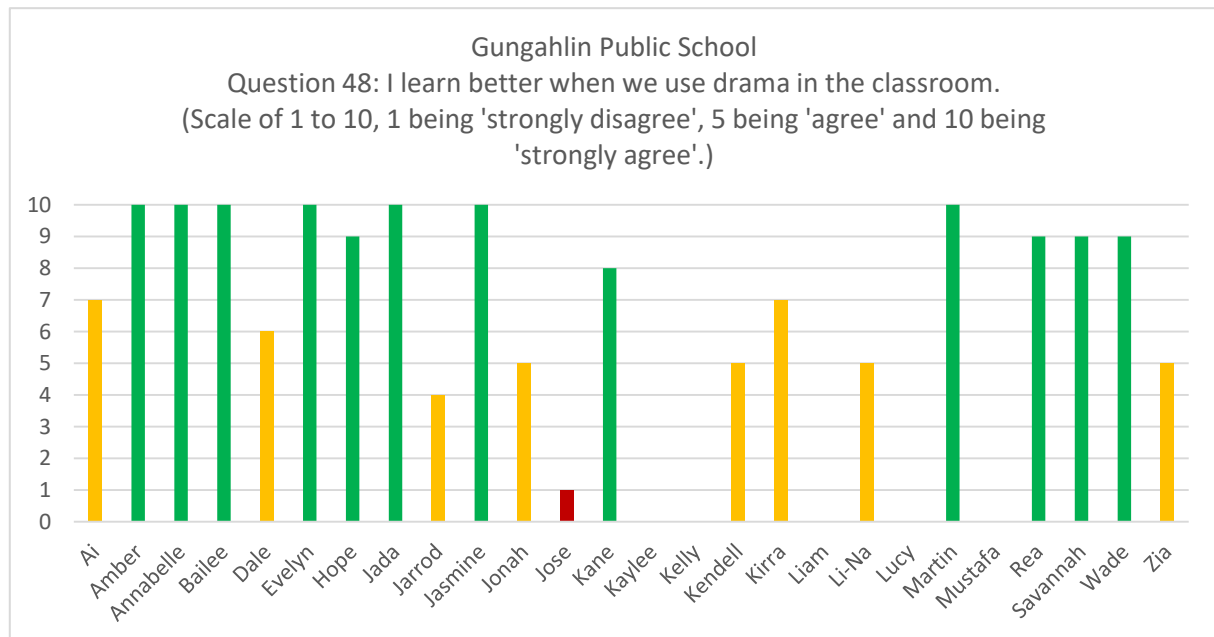


Figure 58 Wentworth Public School Question 48

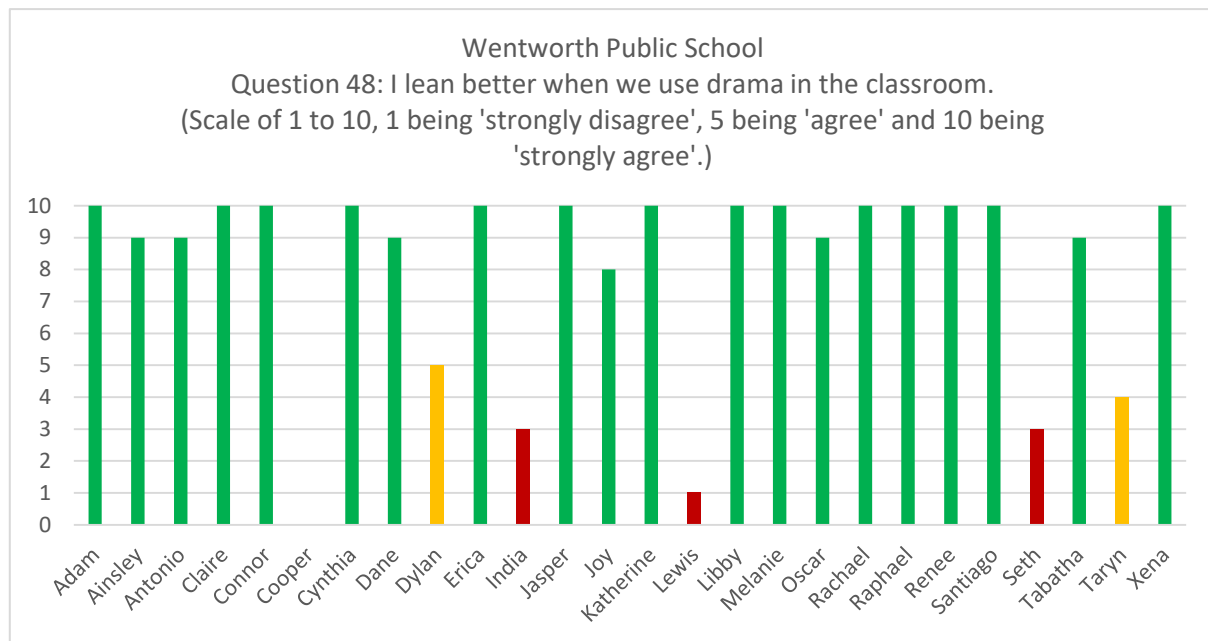


Figure 59 All Case Studies Question 48

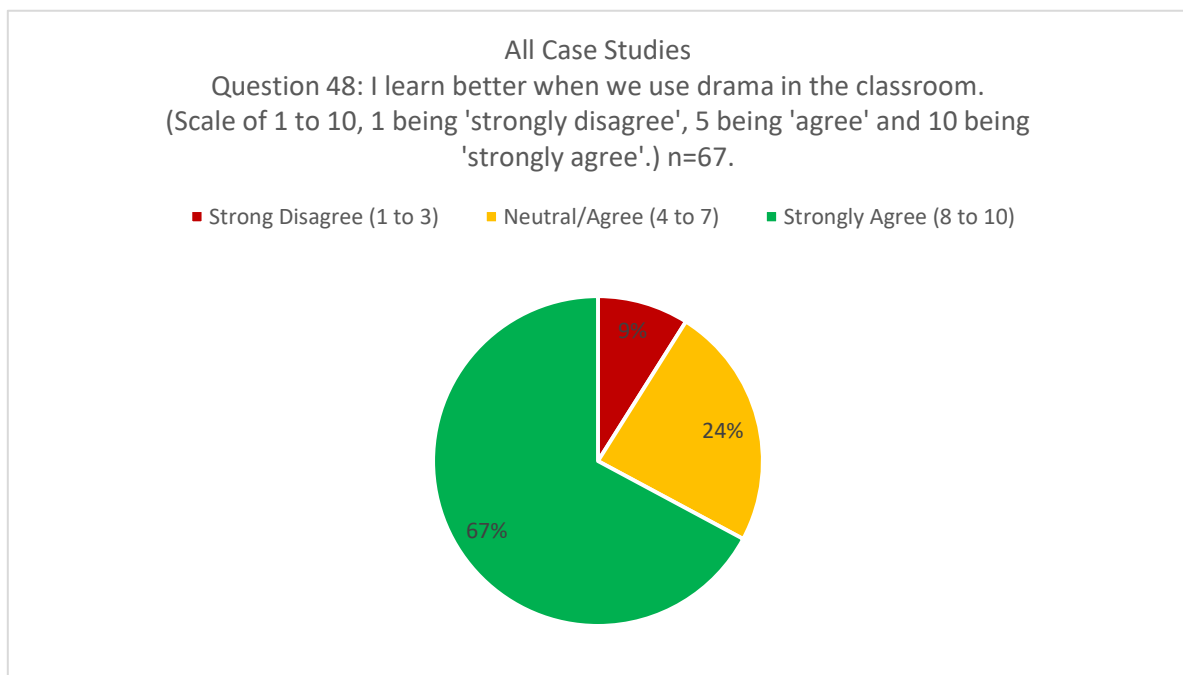


Figure 59 illustrates all data from the three case studies indicating 67% of students (or 45 individuals) strongly agreed that they learnt better when using drama, 24% of students (or 16 individuals) agreed and 9% of students (or 6 individuals) strongly disagreed with the statement. This survey data indicates

that a large majority of case study students (91%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they learned better when drama is used in classroom learning.

Question 51 explored ease of writing by asking students to respond to the statement: “I find it easier to write following drama sessions”. This question related to the ‘blank page syndrome’ and students not feeling like they have ideas when writing. The responses varied considerably across the different schools.

Figure 60 Waratah Grammar School Question 51

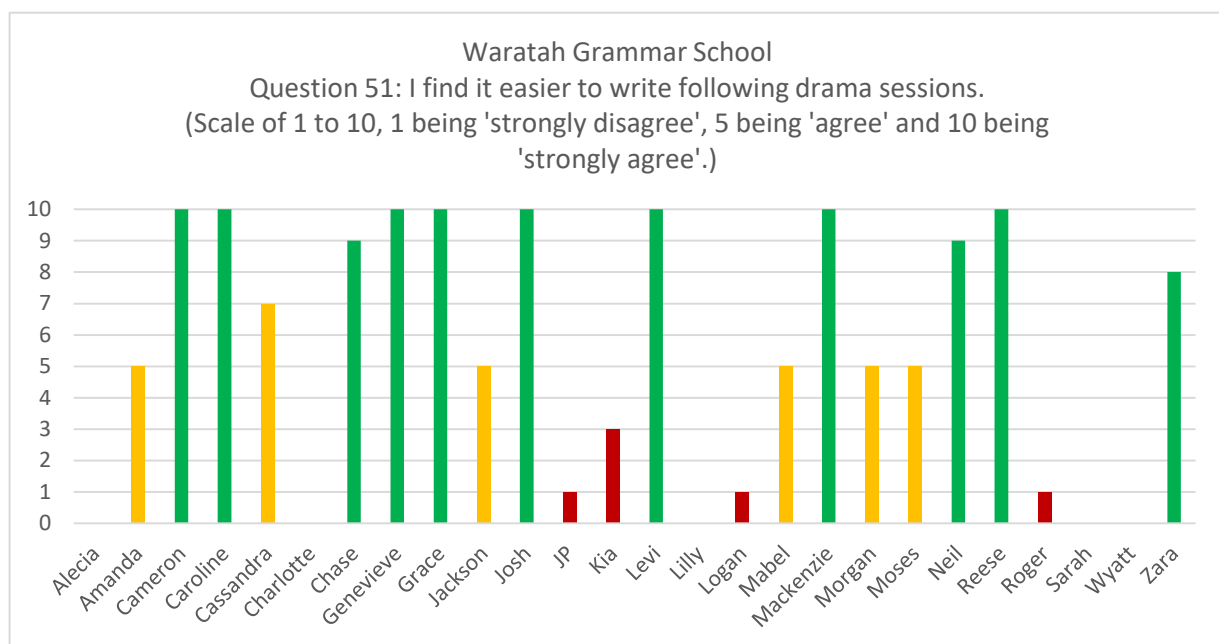


Figure 61 Gungahlin Public School Question 51

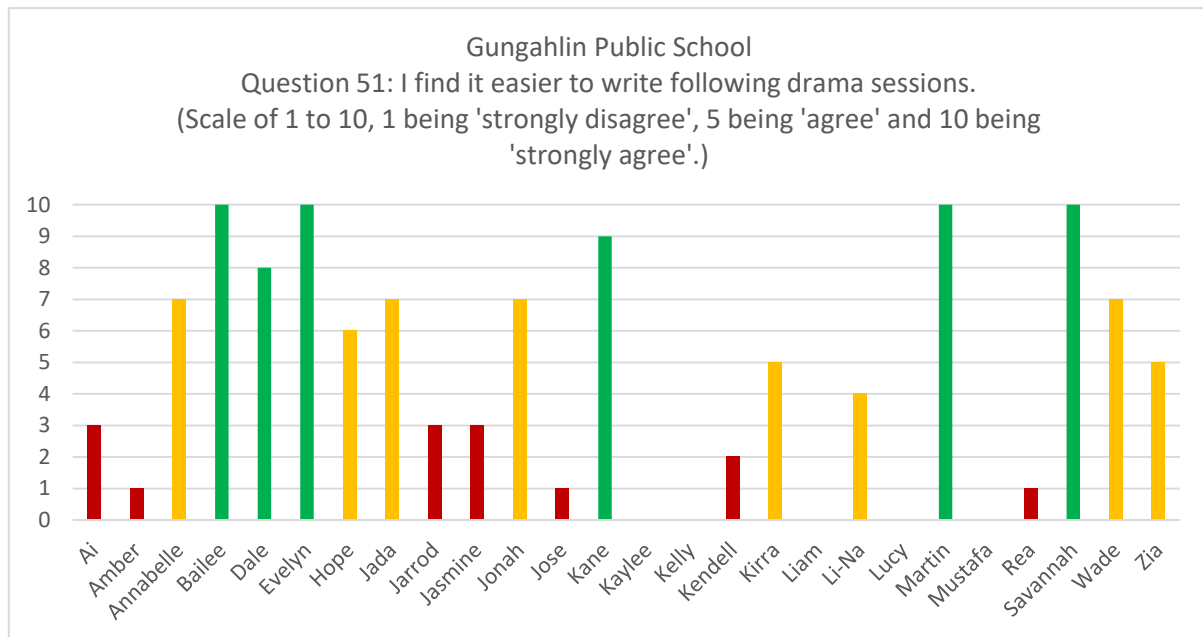


Figure 62 Wentworth Public School Question 51

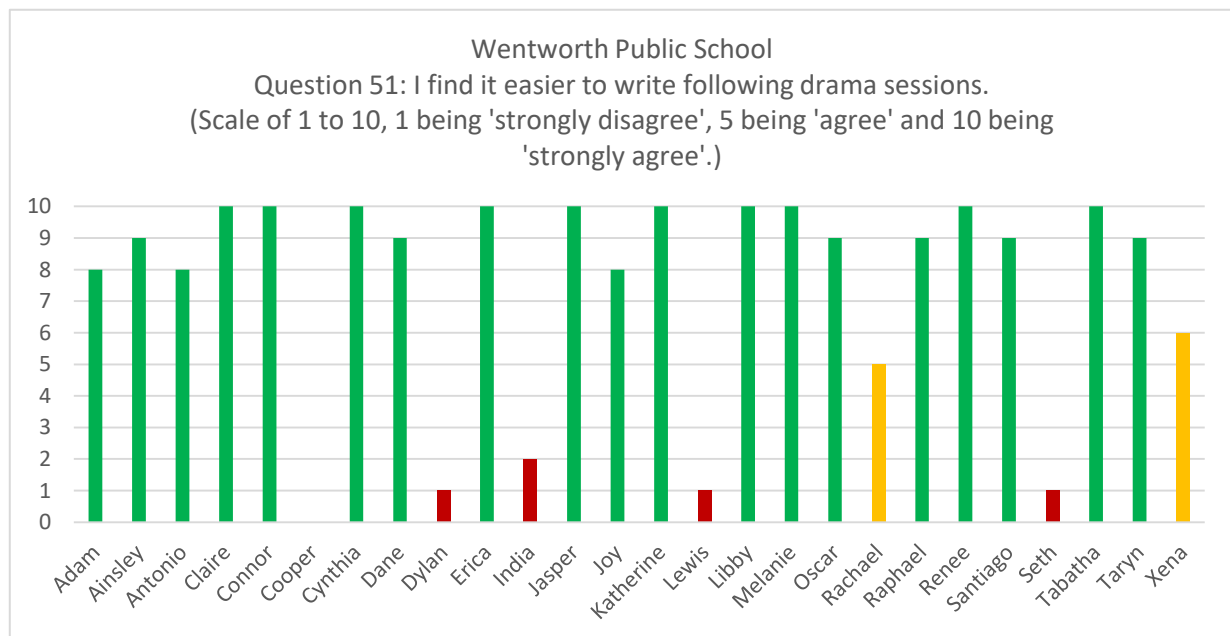


Figure 63 All Case Study Data Question 51

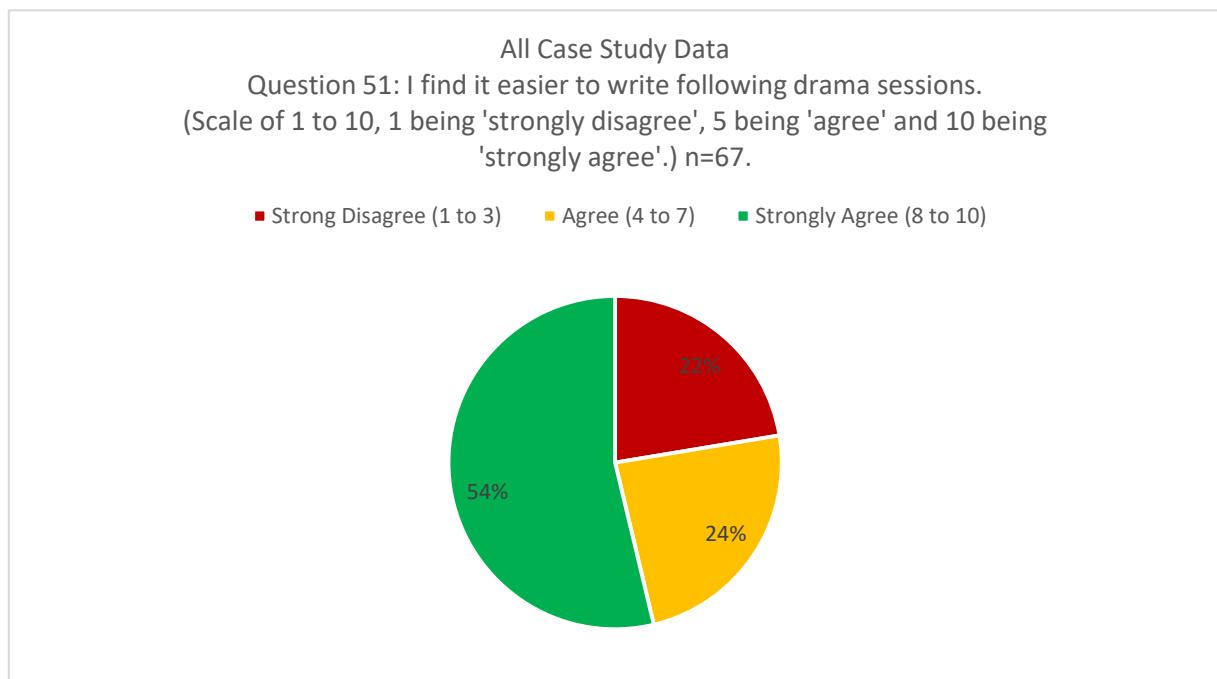


Figure 60, Figure 61, Figure 62 and Figure 63 present the data in response to Question 51. Gungahlin Public students' response to this question was notably different from the other two schools in the case study, as the three areas of response (strongly disagree, agree, strongly agree) are closer together. A third of the class (33%) strongly disagreed, more than a third of the class (38%) agreed, and less than a third of the class (29%) strongly agreed that they found writing easier following drama sessions. This is in stark contrast to Wentworth Public School where just over three quarters of students (76%) strongly agreed, 8% agreed and 16% strongly disagreed with the statement. There was no open-ended survey question to elicit a rationale for these responses. Some comments made by the Gungahlin Public School's teacher, Jacob, provide some insight.

Jacob: When we came to do some creative writing doing a diary entry based on the characters they um, they actually actively asked, a lot of students actively asked if they could continue it the following week, which is really surprising for certain students ... like Kendall is an example, that she usually just wants to sit there and avoid doing the work completely or she'll just do it really quickly and get it over and done with. But with the thing with that, she was actually actively asking if she could continue the creative writing process, so that wasn't expected.

John: And what about the students' engagement in drama compared to normal English lessons or in class generally, have you noticed anything about their engagement?

Jacob: Oh yeah, well that's an easy one. They are just so much more engaged in the drama program than they are if they were just doing a standard sort of writing or reading lesson.

Yeah, there is no comparison. They are far more engaged. It's obvious when they are so excited just for a drama lesson on a Monday, so it's pretty obvious that that's a huge strength. (11.07/09/2017).

Jacob's comment contrasts with the majority of students' response to the above question. While the students reported there hadn't been a shift, the teacher's observations at one point during the intervention suggested marked engagement in the writing process.

### Skills, Dispositions and Capabilities

As previously discussed, the researcher used the interview and focus group transcripts to identify and code themes and patterns within each case study. These themes were then compared with those that were prominent in the student survey data to see if there was consistency across methods of data collection.

### Engagement

Enactment and embodiment leading to engagement was a strong theme that emerged in the focus group data analysis (see each chapter for details) in all three cases. Two questions in the survey also invited responses on engagement from participating students, one focusing on *School Drama* and one focusing more broadly on school. Question 54 was included in the post-program survey only, and asked students to respond to the statement: "I feel more engaged in school after participating in drama" (using a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being strongly disagree, 5 being agree and 10 being strongly agree).

Figure 64 Waratah Grammar School Question 54

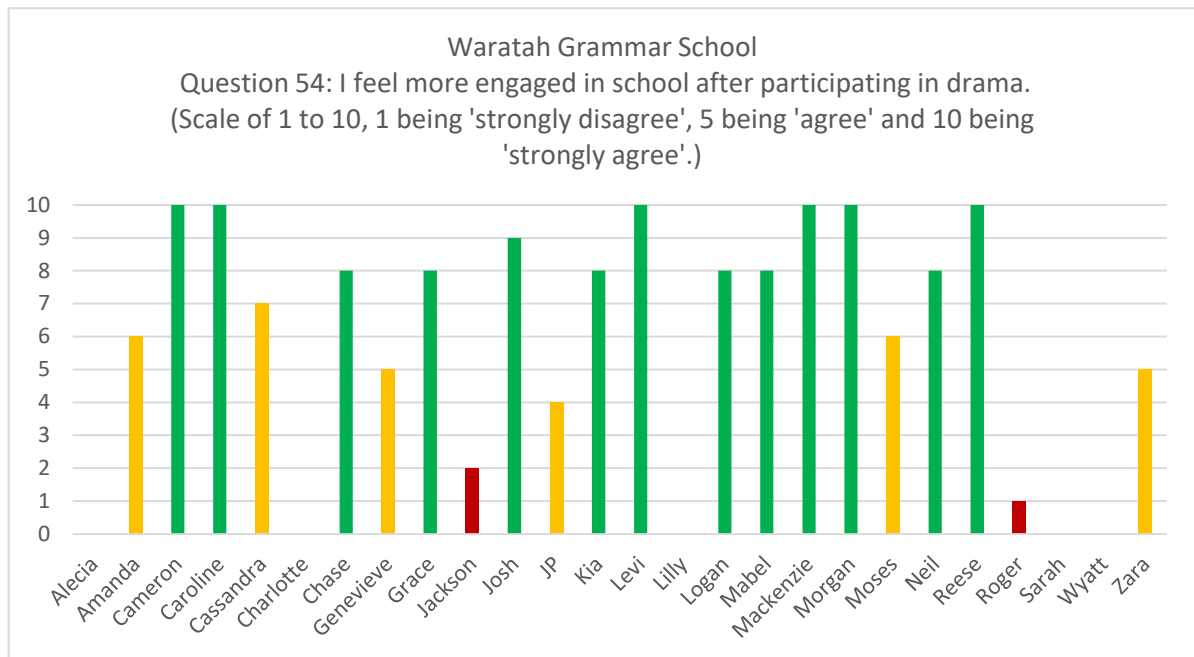


Figure 65 Gungahlin Public School Question 54

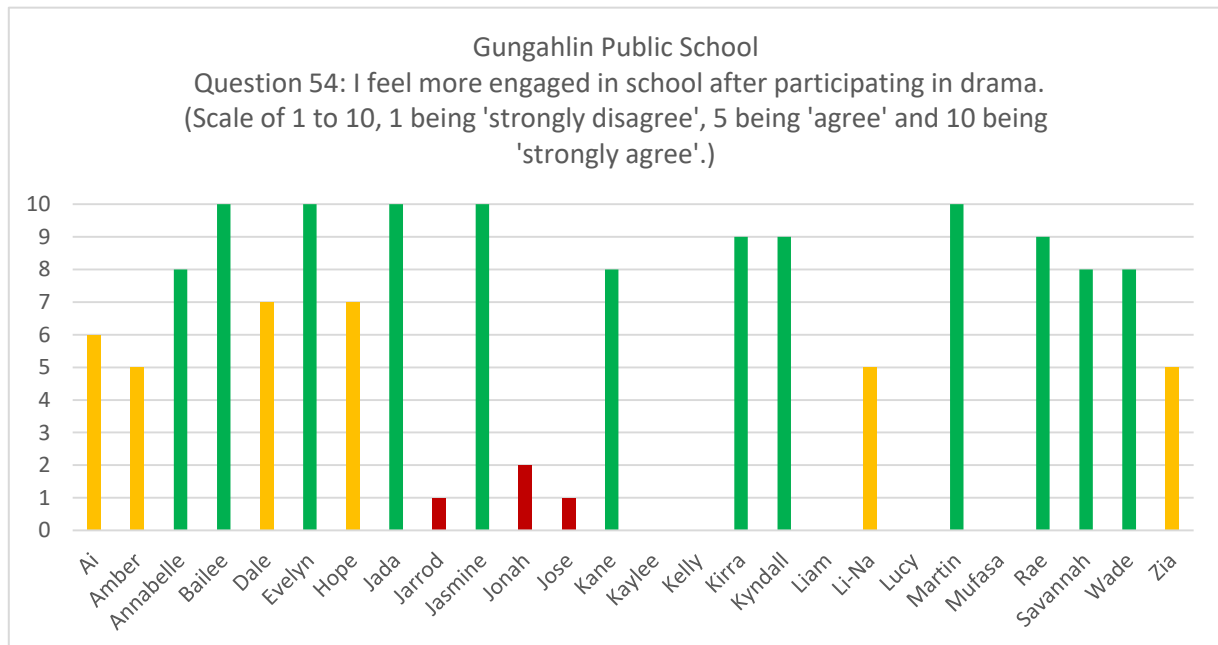




Figure 66 Wentworth Public School Question 54

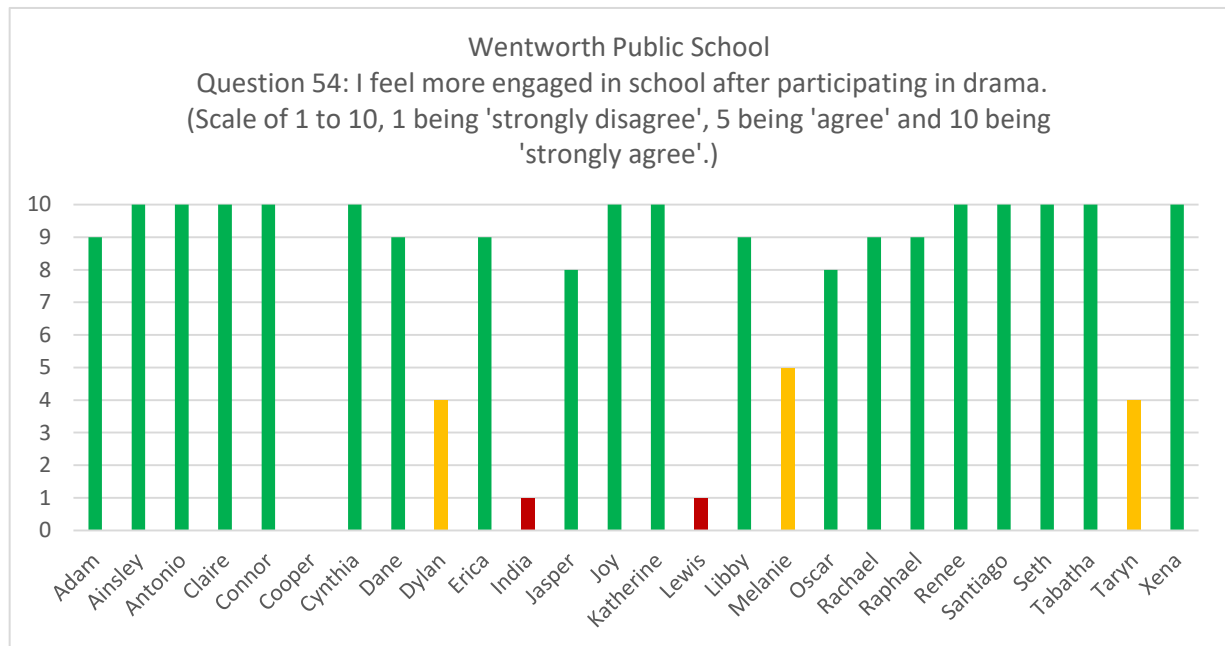
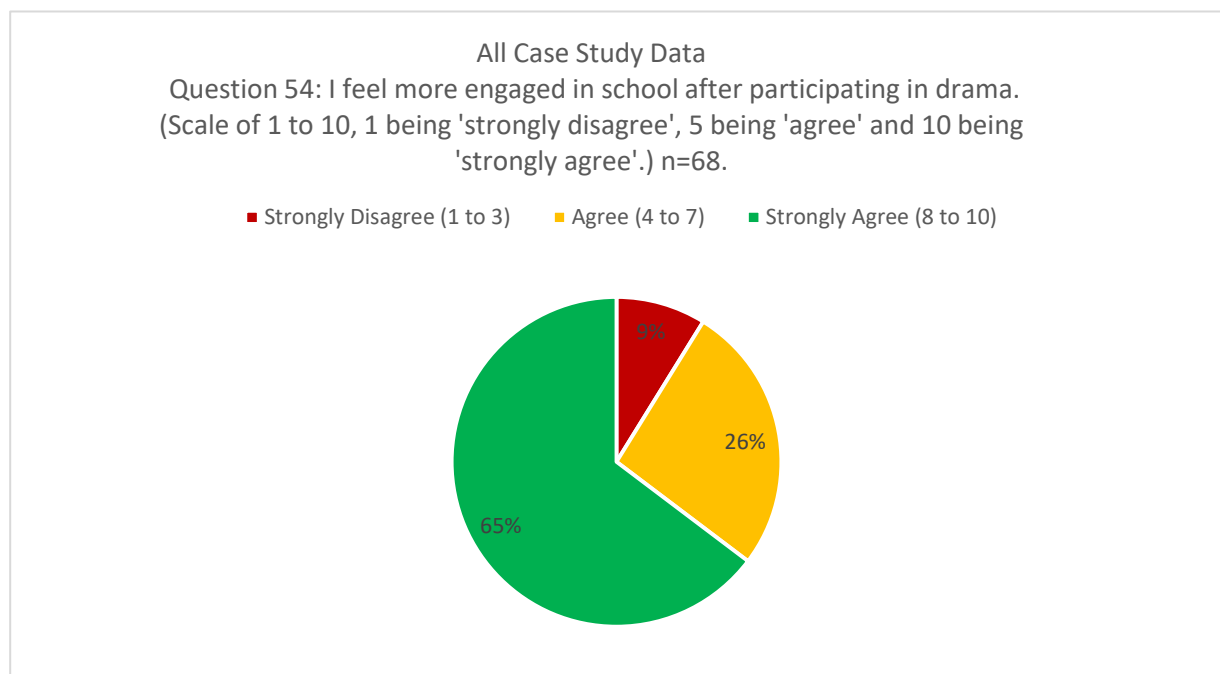


Figure 67 All Case Study Data Question 54



Analysing the student responses to the post-program survey supports the strong claims made by teachers and students in focus groups and interviews: between 57% and 77% of students strongly agreed with the statement “I feel more engaged in school after participating in drama” and between 15% and 38% (average of 26%) placed themselves in the middle of the Likert scale, indicating some agreement with the statement. Between 5% and 14% of students in each case study strongly disagreed, indicating that they did not feel more engaged following drama.

In contrast, Question 14 asked students: “How would you rate your engagement at school?” (Using a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being ‘not engaged’ and 10 being ‘highly engaged’). This question was included in both the pre- and post-program surveys, to see if there had been a shift in engagement at school more broadly than drama. (The Figures representing this data can be found in Chapters 6, 7 and 8)

Students at Waratah Grammar School on average had a pre- score of 7.5 and had an average post-score of 8.0, with an average shift of 0.5, indicating a very small positive shift. Similarly, students at Gungahlin Public School had an average pre-score of 7.2 and an average post-score of 7.4 with an even smaller positive shift of 0.18. Finally, Wentworth Public School students had an average pre-score of 8.7 and an average post-score of 9.2 with an average positive shift of 0.4. Analysing the data from both Question 54 and 14 suggests that while a majority of students indicated they felt more engaged following drama, they did not link this impact to more general school engagement over the duration of the term. My notes suggest that a factor impacting this data could be the timing of the post-program survey being conducted at the end of a term when students are often tired and anticipating a break from school. Future research could explore this area more thoroughly. However, I did ask the three classroom teachers about this in 2019.

Dane: Absolutely! When you do a survey that has any wellbeing connotations attached to it ... they are children, they are going to be basing their survey answers about how they are feeling at that particular moment in time. They may not even think about the whole drama and everything that we did over the seven weeks. And we have difficulty assessing the wellbeing of children in the junior school because of that exact reason. Like one day they may be feeling great and put a 10/10 and literally the next day that could be a 5/10 or a 2/10. Like it changes so quickly. So it just depends on the day that they did it. So you can't take too much ... I don't know how much you can rely on that. (14.30./05/2019).

Jacob reflected:

Jacob: Yeah the timing definitely could [have an impact]. And then again, I remember that the kids really loved drama, so I would think that that would be reflected in the results. Oh I see [he looks at one of the graphs] but like I wouldn't worry about Jose, because every single survey he participated in, school based, he is just one of those kids who just wanted everything to be bad. So I wouldn't worry about that and I know he had got a lot out of the drama program, and his marks went up. So it's ridiculous. He's just like that. Negative. So negative. (13.08/06/2019).

Leanne commented:

Leanne: Yeah I think there is that [that the students are tired and disengaged] at the end of term. I think there definitely is that. But sometimes too, I think they are also a bit green and perhaps not as deep as they could be. So maybe if you started a bit later, say Week Four, that could change it. Even by a week or two. (13.03/06/2019).

The teachers all noted that there is some aspect of the survey data that is untrustworthy; hence crystallisation is important when analysing this data, data points cannot be explored in isolation from each other.

Student engagement was a consistent pattern highlighted across the three case studies and commented on by the three classroom teachers and by a range of students in interviews and focus groups. The reasons for increased engagement cited by students follows.

Comments from Waratah Grammar School included:

Josh: Because ... you don't like have to write a lot of things down ... you can actually talk and move and act so it's more um interactive and interesting. (FG1.31/05/2017).

Kia: Well you are like learning stuff in a fun way. Like you're not just sitting down and working in a work book or something, you are actually getting up and moving. (FG4.21/06/2017).

Grace: It's better because you get to hear other people's opinions and yeah, it's really fun, because you get to hear other people's opinions and you can take on other people's thoughts and yeah. (FG4.21/06/2017).

Chase: I think it's more fun because you can move around to do everything. You don't have to just sit there and look down the entire time. (FG4.21/06/2017).

Students at Wentworth Grammar School strongly linked engagement to enjoyment and being physically involved in the learning. This suggests that the embodied aspect of drama as a pedagogical approach may foster students' engagement in the learning process.

When the teacher at Waratah Grammar School was asked if he had observed any shifts in engagement with his students, Dane commented:

I think yeah, well when I told them you weren't coming yesterday, they were very sad about that. They were like, 'what's going on? Why don't we have drama now' and I was like 'we've got it tomorrow' so they got over it. But obviously you can tell by the way that they are super excited about doing drama but also so engaged in the text, because every time, you know when you tease them and say that 'we'll just read one page' they all really want to know what's happening next and that's evidence that they are connected with the story and connected with the characters....It's a very powerful sort of ... the techniques you use are very powerful for engagement. (I1.31/05/2017).

Dane's comments support the student survey data and student comments during focus groups.

Gungahlin Public School students commented:

Hope: It's like really exciting like ... like, when we stop, it's like an exciting part after, and when we get to act the characters out, you like, you don't know what's going to happen next. (FG3.21/08/2017).

Kelly: Because you get to like be in their shoes and you get to like act what they are like going through and you can make it fun, but it's still sad, but it's a bit fun to act it out. (FG4.28/08/2017).

Amber: Because like it's not just like the same as reading a book and then you're just like 'oh ok' ... you are like hooked on to see the next chapter, or like the next page I guess. And then you get to like act it out in your own way and you get to like choose like how you act it out. (FG4.28/08/2017).

Amber's comment is slightly different to other students' reflections as she links engagement to embodiment, but also to the episodic text model used within the *School Drama* program.

Bailee made a different link to engagement:

Bailee: Well when we are doing like work it's really boring and I just don't try, but when we are doing drama, it's just so fun that I want to try and do well. (FG4.28/08/2017).

This observation isn't found elsewhere in the data; however, it is a finding that is consistent with Martin et al.'s (2013) research where increased motivation and engagement are developed as a result of arts participation in schools.

Liam's reflection is very different and explains that drama has supported his engagement in school.

Liam: Like when I joined this school, I didn't actually want to come like into the room or anything, and now like every day I want to come to school.

John: So because of the drama, you are feeling more confident and want to come to school?

Liam: Yeah.

John: Does anyone else feel like they wouldn't want to miss a day at school because there is drama on that day?

All: Yes.

John: Yeah, all of you. Why is that?

Liam: Because drama is fun. (FG4.28/08/2017).

The idea of 'fun' is a part of engagement as students are enjoying the learning process. Liam's comments link the drama experiences to a shift in general engagement in school. This comment links to other research, (for example, Catterall, 2002, 2009; Fleming et al., 2016; Mansour, 2013; Martin et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2004) indicating shifts in student engagement through arts and drama-based experiences.

Jacob, the teacher at Gungahlin Public School made several comments about student engagement (and some of these are included in Chapter 7). When I asked Jacob how the *School Drama* approach differed from a traditional English or literacy lesson, he commented:

Jacob: Yeah, it just has such a range of activities, such a range of engaging activities that the students just love, that it gives them the chance that they love engaging in every single little part of the book. (I1.07/09/2017).

Jacob made extensive links to the use of a range of drama strategies that engaged students in the learning. The inference here is that students enjoy being active in the learning. It resonates with the students' own comments about embodiment of learning and the joy of 'doing'.

Similar comments were made by students at Wentworth Public School.

Tabatha: Um you've actually made me get into drama, cos now I'm starting drama outside of school. And cos you made it really fun for us. And it, when you make us do it you aren't like 'oh yeah just do this' you sort of twist it and make it more fun for us and then we just want to do more and more of it. Instead of just doing, like for example, um like writing, you'd make us like think of it in our own perspective, not just something that you think, just what we think. (FG2.23/11/2017).

In the whole class debrief during the final workshop, several comments were made by students about engagement:

Joy: You just made everything really fun.

Tabatha: You make the books more engaging.

Ainsley: I feel like compared to all the drama I've done, this has just stepped up a level. Before it was just like normal drama and you've just made it so like enjoyable.

Taryn: And it makes it easier because you act it out. You don't, you don't really just sit there and just read the book, you actually act out and you are like one of the people. (FG3.29/11/2017).

Taryn's comment resonates with the idea consistent in the other two case studies that engagement increases through embodiment. Leanne, the classroom teacher, generally focused on individual students during our interviews, rather than comments about the whole class, in contrast to Dane and Jacob. This made it more challenging to support the argument from the student survey and student focus groups. Leanne did feel that engagement would continue following the drama, as she would continue to use the pedagogical strategies in her classes commenting:

Leanne: So it doesn't stop when you go, and the engagement continues and those 4Cs, not only drama, but reading, writing, art, everything you can use those 4Cs in so I keep the engagement going. You don't leave and it's bye bye, everyone still says 'oh I wish John was here' but we keep going. (12.05/12/2017).

Leanne noticed that the engagement would continue, with her embedding the pedagogical approaches in her own practice.

### Collaboration and the collective zone of proximal development

Collaboration was a key theme in the focus groups at Waratah Grammar School and Gungahlin Public School; however, two different sub-themes emerged. Students at Waratah Grammar School discussed collaboration in reference to learning from others, while students at Gungahlin Public School discussed collaboration with links to developing positive peer relationships. Several survey questions focus on collaboration. Question 39 was an open-ended question in both the pre- and post-program surveys. It asks students: "If you had the option of working by yourself or with a group, what would you choose? And why?" In order to analyse the data, the researcher has clumped the open-ended responses for both the pre- and post-program surveys into 'prefer to work alone', 'not sure or both' and 'prefer to work with a group'.

*Table 13 Analysis of Question 39*

<b>Table 13</b> <b>Analysis of Question 39. "If you had the option of working by yourself or with a group, what would you choose? And why?" (Open-ended)</b>			
	<b>Students who prefer working alone</b>	<b>Students we were unsure or preferred both options</b>	<b>Students who prefer working in a group</b>
<b>Waratah Grammar School Pre-Program</b>	6 (28%)	0	15 (71%)
<b>Waratah Grammar School Post-Program</b>	4 (18%)	1 (4%)	17 (77%)

<b>Gungahlin Public School Pre-Program</b>	7 (31%)	0	15 (68%)
<b>Gungahlin Public School Post-Program</b>	4 (19%)	3 (14%)	14 (66%)
<b>Wentworth Public School Pre-Program</b>	7 (26%)	2 (7%)	17 (65%)
<b>Wentworth Public School Post-Program</b>	2 (8%)	3 (12%)	20 (80%)

Interestingly, collaboration and group work was not a key theme in the focus groups with students at Wentworth Public School, but the survey data suggests that there were some shifts in responses comparing the pre-program to post-program survey data.

In all three cases, similar reasons were provided for the responses. Of the students who preferred to work alone (in the post-program survey) reasons provided included:

Roger: *Myself so I can concentrate.* (PostPSS).

Mackenzie: *By myself because I usually get things done faster on my own.* (PostPSS).

Annabelle: *Myself, don't get me wrong I love socialising and expressing my thoughts but I also don't like arguing and feel like I have more creative freedom.* (PostPSS).

Students who were unsure or indicated they preferred working alone and in groups provided some of the following reasons:

Caroline: *I'm not sure. It depends how I feel that day whether I'm in a fight or I'm having a good day.* (PostPSS).

Evelyn: *Usually it depends on the subject. If you work in groups you might be able to achieve something faster or spread ideas. When you work independently you might be less interrupted and use your ideas and your own work. I would probably choose to be by myself.* (PostPSS).



Rea: Both, because you learn to work cooperatively with others and get an idea of everyone's idea and when you work on your own you learn to work independently and be independent. (PostPSS).

Tabatha: Both, because in groups everyone has a different opinions and you put them altogether and just me because it's all the things I believe and I won't get in an argument with myself. (PostPSS).

Of the students who indicated that they preferred to work in a group, some of the reasons provided included:

Kia: I would work in a group because you can get ideas from the other people and you have fun. (PostPSS).

Grace: I would choose group because you get other people's opinions and choices. (WGS, PostPSS).

Kirra: I would choose a group because in a group, everyone including me gets to learn something new and just not from you. (GPS, PostPSS).

Jarrold: A group because people can help each other. (GPS, PostPSS).

Ainsley: Group, because I like to see their opinion and how they think different to me. (WPS, PostPSS).

Connor: Group because I can hear all different opinions which are always good even better than mine. (WPS, PostPSS).

Erica: I think I would choose a group because when you work by yourself you only have one good answer but when you work in a group, you have lots of different answers and if you put all the different answers together you get the best answer (or idea) and in the end it wins. (WPS, PostPSS).

A common thread through these responses is the idea of learning from peers through group work situations. As Drama is a collaborative medium, many of the workshops involved students working in pairs, groups or as a whole class. The emphasis students placed on learning from their peers resonates with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978), and particularly to its extension or re-conceptualisation by Moll and Whitmore (1993) and later by Ewing (2015) of a Collective Zone of Proximal Development (CZPD). Moll and Whitmore (1993) and Griffin and Gole (1984) and others have suggested some of Vygotsky's work, particularly through English translations, has been narrowly interpreted, "robbing it of some of its potential for enabling us to understand the social genesis of

human cognitive processes and the process of teaching and learning in particular” (Griffin & Cole, 1984, p. 45). Therefore, re-interpreting Vygotsky’s own words in a more expansive way is important. As mentioned previously, he wrote, when defining the ZPD, that this could happen “under adult guidance or in **collaboration** with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86, my emphasis). Hence, a collaborative or collective ZPD may be as plausible and possible as an individual experience. As discussed in Chapter 4 in detail, I also believe that students learn in a CZPD from each other through the *School Drama* experience, but they also learn from the teacher, teaching artist and author and illustrator of the text that they are exploring. Meek’s (1988) work suggests students learn from expert authors and illustrators as they read texts and this informs their own learning. The author and illustrator can be seen as part of the CZPD providing scaffolding to students’ learning.

### Emotion, empathy and connection

Emotion, feeling a sense of connection to a character or situation and empathy are strongly related. As I outlined in Chapter 1, the Super Six Comprehension Strategies (NSWDET, 2010) are an approach to exploring elements of comprehension, drawing on the work of McLaughlin and Allen (2009) and Hoyt (2009). One of the strategies, “Making Connections,” is defined as “learners make personal connections from the text with: something in their own life (text to self), another text (text to text), something occurring in the world (text to world)” (NSWDET, 2010, p. 5). These three forms of connection can be related to emotion, empathy and connection. Through the *School Drama* experience, students make personal connections from the text to their life by drawing parallels between their life and the life of the characters. They can make connections from the text we are exploring in *School Drama* to other texts that they have read before. Students also make connections from the text and drama to the world, particularly as they infer and fill in gaps within the text to make and create meaning.

Another theme that emerged from the student focus group data from both Gungahlin Public School and Wentworth Public School (as mentioned in Chapters 6 and 7) was the link between emotion, empathy and connection to character. This theme was also present in the focus groups from Waratah Grammar School, but to a lesser degree. Several survey questions related to this theme. The first was Question 19 which asked: “When you read a book, how strong is the connection you feel to the character(s)?” This was both a pre- and post-program question. This question goes beyond the drama-based intervention and into students’ perception of connection to character in their own reading.

Figure 68 Waratah Grammar School Question 19

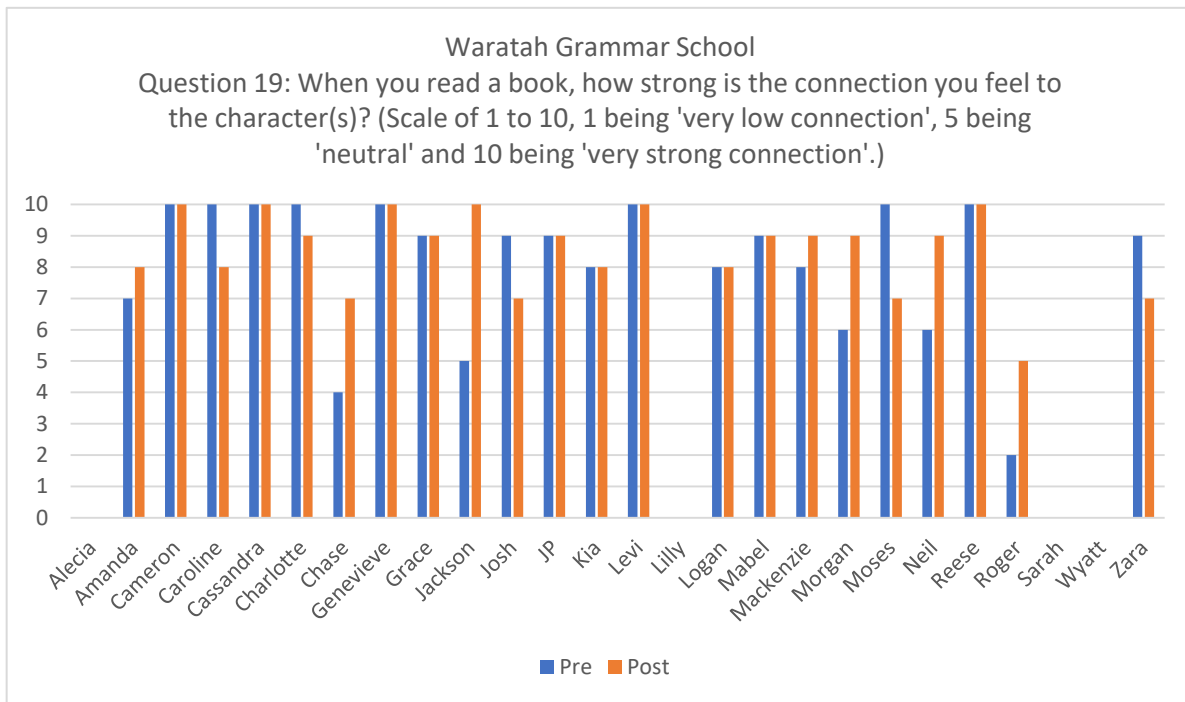


Figure 69 Gungahlin Public School Question 19

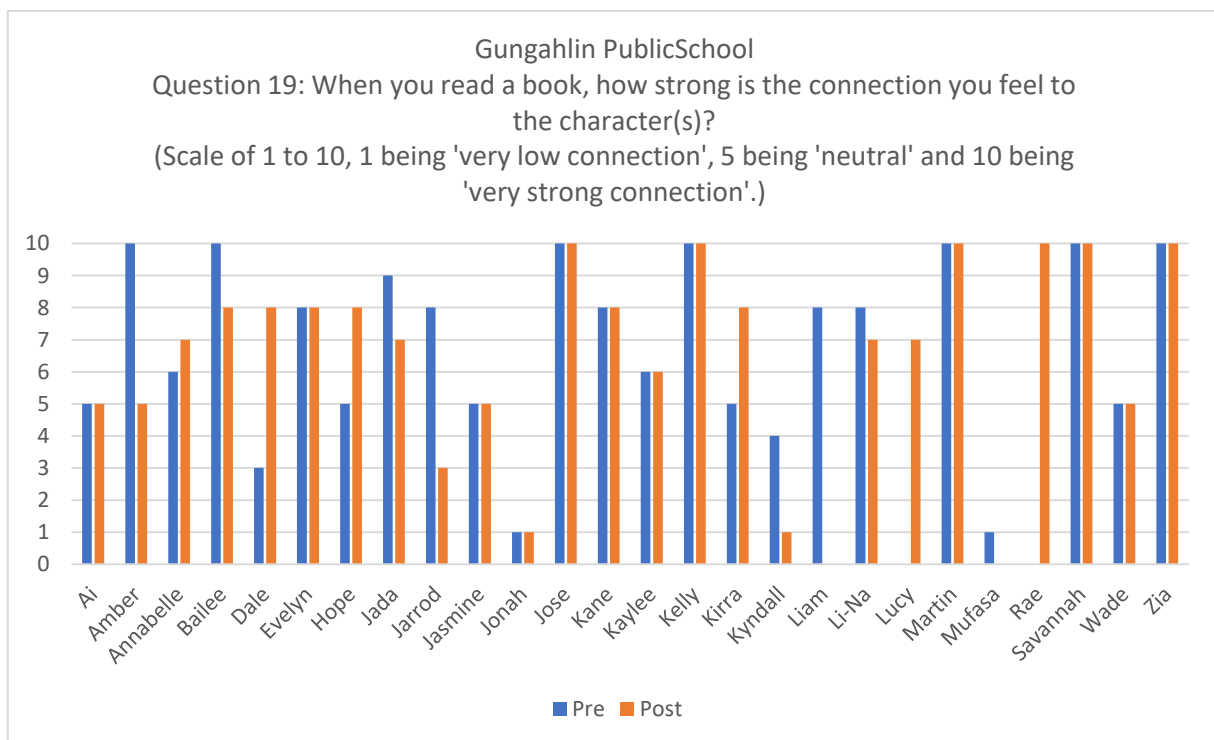
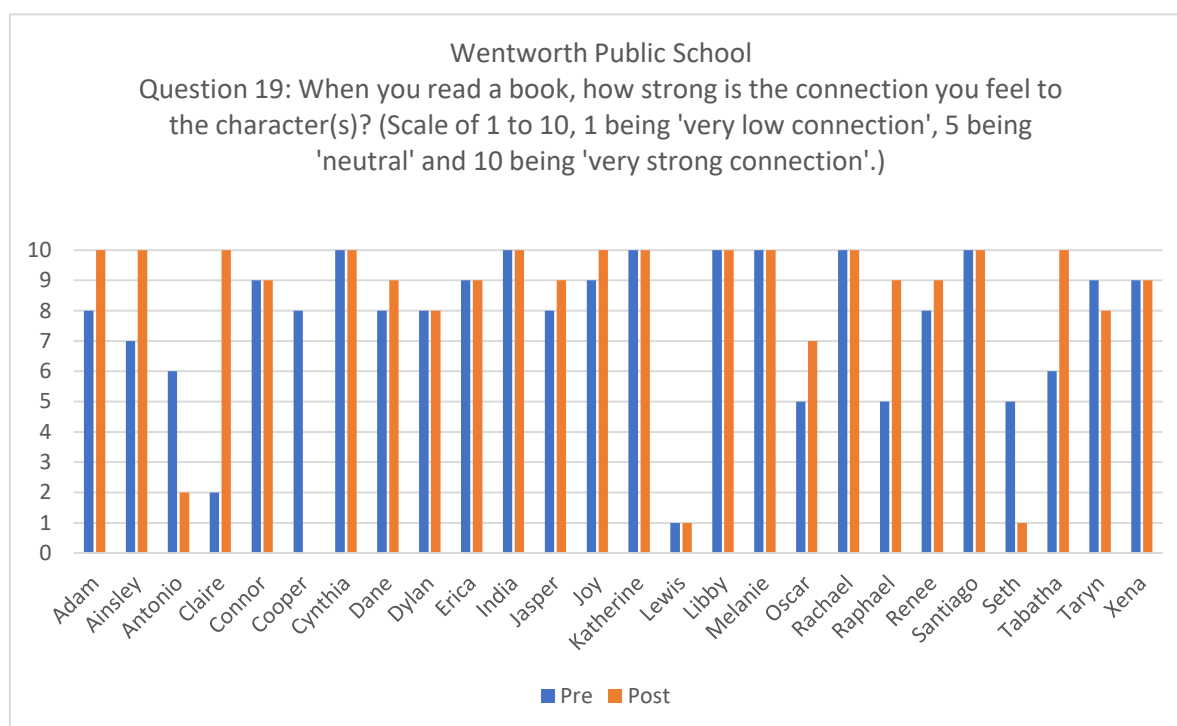


Figure 70 Wentworth Public School Question 19



The above figures (Figure 68, Figure 69 and Figure 70) indicate that the majority of students across the three case studies either stayed the same or had a shift of one point either way when comparing the pre- and post-program data in connection to character when reading. Within each case study, several students significantly shifted their response; however, this shift is often cancelled out by another student making the opposite claim.

Table 14 Cross Case Analysis Question 19

<b>Table 14</b> <b>Cross Case Analysis</b> <b>Question 19. "When you read a book, how strong is the connection you feel to the character(s)?" (Scale of 1 to 10, 1 being 'very low connection', 5 being 'neutral' and 10 being 'very strong connection').</b>		
	<b>Average Pre-Program</b>	<b>Average Post-Program</b>
<b>Waratah Grammar School</b>	8.13	8.54
<b>Gungahlin Public School</b>	6.87	6.95
<b>Wentworth Public School</b>	7.69	8.4

Question 43 was a post-program, open ended question asking students: “Do you think you make stronger connections to the characters that were explored in the *School Drama* program than when you just read a book in class?” For the purposes of analysis, the responses have been broken down into three categories, ‘agree’, ‘disagree’ and ‘unsure’.

Figure 71 Waratah Grammar School Question 43

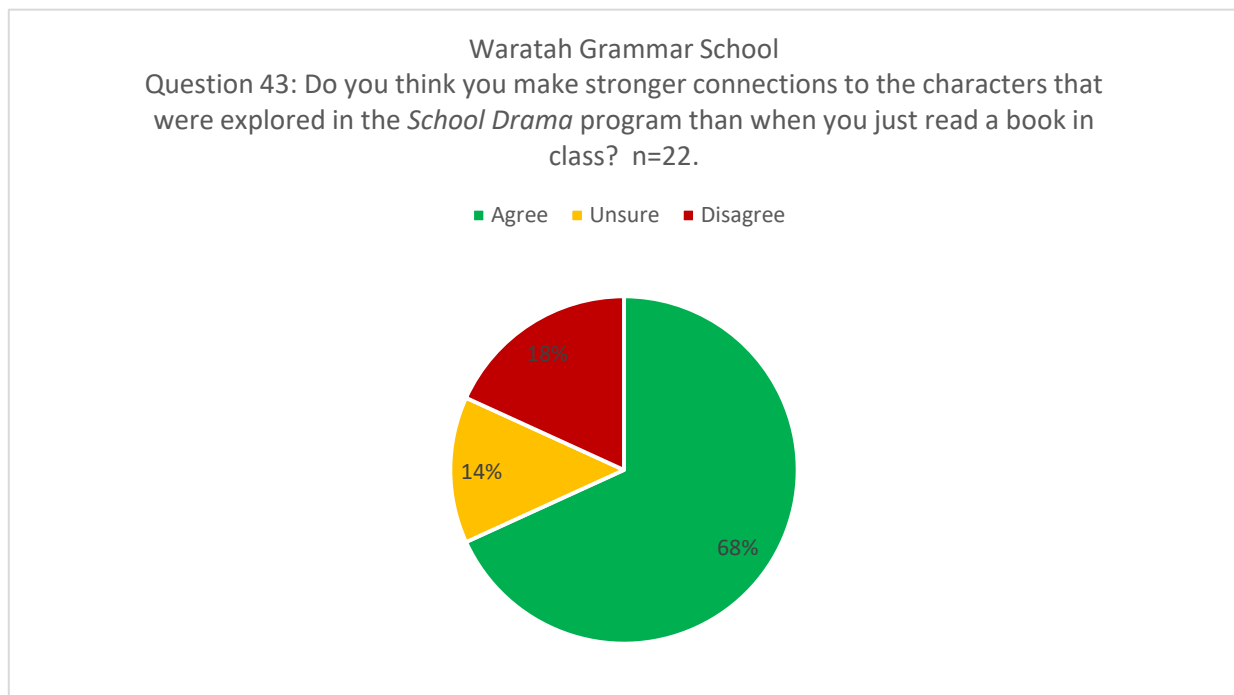


Figure 72 Gungahlin Public School Question 43

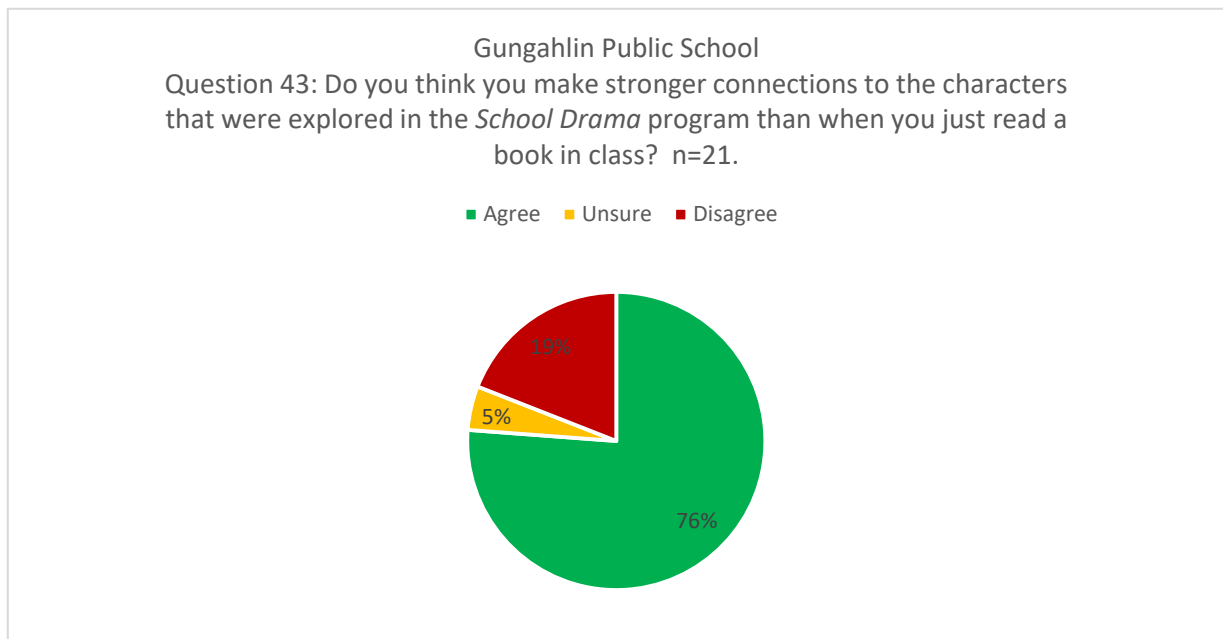


Figure 73 Wentworth Public School Question 43

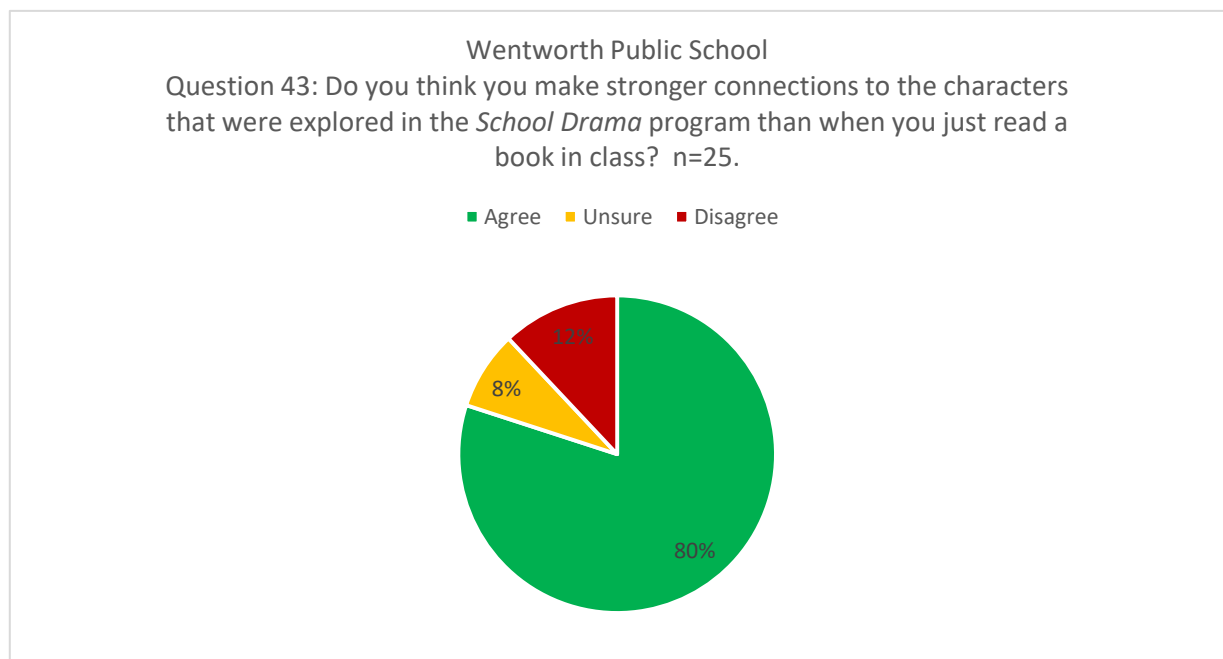
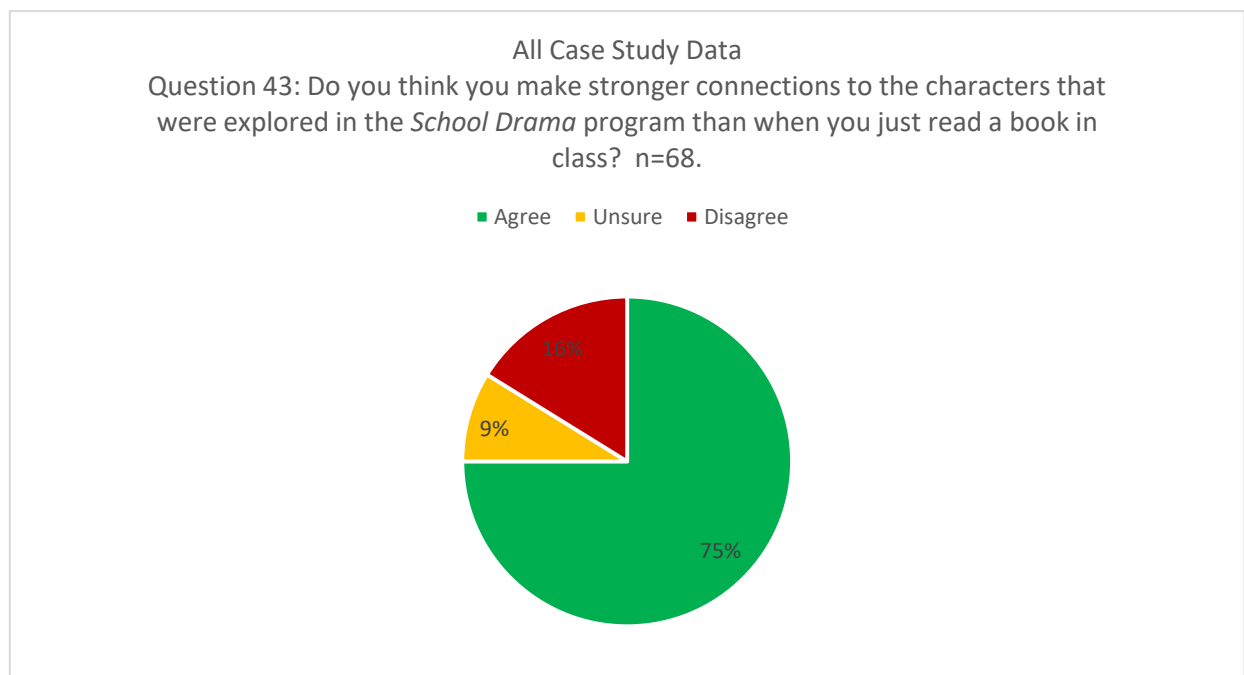


Figure 74 All Case Study Data Question 43



Seventy-five percent of students agreed with the statement, 9% were unsure and 16% disagreed that they had made a stronger connection to the characters explored in *School Drama* when comparing it to reading a book in class. Most of the open-ended responses were single words (like 'yes' or 'no'). However, some students did elaborate on their response, providing some insight into why three quarters of the participants believed that they had indeed developed stronger connections to characters in *School Drama*.

#### Waratah Grammar School

Genevieve: I do because you act out the characters and you feel the connection as opposed to just reading and making assumptions. (PostPSS).

Amanda: Yes because we do lots of different activities to do with the character and that really helps us step into their shoes. (PostPSS).

Caroline: As I said in the last question it helps us see it in a new light. (PostPSS).

#### Gungahlin Public School

Evelyn: I think you have stronger connections with the characters in drama than just reading them in class because when you are in drama you can act out the characters and demonstrate

and imagine what they would do in situations and how. You can be in the characters' shoes. When you are in class you just read the book and don't act out the characters. (PostPSS).

Ai: Yes because you get to know what the character will feel. (PostPSS).

Wentworth Public School

Cynthia: I think it has become a stronger connection with all the books I read now because all you have to do is put yourself into their shoes and then the connections are really strong. (PostPSS).

Erica: I think I have a stronger connection to the characters now because when John brought a picture book in, I just thought it would just be another boring picture book but when he read it we stopped in bits of the book and expressed what we think about it doing freeze frames. (PostPSS).

Jasper: Yes because some of the drama tasks make you go into the characters' shoes. (PostPSS).

Santiago: Of course. It was an amazing journey to go through reading these books. I felt what the character felt and went on their journey too. (PostPSS).

Even though emotion and character connection was not one of the strongest themes in the analysis of the student focus groups at Waratah Grammar School, the responses provided to Question 43 indicated that there may have still been a similar level of connection to character through the drama experience in comparison to the other two sites, Gungahlin Public School and Wentworth Public School. The analysis of data from Question 43 suggests the students reported a stronger connection to the characters explored in the *School Drama* than when they read a book by themselves. This question also links to the false division of academic and non-academic outcomes, as developing an empathetic or emotional connection to a character may provide students with greater levels of comprehension and inferential comprehension about the character, their inner thoughts, motivations and attitudes.

Question 49 was a post-program Likert scale question asking students to provide a numerical response to the statement: "I have changed the way I think about characters as a result of drama." Students provided a response on a 10-point scale, 1 being 'strongly disagree', 5 being 'agree' and 10 being 'strongly agree'.



Figure 75 Waratah Grammar School Question 49

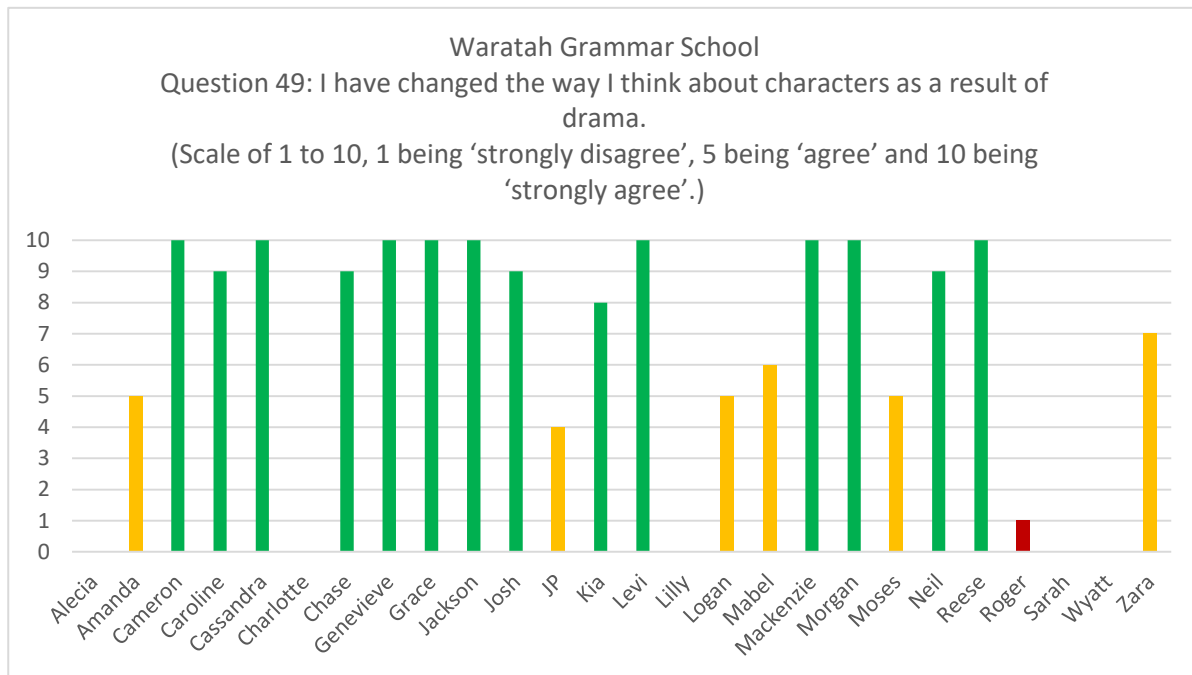


Figure 76 Gungahlin Public School Question 49

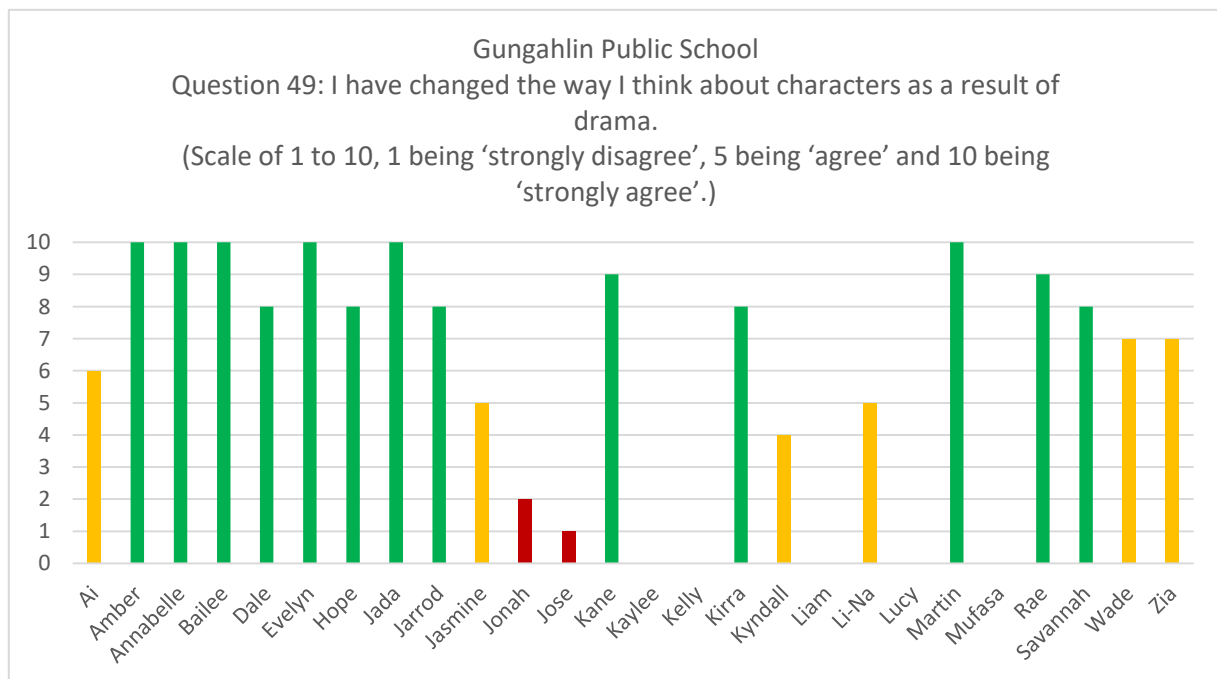


Figure 77 Wentworth Public School Question 49

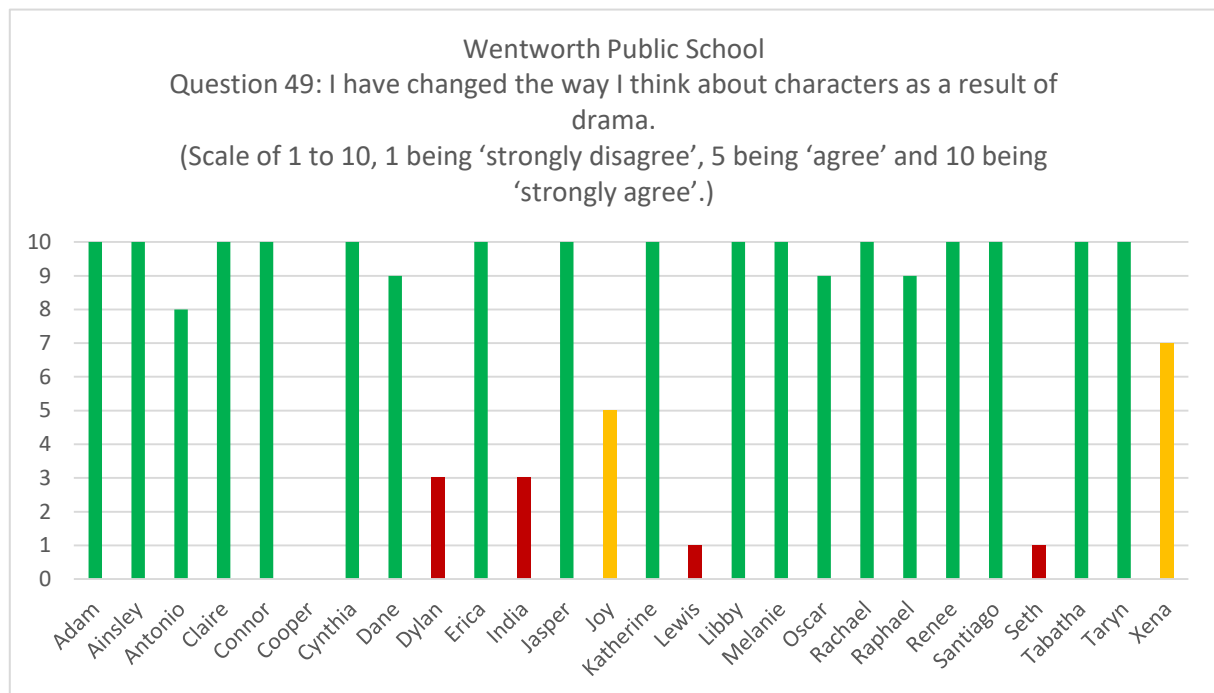
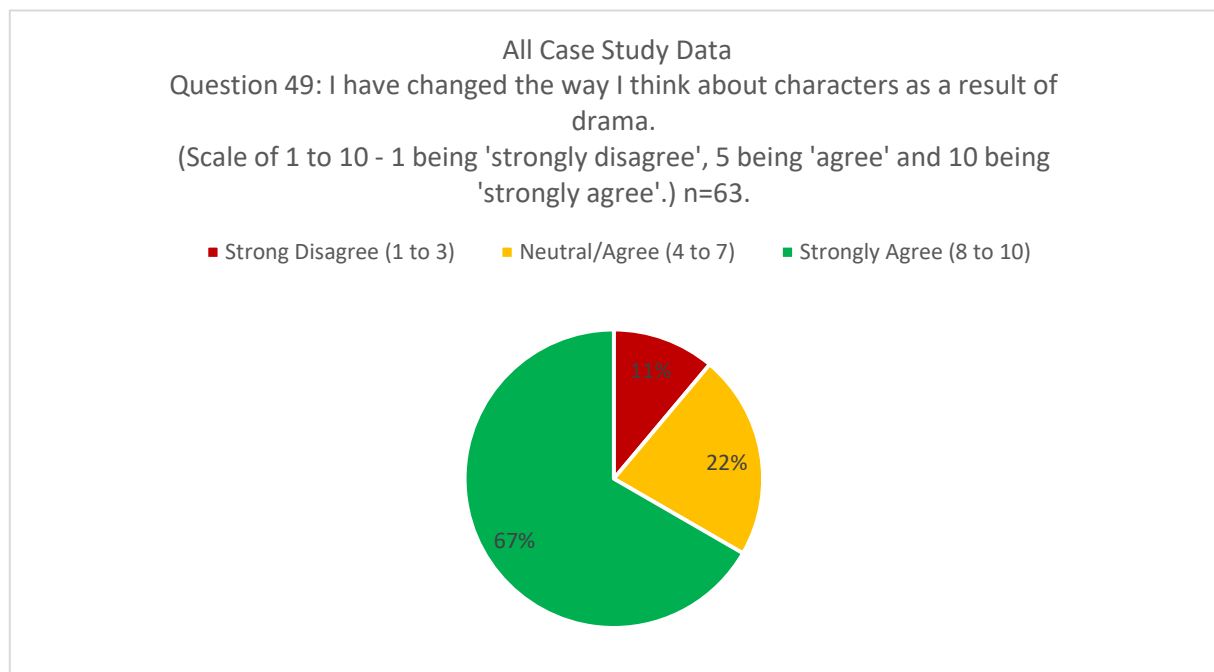


Figure 78 All Case Study Data Question 49



Analysis of the responses to Question 49 represented in the above tables indicated that a large number of students did report a change in their perspective about characters as a result of drama, although, within each class, between 1 and 4 students indicated they strongly disagreed. Their responses thus suggest that drama may have an impact on the way students think about characters through a drama-based intervention.

Linking to O'Mara's (2004) finding that drama can support the development of perspective taking, Question 58 was a post-program Likert scale question asking students to respond to the following statement: "Drama has helped me see the world through different people's eyes/different perspectives."

*Figure 79 Waratah Grammar School Question 58*

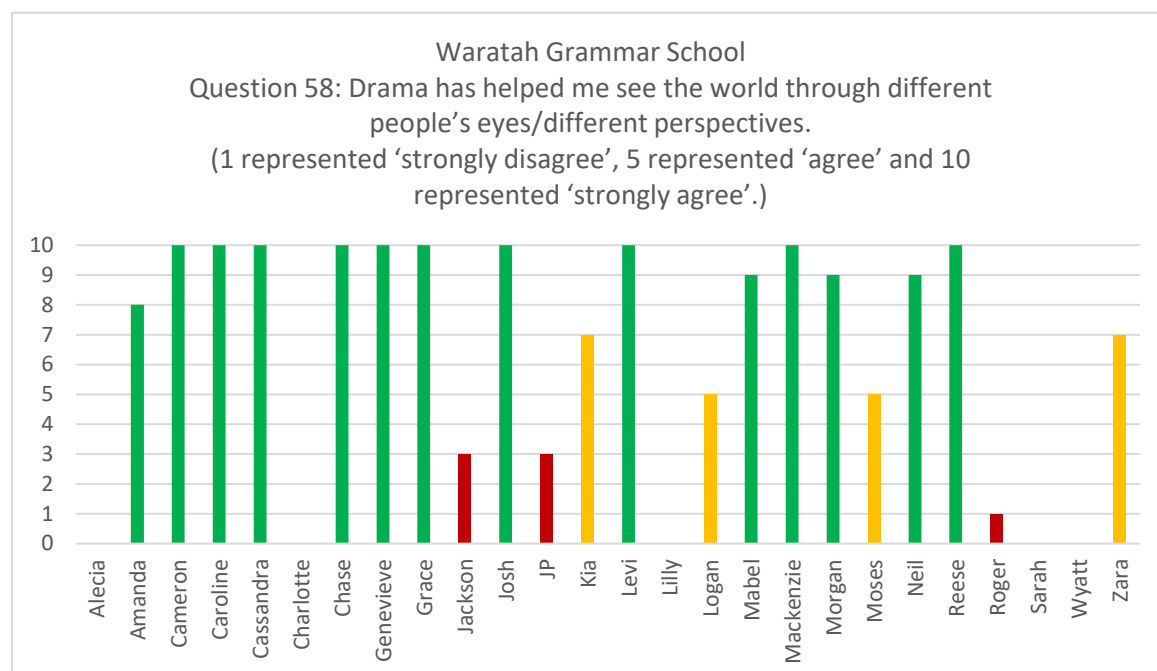


Figure 80 Gungahlin Public School Question 58

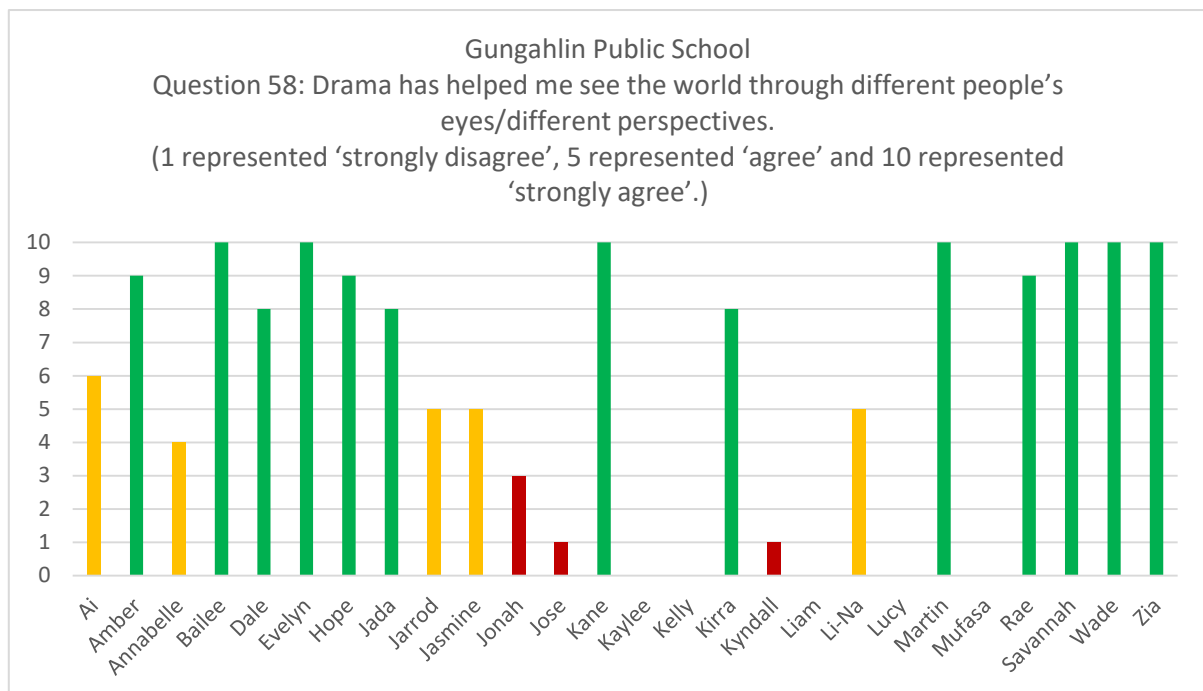


Figure 81 Wentworth Public School Question 58

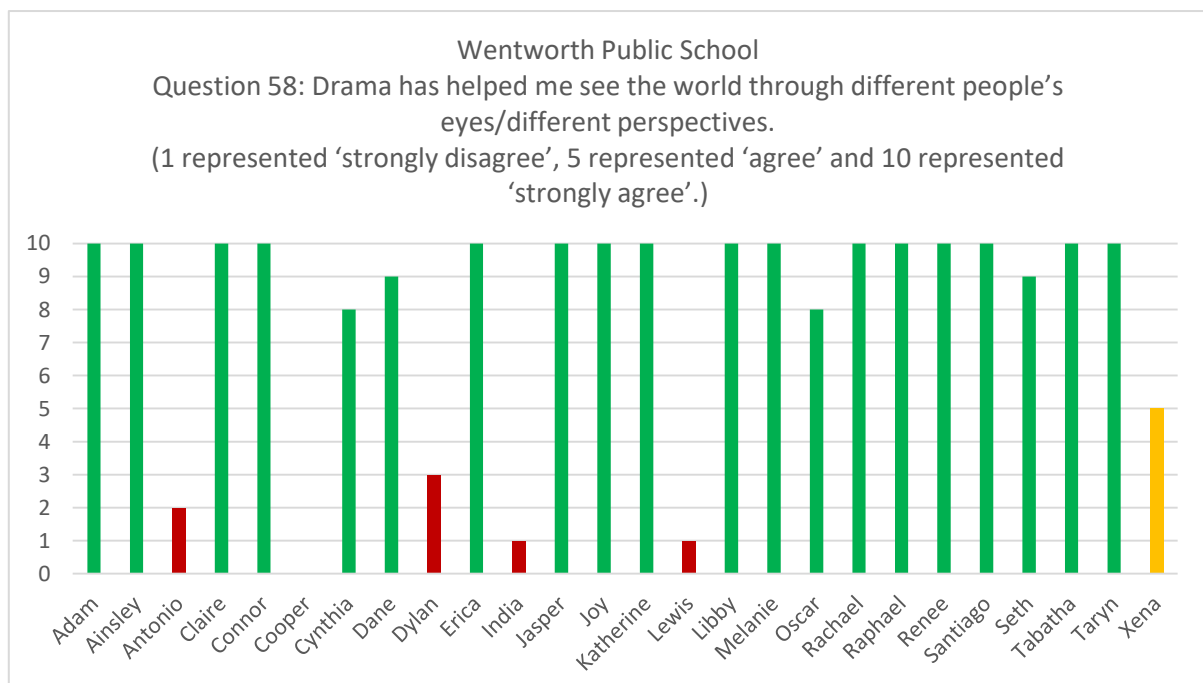
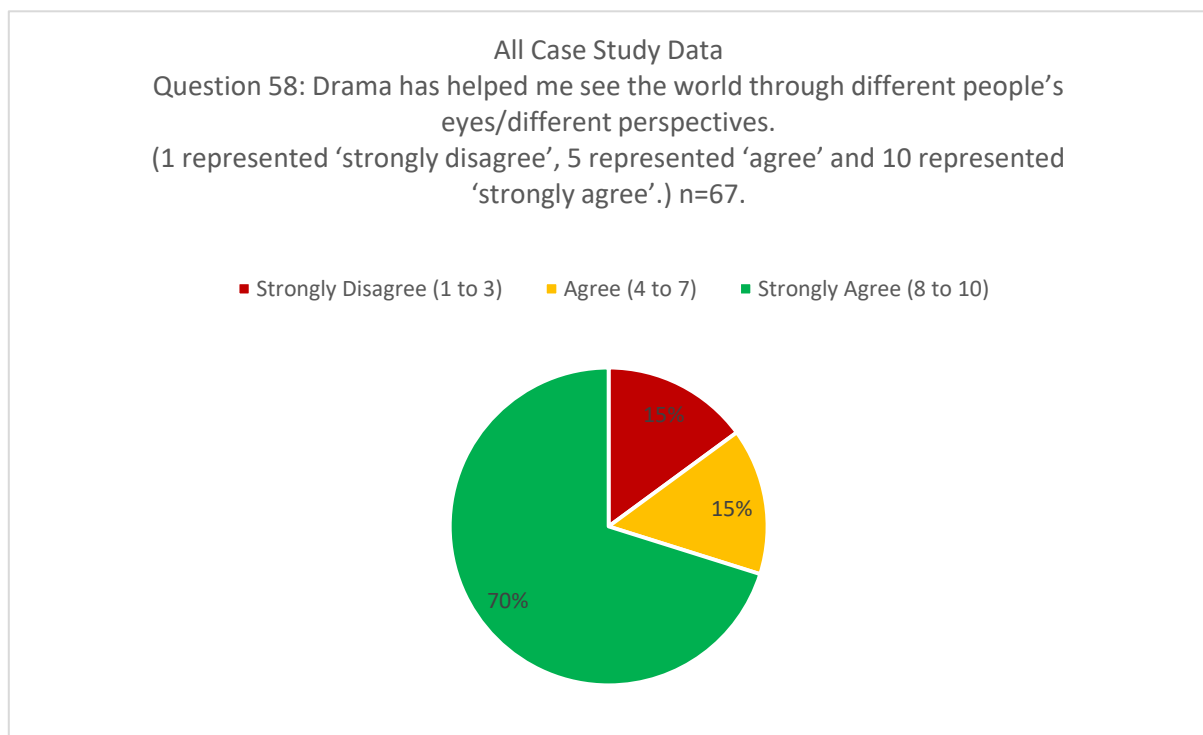


Figure 82 All Case Study Data Question 58



Synthesising the data collected for Question 58 (Figure 79, Figure 80, Figure 81 and Figure 82) suggests that 70% of students (or 47 students) strongly agreed, 15% (or 10 students) agreed and provided a response within the middle range of 4 and 7, and 15% (or 10 students) strongly disagreed providing a response between 1 and 3. While the vast majority of individuals strongly agreed that drama had indeed helped them see the world through different people's eyes or take on different perspectives, others' experiences were different. The student benchmarking tasks did require the students to write in role, infer and comprehend, suggesting that even if students did not note a shift in their perspectives, they were doing this to some degree in their post-program benchmarking tasks. The data from this question largely supports O'Mara's (2004) claims that many students develop perspective taking skills through process-based drama experiences.

The final question relating to empathy, emotion and connection is Question 61. Again, a Likert scale was used and students responded to the statement: "I think I've become a more empathetic and caring person through *School Drama*."

Figure 83 Waratah Grammar School Question 61

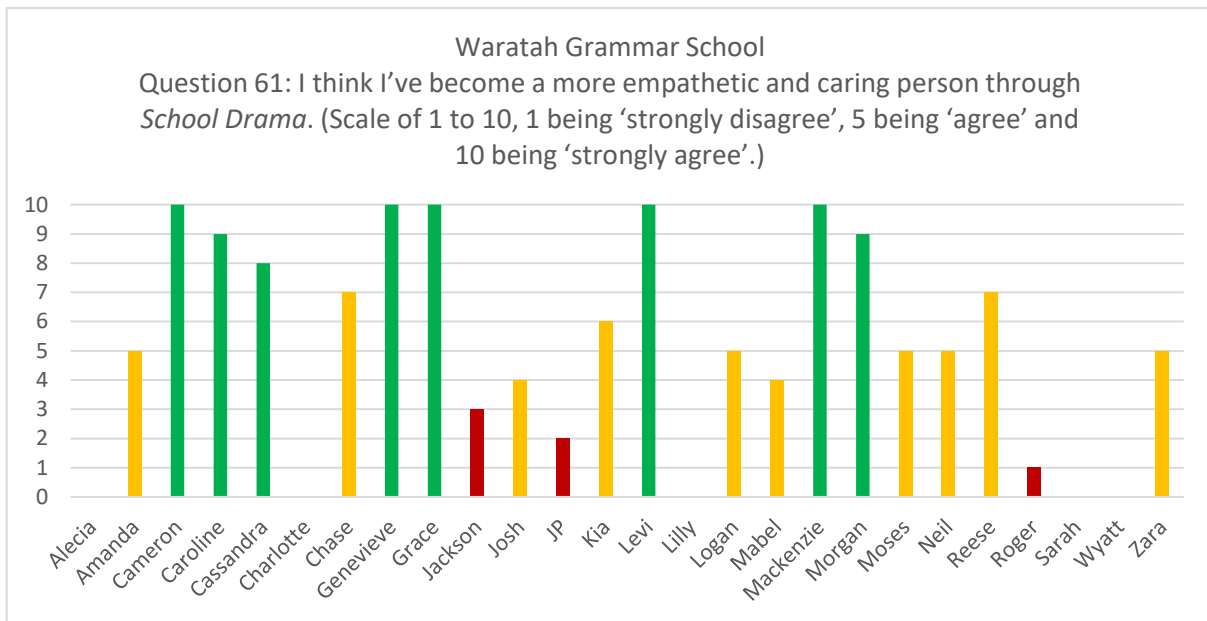


Figure 84 Gungahlin Public School Question 61

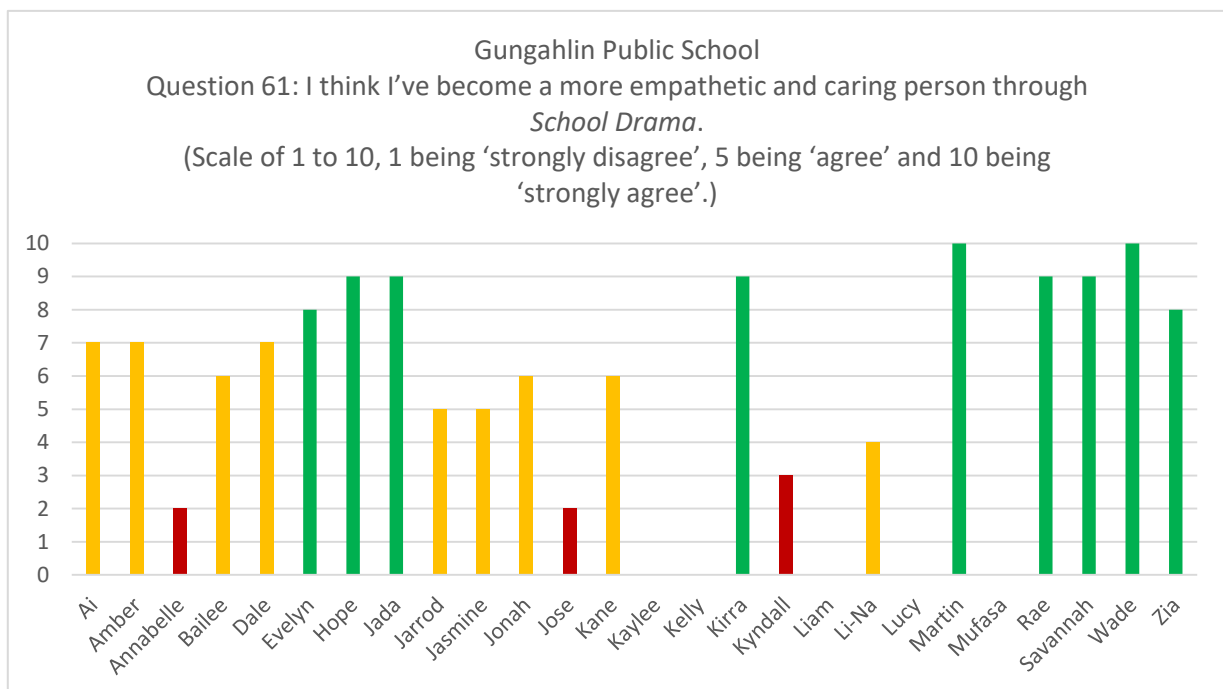


Figure 85 Wentworth Public School Question 61

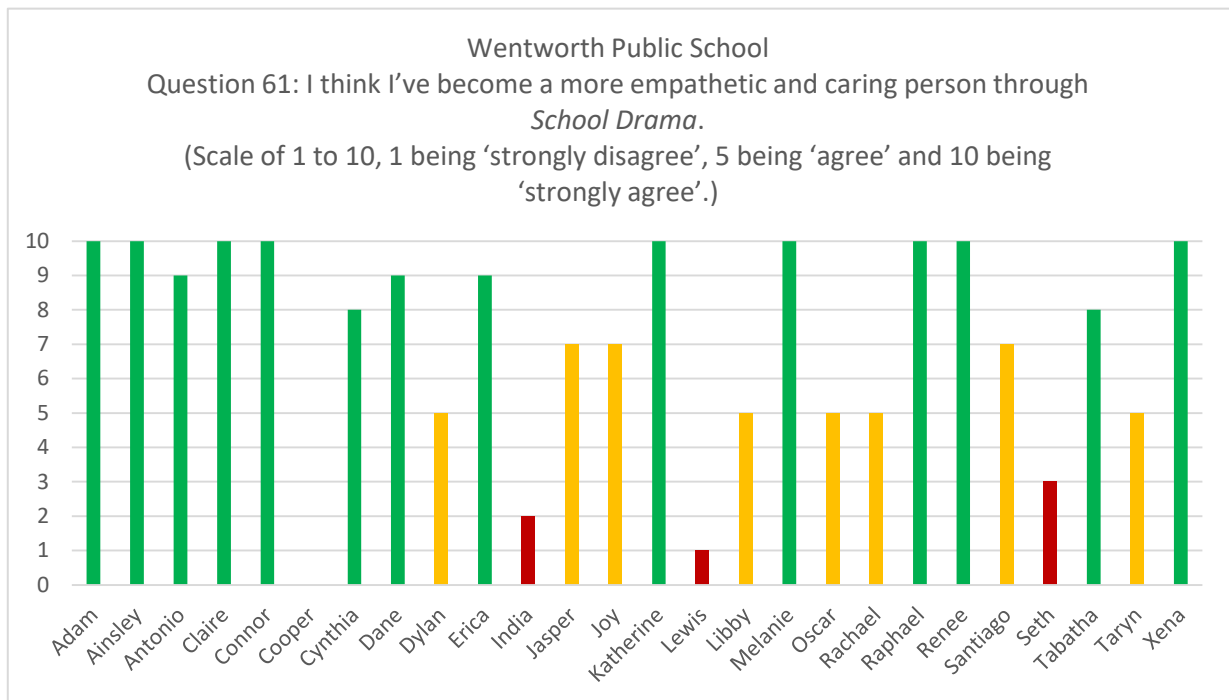
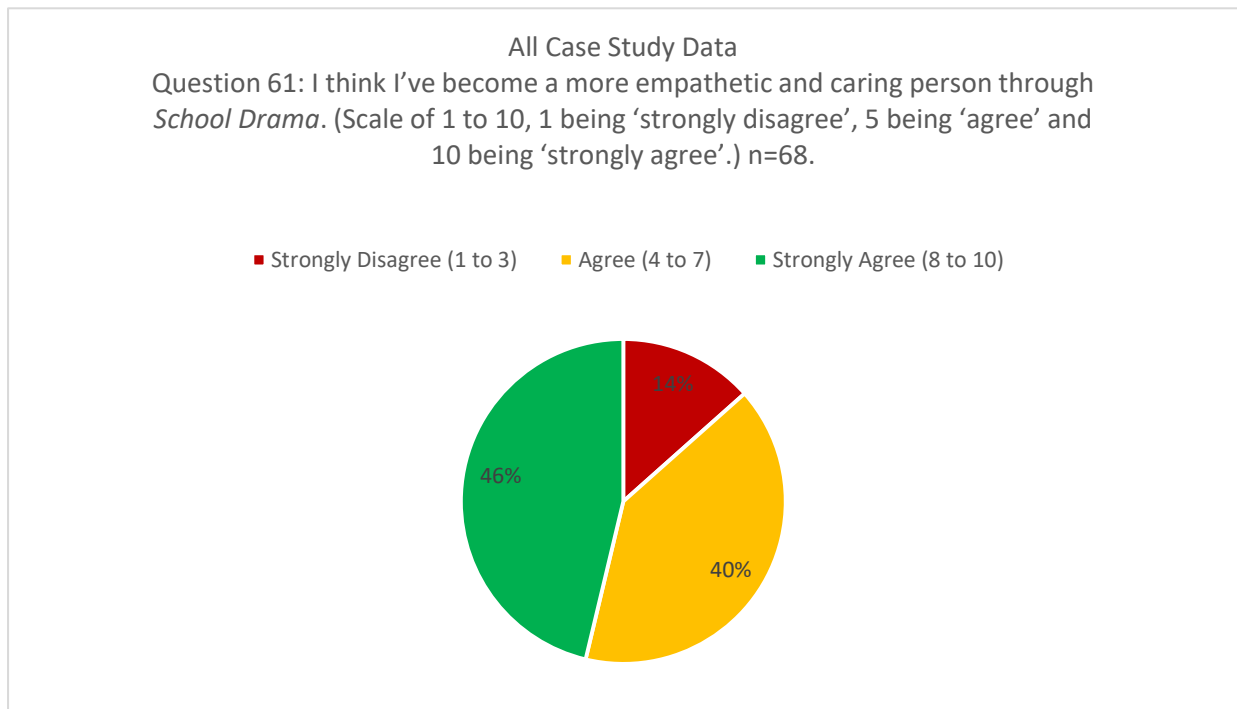


Figure 86 All Case Study Data Question 61



Students at Wentworth reported a higher average score of 7.1 in comparison to Gungahlin's average score of 6.7 and Waratah's average score of 6.4. This may be due to the two texts that were explored with the class at Wentworth, *Tricycle* and *The Island*. The themes in both books are about how society treats those who are different or less fortunate. Students at Wentworth, being from a socio-economically advantaged area, did explicitly identify that they were privileged in one of the early lessons. However, the texts studied at Gungahlin (*Home and Away*) and Waratah Grammar School (*The City*) are both mature texts containing sophisticated themes of war, seeking refuge and loss.

Forty-six percent (or 31 students) of all students across the three cases strongly agreed with the statement in Question 61, 40% (or 27 students) responded in the middle 'agree' range (a score between 4 and 7) and 13% (or 9 students) strongly disagreed with the statement. Eighty-three percent of students (or 56 students) indicated a response of 5 or greater, representing either an 'agree' or 'strongly agree' to the statement. A large majority (83%) either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they have become more empathetic and caring people through *School Drama*.

Emotion, empathy and connection to character are strong interconnected themes in the focus group data from both Gungahlin Public School and Wentworth Public School, and to a lesser degree at Waratah Grammar School. Crystallising the data collected from the survey (specifically Questions 19, 43, 49 and 61) with the focus group data suggests that a large majority of students change the way they think about characters as a result of drama strategies (Question 49), feel they make stronger connections to the characters in books when drama is employed (Question 43), and reflect that they have become more empathetic and caring people through *School Drama* (Question 61). However, over a seven-week period, students did not report transfer to their own reading of texts (Question 19). More longitudinal research is required to track students over time. While empathy and emotion are largely seen as non-academic traits, this data suggests that students who develop emotional connections to characters and feel empathy for them, demonstrate increased academic results in relation to inference and comprehension.

## Confidence

Increases and shifts in student confidence was another key theme consistent in the focus groups across the three case studies.

### Waratah Grammar School

One student spoke about confidence and linked it to shifts in his imagination.



Chase: I find using your imagination actually also builds up your confidence. And you are more confident when you've done the drama.

John: So umm can you expand on that a little bit, Chase? Like do you feel more confident in sharing your ideas or speaking? Or writing?

Chase: I think I feel more confident in speaking and writing and sharing my ideas, actually in everything I do. (FG1.31/05/2017).

In an unrecorded reflection at the end of Workshop Four, students discussed openly how they felt confidence had shifted through the program. Their teacher commented in our interview:

Dane: Yeah I think confidence is a big thing.

John: Yeah it was interesting hearing from the kids.

Dane (Interrupts): Yes, that's right. It's coming straight from the horse's mouth, hearing them say that they are more confident in being able to express themselves through drama and I found that really interesting what Cassandra was saying that drama was all about being silly and trying to make people laugh and joking around, but now she's thinking that actually thinking that 'I can be a bit more serious about this' and that drama is a way that I can express my feelings and emotions instead of something that is a bit silly. So yeah, getting that sort of shift has been really interesting. (I1.31/05/2017).

Later Dane suggested that this confidence may be connected to students being more familiar with the different drama strategies.

Dane: Yes, because they are becoming familiar with the different techniques, so they can then build on their confidence in using these techniques and they get a better understanding about how to do it. (I1.31/05/2017).

Although students didn't mention confidence in the focus groups at Gungahlin Public School, the class teacher commented on the shifts in confidence he had observed in his class.

Jacob: Yeah, I actually wrote it down on my little note pad as something that I wanted to make sure I speak about. Because he's [Liam] always been relatively active with his comments during group work, but I've never seen him take a sort of responsible, sort of active kind of leadership role as he has during the drama program. So he has really had the chance to sort

of run a group and I think because he has been so engaged in what he's doing, he's really had a chance to do an amazing job at that. And really just sort of direct people as to what he is thinking. And he has shown great creativity and, and great ideas during all of the Freeze Frames and things like that. So yeah, I'm really impressed. (I1.07/09/2017).

Students at Wentworth Public School provided insight into why they felt there had been shifts or developments in their confidence during the focus groups.

Katherine: Um even though we didn't do like much things like, this is not a bad thing, but we didn't like talk like one person in front of the class, it still made me more confident in front of people, still. Like to express my emotions.

John: Yeah, how do you think drama has helped you become more confident, do you think?

Katherine: Cos um, like for today when we were the gossip people, like I was trying to like not get embarrassed even if I was doing something like silly. (FG2.23/11/2017).

Another perspective expressed was that the creative thinking and valuing of difference helped develop a sense of confidence as Tabatha reflected:

Tabatha: Ah you've helped us, like everyone I think, a lot with their confidence and how everyone like thinks outside the box now, they think like, you've expanded their knowledge. (FG2.23/11/2017).

Cynthia's comment made links to how she had transferred her confidence developed in *School Drama* to performances.

Cynthia: I think it's like when um, say you are doing a school talent show and you are so nervous to do it, but then you are just like 'ok well, I can do this, like John's taught me this, and I've done it before in the class and I'm ready'. And I think it's been good because I had a drama teacher last year and he wasn't like as creative as you. Like he would only do like drama activities that would just be boring and we wouldn't read like really interesting books, but you've like shown us how to like think outside the box and how to do things more creatively. (FG2.23/11/2017).

Several survey questions explored confidence (Questions 15, 30, 53 and 59).

Figure 87 Waratah Grammar School Question 15

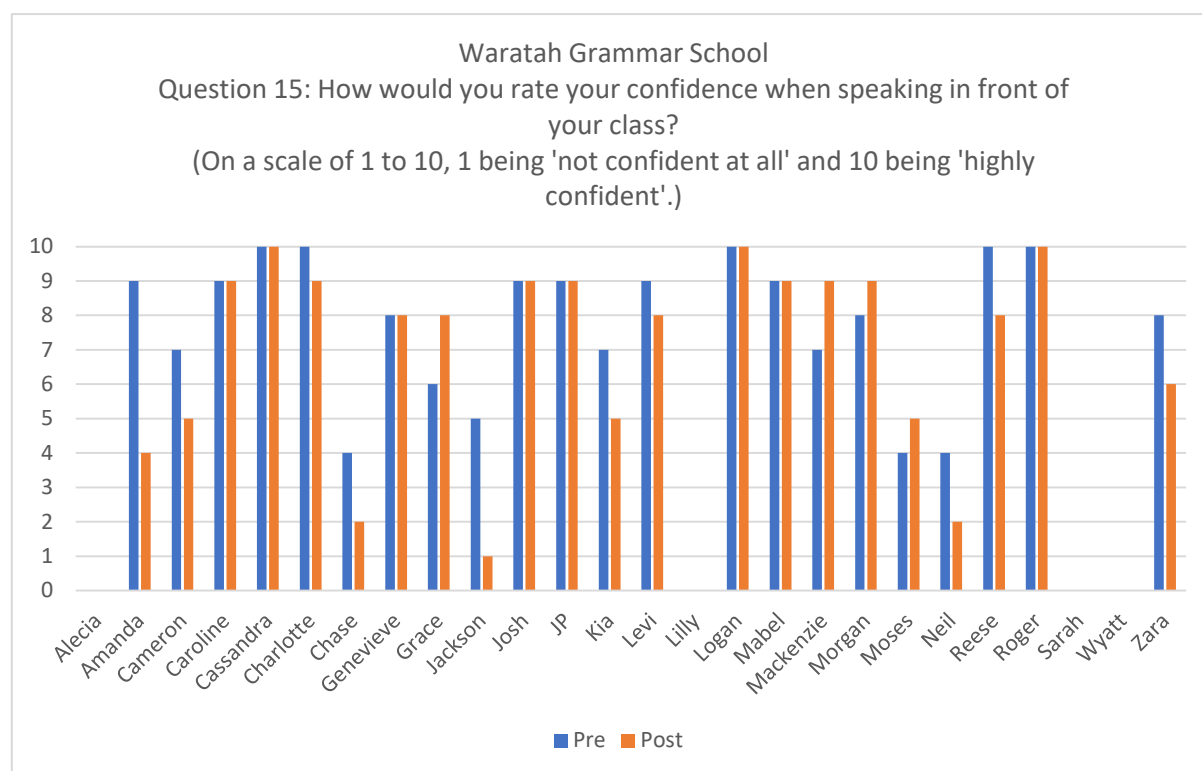


Figure 88 Gungahlin Public School Question 15

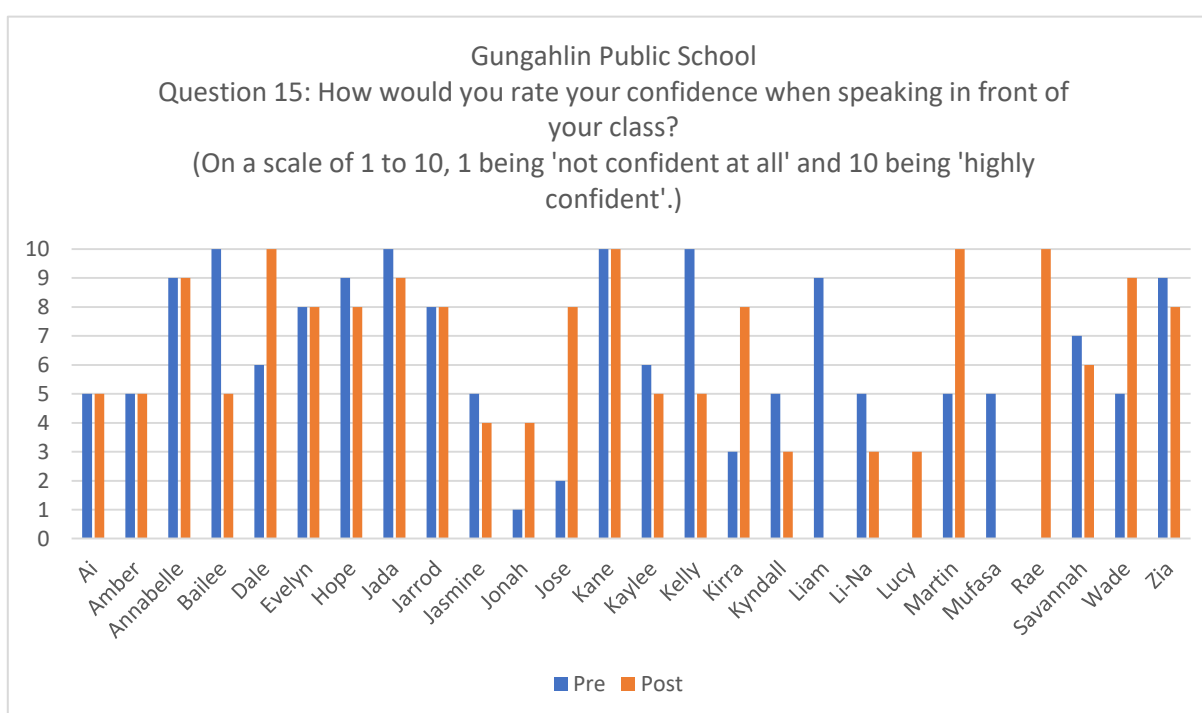
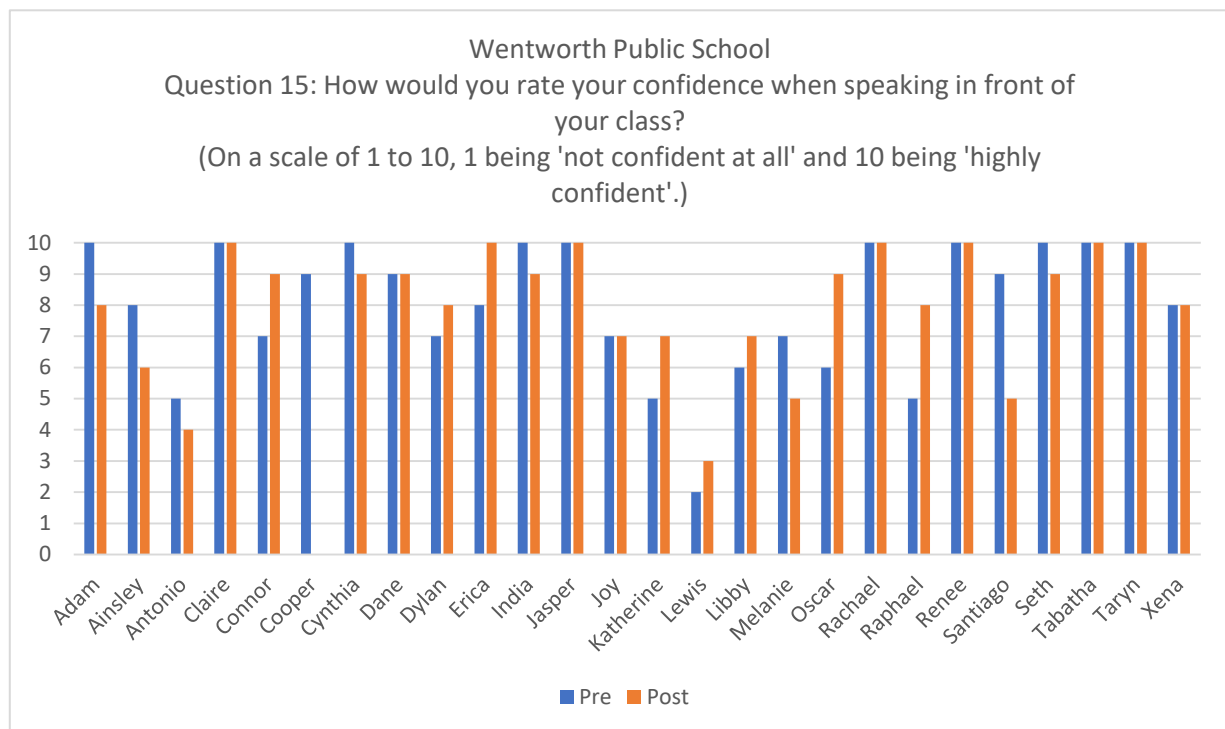


Figure 89 Wentworth Public School Question 15



Comparing average scores for pre- and post-program responses to Question 15 indicates that Waratah Grammar students' average pre-score was 7.8 and post score was 7.0, indicating a slightly lower level of confidence in the post-program score. Gungahlin students' average pre-program score was 6.5 and post program was 6.7. Similarly, Wentworth Public School students' average pre-score was 8 and post-score was 8, indicating that of the three case studies, only one of the three cases (Waratah Grammar School) showed a shift of 0.8 or 8% shift.

Question 30 was both a pre- and post-program question asking students to respond to the statement: "I consider myself to be a confident person" on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being 'strongly disagree', 5 being 'agree' and 10 being 'strongly agree'.)

Figure 90 Waratah Grammar School Question 30

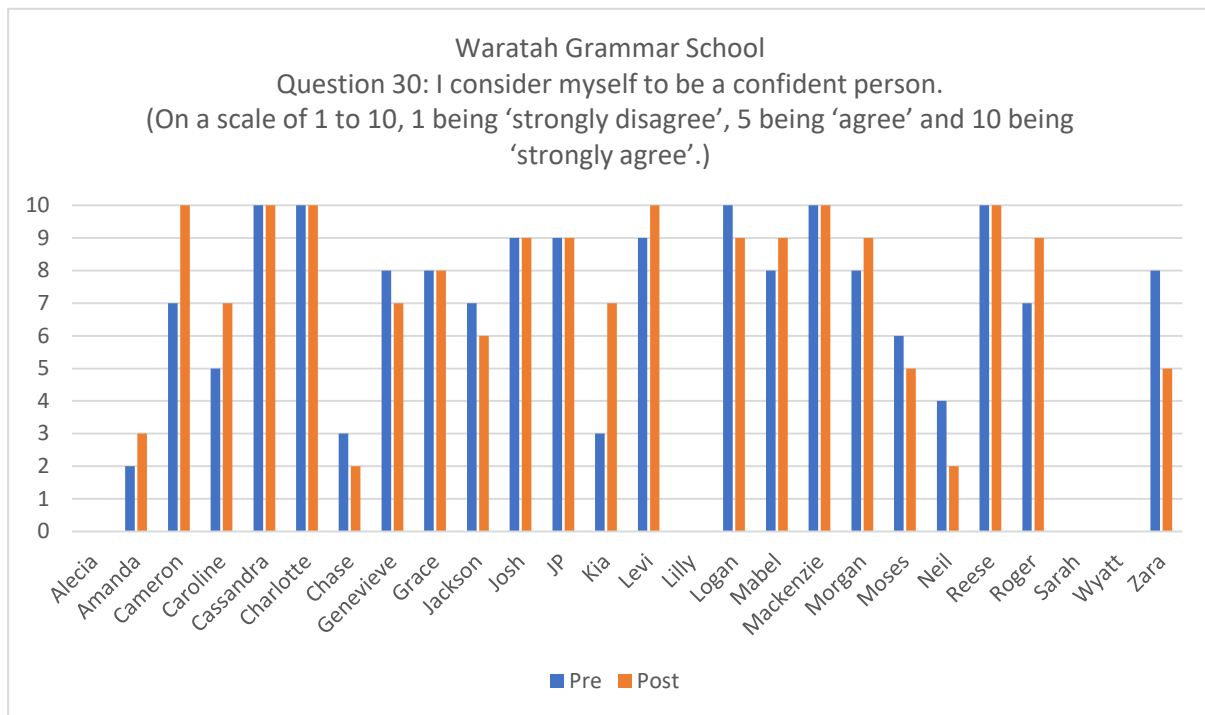


Figure 91 Gungahlin Public School Question 30

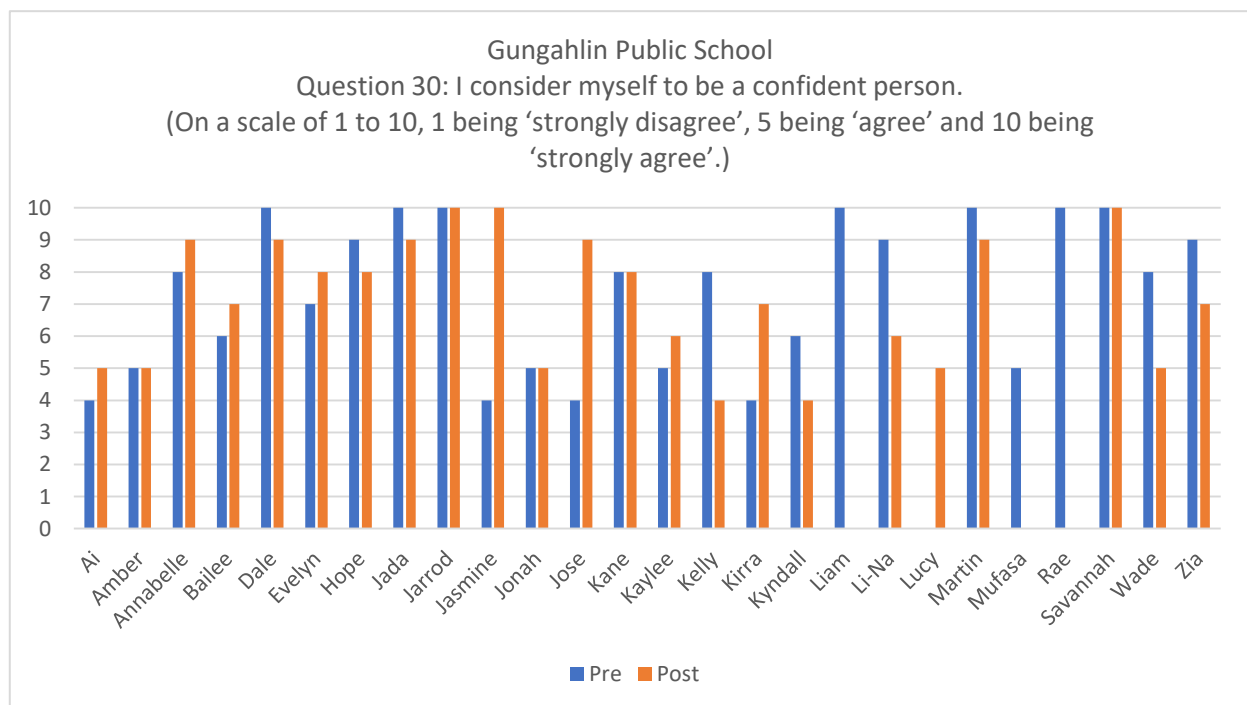
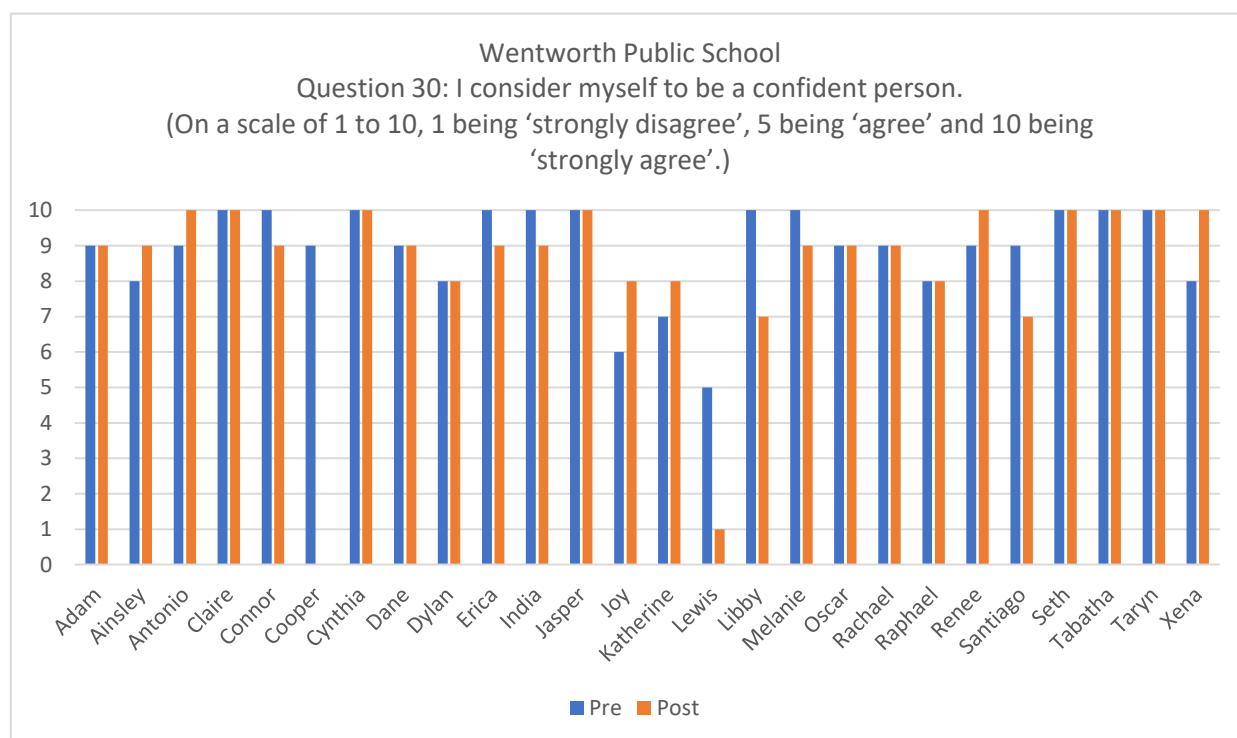


Figure 92 Wentworth Public School Question 30



The above figures indicate that some students show a mix of results. Of the 68 full sets of data, 22 students (or 31%) indicated an increase comparing the pre and post-program survey data. Twenty-four students (or 34%) indicated the same number in both the pre- and post-survey data. Twenty-three students (or 33%) indicated a decreased number when comparing the pre- and post-program data.

Table 15 Site Average Responses Question 30

Table 15		
Site Average Responses to Question 30		
	Site Pre-Program Average	Site Post-Program Average
Waratah Grammar School	7.3	7.5
Gungahlin Public School	7.3	7.1
Wentworth Public School	8.9	8.7

Comparing the averages in the above table, two of the three sites (Gungahlin and Wentworth) had a small 2% decrease and one site (Waratah) had a small 2% increase.

Question 53 was a post-program question specific to *School Drama*, asking students to provide a rating in response to the statement: “I feel more confident after the *School Drama* program”.

Figure 93 Waratah Grammar School Question 53

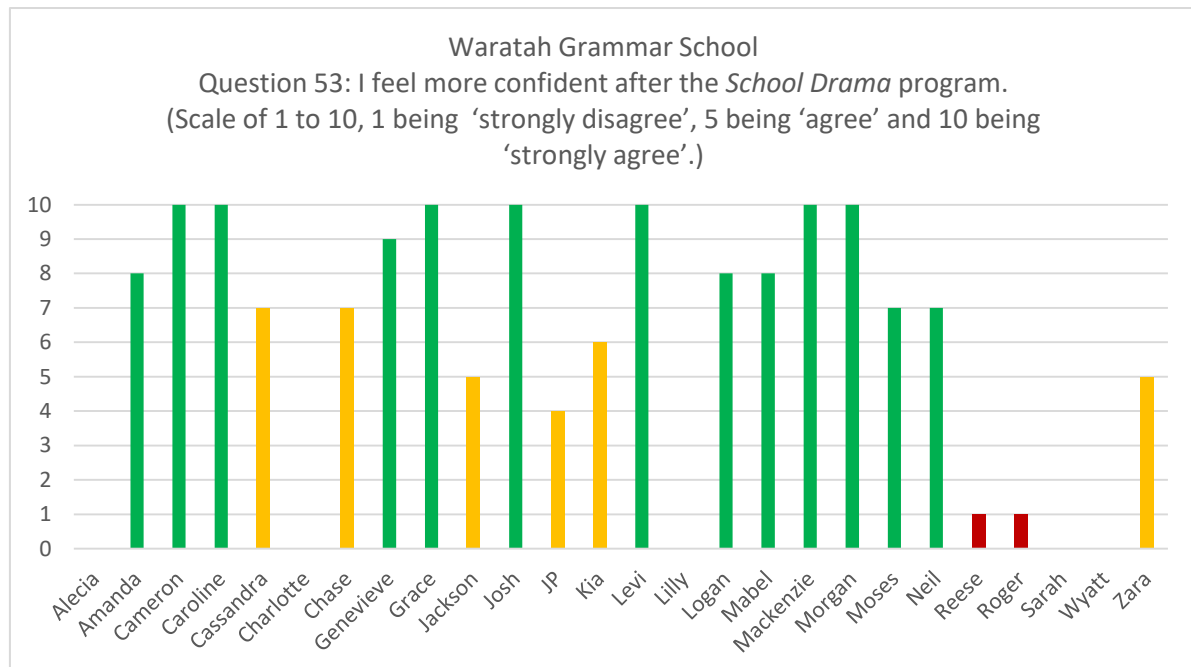


Figure 94 Gungahlin Public School Question 53

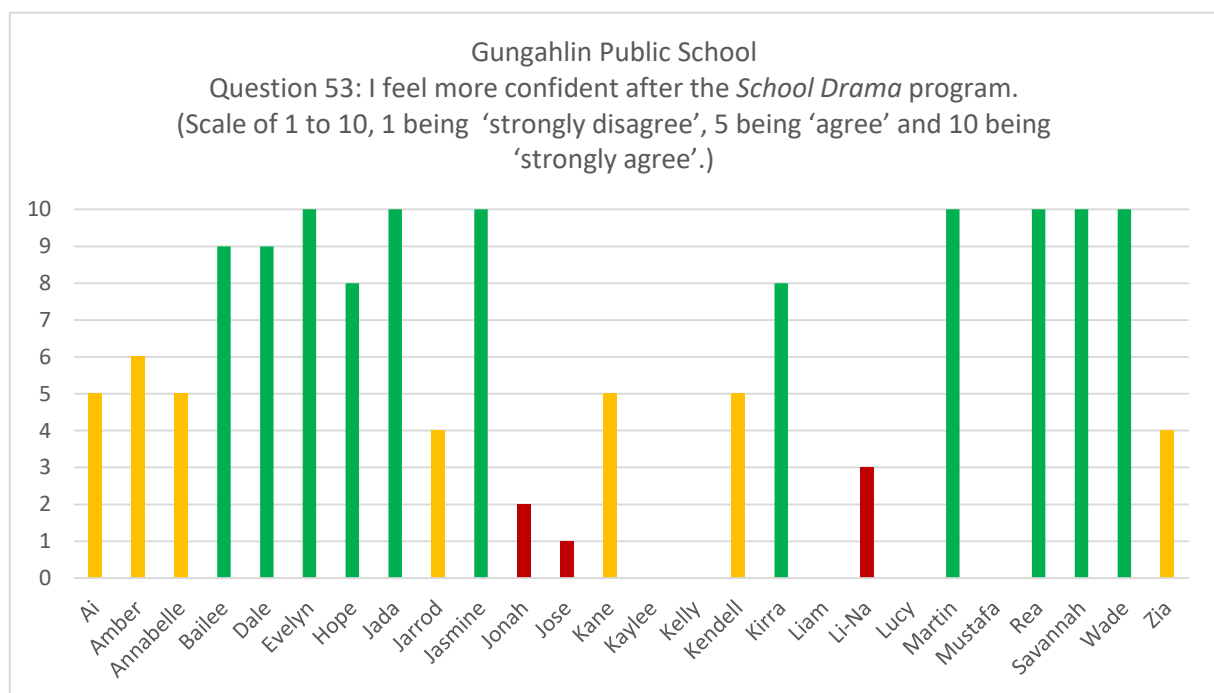


Figure 95 Wentworth Public School Question 53

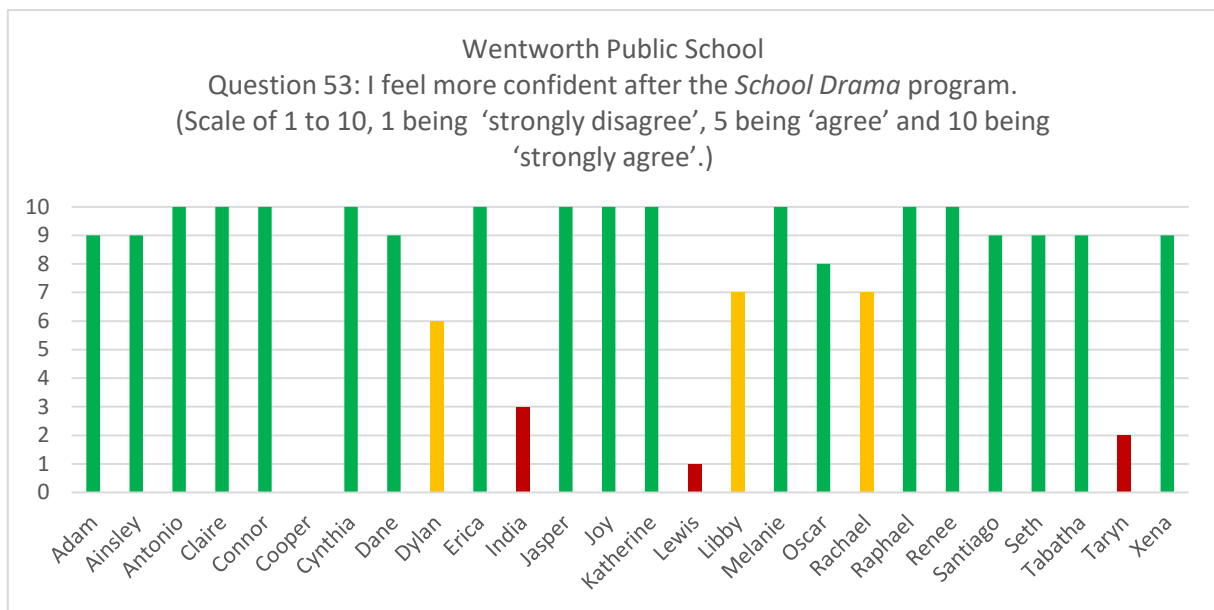
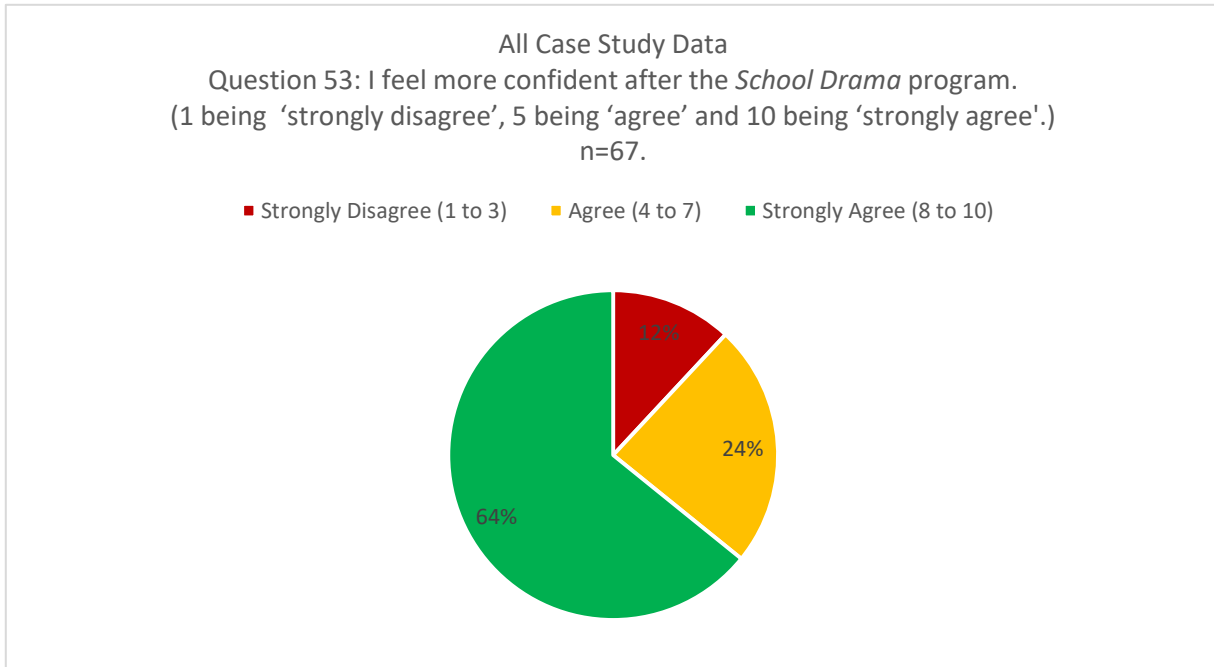


Figure 96 All Case Study Data Question 53



Of the 67 responses, 43 students (64%) strongly agreed with the statement, providing a response between 8 and 10; 16 students (24%) agreed with the statement, providing a response between 4 and 7; 8 students (12%) strongly disagreed with the statement, providing a response between 1 and 3; 56



students (83%) provided a response between 5 and 10, indicating that they agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more confident after the *School Drama* program.

Question 59 was a post program question which asked students to provide a response to the statement “I feel more confident in sharing my ideas with my class than I did last term/before *School Drama*.” Students indicated their response on a Likert scale, 1 being ‘strongly disagree’, 5 being ‘agree’ and 10 being ‘strongly agree’.

Figure 97 Waratah Grammar School Question 59

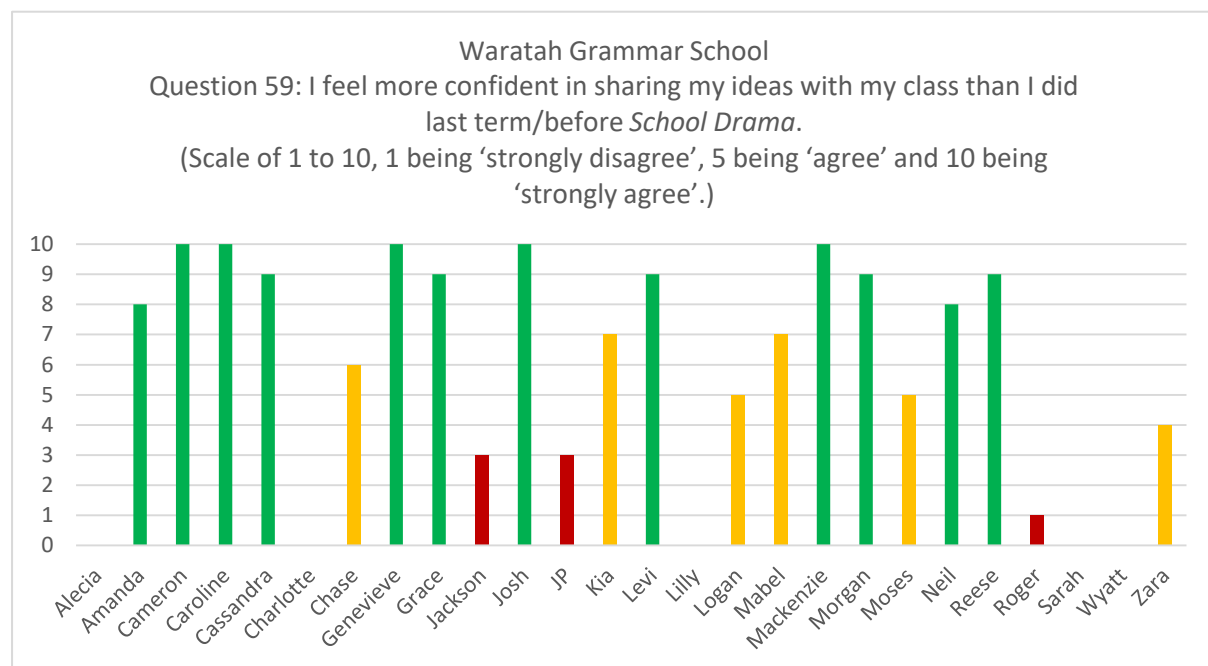


Figure 98 Gungahlin Public School Question 59

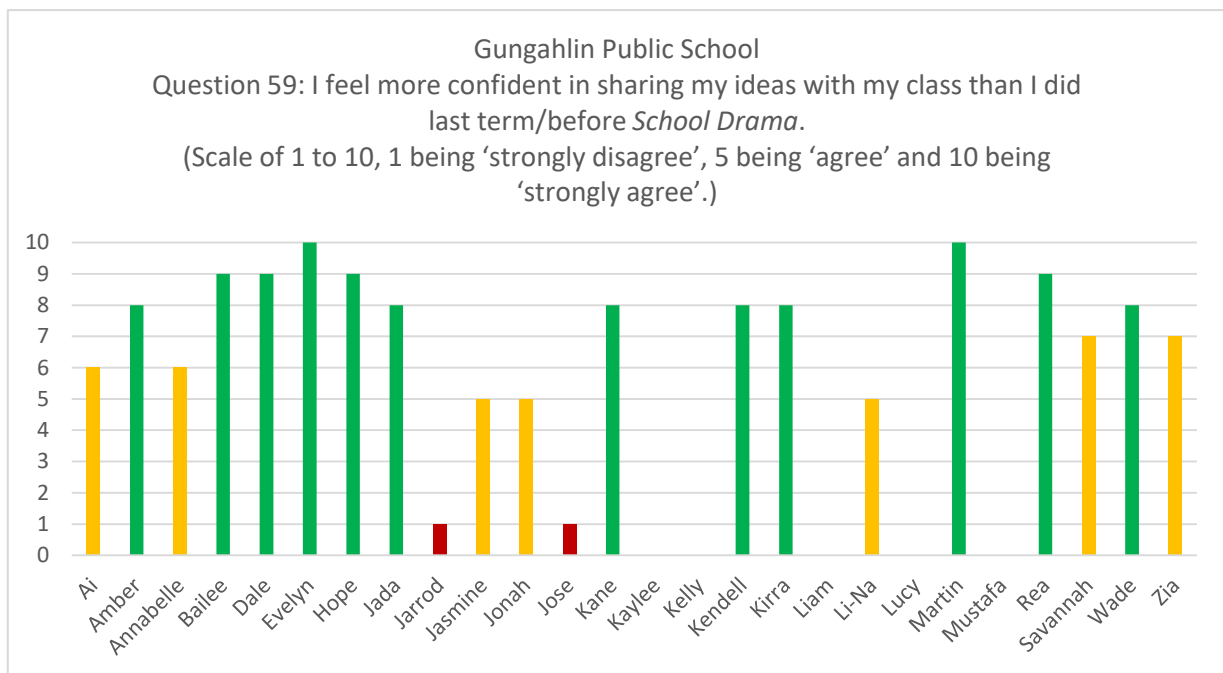


Figure 99 Wentworth Public School Question 59

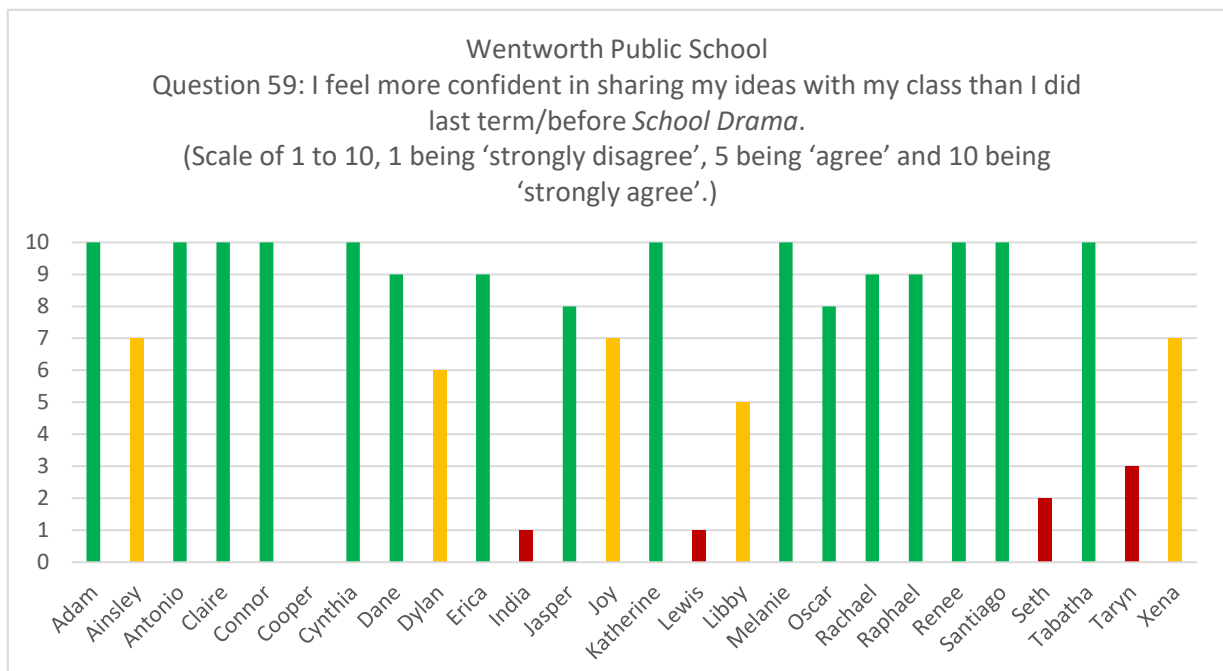
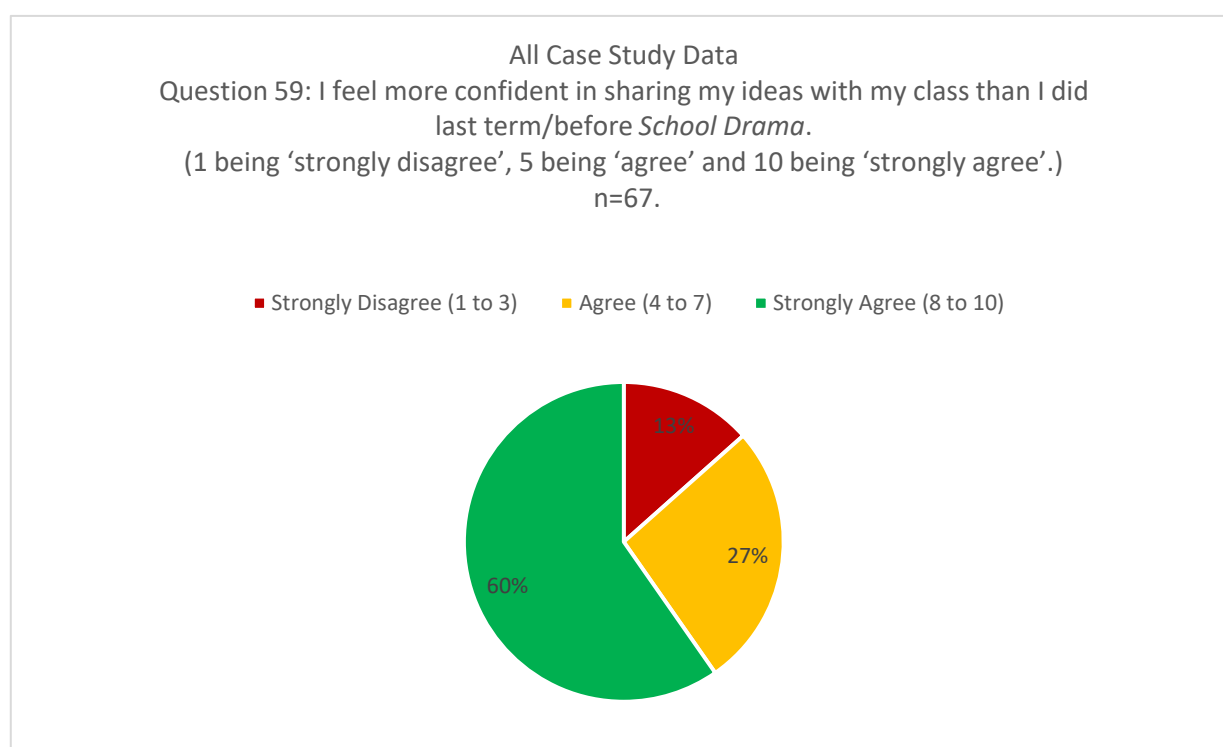


Figure 100 All Case Study Data Question 59



Analysing Question 59 indicated that of the 67 students who completed the question, 60% (or 40 individuals) strongly agreed (providing a response between 8 and 10), 27% (or 18 individuals) agreed (providing a response between 4 and 7) and 13% (or 9 individuals) strongly disagreed (providing a response between 1 and 3). Of those students who 'agreed' and placed a response between 4 and 7 on the scale, all but one (Zara from Waratah Grammar School) placed a value of 5, 6 or 7 on the scale. This indicates that 85% of students (or 57 individuals) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they felt more confident in sharing their ideas in class in compared to the previous term and before *School Drama*.

Analysing the data that explored student confidence through focus group responses, teacher interviews and survey responses, the analysis suggests that most students and their teachers have generally observed that the *School Drama* experience has helped improve student confidence. Students indicated less confidence in relation to speaking in front of the class.

### Imagination and creativity

Imagination and to a lesser extent, creativity, were a theme in the data collected from Waratah Grammar School, although they were not strong themes in the focus groups and interviews at the other two sites. While no questions in the survey referred to imagination and only two related to creativity (Questions 16 and 52) the Waratah Grammar School student focus group comments are

explored in depth in Chapter 6 and not repeated here. The class teacher at Gungahlin Public School, Jacob, explained that he felt there were shifts in his students' ability in imaginative and creative writing; however, students did not mention either imagination or creativity in the focus groups.

Jacob: When we came to do some creative writing doing a diary entry based on the characters they um, they actually actively asked, a lot of students actively asked if they could continue it the following week, which is really surprising for certain students ... like Kendall is an example, that she usually just wants to sit there and avoid doing the work completely or she'll just do it really quickly and get it over and done with. But with the thing with that, she was actually actively asking if she could continue the creative writing process, so that wasn't expected. (11.07/09/2017).

One student at Wentworth Public School, Taryn made an insightful comment about expanding her imagination which resonated with comments from students at Waratah Grammar School.

Taryn: Like when you ... I feel like sometimes when you work in a group, sometimes your imagination becomes bigger and you can make more ideas up. Not just like by hearing your peers' ideas, like makes you more creative. But at the same time, sometimes it can be really annoying because people don't listen to you sometimes, and like you end up not really doing anything, because people are just getting distracted. (FG3.29/11/2017).

Two questions did ask students about different aspects of creativity. The first was Question 16 which asks students to rate their creativity on a ten-point scale.

Figure 101 Waratah Grammar School Question 16

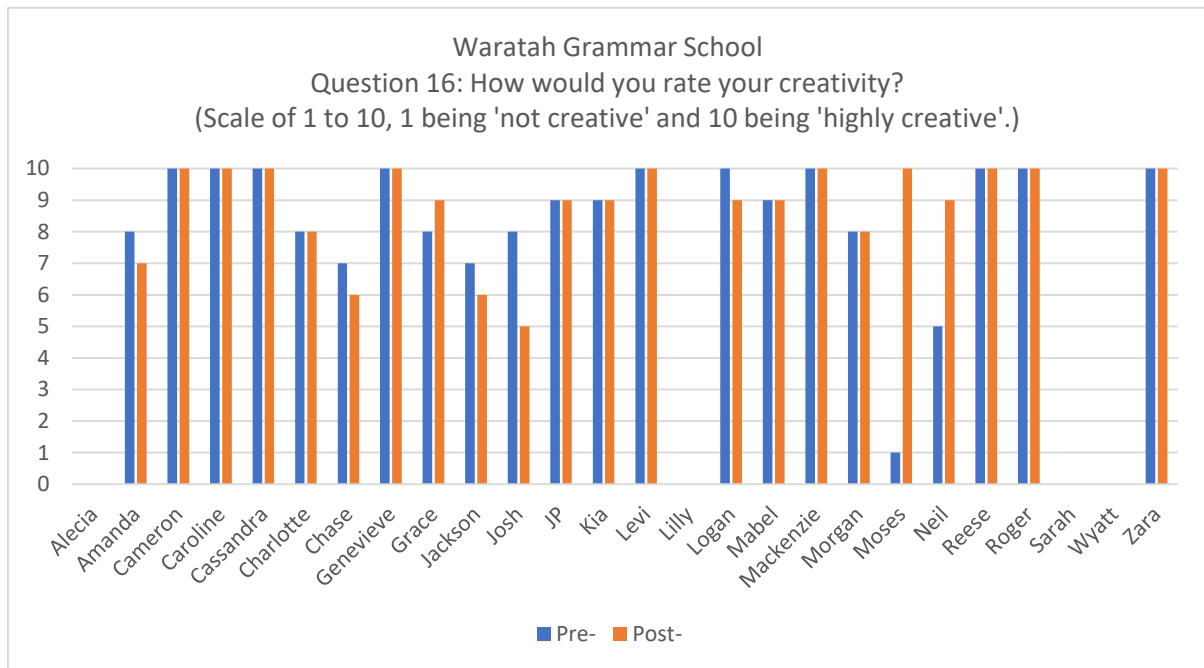


Figure 102 Gungahlin Public School Question 16

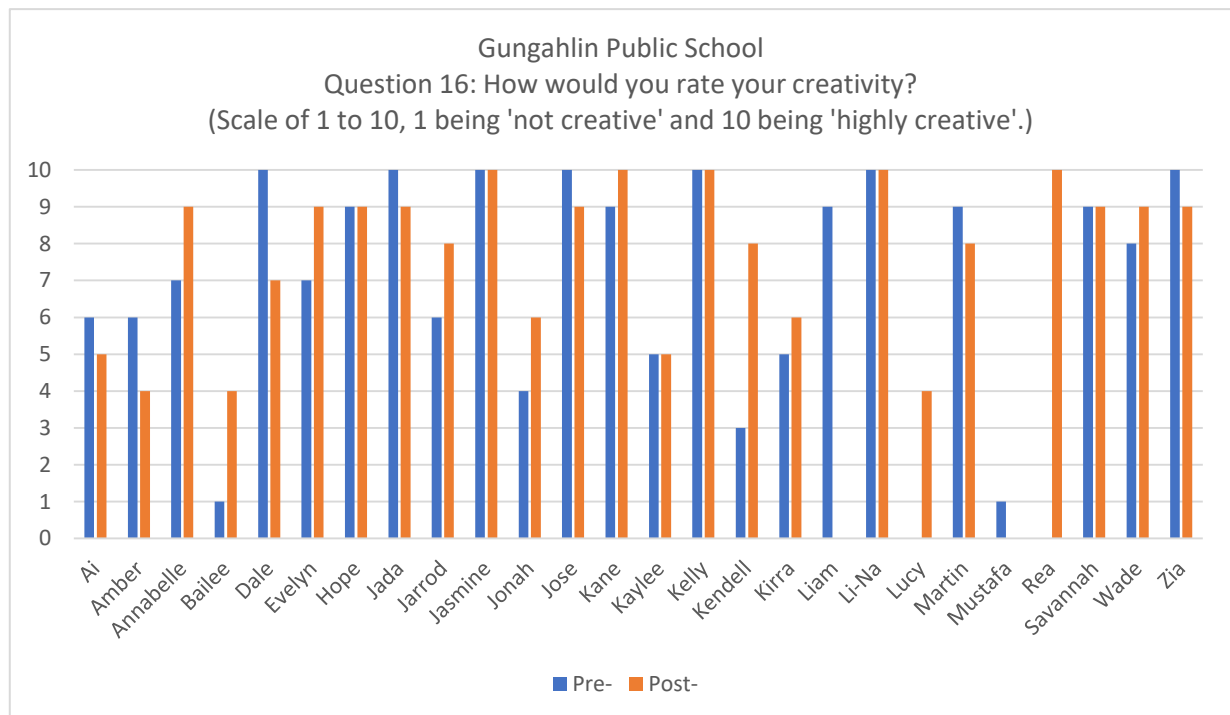
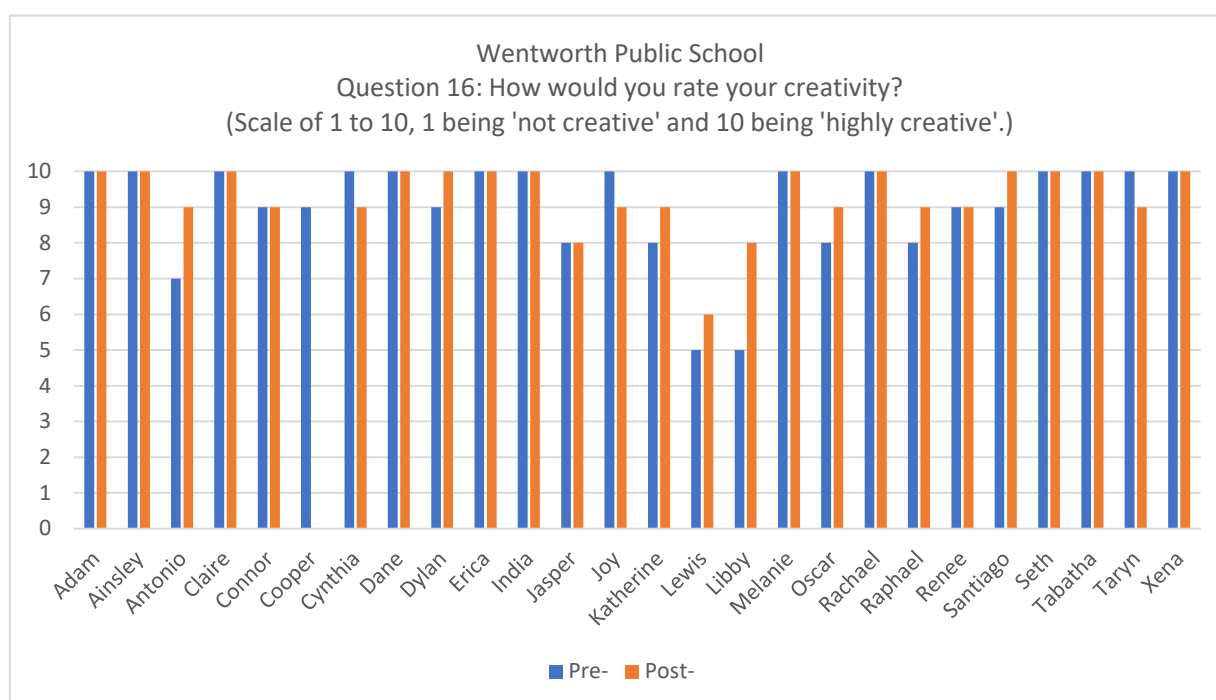


Figure 103 Wentworth Public School Question 16



Analysing only complete sets of data (and excluding data where a student did not complete both the pre- and post- program survey), the average scores are outlined below.

Table 16 Cross Case Analysis of Question 16

Table 16 Cross Case Analysis of Question 16		
	Site Pre-Program Average	Site Post-Program Average
Waratah Grammar School	8.5	8.8
Gungahlin Public School	7.4	7.8
Wentworth Public School	9	9.3

Both Waratah Grammar School and Wentworth Public School students rated themselves averaged in the 'highly creative' end of the spectrum and Gungahlin Public School students in the mid-to high end.

Question 52 was a post-program question that asked students to respond to a statement: "I think my writing is more creative when I've done some drama." This was a numerical scale with 1 being 'strongly disagree', 5 being 'agree' and 10 being 'strongly disagree'.

Figure 104 Waratah Grammar School Question 52

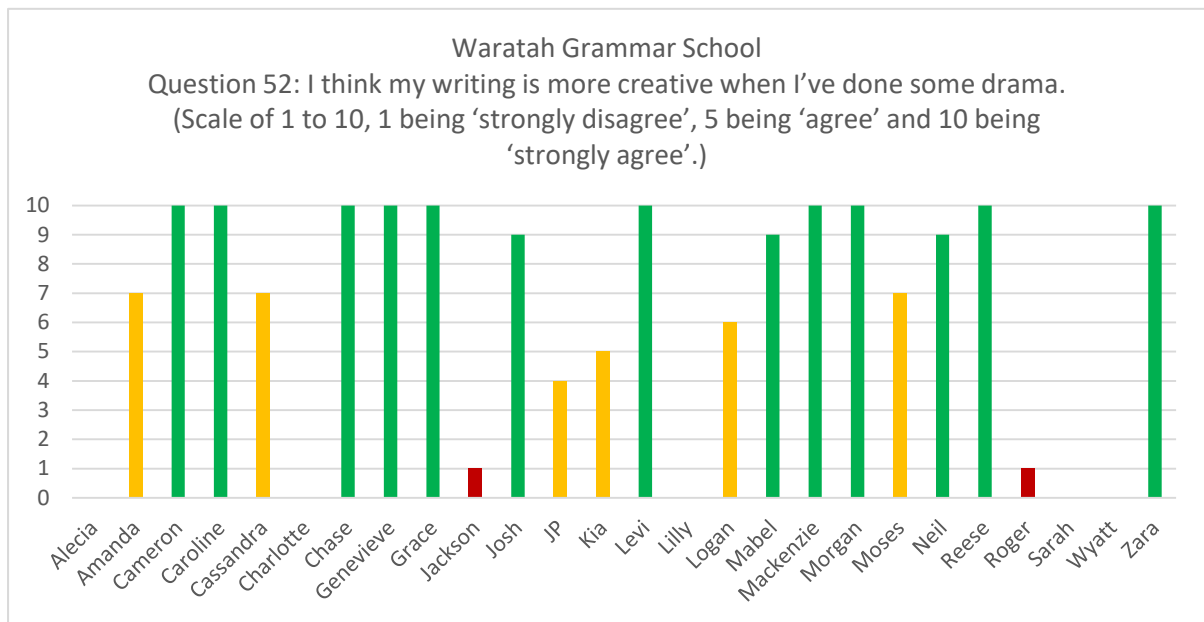


Figure 105 Gungahlin Public School Question 52

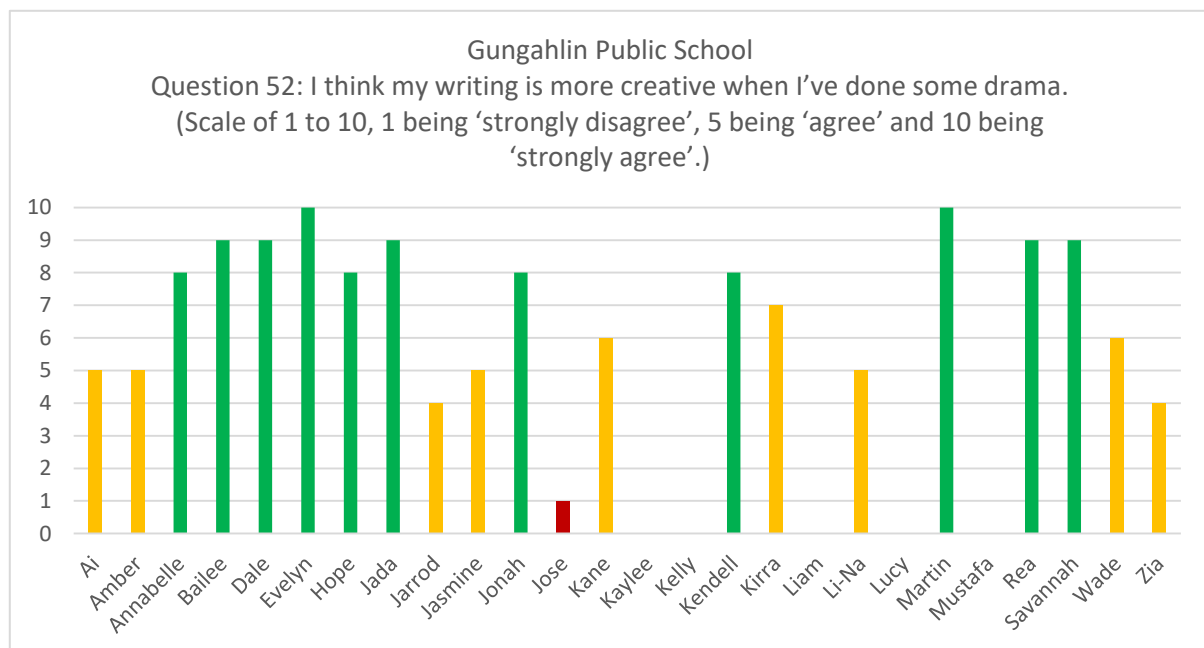


Figure 106 Wentworth Public School Question 52

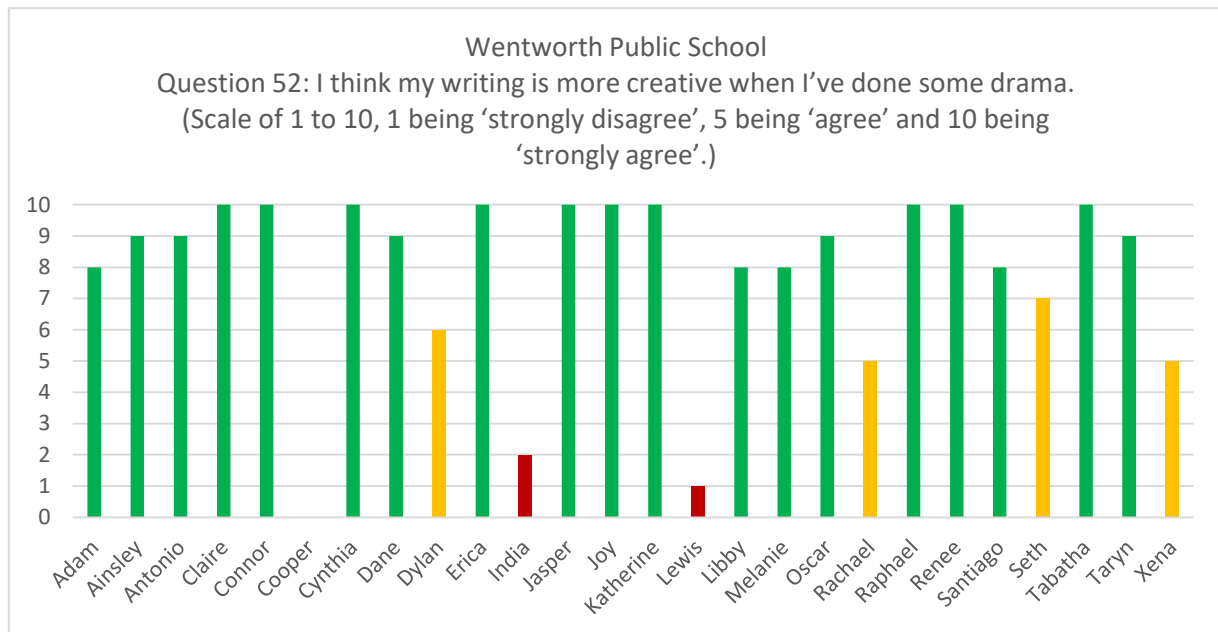
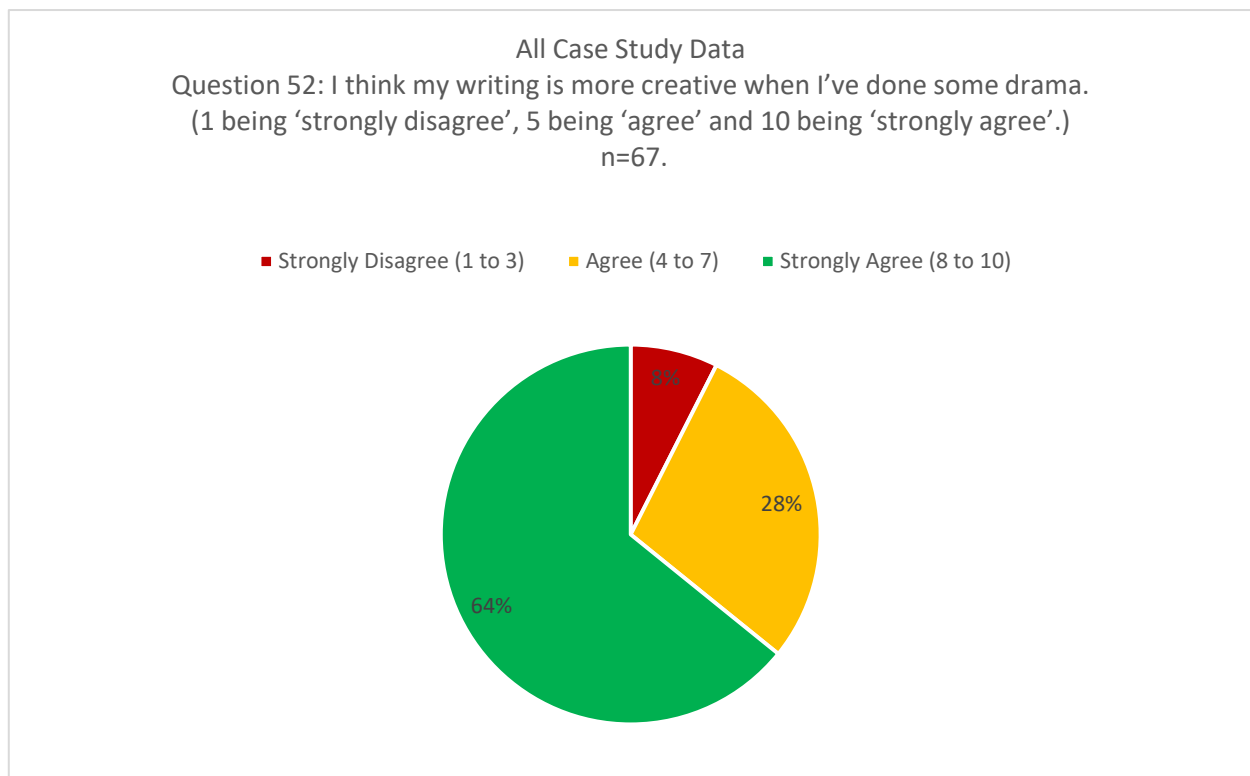


Figure 107 All Case Study Data Question 52





Participating students thus reported that their writing was more creative following some drama experiences.

Analysing data relating to the theme of creativity and imagination shows that a large group of students indicated that they felt their writing was more creative following drama. The students at Waratah Grammar School commented on shifts in their own creativity and imagination.

### **Agency and empowerment**

Student agency and empowerment was a strong theme in student focus groups and teacher interviews with participants from Wentworth Public School although it was not mentioned in the focus groups and interviews at Waratah Grammar School and Gungahlin Public School.

### **The Model: Inputs and Outcomes Working in Symphony**

The model I present in Figure 108 below reflects the commonalities and synergies across the three case studies explored in this research. There are four key inputs that have been identified throughout the research: emotion, embodiment, collaboration and the aesthetic of drama. These, of course, are not discrete – they are inter-related and overlap. During the drama intervention, these inputs are developed, explored, taught and learnt and emerge as four entwined outputs or outcomes. Drawing on the work of Pink (2006), I use the metaphor of the symphony to bring these elements together. Pink (2006) argues for: “Symphony [...] not analysis but synthesis – seeing the big picture, crossing boundaries, and being able to combine disparate pieces into an arresting new whole” (p. 66).

The input of emotion becomes empathy and enables a stronger connection to character. Vygotsky’s tenets of *perezhivanie* (1934/1994) and Dual Affect (1933/1966) relate directly to the significance of emotion in learning. Greene’s (2007) discussion of aesthetic education also includes the awakening of emotion in learning. As mentioned earlier, Bolton stated that “unless there is some kind of emotional engagement nothing can be learned” (2010, p. 87). Emotion is activated through the drama and this overlaps into engagement. Within the psychological literature, Catterall (2015) notes that empathy is considered to be developmental. Through the activation of emotion within the drama, students can develop empathy and this strong sense of the character leads to stronger connections to characters and which enables students to have a deeper understanding of the characters and a greater ability to infer about them.

The input of embodiment has a strong relationship to developing student engagement. Throughout the drama, students were active participants embodying the learning and the characters within the children's literature. In drama, students learn by *doing* and students have directly connected this to their own increased engagement within the workshops. While shifts in student engagement are commonly associated with drama and arts-based interventions (Fleming et al., 2016; Hunter, 2005; Martin et al., 2013 and Turner et al., 2004), Vygotsky's assertion that drama is strongly related to children's play may also suggest that play is the root of drama. Therefore, because young children enjoy playing and taking on the roles of others in their play, this is related to students at school taking on the roles of others within the drama. Students find this role-taking enjoyable.

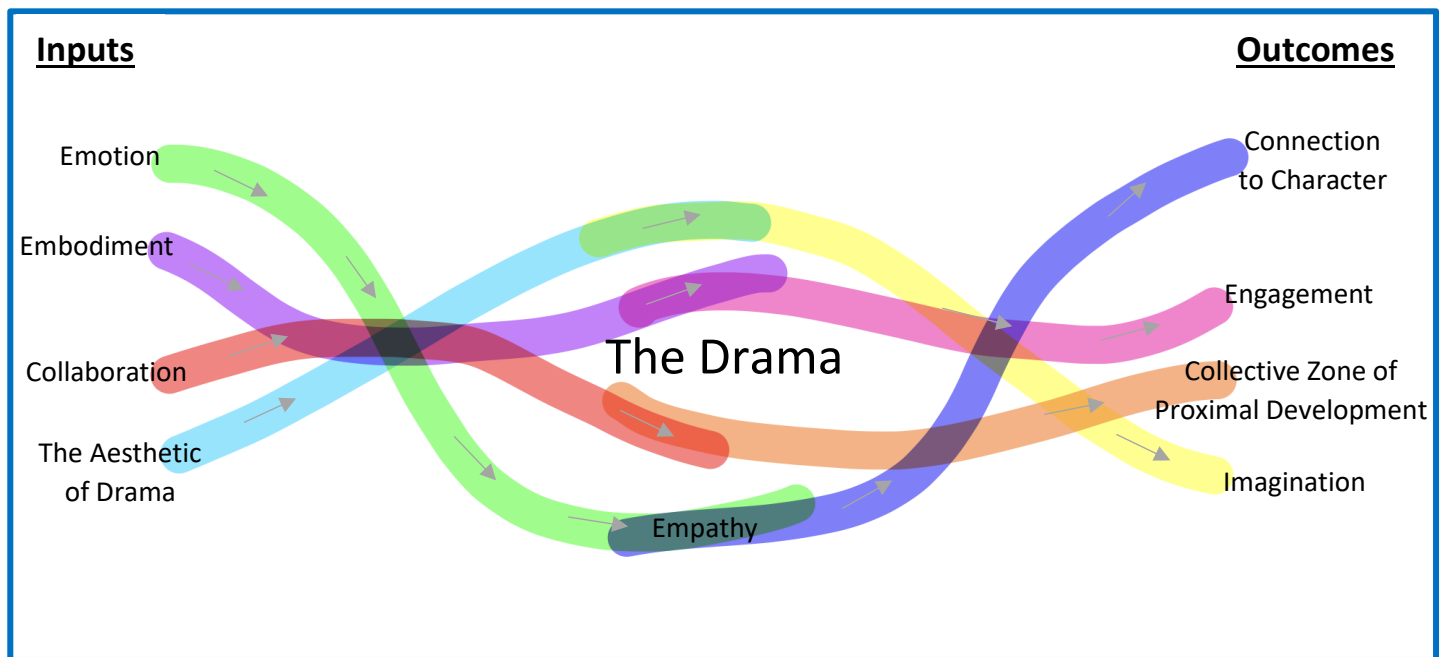
The input of collaboration, as theorised in this thesis, allows students to learn from each other in a Collective Zone of Proximal Development (CZPD). Due to the collaborative nature of learning in drama, students often work as a collectively as a class or in groups or pairs. As a result, students practice collaborating with each other and through these collaborative experiences, students learn from each other, reflecting Moll and Whitmore (1993) and Ewing's (2015) extension of Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development as a Collective Zone.

Finally, the aesthetic nature of the drama processes supports the ongoing development of their imagination. When Greene (1977, 1995, 2001, 2007) popularised the concept of aesthetic education, she also heightened the importance of imagination in education. She underlined that learning should engage the sense and emotions and that drama is a form of aesthetic learning. As mentioned earlier, Vygotsky (1930/2004) also discussed the centrality of imagination and made explicit links to drama and the development of imagination. Vygotsky's cycle of imagination can be understood as "the relationship between 'imagination' and 'reality', with the cycle being understood as a two-fold, mutual interdependence between imagination and experience" (Bundy et al., 2015, p. 147). Within the aesthetic of drama, and connecting to other inputs of emotion and collaboration, students not only imagine, but they also enact, embody or represent what they have imagined. Vygotsky notes that this is central as the "full cycle of this [imagination] process will be completed only when imagination is embodied or crystallised in external images" (1930/2004, p. 28).

These four outcomes foster the development of English and literacy understandings, particularly in the area of inferential comprehension in these three case studies. Strong connection to character enables students to have a deep understanding of the character, what is known and what is inferred. Students who are more engaged in their learning are more likely to be more motivated in the area of

academic achievement (Martin et al., 2016). By learning collaboratively, students develop knowledge in a Collective Zone of Proximal Development, directly learning from their peers. Imagination is core to literacy as students need to be able to imagine elements of the story, building on what they know and have comprehended and moving to imagining and inferring what else might be possible within the story.

*Figure 108 Inputs and Outcomes across All Case Studies: The Symphony*



## Conclusion

This model (Figure 108) is one way of visualising the inputs and outputs/outcomes within this research project. Of course, with any research within an education environment, one can never argue a causal relationship, as there are too many variables involved. However, these four outcomes, plus the shifts in student literacy in the area of inferential comprehension are consistent across the three case studies.

The next chapter provides a brief summary of the research and makes several concluding comments. Chapter 10 also discusses the implications for this research and provides recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 10 - What We Know: Concluding Comments and Looking to the Future

“The arts, for all of their instrumental value, are, in the end, about learning how to be touched. They are about the enrichment of life.” (Eisner, 2000, p. 13).

### Introduction

This research has demonstrated how a drama-based pedagogy with quality children’s literature can foster a range of skills, dispositions and capabilities, while enhancing student literacy development.

The dissertation commenced by introducing the researcher and the lens through which this research would take place. Key terms were then defined before a review, analysis, synthesis and critique of the existing literature. Chapter 3 then told the *School Drama* story, how the program was developed, grew and changed over the past 10 years. It also reviewed the research on the program to date. Chapter 4 - *Art is the social within us*, discussed the theoretical framework, methodology and data methods and analysis approach that were used in this research. In particular, the five Vygotskian concepts that were central to framing this study were elaborated in some detail. Chapter 5 analysed the data collected from teachers and students who participated in the 2017 *School Drama* program, particularly teacher surveys and student benchmarking. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 examined and unpacked each of the three in-depth case studies at Waratah Grammar School, Gungahlin Public School and Wentworth Public School and Chapter 9 compared the three case studies through a cross-case analysis.

This final chapter includes a brief description of each outcome, some comments about the significance of this research, the limitations of the study and some recommendations for further research in this area.

### Broad Overview of 2017 Program Data

As detailed in Chapter 5, data was collected from 59 teachers in the 2017 post-program survey and 12 classes participated in the pre- and post-program student benchmarking.

### Teacher professional learning outcomes

The impact of *School Drama* on teachers' professional learning was not a major focus of this research study. However, examining the 2017 teacher post-program survey data (Chapter 5) demonstrated there is ongoing and strong evidence of the efficacy of the program on teachers' professional learning to support earlier program evaluation and case study research (for example, Campbell et al., 2010; Ewing et al., 2011; Ewing et al., 2015; Ewing & Saunders, 2014, 2016, 2018; Gibson, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015; Gibson & Smith, 2013; Mcatamney, 2018; Robertson, 2010; Saunders, 2015; Smith, 2014; Sze, 2013). In 2017 participating teachers reported an overwhelmingly positive experience in taking part in the *School Drama* program, both for themselves and for their students, with the overwhelming majority stating that they had increased their confidence and ability to use drama strategies in their own classrooms and that they would continue to use these strategies after the teaching artist had left the classroom.

### English and literacy outcomes

Chapter 5 analysed all benchmarking data collected from 12 classes from a range of schools in 2017. This data revealed a positive shift in the post-benchmarking scores. There were four English and literacy foci (confidence in oracy, creative/imaginative writing, descriptive language, and inferential comprehension) selected by the teachers and consistent shifts were observed across stage/year levels throughout the primary years of schooling. This provides strong evidence that the program has an impact across the English and literacy foci and across stage/year levels. Nevertheless, a higher participation rate in the benchmarking would assist in strengthening these findings. These findings resonate strongly with existing research in the area of the relationships between The Arts, particularly drama and English, and literacy development (specifically, Bamford, 2006, 2009; Bryce et al., 2004; Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012; Ewing, 2002, 2006, 2010b, 2019; Gibson & Beachum, 2019; Hunter, 2005; O'Day, 2000; Saunders, 2015; Seidel, 1999; Turner et al., 2004).

## Three Case Studies

### English and literacy outcomes

The three in-depth case studies explored in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 and then compared in Chapter 9 also resonate with earlier studies in the area. Of the 68 students who completed both the pre- and post-program benchmarking, 91% of students (62 individuals) improved their literacy score on the post-benchmarking task while 9% of students (6 individuals) maintained it.

Generally, male students in these case studies started at a lower point on the literacy scale in inferential comprehension and demonstrated a more significant shift overall during the term. As part of the member checking protocol, the recent interviews with the three teachers reaffirmed their perspective on the findings in each of the classes, providing further validation. Additional research is needed to explore whether such positive shifts continue long after the intervention has concluded.

### **Student perceptions of drama on learning**

The survey asked students to respond to the statement: “I learn better when we use drama in the classroom” (through Question 48). Ninety-one percent of all participating students either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. In addition, 78% of students indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “I find it easier to write following drama sessions” (Question 51). The vast majority of participating students thus reported that drama had a positive impact on their learning during the *School Drama* unit in their classrooms.

### **Skills, Dispositions and Capabilities**

Consistently highlighted across the three case studies were four skills, dispositions and capabilities that were seen to be enabled by the program.

### **Student engagement through embodiment**

Students reflected that they felt more engaged in learning as a result of the drama processes and these comments were strengthened through crystallising the data with teacher and teaching artist/researcher observations and student survey data. Ninety-one percent of students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “I feel more engaged in school after participating in drama” (through Question 54, Figure 67). Students and teachers involved in the case studies linked increased engagement to being active and embodying learning through the drama intervention. Students regularly commented that the drama work was “fun” and “enjoyable”. The pre- and post-program student survey question relating to school engagement showed only a small positive shift in students’ engagement at school; however, as the three class teachers note, this may also be related to the timing of the post-program survey in the final week of the school term. Shifts in student engagement through drama and Arts-based experiences is also consistent with existing research (see for example: Mansour, 2013; Martin et al., 2013; Fleming et al., 2016).

### Collaboration and the collective zone of proximal development

As drama is a collaborative medium, students and teachers alike reflected that the drama-based intervention led to improvement of their collaboration skills. They also linked working collaboratively to learning from their peers and receiving feedback from their peers that supported their learning. This was in contrast to traditional learning when they would often only receive feedback from their teacher. Students in the study often commented that they preferred working in a group as they learned from their peers and that learning was more enjoyable in this way.

These results are also consistent with conceptualising Vygotsky's (1987) Zone of Proximal Development as a collective or collaborative ZPD (Moll and Whitmore 1993) as well as existing research and theory that drama and Arts-based experiences can improve student collaboration (Harris, 2016; Hunter, 2005; Robinson with Aronica, 2015).

### Empathy, emotion and connection

Drama engaged students' emotions and senses through the aesthetic experience and through this experience, students developed empathy and connection to character as well as skills in perspective taking. A large majority of students (75%) reported that the drama program helped them make stronger connections to the characters in books (Figure 74). Similarly, most students reported shifts in how they thought about characters as a result of drama (through Question 49, Figure 78). Importantly, 85% of students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "Drama has helped me see the world through different people's eyes/different perspectives" (Question 58, Figure 82). Students also indicated they had become more empathetic and caring person through *School Drama*" (Question 61, Figure 86). The shifts in empathy, connection to character and perspective taking align with existing research (Catterall, 2009, 2015; Dunn, Bundy & Stinson, 2015; Dunn & Stinson, 2012; O'Mara, 2004).

The data reveals strong evidence that drama processes can take children more deeply into the reading process and so contribute to students developing empathy. It is argued that this also relates to students' connection to character and perspective taking.

### Student confidence

Student confidence has been a strong and, perhaps initially unintentional, outcome of the program noted by teachers during the pilot (see Campbell et al., 2010; Gibson, 2011, 2012, 2013; Gibson & Smith, 2013). This also supports other research (e.g. Bryce et al., 2004; Caldwell and Vaughan, 2012; Fleming et al., 2015; Hunter, 2005; Martin et al., 2013). Consistent with this existing research,

students across the three case studies commented on their growth in confidence through the *School Drama* program. This growth improved their willingness to share their ideas with others (Question 59, Figure 100).

However, responses to Question 30 (Figure 90, Figure 91 and Figure 92) where students scored themselves on a Likert scale responding to the statement: “I consider myself to be a confident person” indicated that when comparing a pre- and post-program scale, students did not report a significant shift either way.

### **Imagination and creativity**

The students’ comments about enhanced imagination and, to a lesser degree, creativity were also important in the case study focus group data although less prominent in the survey data. These questions on creativity may have been too general: more specific questions related to *School Drama* indicated more positive reactions. Ninety-one percent of students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: “I think my writing is more creative when I’ve done some drama” (Question 52, Figure 107). It was clear to the teachers that the *School Drama* program helped foster student imagination and creativity, and this is also supported by other research and theory in the field (for example, Greene, 2007; Robinson with Aronica, 2015; Harris, 2016; Jefferson and Anderson, 2017).

### **Significance of Research**

This is the first time an in-depth cross-case analysis has been conducted on the *School Drama* program. While a range of case studies exist investigating different aspects of the *School Drama* program, this research has attempted to capture pre- and post-program student data across a range of skills, dispositions and capabilities in three different school contexts. Strong evidence emerges about the impact that the *School Drama Classic* has on student engagement; student confidence; student empathy, connection to character and perspective taking; as well as student imagination and creativity alongside selected student English and literacy outcomes. I have argued that it is valuable to look at what drama processes foster in a holistic framework rather than separate non-academic from academic outcomes, because drama-based pedagogy engages the whole person in the process.



## Limitations of Research and Recommendations for Further Research

As discussed in Chapter 4, there are three key limitations to this research. The first is that the researcher was also the teaching artist in the three case studies and there may have been potential for perceived bias in the research. To address this, the class teacher was central to the data collection process, particularly in marking the student benchmarking, delivering the surveys and making professional observations. I also interviewed each of the class teachers again in 2019 asking them to read the draft of the findings for their class to ensure the research was accurate, trustworthy and authentic from their perspectives.

The second limitation pertains to the data collection, as each instrument has advantages and limitations. Some of the methods rely on self-reporting. Survey fatigue and the timing of the students' completion of the post-program survey may have been problematic. The final limitation is the nature of case-based methodology given the uniqueness of each context and the inability to generalise findings.

There is also a need for the collection of a larger set of benchmarking data across the *School Drama* program and across schools in different states and territories. This should be a priority for Sydney Theatre Company in the coming years. A meta-analysis of the ten case studies completed should also be undertaken. Longitudinal research, tracking students who participate in *School Drama*, is also recommended to see whether program outcomes are sustained over time. Research investigating if there is transfer to other learning areas from the *School Drama* intervention may also be valuable.

Finally, there is also a need for more large-scale longitudinal studies to be conducted in the future. While many of the earlier large-scale studies have provided important understandings of knowledge and evidence into the field, for example, Bamford (2006, 2009), Catterall (2002), Deasy (2002), DICE (2010), Ewing (2010a), and Fiske (1999), they are now dated. Two recent studies have gone some way in filling the gap in the current international landscape. Brown and Kisida (2019) reported on their large-scale study, using randomised control groups to investigate the impact of The Arts in education. Thompson, Hall, Earl and Geppert (2019) also recently reported on a large-scale, multi-year research project titled *Tracking Arts Learning and Engagement* (TALE) surveying over 4,000 students in England.

## Final Remarks

We must ensure that all children and young people have access to quality Arts education and that teachers are equipped and empowered to use Arts-based pedagogies, particularly drama-based pedagogies, so that students' full potential can be reached. I know from my own experience as a disengaged and disenchanting student that The Arts can be transformative. It was certainly true for me as a student, I've since seen it as a teacher and as a teaching artist, and now again with even greater clarity, I see it as a researcher.

Cate Blanchett reflected upon the *School Drama* program saying:

If we can actually bring that book alive, and ignite that child's sense of wonderment really, in a child's education, then that is something that will stay with that child forever. And if we can impart that, as theatre practitioners, in any way, then I think we really do have a responsibility to do so. (Blanchett in Johnson, 2011).

I believe as educators we do have a responsibility to do this, to provide all young people with quality arts experiences.

If we truly want a future world where our citizens are compassionate, confident, deeply literate, who can harness their imagination and creativity to think in divergent and flexible ways, then we must invest in quality Arts experiences and programs in schools. Maxine Greene is quoted as saying: "The arts, it has been said, cannot change the world, but they may change human beings who might change the world." I believe we enter the profession of teaching because we want to change the world. Within education, The Arts, particularly drama, as this research has shown, has tremendous power to help humanity transform the world.

## Reference List

- Adams, F. (2010). Embodied cognition. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 9(4), 619–628.  
Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-010-9175-x>
- Aitken, V. (2009). Conversations with status and power: how *Everyday Theatre* offers ‘spaces of agency’ to participants. *RiDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 14(4), 503-527.  
doi: 10.1080/13569780903286022
- Aitken, V., Fraser, D., & Price, G. (2007). Negotiating the spaces: Relational pedagogy and power in drama teaching. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 8(14), 1–19.
- Amado, E., & Ruano, A. (2007). *Tricycle*. Toronto, Canada: Groundwood Books.
- Anderson, M. (2007). How to study the mind: An introduction to embodied cognition. In F. Santoianni & C. Sabatano (Eds.), *Brain development in learning environments: Embodied and perceptual advancements*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press.
- Armstrong Melser, N. (2019). *Teaching soft skills in a hard world : Skills for beginning teachers*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Australia Council for the Arts. (2014). *Arts in daily life: Australian participation and the arts*. Sydney, Australia. Retrieved from  
<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/research/arts-in-daily-life-australian-5432524d0f2f0.pdf>
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2011). *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Retrieved from  
[http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/Shape\\_of\\_the\\_Australian\\_Curriculum\\_The\\_Arts\\_-\\_Compressed.pdf](http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/Shape_of_the_Australian_Curriculum_The_Arts_-_Compressed.pdf)
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2014). *Guide to understanding ICSEA*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Retrieved from [http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/About\\_icsea\\_2014.pdf](http://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/About_icsea_2014.pdf)
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2015). *English: Sequence of context F-6 (v8.1)*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Retrieved from [https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/4401/english\\_-\\_sequence\\_of\\_content.pdf](https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/4401/english_-_sequence_of_content.pdf)
- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2017a). *Waratah Grammar School, school profile*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Retrieved from

<https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/43934>

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2017c). *Wentworth Public School, school profile*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Retrieved from

<https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/41146>

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2017b). *Gungahlin Public School, school profile*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Retrieved from

<https://www.myschool.edu.au/school/41139>

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2019a). *Students for whom EAL/D*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Retrieved from

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/student-diversity/students-for-whom-eald/>

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). (2019b). *General capabilities: Literacy*. Sydney, Australia: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Retrieved from

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/literacy/>

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). (2011). *Australian professional standards for teachers*. Victoria, Australia: Education Services Australia. Retrieved from

<https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/teach-documents/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers.pdf>

Baldwin, P. (2004). *With drama in mind: Real learning in imagined worlds*. London, England: Bloomsbury.

Baldwin, P. (2012). *With drama in mind: Real learning in imagined worlds*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Baldwin, P., & Fleming, K. (2003). *Teaching literacy through drama: Creative approaches*. London, England: Routledge Falmer.

Baldwin, P., & John, R. (2012). *Inspiring writing through drama*. London, England: Bloomsbury.

Bamford, A. (2006). *The wow factor: Global research compendium on the impact of the arts in education*. Berlin, Germany: Waxmann Verlag.

Bamford, A. (2009). *The wow factor: Global research compendium on the impact of the arts in education*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Berlin, Germany: Waxmann. No longer with Verlag?

- Berkowitz, L., & Troccoli, B. T. (1990). Feelings, direction of attention, and expressed evaluations of others. *Cognition and Emotion*, 4(4), 305-325. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02699939008408080>
- Berns, G., Blaine, K., Prietula, M., & Pye, B. (2013). Short- and long-term effects of a novel on connectivity in the brain. *Brain Connectivity*, 3(6), 59–600. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1089/brain.2013.0166>
- Biesta, G.J.J. (2017). *The rediscovery of teaching*. New York: Routledge.
- Blackmore, J. (2015) *How theory can inform purposeful leadership*. Perth, Western Australia: Australian Association for Research in Education.
- Blackwell, L., Trzesniewski, K., & Dweck, C. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across an adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and an intervention. *Child Development*, 78(1), 246-263.
- Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the oppressed*. London, England: Pluto Press.
- Bohnert, A., Fredricks, A. J., & Randall, E. (2010). Capturing unique dimensions of youth organized activity involvement: Theoretical and methodological considerations. *Review of Educational Research*, 80, 576–610. doi:10.3102/0034654310364533.
- Bolton, G. (1978). Emotion in the dramatic process – is it an adjective or a verb? *The NADIR Journal*, 3(2), 14-18.
- Bolton, G. (1984). *Drama as education: An argument for placing drama at the centre of the curriculum*. Harlow, England: Longman.
- Bolton, G. (1986). Drama and emotion: Some uses and abuses. In D. Davis & C. Lawrence (Eds.), *Gavin Bolton: Selected writings* (pp. 89–99). London: Longman.
- Bolton, G. (2010). Drama as education: Protection. In D. Davis (Ed). (2010). *Gavin Bolton: Essential writings* (pp. 87-96). Stoke-on-Trent, England: Trentham Books.
- Booth, D. (1994). *Story drama: reading, writing and roleplaying across the curriculum*. Ontario, Canada: Pembroke Publishers.
- Booth, D. (2005). *Story drama: Creating stories through role playing, improvising and reading aloud* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Ontario, Canada: Pembroke Publishers.
- Booth, E. (2003). Seeking definition: What is a teaching artist? *Teaching Artist Journal*, 1(1), 5–12. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/15411796.2003.9684265>
- Booth, E. (2009). *The music teaching artist's bible: Becoming a virtuoso educator*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Brice Heath, S. & Roach, A. (1999). Imaginative actuality: Learning in the arts during the nonschool hours. In Fiske, E. (Ed.). (1999). *Champions of change: The impact of arts on learning*.

- Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.
- Brinkmann, S. (2018). The interview. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 576 - 599). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Brown, D.H., & Kisida, B. (2019, 12 February). *New evidence of the benefits of arts education*. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2019/02/12/new-evidence-of-the-benefits-of-arts-education/>
- Bryce, J., Mendelovits, J., Beavis, A., McQueen, J., & Adams, I. (2004). *Evaluation of school-based arts education programmes in Australian schools*. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research,
- Bundy, P., Piazzoli, E., & Dunn, J. (2015). Sociocultural theory, process drama and second language learning. In S. Davis, H. Grainger Clemson., B. Ferholt., S.M. Jansson., & A. Marjanovic-Shane. (2015). *Dramatic interactions in education, Vygotskian and sociocultural approaches to drama, education and research*. London, England: Bloomsbury. 153 – 170.
- Burke, K. (2011, March 5). Creative alliances allow disadvantaged students to excel. *Sydney Morning Herald*, p. 16.
- Burton, J. Horowitz, R. & Abeles, H. (1999). Learning in and through the arts: Curriculum implications. In E. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of arts on learning*, 35–46. Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.
- Caldwell, B. J., & Vaughan, T. (2012). *Transforming education through the arts*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Campbell, V. & Hogan, Z. (2019) Pandora and the Tiger's Whisker: stories as a pretext in two adult language learning contexts, *NJ*, 43(1), 39-50. doi: 10.1080/14452294.2019.1585931
- Campbell, V. (2018, December). *Moonlight on sand dunes – School Drama: The teaching artist experience*. Paper presented at Australian Association for Research in Education, Sydney, Australia.
- Campbell, V., Ewing, R., & Gibson, R. (2010). *Evaluation of school drama 2009*. Sydney, Australia: University of Sydney.
- Catterall, J. (2009). *Doing well and doing good by doing art: The long term effects of sustained involvement in the visual and performing arts during high school*. Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles Imagination Group.

- Catterall, J. (2015). *The Creativity Playbook: A guide to our creativity debates*. Los Angeles, CA: I-Group Books.
- Catterall, J. S., Dumais, S. A., & Hampden-Thompson, G. (2012). *The arts and achievement in at-risk youth: Findings from four longitudinal studies*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts.
- Catterall, J., & Waldorf, L. (1999). Chicago arts partnerships in education: Summary evaluation. In E. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of arts on learning*, 47–62. Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.
- Catterall, J., Chapleau, R., & Iwanaga, J. (1999). Involvement in the arts and human development: General involvement and intensive involvement in music and theatre arts. In E. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of arts on learning*. Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.
- Catterall, J.S. (2002). The arts and the transfer of learning. In R. Deasy. (Ed.). (2002). *Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership.
- Chalmers, J. & Quigley, M. (2017). *Changing jobs: The fair go in the new machine age*. Melbourne, Victoria: Redback Quarterly.
- Children's Parliament. (2017). *School should be a joyful place: Learning and school life in Scotland – A children's parliament report*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Children's Parliament Scotland.
- Clark, A. (1997). *Being there: putting brain, body, and world together again*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Clements, A. M., Rimrodt, S. L., Abel, J. R., Blankner, J. G., Mostofsky, S. H., Pekar, J. J., Denckla, M. B., & Cutting, L. E. (2006). Sex differences in cerebral laterality of language and visuospatial processing. *Brain and Language*, 98, 150–158.
- Cody, T.L. (2015). Transformative classroom drama practice: What is happening in New Zealand schools? *P-e-r-f-o-r-m-a-n-c-e*, 2(1-2). Retrieved from <http://www.p-e-r-f-o-r-m-a-n-c-e.org/?p=2513>
- Conard, F. (1992). *The arts in education and a meta-analysis*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis), Purdue University, IN.
- Cook, H.C. (1917). *The play way: An essay in educational method*. New York, NY: Frederick A. Stokes Company.
- Courtney, R. (1995). *Drama and feeling: An aesthetic theory*. Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.

- Cremin, T. & Macdonald, R. (2013). Developing creativity through drama. In R. Jones & D. Wyse (Eds.), *Creativity in the primary curriculum*. London, England: Routledge (pp. 83-97). Retrieved from <http://oro.open.ac.uk/52334/>
- Cremin, T. (2014). Developing creativity through drama. In T. Cremin (Ed.), *Teaching English creatively* (pp. 25–40). London: Routledge. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286269403\\_Developing\\_creativity\\_through\\_drama](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286269403_Developing_creativity_through_drama)
- Cremin, T. (2019). *Teachers' knowledge of children's literature: The cornerstone of reading for pleasure*. Scottish Book Trust. Retrieved from <http://oro.open.ac.uk/60386/>
- Cremin, T., Goouch, K., Blakemore, L., Goff, E., & Macdonald, R. (2006). Connecting drama and writing: Seizing the moment to write. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 11(3), 273–291. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569780600900636>
- Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J.D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Melbourne, Australia: SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. & Miller, D. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124-130.
- Davis, D. (2008). *First we see. Report of the National Review of Visual Education*. Australian Government: Australia Council and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Canberra, Australia.
- Davis, S. (2016). *Learning that matters: Revitalising Heathcote's rolling role for the digital age*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Davis, S., Grainger Clemson, H., Ferholt, B., Jansson, S.M., Marjanovic-Shane, A. (2015). *Dramatic interactions in education, Vygotskian and sociocultural approaches to drama, education and research*. London, England: Bloomsbury.
- de Bruin, L.R., & Harris, A. (2017). Fostering creative ecologies in Australasian secondary schools. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(9), 23-43.
- Deasy, R. (Ed.). (2002). *Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development*. Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership.
- Deitch Feshbach, N., & Feshbach, S. (2011). Empathy and education. In Decety, J. & Ickes, W (Eds.), (2011). *The social neuroscience of empathy*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2018). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 1 - 26). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.



- Denzin, N.K. (1989). *The interpretive point of view: Interpretive interactionism*. Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (pp. 1-33). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Department of Education and Child Development. (2015). *Comprehension strategies*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/northernadelaide/pages/comp/37986?reFlag=1>
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). (2009). *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government Department of Education and Training for the Council of Australian Governments. Retrieved from [https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging\\_being\\_and\\_becoming\\_the\\_early\\_years\\_learning\\_framework\\_for\\_australia\\_0.pdf](https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia_0.pdf)
- Department of Industry, Innovation and Science. (2015). *National innovation and science agenda report*. Retrieved from <https://www.education.gov.au/national-innovation-and-science-agenda>
- Department of Industry, Innovation and Science. (2018). *Boosting innovation and science*. Retrieved from <https://www.industry.gov.au/strategies-for-the-future/boosting-innovation-and-science>
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2008). *Australia 2020 Summit: Final report*. Retrieved from <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2008/06/apo-nid15061-1228151.pdf>
- DICE Consortium, (2010). *Drama improves Libson key competencies in education, policy paper*. Retrieved from <http://www.dramanetwork.eu/>
- Donnelly, K. & Wiltshire, K. (2014). *Review of the Australian curriculum: final report*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government Department of Education. Retrieved from [https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/review\\_of\\_the\\_national\\_curriculum\\_final\\_report.pdf](https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/review_of_the_national_curriculum_final_report.pdf)
- Du Pré, H. (1997). *A genius in the family: an intimate memoir of Jacqueline du Pré*. London, England: Heinemann.
- Duffy, P. (2012). Problem finders in problem spaces: A review of cognitive research for drama in education. *Youth Theatre Journal*, 26(2), 120-132. doi:10.1080/08929092.2012.723562
- Duffy, P., & Vettraino, E. (2010). *Youth and theatre of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230105966>

- Dunn, J. & Stinson, M. (2012). Learning through emotion: Moving the affective in from the margins. *International Journal of Early Childhood*. doi 10.1007/s13158-012-0058-x
- Dunn, J., Bundy, P., & Stinson, M. (2015). Connection and commitment: Exploring the generation and experience of emotion in a participatory drama. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 16(6). Retrieved from <http://www.ijea.org/v15n6/>.
- DuPont, S. (1992). The effectiveness of creative drama as an instructional strategy to enhance the reading comprehension skills of fifth-grade remedial readers. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 1992, 31(3): 41-52.
- Dwyer, S., & Buckle, J. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1), 54–63. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690900800105>
- Edmiston, B. (2015). Dialogue and social positioning in dramatic inquiry: Creating with Prospero. In S. Davis, H. Grainger Clemson, B. Ferholt, S.M. Jansson, & A. Marjanovic-Shane. (2015). *Dramatic interactions in education, Vygotskian and sociocultural approaches to drama, education and research* (pp.79-96). London, England: Bloomsbury.
- Education Council. (2018). *Optimising STEM industry-school partnerships: Inspiring Australia's next generation, final report*. Retrieved from <http://www.educationcouncil.edu.au/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/Reports%20and%20publications/Publications/Optimising%20STEM%20Industry-School%20Partnerships%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf>
- Eisner, E. (2000). *Learning and the arts: Crossing boundaries*. Retrieved from <https://www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/learning-and-the-arts-crossing-boundaries.pdf>
- Eisner, E.W. (2017). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.
- Ewing, R. (2002). Framing a professional learning culture: An Australian case study. *Curriculum Perspectives*, 22(3), 23-32.
- Ewing, R. (2006). Reading to allow spaces to play. In R. Ewing (Ed.), *Beyond the reading wars: Towards a balanced approach to helping children learn to read*, (pp. 141-150). Sydney, Australia: Primary English Teachers' Association.
- Ewing, R. (2009). Creating imaginative, practical possibilities in K-6 English classrooms. In J. Manuel, P. Brock, D. Carter, & W. Sawyer (Eds.), *Imagination innovation creativity: Re-visioning English in education*, (pp. 173-182). Sydney, Australia: Phoenix Publication.
- Ewing, R. (2010a). *The arts and Australian education: Realising potential*. Australian Education Review 58. Melbourne, Victoria: Australian Council for Educational Research.

- Ewing, R. (2010b). Literacy and the arts. In F. Christie, & A. Simpson, *Literacy and social responsibility: multiple perspectives*. London, England: Equinox.
- Ewing, R. (2015). Dramatic play and process drama: Towards a collective zone of proximal development to enhance language and literacy learning. In S. Davis, H. Grainger Clemson, B. Ferholt, S.M. Jansson, & A. Marjanovic-Shane. (2015). *Dramatic interactions in education, Vygotskian and sociocultural approaches to drama, education and research*. London, England: Bloomsbury.
- Ewing, R. (2018). *Exploring SOME of the myths about learning to read: A review of research on the role of phonics*. Sydney, Australia: NSW Teachers Federation. Retrieved from [https://news.nswtf.org.au/application/files/8715/3249/6625/18181\\_Role\\_of\\_Phonics.pdf](https://news.nswtf.org.au/application/files/8715/3249/6625/18181_Role_of_Phonics.pdf)
- Ewing, R. (2019). *Drama-rich pedagogy and becoming deeply literate: Drama Australia Monograph No. Twelve*. Brisbane, Australia: Drama Australia.
- Ewing, R. & Saunders, J.N. (2019). The school drama partnership: Beyond an artist-in-residence program. In M. Finneran & M. Anderson (Eds.), *Education and theatres: Beyond the four walls. Landscapes: the Arts, Aesthetics, and Education* (27). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- Ewing, R. A., & Saunders, J. N. (2018). Towards 'grown-up-ness in the world' through the arts as critical, quality pedagogy. In C. Naughton, G. Biesta & D. R. Cole (Eds.), *Arts, artists and pedagogy: Philosophy and the arts in education* (pp. 107-114). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ewing, R., & Saunders, J. N. (2016). *The school drama book: Drama, literature and literacy in the creative classroom*. Sydney, Australia: Currency Press Pty Ltd.
- Ewing, R., & Saunders, J.N. (2014, July). *The school drama experience*. Paper presented at the international teaching artist conference 2 (ITAC 2), Brisbane, Australia.
- Ewing, R., & Simons, J. (with Hertzberg, M.). (2004). *Beyond the script: Take two*. Newtown, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Ewing, R., & Simons, J. (with Hertzberg, M.). (2016). *Beyond the script: Take three*. Newtown, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Ewing, R., Gibson, R., Campbell, V., Saunders, J.N., & Hristofski, H. (2015). The school drama program. In M. Anderson & C. Roche (Eds.), (2015). *The state of the art: teaching drama in the 21st century*. Sydney, Australia: Sydney University Press.
- Ewing, R., Hristofski, H., Gibson, R., Campbell, V., Robertson, A. (2011). Using drama to enhance literacy: The school drama initiative. *Literacy Learning: the Middle Years, A Journal of the Australian Literacy Educators' Association*, 19(3), 33 – 39.

- Ewing, R., Miller, C., Saxton, J. (2008). Drama and contemporary picture books in the middle years. In M. Anderson, J. Hughes, & J. Manuel (Eds.), *Drama and English teaching: Imagination, action and engagement*, (pp. 121-135). Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press.
- Finlay Johnson, H. (1907). *The dramatic method of teaching*. London, England: Nisbet.
- Fiske, E. (Ed.). (1999). *Champions of change: The impact of arts on learning*. Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.
- Fleming, J., Gibson, R., & Anderson, M. (Eds.), (2016). *How arts education makes a difference. Research examining successful classroom practice and pedagogy*. London, England: Routledge.
- Flynn, R. M. (1997). Developing and using curriculum-based creative drama in fifth grade reading/language arts instruction: A drama specialist and a classroom teacher collaborate. *Youth Theatre Journal*, 11(1), 47-69. doi: 10.1080/08929092.1997.10012483
- Freebody, P. (2003). *Qualitative research in education: Interaction and practice*. London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Frey, C. & Osborne, M. (2013). *The future of employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerisation?* Oxford, England: Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford. Retrieved from [https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/The\\_Future\\_of\\_Employment.pdf](https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/academic/The_Future_of_Employment.pdf)
- Frost, J. (1997). *Now read this*. Brisbane, Australia: Key Publications.
- Gaiman, N. (2002). *Coraline*. Sydney, Australia: HarperCollins Publishers Australia.
- Gardiner, P. (2014). *Teaching playwriting: Dramaturgy, creativity and agency*. Sydney, Australia: The University of Sydney.
- Gazzaniga, M. (2008). Arts and cognition: Findings hint at relationships. In C. Asbury & B. Rich (Eds.), *Learning, arts, and the brain: The Dana consortium report on arts and cognition*. New York, NY: Dana Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of culture*. New York, NY: Basic books.
- Gibbs, R. (2005). *Embodiment and cognitive science*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Gibson, R. & Beachum, J. (2019). *Evaluation of school drama programs 2014-2018*. (Unpublished report). Sydney, Australia: The University of Sydney.
- Gibson, R. & Ewing, R. (2011). *Transforming the curriculum through the arts*. Melbourne, Australia: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gibson, R. (2011). *Evaluation of school drama 2010*. Sydney, Australia: University of Sydney.
- Gibson, R. (2012). *Evaluation of school drama 2011*. Sydney, Australia: University of Sydney.
- Gibson, R. (2013). *Evaluation of school drama 2012*. Sydney, Australia: University of Sydney.

- Gibson, R. (2015). The school drama program: delivering process drama via a teaching artist. *NJ*, 39(1), 76–95. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/14452294.2015.1083152>
- Gibson, R., & Smith, D. (2013). *Meta-evaluation of school drama 2009 to 2012*. Sydney, Australia: University of Sydney.
- Gleeson, L. (2006, March). *Places to play: Stories as an adventure playground*. Paper presented at The National Conference on Future Directions in Literacy, University of Sydney, Australia.
- Goleman, D. (2006). *Social intelligence: The new science of human relationships*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Gonski, D., Arcus, T., Boston, K., Gould, V., Johnson, W., O'Brien, L., Perry L.A., & Roberts, M. (2018). *Through growth to achievement: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Government Department of Education.
- Grainger Clemson, H. (2015) Stanislavski and Vygotsky: On the problem of the actor's and learner's work. In S. Davis, H. Grainger Clemson., B. Ferholt, S.M. Jansson, & A. Marjanovic-Shane. (2015). *Dramatic interactions in education, Vygotskian and sociocultural approaches to drama, education and research*. London, England: Bloomsbury.
- Grainer, T. & Cremin, M. (2001). *Resourcing classroom drama, 5-8*. Sheffield, England: National Association for Teachers of English.
- Greder, A. (2002). *The Island*. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Greder, A. (2010). *The City*. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Greene, M. (1977). Towards wise-awakeness: An argument for the arts and humanities in education. *Teachers College Record*, 79(1). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1311543470/>
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Greene, M. (2001). *Variations on a blue guitar: The Lincoln Centre Institute lectures on aesthetic education*. Williston, VT: Teachers College Press.
- Greene, M. (2007). *Imagination and the healing arts*. Maxine Greene Institute. Retrieved from [https://maxinegreene.org/uploads/library/imagination\\_ha.pdf](https://maxinegreene.org/uploads/library/imagination_ha.pdf)
- Groundwater-Smith, S., Dockett, S. & Botrell, D. (2015). *Participatory research with children and young people*. London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Gröhn, D., Rebucal, K., Diehl, M., Lumley, M., & Labouvie-Vief, G. (2008). Empathy across the adult lifespan: Longitudinal and experience-sampling findings. *Emotion* (Washington, D.C.), 8(6), 753–765. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014123>

- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Gungahlin Public School. (2018). *Gungahlin Public School Annual Report 2017*. Sydney, Australia: Gungahlin Public School.
- Hankus, N. (2016). *It made me feel like I lost something: Engaging students in learning through process drama*. (Unpublished honours thesis), The University of Sydney, Australia.
- Harris, A. (2016). *Creative ecologies: fostering creativity in secondary schools*. . Retrieved from <http://creativeresearchhub.com>
- Harris, A. (2016). *Creativity and education*. London, England: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Haseman, B. (1991). Improvisation, process drama and dramatic art. *The Drama Magazine*, July, 19-21.
- Haseman, B. (2014). Improvisation, process drama and dramatic art. *Drama Queensland Says*, 37(1), 6–11.
- Hatfield, E., Rapson, R.L., & Le, Y.C.L. (2011). Emotional contagion and empathy. In J. Decety & W. Ickes (Eds.), *The social neuroscience of empathy*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Hattie, J.A.C. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hawke, J. L., Wadsworth, S. J., & DeFries, J. C. (2005). Genetic influences on reading difficulties in boys and girls: The Colorado twin study. *Dyslexia*, 12, 21–29.
- Heathcote, D. (1984). Dorothy Heathcote's notes. In Johnson, L., & O'Neill, C. (Eds.), *Dorothy Heathcote: collected writing on education and drama*, 202-210. London, England: Hutchinson.
- Heathcote, D., & Bolton, G. (1995). *Drama for learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Hill, A. (1994). *The burnt stick*. Sydney, Australia: Penguin/Viking.
- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training. (2017). *Inquiry into innovation and creativity: workforce for the new economy*. Retrieved from [https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/reportrep/024036/toc\\_pdf/Innovationandcreativity.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf](https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/committees/reportrep/024036/toc_pdf/Innovationandcreativity.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf)
- Hoyt, L. (2009). *Revisit, reflect, retell: Time-tested strategies for teaching reading comprehension*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Hunter, M.A. (2005). *Education and the arts research overview: A summary report prepared for the Australia Council for The Arts*. Sydney, Australia: Australia Council for the Arts.
- Jefferson, M., & Anderson, M. (2017). *Transforming schools: creativity, critical reflection, communication, collaboration*. London, England: Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Johnson, N. (Presenter). (2011, October 11). Dramatising the syllabus. In 7.30 [Television program] [Transcript]. Sydney, Australia: ABC TV. Retrieved from <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/dramatising-the-syllabus/3503434>
- John-Steiner, V. (2015). Forward. In S. Davis, H. Grainger Clemson, B. Ferholt, S.M. Jansson, & A. Marjanovic-Shane. (2015). *Dramatic interactions in education, Vygotskian and sociocultural approaches to drama, education and research* (pp. XV – XXI). London, England: Bloomsbury.
- Karaolis, O. (in press). *Case study of School Drama*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis), The University of Sydney, Australia.
- Kardash, C.A.M., & Wright, L. (1987). Does creative drama benefit elementary school students: A meta-analysis. *Youth Theatre Journal*, 1(3), 8-11.
- Kempe, A. (2000). Drama and the development of literacy. *NJ*, 24(1), 5-24.
- Kempe, A. (2001). Drama as a framework for the development of literacy. *Set* 2001(2), 14-19.
- Kincheloe, J.L. (1991). *Teachers as researchers: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment*. London, England: The Falmer Press.
- Lankshear, C. (1994). *Critical literacy*. Belconnen, Australia: Australian Curriculum Studies Association.
- Lee, B.K., Patall, E., Cawthon, S., & Steingut, R.R. (2014). The effect of drama-based pedagogy on preK-16 outcomes: A meta-analysis of research from 1985 to 2012. *Review of Educational Research*, 85(1), 3-49. doi: 10.3102/0034654314540477
- Limbrick, L., Wheldall, K., & Madelaine, A. (2010). Estimating gender ratios of poor reading using large-scale assessments. *Australian Journal of Education*, 54(2), 190–222. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/000494411005400206>
- Lincoln, Y.S., Lynham, S.A. & Guba, E.G. (2018). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 108 - 150). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Lindgren, R., & Johnson-Glenberg, M. (2013). Emboldened by embodiment: Six precepts for research on embodied learning and mixed reality. *Educational Researcher*, 42(8), 445–452. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X13511661>
- Livermore, J. (1998). *More than words can say*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Centre for Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Canberra.
- Livermore, J. (2003). A view of literacy through the arts. In J. Livermore (Ed.) (2003). *More than words can say*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Canberra, Australia: National Affiliation of Arts Education. Retrieved from [https://dramaaustralia.org.au/assets/files/NAAE-pubs-more-than-words-can-say%20\(1\).pdf](https://dramaaustralia.org.au/assets/files/NAAE-pubs-more-than-words-can-say%20(1).pdf)



- Livermore, J. (2019). A view of literacy through the arts. In J. Dyson (Ed.), (2019). *More than words can say*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Canberra, Australia: National Advocates for Arts Education. Retrieved from [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c7763c2778897204743a4c4/t/5ce4e34ad77bf50001a63f5c/1558504312124/MTWCS\\_2019.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c7763c2778897204743a4c4/t/5ce4e34ad77bf50001a63f5c/1558504312124/MTWCS_2019.pdf)
- Mansour, M. (2013). *The role of school, home, and community arts participation in students' academic and non-academic outcomes*. Sydney, Australia: University of Sydney, Faculty of Education and Social Work. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/2123/11680>
- Marsden, J. & Tan, S. (1998). *The rabbits*. Sydney, Australia: Lothian Children's Books.
- Marsden, J., & Ottley, M. (2008). *Home and away*. Melbourne, Australia: A Lothian Children's Book.
- Martin, A. (2008). Enhancing student motivation and engagement: The effects of a multidimensional intervention. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 33(2), 239–269. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2006.11.003>
- Martin, A. (2009a). Motivation and engagement in the workplace: Examining a multidimensional framework and instrument from a measurement and evaluation perspective. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 41(4), 223–243. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481756.2009.11909831>
- Martin, A. J. (2004). School motivation of boys and girls: Differences of degree, differences of kind, or both? *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 56, 133–146.
- Martin, A. J. (2007). Examining a multidimensional model of student motivation and engagement using a construct validation approach. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77, 413–440.
- Martin, A. J. (2009b). Motivation and engagement across the academic lifespan: A developmental construct validity study of elementary school, high school, and university/college students. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 69, 794–824. doi:10.1177/0013164409332214
- Martin, A. J. (2010). *Motivation and engagement scale*. Summerhill, New South Wales, Australia: Lifelong Achievement Group. Available at <http://www.lifelongachievement.com>
- Martin, A., Mansour, M., Anderson, M., Gibson, R., Liem, G., & Sudmalis, D. (2013). The role of arts participation in students' academic and nonacademic outcomes: a longitudinal study of school, home, and community factors. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(3), 709–727. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032795>
- Martin, A.J., Collie, R.J., & Evans, P. (2016). Motivation and engagement in music: Theory, research, practice and future directions. In Fleming, J., Gibson, R., & Anderson, M. (Eds.), *How arts education makes a difference. Research examining successful classroom practice and pedagogy*. London, England: Routledge.



- Marzano, R.J., & Kendall, J.S. (1996). *The fall and rise of standards-based education. Issues in brief*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Boards of Education. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED398643.pdf>
- Masters, G. (in press). *Review of NSW School Curriculum*. Sydney, Australia: NSW Education Standards Authority.
- Mcatamney, O. (2018). *School Drama: A case study of using drama for oracy in the EAL/D classroom* (Unpublished Honours dissertation), The University of Sydney, Australia.
- McCaslin, N. (1996). *Creative drama in the classroom and beyond*. New York, NY: Longman Publishers.
- McLaughlin, M. & Allen, M. B. (2009). *Guided comprehension in grades 3-4*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association Inc.
- McNaughton, M. J. (1997). Drama and children's writing: A study of the influences of drama on the imaginative writing of primary school children. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 2(1), 55-86. doi:10.1080/1356978970020105
- Meek, M. (1988). *How texts teach what readers learn*. Gloucestershire, England: The Thimble Press.
- Millard, G., & King, S.M. (2014). *The Duck and the Darklings*. Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Miller, C. & Saxton, J. (2011). To see the world as if it were otherwise: Brain research challenging the curriculum of 'organized chunks'. *NJ*, 35, 118-132.
- Miller, C., & Saxton, J. (2004). *Into the story, language in action through drama*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Miller, C., & Saxton, J. (2009). Drama: Bridging the conversations between our inner selves and the outside world. *English in Australia*, 44(2), 35-42.
- Miller, C., & Saxton, J. (2016). *Into the story 2. More stories! More drama!* Chicago, IL: Intellect Ltd.
- Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA). (2008). *Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians*. Retrieved from [http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/national\\_declaration\\_on\\_the\\_educational\\_goals\\_for\\_young\\_australians.pdf](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/national_declaration_on_the_educational_goals_for_young_australians.pdf)
- Mitchell, M. (2015). Dramatic interactions: From Vygotsky's life of drama to the drama of life. In S. Davis, H. Grainger Clemson, B. Ferholt, S.M. Jansson, & A. Marjanovic-Shane. (2015). *Dramatic interactions in education, Vygotskian and sociocultural approaches to drama, education and research* (pp. 19-38). London, England: Bloomsbury.
- Moll, L. & Whitmore, K. (1993). *Vygotsky in classroom practice: Moving from individual transmission to social transaction*. In E.A. Forman, N. Minick and C. Stone (Eds.), *Contexts for learning: sociocultural dynamics in children's development*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

- Morgan, M., Gibbs, S., Maxwell, K., & Britten, N. (2002). Hearing children's voices: methodological issues in conducting focus groups with children ages 7 – 11 years. *Qualitative Research*, 2(5), 5-20. doi: 10.1177/148794102002001636.
- Morgan, N. & Saxton, J. (1987). *Teaching drama: A mind of many wonders*. Cheltenham, England: Stanley Thornes Publishers Ltd.
- Morse, J. (2018). Reframing rigor in qualitative inquiry. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 796 - 817). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Nastasi, B.K., & Schensul, S.L. (2005). Contributions of qualitative research to the validity of intervention research. *Journal of School Psychology*, 43(3), 117-195.
- National Education Association. (2013). *Preparing 21<sup>st</sup> century students for a global society: An educator's guide to the "Four Cs"*. Washington, DC: National Education Association. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/A-Guide-to-Four-Cs.pdf>
- Neelands, J., & Goode, T. (1990). *Structuring drama work : a handbook of available forms in theatre and drama*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Neelands, J., & Goode, T. (2000). *Structuring drama work: A handbook of available forms in theatre and drama*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA). (2018). *National Literacy Learning Progression*. Sydney, Australia: NESA. Retrieved from <https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/32837681-1ffc-49b3-8069-c756611ff054/national-literacy-learning-progression.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=>
- New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA). (2012). NSW Syllabus for the Australian Curriculum, *English K-10 Syllabus*. Sydney, Australia: NESA. Retrieved from <http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/1c3d7c13-87c1-402a-a43e-897a4b7dd74c/english-k10-syllabus.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID>
- Nicholson, H. (1999). Aesthetic values, drama education and the politics of difference. *NJ*, 23(2), 81-90.
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring, a feminine approach to ethics & moral education*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Norman, J. (1999). Brain right drama part 1. *The Drama Magazine*, Summer 1999, 9-13.
- Norman, J. (2002). Brain right drama part 2. *The Drama Magazine*, Winter 2002, 33-40.
- NSW Department of Education and Training. (2010). *Teaching comprehension strategies*. (Taken from the Focus on Reading 3-6 program). Retrieved from

<http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/literacy/assets/pdf/packages/combook.pdf>

- O'Day, S. A. (2000). *Creative drama as a literacy strategy: Teachers' use of a scaffold* (Doctoral thesis), Georgia State University, Atlanta, US.
- O'Mara, J. (2004). At Sunny Bay: Building students' repertoire of literacy practices through process drama. In A. Healy, & E. Honan (Eds.), *Text next: new resources for literacy learning* (pp. 119-136). Newtown, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association.
- O'Neill, C. (1995). *Dramaworlds: A framework for process drama*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- O'Toole, J. (1992). *The process of drama: negotiating art and meaning*. London, England: Routledge.
- O'Toole, J. (2006). *Doing drama research: Stepping into enquiry in drama, theatre and education*. Brisbane, Australia: Drama Australia.
- O'Toole, J. (2010). Drama as pedagogy. In J. O'Toole, M. Stinson, & T. Moore. (2010). *Drama and curriculum: A giant at the door* (pp. 97-113). (Vol. 6). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9370-8>
- O'Toole, J., & Dunn, J. (2002). *Pretending to learn: Helping children learn through drama*. Sydney, Australia: Pearson Education Australia.
- O'Toole, J., & Lepp, M. (2000). *Drama for life : stories of adult learning and empowerment*. Brisbane, Australia: Playlab.
- O'Toole, J., Adams, R., Anderson, M., Burton, B., & Ewing, R. (2014). *Young audiences, theatre and the cultural conversation*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.
- O'Toole, J., Stinson, M., & Moore, T. (2010). *Drama and curriculum: A giant at the door*. (Vol. 6). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9370-8>
- Olson, R. K. (2002). Dyslexia: nature and nurture. *Dyslexia*, 8, 143–159.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2000). *Student questionnaire for PISA 2000*. Retrieved May 7, 2009 from [www.oecd.org/](http://www.oecd.org/)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Student questionnaire for PISA 2006*. Retrieved May 7, 2009 from [www.oecd.org/](http://www.oecd.org/)
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2018). *The future of Education and Skills: Education 2030*. Paris, France: OECD. Retrieved from [https://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20\(05.04.2018\).pdf](https://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20(05.04.2018).pdf)
- Pascoe, R. (2002). Stretching the envelope for arts literacy: Arguing for multiple literacies through drama and the other arts. *Critical Studies in Education*, 43(2), 64-76. doi: 10.1080/17508480209556403

- Pascoe, R. (2003). The language of drama: Making and communicating meaning. In J. Livermore (Ed.), *More than words can say*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Canberra, Australia: National Affiliation of Arts Education. Retrieved from [https://dramaaustralia.org.au/assets/files/NAAE-pubs-more-than-words-can-say%20\(1\).pdf](https://dramaaustralia.org.au/assets/files/NAAE-pubs-more-than-words-can-say%20(1).pdf)
- Pascoe, R. (2019). The language of drama: Making and communicating meaning. In J. Dyson (Ed.), (2019). *More than words can say*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Canberra, Australia: National Advocates for Arts Education. Retrieved from [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c7763c2778897204743a4c4/t/5ce4e34ad77bf50001a63f5c/1558504312124/MTWCS\\_2019.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c7763c2778897204743a4c4/t/5ce4e34ad77bf50001a63f5c/1558504312124/MTWCS_2019.pdf)
- Pascoe, R., Leong, S., MacCallum, J., Mackinlay, E., Marsh, K., Smith, B., Church, T., Winterton, A. (2005). *National review of school music education: augmenting the diminished*. Canberra: Dept. of Education, Science and Training. Retrieved from [https://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/id/eprint/9459/1/music\\_review\\_reportFINAL.pdf](https://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/id/eprint/9459/1/music_review_reportFINAL.pdf)
- Pfeifer, J.H., & Dapratto, M. (2011). "Mirror, mirror, in my mind": Empathy, interpersonal competence, and the mirror neuron system. In J. Decety & W. Ickes (Eds.), (2011). *The social neuroscience of empathy*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Phillips, N. M. (2015). Literary neuroscience and history of mind. In Zunshine, L. (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of cognitive literary studies*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199978069.013.0004>
- Piazzoli, E. (2018). *Embodying language in action: The artistry of process drama in second language education*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.
- Pickle, M. J. (1998). Historical trends in biological and medical investigations of reading disabilities: 1850–1915. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 31, 625–635.
- Pink, D. (2006). *The whole new mind: why right-brainers will rule the future*. New York, NY: Riverhead Books.
- Plastow, J., & Boon, R. (2004). *Theatre and empowerment: community drama on the world stage*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Podlozny, A. (2000). Strengthening verbal skills through the use of classroom drama: A clear link. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 34(3/4), 239–275. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2307/3333644>
- Rabkin, N., Reynolds, M., Hedberg, E., & Shelby, J. (2011) *Teaching artists and the future of education: A report on the teaching artist research project*. Chicago, IL: NORC at The University of Chicago.

- REA Group, (2018). *Neighbourhoods, Wentworth*. Sydney, Australia: Retrieved from [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au)
- Reading, M., Thorpe, J. & Peake, T. (2015). *A smart move: Future-proofing Australia's workforce by growing skills in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM)*. Sydney, Australia: PricewaterhouseCoopers.
- Richards, L. (2005) *Handling qualitative data: A practical guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Richardson, L. & Adams St Pierre, E. (2018). Writing: A method of inquiry. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 818 - 838). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Richardson, L. (1997). *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Roberts, W., & Strayer, J. (1996). Empathy, emotional expressiveness, and prosocial behavior. *Child Development*, 67(2), 449–470. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.1996.tb01745.x>
- Robertson, A. (2010). *The school drama experience: A case study of learning in and through the art of drama*. Sydney, Australia: The University of Sydney.
- Robinson, K., & Aronica, L. (2015). *Creative schools*. London, England: Allen Lane.
- Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Rowling, J.K., (1998). *Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone*. New York, NY: A Levine Books.
- Rubtsova, O., & Daniels, H. (2016). The concept of drama in Vygotsky's theory: Application in research. *Cultural-Historical Psychology*, 12(3), 189–207. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.17759/chp.2016120310>
- Rudduck, J. & Hopkins, D. (1985). *Research as a basis for teaching: Reading from the work of Lawrence Stenhouse*. Portsmouth, England: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. London, England: SAGE Publications.
- Saunders, J.N. (2015). *School drama: A case study of student academic and non-academic outcomes*. Sydney, Sydney University, Faculty of Education and Social Work. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/2123/13948>
- Saunders, J.N. (2018). Imagine the dramatic (r)evolution: A good revolution always involves a lot of drama. *Australian Drama Education Magazine*, 14, 42-46.

- Saunders, J.N., & Stinson, M. (2016). Drama in the Australian national curriculum – the role of advocacy. *NJ*, 40(2), 113–126. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/14452294.2016.1276737>
- Sawyer, R.K. (2012). *Explaining creativity : the science of human innovation*. (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Saxton, J. (2018). *What matters?* Keynote address July 6th, 2015, *NJ*, 42(1), 3-13, doi: 10.1080/14452294.2018.1504338
- Seidel, S. (1999). Stand and unfold yourself: A monograph on the Shakespeare & Company research study. In E. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of arts on learning*, (pp. 47–62). Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities.
- Seidel, S., Tishman, S., Winner, E., Hetland L., & Palmer, P. (2009). *The qualities of quality: Understanding excellence in arts education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Gradual School of Education.
- Sharpiro, L. (2011) *Embodied cognition: New problems of philosophy*. London, England: Routledge.
- Sharpiro, L. (2014). *The Routledge handbook of embodied cognition*. London, England: Routledge.
- Shaywitz, B. A., Shaywitz, S. E., Pugh, K. R., Constable, R. T., Skudlarski, P., Fulbright, R. K., Bronen, R. A., Fletcher, J. M., Shankweller, D. P., Katz, L., & Gore, J. C. (1995). Sex differences in the functional organization of the brain for language. *Nature*, 373(6515), 607–609.
- Smidt, S. (2009). *Introducing Vygotsky: A guide for practitioners and students in early years education*. London, England: Routledge.
- Smith, D. (2014). *School drama program sustainability case study*. Sydney, Australia: The University of Sydney.
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Stake, R.E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (pp. 443-466). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Stanislavski, C. (1936/1989). *An actor prepares*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Stinson, M. (2015). Drama literacy: developing the know-how of drama. *Drama Queensland Says*, 38(2015), 30–40.
- Stinson, M. (2018). Defining drama literacy – beginning the conversation. *NJ*, 42(1), 89–96. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/14452294.2018.1482815>
- Stinson, M., & Saunders, J.N. (2016). Drama in the Australian National Curriculum: Decisions, tensions and uncertainties. *Research in Drama Education*, 21(1), 93–104. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2015.1126173>

- Strack, F., Martin, L.L., & Strepper, S. (1988). Inhibiting and facilitating condition of facial expressions: A non-obtrusive test of the facial feedback hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54(5), 768–777.
- Sydney Theatre Company. (1982). *Sydney Theatre Company Annual Report 1981*. Sydney, Australia: Sydney Theatre Company.
- Sydney Theatre Company. (2001). *Constitution of Sydney Theatre Company Ltd*. (Unpublished).
- Sze, E. (2013). *Sustainable professional development: A case study on quality arts partnerships in the primary classroom*. Sydney, Australia: The University of Sydney.
- Tan, S. (2006). *The Arrival*. Melbourne, Australia: Lothian.
- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*. New York, NY: Falmer.
- The Royal Conservatory. (2019). *Learning through the arts research*. Ontario, Canada: The Royal Conservatory. Retrieved from <https://www.rcmusic.com/learning/learning-through-the-arts/Itta-research>
- Thomson, P. (2019, 31 March). *Arts organisations and teacher professional development*. Retrieved from [https://researchtale.net/2019/03/31/arts-organisations-and-teacher-professional-development/?fbclid=IwAR3NuTo7uhJy5x7vqE1rnBWiy11ICK\\_NBZA5ONQL-9MXmn34bAMv6To8-M](https://researchtale.net/2019/03/31/arts-organisations-and-teacher-professional-development/?fbclid=IwAR3NuTo7uhJy5x7vqE1rnBWiy11ICK_NBZA5ONQL-9MXmn34bAMv6To8-M)
- Thomson, P., & Hall, C. (2019). *Time To listen: Evidence from the tracking arts learning and engagement (TALE) project*. Retrieved from: <https://researchtale.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/time-to-listen-background-report.pdf>
- Thomson, P., & Hall, C. (2018). *Time to listen report*. Retrieved from: <https://researchtale.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/time-to-listen-report2.pdf>
- Thomson, P., Hall, C., Earl, L., & Geppert, C. (2019). The pedagogical logics of arts-rich schools: A Bourdieusian analysis. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 40(2), 239–253. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2018.1554474>
- Tiller, C. (1999) Drama for empowerment: the role of drama in education with special reference to work in the countries of central and eastern Europe. *European Journal of Intercultural studies*, 10(3), 271-279, doi: 10.1080/0952391990100306
- Turner, H., Mayall, B., Dickinson, R., Clark, A., Hood, S., Samuels, J., & Wiggins, M. (2004). *Children engaging with drama: An evaluation of the National Theatre's drama work in primary schools 2002-2004*. London, England: Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.



- United Nations. (1989). *The Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved from [www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf)
- Vaughan, T., Harris, J., & Caldwell, B. J. (2011). *Bridging the gap in school achievement through the arts: Summary report*. Melbourne, Australia: The Song Room. Retrieved from <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/69164/1/69164.pdf>
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1925/1971). *The psychology of art*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1930/2004). Imagination and creativity in childhood. *Journal of Russian and Eastern European Psychology*. 42(1). 7 – 97.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, S.L. (1933/1966). Play and its role in the mental development of the child. *Voprosy Psikhologii*, 12(6), 62-76.
- Vygotsky, S.L. (1934/1994). The problem of the environment. In R. Z. Van Der Veer & J. Valsiner (Eds.), *The Vygotsky reader*. Oxford, England: Blackwell, 338-52.
- Wagner, B.J. (1976). *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as learning medium*. Washington, DC: The National Education Association.
- Walker, R., Anderson, M., Gibson, R., & Martin, A. (2015). Constructing identity and motivation in the drama classroom: A sociocultural approach. In S. Davis, H. Grainger Clemson, B. Ferholt, S.M. Jansson, & A. Marjanovic-Shane. (2015). *Dramatic interactions in education, Vygotskian and sociocultural approaches to drama, education and research* (pp. 115 – 134). London, England: Bloomsbury.
- Waratah Grammar School. (2017). *Waratah Grammar School Annual Report 2016*. Sydney, Australia: Waratah Grammar School.
- Weingott, P. (1987). Education Officer Report. In Sydney Theatre Company. *Sydney Theatre Company Annual Report 1986*. Sydney, Australia: Sydney Theatre Company.
- Wheatley, N. (2000). *A banner bold*. Sydney, Australia: Scholastic Australia.
- Wherrett, R. (1982). Artistic Director's Report. In Sydney Theatre Company. *Sydney Theatre Company Annual Report 1981*. Sydney, Australia: Sydney Theatre Company.
- Wherrett, R. (1989). Artistic Director's Report. In Sydney Theatre Company. *Sydney Theatre Company Annual Report 1987*. Sydney, Australia: Sydney Theatre Company.
- Williams, G. (1987). Spaces to play: The use of analyses of narrative structure in classroom work with children's literature. In M. Saxby and G. Winch (Eds.), *Give them wings: The experience of children's literature*. Melbourne: Macmillan.



- Winner, E., & Cooper, M. (2000). Mute those claims: No evidence (yet) for a causal link between arts study and academic achievement. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 34(3/4), 11. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2307/3333637>
- Winner, E., Goldstein, T. R., Vincent-Lancrin, S. (2013). *Arts for art's sake? The impact of Arts education*. Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing. Retrieved from [http://www.oecd.org/education/ceri/ART%20FOR%20ART%E2%80%99S%20SAKE%20OVERVIEW\\_EN\\_R3.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/education/ceri/ART%20FOR%20ART%E2%80%99S%20SAKE%20OVERVIEW_EN_R3.pdf)
- Winston, J. (2006). Researching through case study. In J. Ackroyd (Ed.), *Research methodologies for drama education*. Stokes on Trent, England: Trentham Books.
- Wiseman, T. (1996). A concept analysis of empathy. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 23(6), 1162–1167. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1996.12213.x>
- Wood, D., Bruner, J.S., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 17(2), 89 – 100. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.1976.tb00381.x>
- Woodruff, P. (2008). *The necessity of theatre: The art of watching and being watched*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Yeager, D., & Walton, S. (2011). Social-psychological interventions in education: They're not magic. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 267-301.
- Yin, R.K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4<sup>th</sup> ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Yin, R.K. (2012). *Applications of case study research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Thousand Oakes, CA: SAGE.
- Yin, R.K. (2014). *Case study research* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) Thousand Oakes, CA: SAGE.

## Appendices

## Appendix A - Waratah Grammar School Intervention and Brief Reflections

The unit was adapted from a version published in *The School Drama Book* (Ewing & Saunders, 2016).

Note: a selection of brief reflections have been included after some of the workshop outlines, due to space constraints.

### Workshop One

**Monday 8/05/2017**

**Middle Period – 11:40am to 1pm**

**Warm Up: Email Game**

**Groupings:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To get to know the students and the dynamic of the class.

**Description:** Students sat in chairs in a circle in the room. There was one person who stood in the middle (the Spoon) and they said “I’m sending an email to ...” (for example, ‘everyone who walked to school today’). Everyone whom the changeable idea applied to needed to find a new chair in the circle. The Spoon also needed to find a seat.

**Warm Up: Pairs, Triads and Quads**

**Grouping:** Pairs (2s), Triads (3s) and Quads (4s).

**Purpose:** To engage the students with other people in the class; to introduce some of the ideas from the text and to embody these ideas.

**Description:** Students walked around the classroom and as I called a grouping they would need to quickly find this group number. When I called out ‘Pairs’, they made pairs, then triads and then quads. In each grouping they had to create a still image. Pairs were a parent and child getting in trouble, triads created an image of protection and quads an image of a festival.

**Strategy: Sculpting**

**Grouping:** Pairs.

**Purpose:** To get students to consider and embody two of the key themes in the text and to make connections from their own life to the world of the text.

**Description:** Students formed pairs where one student was the sculptor and the other was the thinking clay. The sculptor firstly sculpted their partner into an image of 'hope'. Then they swapped roles and the new sculptor sculpted their partner into an image of 'fear'. Once everyone was ready, the class formed a huge circle in the room and faced outwards. I played some quiet music and asked the students to start in a neutral pose, then over ten claps of the clapping sticks, the students morphed into the image of 'hope'. They held this pose and I asked them to think about how they felt in this pose; a time when they might have felt a similar feeling; their status relationship to the space around them." Then the students slowly morphed over ten counts into the image of 'fear' and I repeated the questions. This was followed by a short reflection in class.

**Strategy: Word Bank and Freeze Frame**

**Grouping:** Groups of 4 or 5.

**Purpose:** To brainstorm about some key theme words and embody them.

**Description:** Students were split into groups of 4 or 5 and given a piece of butchers' paper with a 'theme word' written on it. The theme words were: family, home, friends, community, city and isolation. Each group spent some time brainstorming and either writing or drawing ideas related to the theme word. I then asked them to great a single Freeze Frame depicting it and the rest of the class had to guess what the theme word could be.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop One

Our first workshop fell during the National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) week (three days are allocated to Year 3, 5 and 9 students to complete a series of standardised tests). The students weren't settled and were clearly distracted and restless during the workshop. They had just returned from language lessons where they had been preparing for NAPLAN testing the following day. The class straggled back from their previous lesson, reducing the amount of time we had for *School Drama*. The Email Game wasn't a great choice as it did not help focus the class, rather got them more energised.

When we moved to the Clumps of Pairs, Triads and Quads it became apparent that students didn't want to work with other students who were of a different gender or who were outside their close group of friends.

The sculpting strategy finally settled the class and the students started to focus and this continued into the Word Bank. The key ideas of the text were introduced in this session rather than the text itself.

Heathcote (in Morgan and Saxton, 1987) states, “I must first attract their attention. If I have their attention, I can gain their involvement. Then I have a chance for their investment and from that their concern. If I have their concern, I have hope for obsession” (p. 22). I felt I had more work to do to attract and capture the students’ attention.

Following the class, I wrote an email to Dane reflecting on my unhappiness with the lesson. It hadn’t been the positive and focused start I had hoped for. He responded immediately saying: “It was great today. I think they are really going to get a lot out of the sessions” (Everhart in personal communication, 8 May 2017). I considered Dane’s observations as I prepared for the next workshop and thought that perhaps I was being too hard on myself given it was my first lesson with the class.

## Workshop Two

**Tuesday 16/05/2017**

**First Period – 8:45 to 10am**

**Strategy: Clumps of theme words**

**Grouping:** Varied.

**Purpose:** To collaboratively embody and create images of several theme words.

**Description:** Students walked around the room and I called out a number (between 2 and 6) and students had to get into groups/clumps of that number. I then called out a theme word and students had six seconds to create a single frozen image of that word. Theme words included: conflict, home, war, freedom, violence, parental love, life in a big city, and childhood.

**Strategy: I wonder**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To encourage predictions about the story.

**Description:** As a class, we looked at the cover image of *The City* and I invited the students to ‘wonder’ about it. What questions did they have about the cover? Once they had a question beginning with ‘I wonder ...’ they could call it out.

**Read:** From the beginning of *The City* to the end of page 6 “Here she decided to stay.”

**Strategy:** Visualisation

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To visualise the city scene as a class.

**Description:** The class sat down on the floor and closed their eyes. I played some quiet music to create mood and focus in the room. I asked the students to imagine that they were in the city depicted in the book and to think about what they could see, hear, smell and feel. Then, I asked them to pick the strongest sense that came to them and they would share a phrase with one of the following starters:

- In the city, I can see ...
- In the city, I can hear ...
- In the city, I can smell ...
- In the city, I can feel ...

This created a very rich description of the city where this story might take place.

**Strategy:** Single Freeze Frame

**Grouping:** Groups of 4 or 5.

**Purpose:** To build the context of the story.

**Description:** In groups of 4 or 5, students brainstormed a reason why The Mother wanted to leave the city. Then, they created a single freeze frame depicting this. The Mother may have been inside the image as well as on the outside as the narrator speaking to the image and describing what was going on and why she wanted to leave. Dane Everhart and I modelled this to the students before they began.

**Strategy:** Mapping

**Grouping:** Same as previous groups of 4 or 5.

**Purpose:** To visually represent the space and journey where the story takes place and where the mother walked. To develop inferential comprehension.

**Description:** In groups, students were given a large piece of butcher’s paper and some pastels. They were asked to think about the place where this story could be set. I asked the students to draw part of the city and map the journey of The Mother described in the book and where she decided to stay. Students needed to draw on their comprehension of what they know is in the book

and also infer what else could be included in the map. Once students created these images, they shared them and talked through them with the rest of the class.

**Follow Up:** Students wrote a diary entry from The Mother's perspective at some point on her journey from the city to the place where she decided to stay. They also drew a picture of something special that she might have taken with her from The City.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Two

We didn't have time for a warm up as the classes are slightly shorter than normal. Working in groups is challenging for this class and Dane ended up putting the students into groups, rather than letting the students choose their own. Once we introduced the book, there seemed to be a bit more focus in the group. The Visualisation strategy was a particularly strong feature of this session and grounded the remainder of the lesson.

### Workshop Three

**Tuesday 23/05/2017**

**First Session – 8:45 to 10am**

No warm up. We did a quick recap of the book and strategies we explored last week. A few of the follow up diary entries were shared with the class.

**Read:** From the start of *The City* to the end of page 8 "She was happy."

**Strategy:** Conscience Circle

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To explore The Mother's inner thoughts.

**Description:** Students formed a large circle and were given the letter A or B. A's were tasked with thinking about The Mother's hopes and B's were tasked with thinking about her fears. Then I went around the circle as teacher-in-role as The Mother with a scarf around my shoulders to symbolise that I was in role. I walked slowly around the circle and as I passed each student, they shared their hope or fear. These started with 'I hope that/for ...' or 'I fear that/for ...'.

**Strategy:** Teacher-in-Role / Hot Seat

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To ask questions of The Mother and build belief in the story and drama.

**Description:** I went into role as The Mother with a dark scarf wrapped around my shoulders. I explained to the students that when I sat in the chair and had the scarf on, I was in role as The Mother and they could ask me some questions. It was important for me to model the Hot Seat as teacher-in-role so that students could see the potential of the strategy for them.

**Read:** We read pages 9 and 10 and looked at the illustrations from “One day some travellers ...” to “showed them the way.”

**Strategy:** Tableau and Tap In

**Grouping:** Groups of 5 or 6.

**Purpose:** To dig deeper into the situation and explore roles, relationships, motivations and attitudes of the characters.

**Description:** In groups of 5 or 6, the students discussed the image and situation depicted on pages 9 and 10. They then created a single still image, a tableau based on this moment. The groups needed to depict the travellers, The Mother and also include The Boy in the tableau (who is not depicted in the illustrations). Then, once each group had created their tableau, we went around and looked at each tableau and I tapped into each person. I used a different tap-in question for each group such as:

- Can you say one word to scribe how your character is feeling at this moment?
- Can you say one sentence explaining what and why your character is feeling at this moment?
- Can you please tell me your character’s motivation? What do they want?
- Can you say one or a few words that your character might say if this moment came to life?
- Can you say one or a few words that might be going through your character’s mind at this moment?

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Three

I felt that going into role as The Mother was a key moment in the drama. O’Neill (1995) has reflected that the teacher-in-role strategy can be a “complex tactic ... [in] which the teacher or leader initiates the dramatic world by adopting a role, offers both a change of stance to the teacher or leader and an opportunity to function as playwright within the work” (O’Neill, 1995, pp. 125-126). I certainly felt that this was true for this workshop as I was able to draw on the work the students had done prior:



the Freeze Frames they had developed depicting a reason The Mother left the city; the Visualisation and what the students had seen, heard, smelt and felt in the city; the Mapping and what students had inferred about the journey The Mother had been on and the Conscience Circle where students shared a hope or a fear that The Mother might have held. In this way I was able to 'function as playwright' and ground the fiction for the class by adding some vivid details to the story that are not explicitly provided in Greder's text. By taking on teacher-in-role during this workshop, prior to students engaging in non-frozen role work, I was also able to model how we can take on role, how we can work within the realm of the story and how we can take questions and add to them through our responses during hot-seating.

The Tableaux of the travellers, The Mother and The Boy were fascinating and the students really started to dig deeper into the motivations and inner thoughts of each of the characters, particularly The Mother. Nevertheless, I felt that we needed to revisit this critical moment in the following workshop and unpack the travellers' observations in more detail.

## Workshop Four

**Wednesday 31/05/2017**

**Middle Period – 11am to 12:15pm**

### **Warm Up: Mirrors**

In pairs students faced their partner. One person started moving slowly and the other person mirrored their actions exactly. They then swapped over and continued. They then swapped 'the leader' back and forth organically. I played some quiet music to enhance the focus.

### **Strategy: Two Freeze Frames**

**Grouping:** Groups of 5 or 6.

**Purpose:** To explore this critical moment in more detail and encourage prediction of what could happen next.

**Description:** We went back to pages 9 and 10 depicting the Travellers and The Mother. This time, groups had to create two Freeze Frames, as the travellers left. All students needed to be in both Freeze Frames and we used an eyes-open and eyes-shut technique to transition between the images.

### **Strategy: Role Play**

**Grouping:** Pairs.

**Purpose:** To infer and predict what might happen next.

**Description:** In pairs, student developed a rehearsed Role Play depicting The Mother and The Boy having a conversation after the Travellers leave. This was to be a very short scene, a fraction of a conversation and only between 4 and 6 lines of dialogue in total. We used a performance carousel technique to share these fractions of conversations.

**Strategy: Hot Seat – The Boy**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To explore the inner thoughts of The Boy.

**Description:** As a class, I invited 4 students and Dane Everhart to sit on a series of chairs at the front of the room and be Hot-Seated as The Boy. The rest of the class had some time to discuss some questions they would really like to ask The Boy and things they really wanted to find out about The Boy and The Mother and their situation.

We repeated the Hot-Seating activity with a new set of 4 students and this time they were Hot-Seated as The Mother.

**Follow Up:** Students were asked to write to the mother in role as The Boy arguing why she should take him to the city.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Four

I conducted a large focus group with the entire class during the final few minutes of the lesson and then held a small focus group with some students after the lesson. I also interviewed Dane Everhart as this was about half way through the workshop series.

The work I had done in Workshop 3 by modelling the Hot Seating and role work as Teacher-in-Role had worked well in preparing students for the Hot Seating strategy during this workshop. I also asked Dane if he would be part of the first group being Hot Seated to try to again remind students that they should take this seriously. If students saw the teaching artist (me) and then their classroom teacher (Dane Everhart) taking 'in role' work seriously, then I had hoped that this would reduce any potential for silliness and it did. The students really started to dig deeper into the narrative and discussed the inference work that was taking place during the debrief at the end of class.

In the whole class reflection, Mackenzie commented:

Mackenzie: Umm I think that because we've worked out the ... ohhh, what's actually happening, I think we've actually been quite imaginative because we've worked out 'oh this probably could have happened' and we've like assumed things from, the text ... like this much might have happened or this much might have happened. And we've chosen to, to pursue one way.

John: Any other reflections?

Dane: I really liked, just quickly, I liked the word that Mackenzie used which was 'pursue'. I think that's a big thing for what we are doing in this drama. We are assuming that things are going to happen or things are happening so what we are doing is inferring, that's another word to use. We are actually inferring, we are making inferences. Based on our own knowledge and our own understanding and what's included in the text. (FG.1.31/05/2017).

This extract of the conversation illustrates how Dane was making explicit links with the students between the drama work and the literacy focus area, particularly following the Hot Seating during this workshop.

## Workshop Five

**Tuesday 06/06/2017**

**First Period 8:45 to 10am**

The workshop began with several students sharing what they had written as the follow up activity. Unfortunately these were not collected as part of the research. The examples that students shared were fantastic and really insightful, reflecting that they were indeed developing their inferential comprehension skills.

**Strategy: Role Walk**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To embody the feelings that The Boy, The Mother and the travellers might have experienced. To make connections from students' own life to the world of the book.

**Description:** Students walked around the room silently in a neutral walk and then I called out a word and they walked 'in role' as either that emotion or that character. I played quiet music during this activity to encourage focus. The emotions included: lonely, curious, protecting, and fearful. And then the students walked as The Boy, then The Mother and then one of the travellers.

**Strategy: Word Circle / Adjective Call Out**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To consider adjectives to describe the characters and continue to build these characters as a class.

**Description:** Students stood in a circle facing inwards and I asked them to close their eyes and picture The Boy. I asked them to think of a word that described the boy, then a way that they could use their voice to add meaning, and then an action or gesture that they could do with the word to also add meaning. We went around the circle and shared these and then repeated the strategy with The Mother.

**Strategy: Gossip Mill**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To explore what the travellers might have thought about The Mother and The Boy.

**Description:** Students formed two concentric circles. They went into role as one of the travellers after they had left The Boy and The Mother in the countryside. Students had about 10 seconds to engage in a short improvised conversation with the person opposite them and then I clapped the clapping sticks and the outside circle moved to the person on their right and started a new conversation. This was repeated several times. Following this strategy, we had a short debrief and reflection as a class.

**Strategy: Proximities**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To explore the range of attitudes towards The Mother's actions.

**Description:** One student went into role, representing The Mother and stood in the middle of the room. We placed a scarf over their shoulders to represent the character. The rest of the class stood in a line along one side of the classroom. One at a time, the students entered the space, placed themselves somewhere in proximity to The Mother and said: "I'm standing here, because ...". The view they took might not have been their own and if they felt that there was a view or perspective missing, then they were encouraged to take that view when they entered the space.

**Read:** We read from the start of the book to the end of page 14 "One moonless night she died."

**Strategy: Hot Seat – The Mother**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To explore what The Mother knew.

**Description:** We re-wound the drama here and had The Mother step out of the story so that we could Hot-Seat her, knowing that she was going to die. The Mother was represented by four students who sat in chairs at the front the class and the rest of the class asked them questions. This was very insightful and sensitive and a lot of the discussion surrounded what The Mother thought her son would do after she died.

**Follow Up:** Students wrote in role as The Mother a letter to her son before she dies.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Five

The class weren't focused this lesson and I was really disappointed by their behaviour, although their time in the Adjective Circle and Proximities was fascinating as they created very real and thoughtful depictions of The Mother. The Role-Walk felt really messy and unfocused and this set the tone for most of the lesson. I struggled to keep the focus on the story.

### Workshop Six

**Tuesday 13/06/2017**

**First Period – 8:45 to 10am**

We read several of the letters that were done as follow-ups from the previous lesson. There was no warm up done for this lesson.

**Read:** We read from the start of the book to the end of page 17 "He was cold" and looked as the illustrations on pages 17 and 18.

**Strategy:** Dream Sequence

**Grouping:** Whole Class as two groups.

**Purpose:** To fill in some gaps in the relationship between The Boy and The Mother. To engage the emotions.

**Description:** We split into two groups. One group took chairs and sat somewhere in the room away from other people (the dreamer). The second group (the whisperer) thought about what the

mother might whisper to the boy in his dream. What might be going through his mind? What is a hope that she might have for her son? Then the group sitting down closed their eyes and imagined that they were The Boy having a dream and their mother whispered something to them in their dream. The whisperers moved around to everyone sitting, and then came back to stand in the corner. Once this was done, we swapped over so that everyone could have a go at being both the 'dreamer' and the 'whisperer'.

**Strategy: Conscience Alley – The Boy**

**Grouping:** Whole Class – Two Lines.

**Purpose:** To explore what the boy could do next.

**Description:** Students moved into two lines facing each other with one student at the top of the alley or corridor of students. We thought about The Boy and his options; he could stay here or he could go to the city. Students in one line individually thought about a reason why he should stay and the students from the other line thought about a reason why he should go to the city. Then, as the student representing The Boy at the top of the alley/corridor moved slowly down the alley, each student shared their argument with the rest of the class.

**Strategy: Hot Seat – The Boy**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To explore what The Boy might be thinking.

**Description:** Following the Conscience Alley, we decided to Hot-Seat The Boy one last time to ask him what he was thinking he would do next. Four students went into role as The Boy and took turns to answer their peers' questions.

**Strategy: Three Freeze Frames – What next?**

**Grouping:** Groups of 3 or 4.

**Purpose:** To predict what could happen next in the story.

**Description:** In groups of 3 or 4, students developed 3 Freeze Frames depicting what they thought could happen next, knowing that there were only a few pages left of the book. Once the groups had created these, we looked at several different versions.

**Read:** We read the final part of the book from page 19 "Then he took ...." to the end of the book "... out to find the city."

**Strategy: Postcard**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To depict The Boy entering the city and infer what the city might actually be like.

**Description:** We created a huge frozen image of the boy entering the city. One at a time, students moved into the space and took a pose and said “I’m .... And I’m doing ...” (their character or role and what they were doing in the city). Dane Everhart took a photo of the final Postcard.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Six

This workshop felt totally different to the previous one where I felt there was very little focus in the room. Instead, the students were really engaged and deeply invested in the struggle of The Boy in the story. I was nervous about how the Dream Sequence strategy would go. I was really pleased that the students respected the strategy and did engage in the Dream Sequence with maturity.

The Postcard was a fantastic way to finish the workshop, as students really drew inferences and synthesised knowledge to create the postcard of what the city actually looked like when The Boy arrived. The city did have elements of darkness and leftover aspects of the war that had finished, but there was also hope for The Boy and a sense that he had made the right decision to return to the city. I was really impressed with the way the students engaged in this workshop.

### Workshop Seven

**Wednesday 21/06/2017**

**Middle Period – 11am to 12:20pm**

**Warm Up:** We did a vocal warm up which was a version of Kristin Linklater’s “Resonance Ladder” developed by Floy Kennedy and called *The Hungry Giant*.

**Strategy: Readers’ Theatre**

**Grouping:** Six groups.

**Purpose:** To retell the story of *The City* using Readers’ Theatre (exploring voice and movement).

**Description:** We then split into six groups and each group was given a section of *The City*. I typed the text up and printed it in large font so that it could be used for Readers’ Theatre. I introduced Readers’ Theatre and gave the students some instructions. They worked in groups to devise their Readers’ Theatre section. During this time, I took several groups out of the room for small focus

groups and at the end of the lesson we did a performance carousel of Readers' Theatre of The City. This was followed by a whole class debrief and reflection on the *School Drama* experience.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Seven

I was concerned moving into this final workshop that I hadn't collected enough data from students through focus group discussions. So I set up the task for the lesson and pulled three of the small Readers' Theatre groups aside at different points to conduct focus groups (GF4.21/06/2017, FG5.21/06/2017 and FG6.21/06/2017). I think the class generally found the Readers' Theatre task quite challenging. Some of the students mentioned this as I went around the class checking in on their progress. Some groups were showing internal tensions and Dane Everhart and I had decided to put the class into groups ourselves and there was some conflict within these groups.

The sharing of the Readers' Theatre was really strong and the students did a great job at re-telling the story. I felt it was an effective way to end the program. We finished with a whole class reflection (FG.7.21/06/2017).



## Appendix B - Gungahlin Public School Intervention and Brief Reflections

The unit was adapted from a version published in *The School Drama Book* (Ewing & Saunders, 2016).

Note: a selection of brief reflections have been included after some of the workshop outlines, due to space constraints.

### Workshop One

**Wednesday 02/08/2017**

**First Period – 10:30am to 12:15pm**

**Warm Up: Nuclear Ball**

**Groupings:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To focus students.

**Description:** The class stand in a circle (including the teacher) and a medium sized soft ball (often with gripping grooves) is used. The ball, we imagine, is 'nuclear' and is hot and needs to keep moving (to ensure a fast game).

**Strategy: Artefacts and 'I Wonder ...'**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To encourage prediction and built the context of the story.

**Description:** I chose 30 or so Google Images that linked to the themes and settings of the story, particularly people seeking asylum and 'boat people', images of war, images of Australian icons such as the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge being bombed and destroyed, cities in ruins and families fleeing their homes.

**Strategy: Clumps of Theme Words**

**Grouping:** Varied.

**Purpose:** To collaboratively embody and create images of several theme words.

**Description:** Students walked around the room and I called out a number (between 2 and 6) and students had to get into groups/clumps of that number. I then called out a theme word and students had six seconds to create a single frozen image of that word. Theme words included: war, home, refuge, poverty, hope, family, running away and starvation.

**Strategy: Sculpting**

**Grouping:** Pairs.

**Purpose:** To get students to consider and embody two of the key themes in the text and to make connections from their own life to the world of the text.

**Description:** Students formed pairs where one student was the sculptor and the other was the thinking clay. Drawing on Marsden's comment that "There're only two places you can be in life: home or away" (2008), the sculptor firstly sculpted their partner into an image of 'being at home'. Then they swapped roles and the new sculptor sculpted their partner into an image of 'being away from home'. I then played quiet music while they faced the walls and morphed from one sculpture to another.

**Read:** From the beginning of *Home and Away* to the end of page 4 (end of diary entry for April 26).

**Strategy: Role on the Wall**

**Grouping:** 4 or 5 students.

**Purpose:** To demonstrate what students have comprehended about each character and infer other aspects about each character.

**Description:** I provided each group with a large piece of butchers' paper with an outline of a human figure on it. Students then brainstormed words that described each character, building on what they definitely know about that character (from the first few pages of the story) and inferring and imagining other facts about the characters. The characters were: Mum/Julie, Dad/Ken, Tee, Claire, Toby, Gran.

**Strategy: Single Freeze Frame**

**Grouping:** Groups as above.

**Purpose:** To build the context of the story.

**Description:** In groups of 4 or 5 and building on the Role on the Wall strategy, students developed a Single Freeze Frame of the morning of 26 April (depicted in the text) from the perspective of the character whom they were assigned to create for the Role on the Wall.

**Read:** Diary entry April 27 "The war starts."

**Discussion:** As a class we discussed the idea of war and why groups might go to war. We then created a fictional country or organisation who were going to go to war with Australia. The class

came to a consensus that a country called the Warwick Islands were going to invade Australia because they wanted Australia's natural resources and wanted to destroy democracy.

**Follow Up:** Students were asked to write a description of one of the characters in the book.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop One

The class was very excited about starting drama and it took time to settle the students into the lesson. Once we read the diary entry for April 27, "The war starts" that really focused them. There was one student in the class who had very little English language and who had only recently arrived at the school and the country from China.

I explained to the class that we were setting the book in the future, so that this story *could* potentially happen. We agreed that the book would be set in 2018, one year ahead of where we were at that time. I thought the discussion about war and devising a fictional country or organisation was really good and the idea of the Warwick Islands seemed to make sense to the students.

Jacob quietly kept monitoring the class and working with different groups while I led the lesson.

### Workshop Two

**Monday 07/08/2017**

**First Period – 9:30am to 11am**

**Warm Up: Nuclear Ball**

**Warm Up: Dude**

Recap from last lesson and we read a couple of the follow up descriptions of the characters that the students had done since our first workshop.

**Re-read:** From the start of the book to April 27.

**Strategy: Teacher-in-Role**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To build belief in the story and add detail and 'realness' to the family.

**Description:** I went into Teacher-in-Role as the father in the story, Ken, to provide more context to the family and to provide students with some information about the war and the Warwick Islands. This worked in a similar fashion to Hot-Seating, where students asked me questions.

**Read:** Diary entries for May 21 and June 29.

**Strategy: Visualisation**

**Grouping:** Whole Class

**Purpose:** To visualise the city of Sydney after the war has started.

**Description:** I asked the students to sit somewhere in the room and close their eyes. I played some quiet music and asked them to imagine that they were somewhere in the city in the story on June 29. I asked them to imagine what they could see, hear, smell and feel. Then I tapped each student on the shoulder and invited them to share a phrase beginning with one of the following starters:

- In the city I can see ...
- In the city I can hear ...
- In the city I can smell ...
- In the city I can feel/I feel ...

**Read:** Diary entries for July 18 and 19.

**Strategy: Mime**

**Groupings:** Groups of 4 or 5 students.

**Purpose:** To explore the reaction of individuals to the situation.

**Description:** In groups of 4 or 5, students developed a 15 second mime (covered by music) depicting an activity happening on the street where the family live and reacting to a bomb going off in the distance.

**Strategy: Mapping**

**Groupings:** Groups of 4 or 5 (same as above).

**Purpose:** To illustrate the same area before and after the war, to build comprehension and inference.

**Description:** In groups students created two maps using a large piece of butchers' paper. One version of the map was an area in the city before the war began and the other map was the same area of the city after the war had started.

**Read:** Diary entry for August 29.

**Follow Up:** Students were invited to write a diary entry from Tee's perspective describing the day depicted in the mime.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Two

There was a shift in the focus in the class this week and I wondered if this was the wrong text to use as tensions were escalating between the US and North Korea. North Korea has started testing long-range missiles in close proximity to Japan and this has been all over the news. These events hadn't started until after the workshops had commenced; however, I can feel that the ideas in *Home and Away* are now a bit closer and the distance between the imagined and the real is shrinking.

There was a much stronger investment in the story and connection to the characters, and I could feel the students' focus had improved since the first workshop.

### Workshop Three

**Monday 14/08/2017**

**First Period – 9:30am to 11am**

**Warm Up: Cat and Mouse**

The purpose of this warm up was provide an opportunity for students to work with peers they wouldn't usually work with.

**Read:** Diary entry for August 29 and September 8.

**Strategy: Semi-improvised Scene**

**Grouping:** 6 or so students.

**Purpose:** To imagine the chaos depicted in the illustrations on pages 11 and 12.

**Description:** In groups of about 6 students, I asked them to devise a short scene based on the illustrations on pages 11 and 12. Students were encouraged to consider which characters they were, what they were doing and what their attitude was to the events.

**Read:** Diary entry for September 13.

**Strategy: Conscience Alley**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To consider the decision the father is about to make.

**Description:** In two lines, students provided reasons for why the father (Ken) should get on boat and leave Australia and reasons for why he should stay.

**Strategy: Hot Seat Ken**

**Grouping:** Whole Class

**Purpose:** To build on the conflicting advice given to Ken in the previous strategy and to infer and imagine what might be going through this character's mind at this moment.

**Description:** Four students and Mr Lockyer sat on chairs and took turns to answer questions as Ken.

**Strategy: Hot Seat**

**Grouping:** Whole Class

**Purpose:** To infer what another character might be thinking and feeling.

**Description:** I asked the students if they could Hot-Seat another character, who would it be and they decided that they wanted to Hot-Seat Toby (the 5 year old brother of Tee). Five students took turns at answering questions in role as Toby.

**Follow Up:** Students were asked to write a diary entry as Ken (the dad) at this point in time considering what he should do next (stay in Australia or get on a boat and leave).

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Three

I felt during the previous lesson that even though the focus was really strong, there were still some divisions within the class working with each other, so I framed the lesson with a game of Cat and Mouse to try to mix up the group dynamics.

The Hot-Seating was really fantastic and I think having Jacob Lockyer as one of the people being hot-seated lifted the experience. It helped that Jacob had studied drama at university and he was able to really get into role and model this for his students. They absolutely loved seeing their teacher in role as Ken.

I conducted a short focus group with the entire class at the end of the lesson and they reflected on the hot-seating strategy.

Liam: I liked being hot seated because it felt fun being in their boots.

John: Yeah, it felt fun being in the shoes of the character. Annabelle?

Annabelle: I like being hot seated because you can kind of channel other characters and you can pretty much escape from yourself for a while.

John: Be in that other character's shoes? Yeah great. Rea?

Rea: I like being hot seated because you know how ... how ... what the person is going through, and you are like in their shoes and you can kind of like understand what's going on.

John: Dale?

Dale: I like being hot seated because you umm explain how you feel.

John: And do you think it's easier to do it when you are being hot seated or if you had to write it?

Dale: I think it's pretty hard because you don't know some of the questions.

(FG1.14/08/2017).

I was really struck by the way the students talked about being in role during the Hot-Seating strategy and thought that they shared great insight into the experience of being in role and being Hot-Seated.

## Workshop Four

**Monday 21/08/2017**

**First Period 9:30 to 11am**

**Warm Up: Nuclear Ball**

**Strategy: Memory Slide Show**

**Grouping:** Groups of 4 students.

**Purpose:** To infer and imagine what the family's life has been like.

**Description:** A Memory Slide Show resembles an old fashioned slide show where a family might share slides from a holiday. In this strategy, the image is created as a Freeze Frame and one of the characters depicted in the Freeze Frame also narrates and explains the Freeze Frame in role. Students were asked to create 3 Freeze Frames depicting the family's life. One image needed to be from before the war, another from after the war and the third image could be from whenever the group wanted it to take place.

**Re-read:** We re-read the book from the start to the diary entry September 16.

**Strategy: Role Play Conversation**

**Grouping:** Pairs.

**Purpose:** To infer and imagine a conversation that takes place between two of the family members after the dinner scene depicted in September 16.

**Description:** In pairs, students devise part of a conversation that occurred between any two of the family members following the events depicted in the September 16 diary entry. The scene was only 4 lines long (2 lines per character).

**Strategy: Drawing**

**Grouping:** Individual.

**Purpose:** To build stronger connections to the characters and the situation.

**Description:** I provided students with a Post-it-Note and I asked them to imagine that they were someone in the family. Who would it be? I then asked them to imagine that if they were that character, what would be the most precious and important thing that they would take with them if they went on the boat and left Australia. They then drew this on the Post-it-Note.

**Read:** Diary entry September 17.

**Strategy: Improvised Role Play**

**Grouping:** Whole Class

**Purpose:** To imagine what it might have been like for the family in the story as they got into the boat.

**Description:** I explained that Mr Lockyer and I were going to go into role as the people who own the boat and that the students were going to go into role as the character they had imaged previously. They would form a single file and we would enact what might have happened as the



family got onto the boat. Mr Lockyer and I made a corner of the room the 'boat' and students made a single file line. I then indicated that the improvisation had started by asking students to hurry up and get on the boat. As they did, I asked them what they were bringing with them and either threw it away if it was sentimental or too big, and if it was valuable I would take the item as a form of payment.

We then stopped the improvisation and debriefed the improvisation.

**Strategy: Crowd Reaction**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To imagine who the other people on the boat might be and what their reaction could have been to seeing Granma die.

**Description:** I asked students to imagine that they were other characters on the boat and witnessed what was described in the diary entry on September 17. I then clapped the clapping sticks and asked them to form their reaction to the events.

**Follow up:** Students were asked to write a diary entry as Tee's reflection on the events of September 17.

## Workshop Five

**Monday 28/08/2017**

**First Period – 9:30 to 11am**

We did a recap from last lesson and students shared a few of their follow up work samples.

**Read:** Diary entry September 20.

**Strategy: Visualisation**

**Grouping:** Whole Class

**Purpose:** To visualise life on the boat.

**Description:** I explained that we were repeating the visualisation strategy that we had done several weeks beforehand about the city; however, this time we were going to visualise what it

might have been like on the boat. Students imagined what they could see, hear, smell and feel on the boat and then shared these phrases.

**Strategy: Conscience Circle**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To infer and imagine the inner thoughts of Tee.

**Description:** Students stood in a circle and each was given a letter (either A or B, alternating around the circle). A's then considered a 'hope' that Tee might have and B's thought of a 'fear' that he might have. Then, a student moved around the circle and as they stood in front of a student, that student shared their 'hope' or 'fear'.

**Read:** Diary entries for September 22, 23, 24 and 25.

**Strategy: Soundscape**

**Grouping:** Four large groups.

**Purpose:** To imagine the sounds on the boat and visualise the events taking place as they listen to other groups soundscapes.

**Description:** Students were split into four large groups and asked to create a 30 second soundscape of life on the boat. They needed to consider the time of the soundscape (e.g. as day breaks, or as evening falls). Students then shared their devised soundscapes.

**Discussion:** Jacob and I asked the students "what could they see" when they were listening to each of the other groups soundscapes.

## Workshop Six

**Monday 04/09/2017**

**First Period 9:30 to 11am**

Mr Jacob Lockyer and I improvised a very short scene for the students. The scene consisted of the two of us taking on the roles of the people who ran the boat. We made comments like "I don't think these people have any idea what is going to happen when we arrive in Hollania." And "the boat is broke. I can't steer it properly anymore."

**Strategy: Three Freeze Frames**

**Grouping:** Groups of 3 or 4.

**Purpose:** To build on the comprehension of the improvised scene (above) and infer and imagine what Tee might do next.

**Description:** Groups were asked to develop 3 Freeze Frames of Tee's reaction to overhearing the above improvised scene. The first image might be Tee overhearing the conversation and the next two images needed to depict what Tee might do next. Students were asked to include a word, a caption or a line of dialogue with each Freeze Frame.

**Read:** Diary entries September 26 and 27.

**Strategy: Mime**

**Grouping:** Groups of 3 or 4.

**Purpose:** To depict the reaction of the family seeing land.

**Description:** In groups, students devised a mime of the family seeing land for the first time.

**Strategy: Postcard**

**Grouping:** Whole Class

**Purpose:** To imagine what the best-case and worst-case scenario might be like when they arrive in Hollania.

**Description:** As a class, students created two Postcards. The first depicted the best-case scenario of the boat arriving in Hollania. The second depicted the worst-case scenario. Individually, students move into the frozen image, adding to it and saying who they are and what they are doing.

**Read:** Diary entry September 28.

**Strategy: Tableau and Tap In**

**Grouping:** Groups of 4 or 5.

**Purpose:** To dig deeper into the scene depicted in the diary entry on September 28. To consider different perspectives.

**Description:** In groups, students developed a single Freeze Frame (tableau) depicting a particular group in the story reacting to the events on described in the diary entry September 28. These may have been the people on the boat, the Hollania navy, the people on the land etc.

**Read:** Diary entries for September 30 and October 1.

**Strategy: Rehearsed Role Play**

**Grouping:** Pairs

**Purpose:** To imagine and predict how a conversation might occur.

**Description:** In pairs, students devised a short Role Play consisting of a just a couple of lines each. The conversation was between Tee and his younger brother Toby and started with Toby asking: "Well why are we in prison?"

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Six

You could have heard a pin drop in this lesson. The focus was absolutely unbelievable. Students really made connections between the story and the real world and drew on these connections when developing the two versions of the tableau of the boat arriving in Hollania.

### Workshop Seven

**Monday 11/09/2017**

**First Period 9:30am to 11am**

**Warm Up: Email Game**

**Read:** To the end of the book.

**Discussion:** As a class we discussed the book and the intention of the author (Marsden) in writing this book and setting it in Australia.

**Strategy: Dream Sequence**

**Grouping:** Two groups.

**Purpose:** To imagine what Tee's mother or father might whisper to him in his dream.

**Description:** One group sat on the floor with their eyes closed. The other group imagined that they were Tee's mum or dad and what they might whisper to him in a dream. Students were encouraged to consider a 'hope' they might have for Tee. Then they whispered to everyone one sitting down. We swapped over so both groups had both experiences.

**Strategy: Letter Writing**

**Grouping:** Individual.

**Purpose:** To write in role as Tee and consider hope.

**Description:** Individually, students wrote a letter to the Prime Minister of Hollania in role as Tee. Students then left their letter on the floor facing upwards and I played quiet music and asked students to move around the room reading other letters.

**Strategy: Class Poem**

**Grouping:** Whole class.

**Purpose:** To create a class poem using a line from the students' letters.

**Description:** I asked the class to select a letter that was not their own. They sat and read the letter and underlined a short phrase that really stood out for them. I then explained that we were going to create a class poem using only the underlined phrases. We 'drafted' the letter together and students stood up to add to the poem, placing themselves either towards the beginning or the middle or the end of the poem.

**Strategy: Storyboard an alternative**

**Grouping:** Groups of 4 or 5 students.

**Purpose:** To consider an alternative to the story's ending.

**Description:** In groups, we re-read the diary entry on September 13 when the father in the story heard news of a boat. I asked students to take themselves back to that critical moment in the story and consider developing an alternative ending to the story.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Seven

This lesson was magical! The class poem was a really powerful moment for me as a teacher as I could see and feel the emotion and empathy in the room. There was a deep understanding of this character, Tee and his situation and how he longed for his old life.

The discussion about the book and why the author had made the choice to set the book in Australia was also particularly interesting. Students were more than aware of the political context in Australia and the polarising and often negative views of refugees that are presented in the media. It left me

with hope that perhaps the next generation might be able to act with empathy towards refugees and those seeking asylum.

I explained to the students what was going to happen after I left the school that day and that they would do another piece of writing based on *Home and Away* and another survey. They thanked me for coming and working with them and I thanked them for working with me.

## Appendix C - Wentworth Public School Intervention and Brief Reflections

The unit was adapted from a version published in *The School Drama Book* (Ewing & Saunders, 2016).

Note: a selection of brief reflections have been included after some of the workshop outlines, due to space constraints.

### Workshop One

**Friday 20/10/2017**

**First Period 9:30 to 11:00am**

I started with my expectations and rules in the drama class with the students along with my purpose for working with this group and Mrs McPhee. I also explained that we were going to look at two books; one might seem a bit young for them, but had some darker hidden meanings and the other book may be a bit advanced, but that Mrs McPhee believed this Year 4/5 group was very mature and would be able to cope with it.

**Warm Up: Email Game**

**Purpose:** To get to know students and the dynamics of the class.

**Warm Up: Nuclear Ball**

**Purpose:** To focus students.

**Strategy: Clumps with six second images**

**Groupings:** Various – Whole class and groups of between 2 and 6.

**Purpose:** To start embodied learning in a non-confrontational way and to use key theme words that link to the text enabling students to consider vocabulary.

**Description:** Students walked around the room in a random pattern silently and I called out a number and students would jump into a group or 'clump' of that number of people (or thereabouts). I would then nominate a 'theme word' and the groups would have six seconds to quickly create a frozen image depicting that word. We used the words: friendship, greed, children playing, needy, caring, wealthy and smoking volcano.

I then gave groups of 5 an individual theme word and this time they had 2 minutes to develop a frozen image the rest of the class would try to guess. Theme words were: neighbours, snobbery, stealing, poverty and family.

**Strategy: Artefacts and ‘I Wonder ...’**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To encourage prediction and built the context of the story.

**Description:** I chose 30 Google Images that linked to the themes and settings of the story, including huge mansions in South America next to shacks and ghettos, images of children playing, people begging, wealthy people in big black cars, of life in some South American villages and cities.

I laid these images out all over the floor of the classroom and played some quiet music while students moved around each image and thought about any question that was triggered. Once everyone had looked at most of the images, I asked the students to stand close to the one that really resonated with them. I invited students to hold up their selected image and share with the rest of the class a question beginning with ‘I wonder ...’.

**Strategy: Sculpting**

**Grouping:** Pairs.

**Purpose:** To invite student to consider and embody two key themes in the text and to make connections from their own life to the world of the text.

**Description:** I introduced the concept of ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ and then in pairs, students sculpted each other into a ‘have’ and into a ‘have not’. I then played quiet music while they faced the walls and morphed from one sculpture to another.

**Strategy: Reading an image & ‘I Wonder ...’**

**Groupings:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To encourage prediction about the story and consider the relationships and roles and status of the characters depicted in the cover art.

**Description:** As a class, we looked at the projected cover of *Tricycle*. I invited students to ‘wonder’ about it. What questions did they have about the cover? Once they had a question beginning with ‘I wonder ....’ they could share it with the rest of the class.



**Read:** From the beginning of the book to the end of page 13 “... we buy her tortillas for lunch every day.”

**Strategy:** Visualisation

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To visualise the settings on either side of the hedge that divides these two worlds.

**Description:** I invited the class to form a huge human version of the hedge depicted in *Tricycle* back to back in two rough lines. One side of the hedge faced the shacks where Rosario, Chepe and Juanita lived and the other side faced the little girl in the tree, Margarita. I asked the students to close their eyes and imagine that they were a tiny part of that hedge on that particular side and imagine what they could see, hear, smell feel. When I tapped each student lightly on the shoulder they could share a phrase: ‘From the hedge I can see’ or ‘hear’ or ‘smell’ or ‘feel’. Students also had the opportunity to stay silent.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop One

Mrs McPhee and Miss Bowers participated fully in the lesson, either joining groups like any other participant or monitoring what happened and supporting students.

Following this we had a brief reflection about the Sculpting and Tabatha mentioned that she thought that all of us in the room were ‘haves’. Later, Leanne and I reflected on this during our mid-program interview:

John: I thought it was really interesting about the ‘haves and have nots’ after we did the images and had a bit of a chat and the kids were talking about themselves, like they were really bringing in their own ...

Leanne: ‘Wentworth’

John: World, yes! (We laugh) Yes their own ‘Wentworth world’ about being ‘haves’ and that many of us in the room are ‘haves’ and ...

Leanne: And they identified openly and thought that that should be acknowledged.

John: Yeah, yes! And that, that’s the way that they were going to look through and look at that book through the lens of someone that is a ‘have’, you know, and I think that has helped them empathise with the ‘have not’s’. (11.15/11/2017).

I found this was a really interesting acknowledgement of their privileged living in an affluent part of Sydney.

Another moment that stood out from this first lesson was the discussion about the cover of the book. Until this point I had only used *Tricycle* with teachers to model the work we do on the *School Drama* program. Teachers have often discussed the complexity of the 'haves' and 'have nots' when looking at the cover illustration, particularly that while Chepe and Rosario might be poorer and traditionally be labelled as a 'have not', they also have each other and have friendship and someone to play with, while Margarita is all alone. So that the idea of 'have' and 'have not' can be turned and challenged. To my surprise the students had a discussion that was almost identical to that which I've witnessed when working with adults. These 9, 10 and 11 year old students were identifying exactly the same complexities: what does it really mean to be a 'have' and a 'have not' with comments such as "well that little girl [Margarita] might be lonely so she could be a 'have not'" or "at least those two kids [Chepe and Rosario] have each other to play with, so even though they are poor, they have friendship so they may be a 'have' and a 'have not'". I was astonished.

What also surprised me about this lesson is that there was no silliness with the students. They simply accepted me into the classroom as one of their teachers and went with the drama. We also talked about the configuration of the space:

John: And it reminds me of like a Google office, you know ...

Leanne (laughing): Thank you!

John: ...because you look at a Google office and there are people on beanbags, there are people sitting at benches, on the floor, there are some at tables.

Leanne: There are some standing up at the high tables.

John: That's right! And you do what works best for you. But if we are putting kids into this factory model of 'you'll all sit down. You'll all have the same tables and chairs. Every classroom looks the same.'

Leanne: And I'm really glad that I taught like that for a long time ... One day Gene said to me ... 'you know, this is just like being at home'. Because some kids were painting, some were reading. She said 'I feel comfortable like I'm at home'. ....my year four boys were caught up there, Oscar and Raphael and said 'but it's our room'. So they had the ownership of that space. And you make them feel like it's their space and it's our space.

I loved this sense of ownership and 'being at home' and of students feeling relaxed in their schooling environment.

## Workshop Two

**Thursday 26/10/2017**

**First Period 9:30 to 11:00am**

### **Warm Up: Balloon Pop**

**Grouping:** Pairs.

**Purpose:** To encourage students to make connections to the theme of losing something precious to them.

**Description:** This is a variation of a well-known warm up: one student is blindfolded or has their eyes closed and the second student places their hands on their partner's shoulders and guides them around the room. In my version, another layer is added. The student with their eyes closed has a balloon that they blow up and hold with two hands in front of their stomachs imagining something precious to them; it could be a precious memory, an object, a toy etc, and they imagine that this thing is inside their balloon and they need to keep it safe while their partner guides them around the room. After the students has moved around the room for a few minutes, I ask them to stop and explained that when we continue I will come to each pair and pop the balloon with a pin. I did this and then we reflected about the use of symbol.

**Read:** We re-read the beginning of *Tricycle* up to the end of page 13 "... we buy her tortillas for lunch every day."

### **Strategy: Mapping**

**Grouping:** Groups of 4 or 5 students.

**Purpose:** To visualise, imagine and predict what the area where the story is set might look like and visually represent this in a map.

**Description:** Leanne put the students in groups and I provided each group with a large piece of butchers' paper (about 1.5 meters long) and a box of oil pastels. We asked the groups to talk about what they know is definitely in the story on either side of the hedge and then what else they might imagine could also be in the space where the story takes place. Then students worked in their groups to draw a map depicting this space with the hedge at the centre of the page. Each group showed their map and explained their choices to the rest of the class.

**Strategy: Two Freeze Frames**

**Grouping:** Groups of 4 or 5 students.

**Purpose:** To build the field of the story and infer about the lives of the characters on either side of the hedge.

**Description:** In groups of 4 or 5, students devised two Freeze Frames, depicting 'a day in the life' on each side of the hedge. The first Freeze Frame might be of a day in the life of Margarita and the second Freeze Frame might depict a day in the life of Chepe, Rosario and their mother, Juanita. We used an 'eyes open and eyes closed' technique to transition between the two images.

**Read:** We read from page 14 to the end of page 16 "... and hides with me".

**Strategy: Mime**

**Groupings:** Groups of 3 students.

**Purpose:** To explore the relationship between the children.

**Description:** In groups of 3, students developed a 15 second Mime (covered by music) depicting the children (Margarita, Rosario and Chepe) starting to play together either for the first time or like any other day. Once each group had devised their Mime, I played some quiet music and counted from 1 to 15 on the clapping sticks and all the groups entered their Mimes. Then as a class we looked at what a few groups had created.

### Workshop Three

**Thursday 02/11/2017**

**First Period 9:30 to 11am**

**Warm Up: Nuclear Ball**

**Read:** We re-read from the beginning of *Tricycle* to half way through page 21 stopping at "... their mother isn't in the doorway anymore."

**Strategy: Tableau and Tap In**

**Grouping:** Groups of 4 or 5.

**Purpose:** For students to discuss, consider and infer who the hand in the illustration belongs to and to explore the relationships, motivations and feelings of each of the characters at this critical moment.

**Description:** I asked the students to really look at this illustration as I re-read the text and explained that they would soon move into groups of 4 or 5 to discuss this moment and create a frozen image before I would tap in to each person. They would need to take on Margarita, Chepe, Rosario and decide who the hand belonged to. If they were in a group of 5, then someone could also be the tricycle, because in drama, objects can think and feel and speak.

Each group spent some time talking, then devising the Tableau before we looked at each group. I used a different question when tapping in to each group. The questions were:

- Please say one word describing how your character is feeling (and why).
- Can you tell me what your character wants at this moment? (I want ....)
- Can you share with us what is going through your character's mind at this moment?
- Can you say a word or a couple of words that your character might say if this moment came to life?

**Read:** We read the rest of page 21 to the end "... my toys outside."

**Discussion:** As a class we had a brief discussion about this critical moment in the story and who each group thought the hand belonged to.

**Strategy: Hot-Seat / Teacher-In-Role as Juanita**

**Grouping:** Whole Class

**Purpose:** To introduce the strategy of hot-seating to the students by modelling this as Teacher-in-Role and also to provide some more detail and background to the character of Juanita (the mother).

**Description:** I explained that I was going to go into role as Juanita, as that is who most of the students thought the hand belonged to. I reiterated the need for open ended questions and the purpose of this strategy. I placed a dark blue scarf around my shoulders, sat down and went into role and answered questions as Juanita.

**Follow Up:** Leanne and I asked the students to write a diary entry as Juanita reflecting on that day.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Three

The students were really engaged as we approached the peak of the tension in the story and its complexity. I had intended to get to this in the second workshop (hence the balloon warm up) but we ran out of time. However, I did explain this to the class and asked them to try to remember what it felt like when their balloon was popped.

The Tap In and discussion about the hand and the questions from the students during the Teacher-in-Role blew me away, especially knowing that some of these students were in Year 4.

### Workshop Four

**Thursday 09/11/2017**

**First Period – 9:30 to 11:00am**

**Warm Up: Stop/Go, Fast/Slow, Jump/Clap, Up/Down.** (Students walk around the room filling it evenly and once we go through each of the ‘calls’ the teacher then explains that it is opposites so when the teacher says ‘go’ students ‘stop’, and the teacher says ‘jump’ students ‘clap’ etc.

**Follow Up:** We read several of the follow up diary entries that students had penned since last lesson which helped jog our memories of where we were up to.

**Strategy: Proximities**

**Groupings:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To explore and infer a range of different opinions and views about Juanita’s actions in helping her children steal the tricycle.

**Description:** One student stood in the middle of the classroom with my blue scarf around their shoulders to represent that they were in role as Juanita. One by one, each student (and teacher) moved into the space and placed themselves somewhere in proximity to Juanita, and as they took their place they justified why they were standing there. For example, “I’m standing here (beside the student in role as Juanita) because I’m here to support her.”

**Re-Read:** We re-read from page 21 to half of page 23 stopping at “... where’s your trike?’ she scolds.”

**Strategy: Conscience Alley**

**Grouping:** Whole Class in two lines.

**Purpose:** To explore the dilemma that Margarita is facing.

**Description:** One line of students devised an argument why Margarita should tell her mother the truth, and the other line of students devised an argument why Margarita should not tell her mother the truth.

**Strategy: Hot Seat Margarita**

**Grouping:** 5 students sat on chairs at the front of the classroom being hot seated and the rest of the class sat on the floor facing them.

**Purpose:** To infer and explore what Margarita might be feeling and thinking at this critical moment in the story.

**Description:** The 5 students who were being hot seated as Margarita took turns at answering questions from the rest of the class, answering two questions each.

**Read:** The final sentence on page 23 “‘I don’t know’, I say.” And to half way through page 27 stopping at “But they don’t and I fall asleep”.

**Strategy: Dream Sequence**

**Groupings:** Two groups of students.

**Purpose:** To infer and imagine what might be going through Margarita’s mind at that moment when she falls asleep after lunch.

**Description:** Half the students became ‘the dreamers’ and the other half ‘the whisperers’. The dreamers moved around and whispered something to each of the dreamers who were sitting down with their eyes closed in role as Margarita having a dream. What might be whispered to her in her dream? Some advice? A wish or hope? Once this was finished we swapped over and repeated with a new group of dreamers and whisperers.

**Read:** We read from half way through page 27 “When I wake up ....” To half way through page 29 stopping at “My Tricycle”.

**Strategy: Role Play/Rehearsed Improvisation**

**Groupings:** Pairs.

**Purpose:** To predict and devise what the conversation might be like between Margarita and her mother. What do the characters know, what do they say and how do they react?

**Description:** In pairs students discussed what this conversation might be like between the mother and Margarita. It must start with Margarita saying, “My tricycle ...” and can only be 4 lines long. Once the pairs had enough time to devise and rehearse we heard several conversations before we ran out of time.

**Follow Up:** Students were asked to write a diary entry as Margarita reflecting on this day.

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Four

The focus during the class was exceptional and was even better than last week’s lesson, because of the students’ depth of engagement in the content and the attachment to the characters and situations.

### Workshop Five

**Wednesday 15/11/17**

**Middle Session 11:30am to 1:00pm**

**Warm Up: Pass the clap**

**Strategy: Two Freeze Frames**

**Grouping:** Groups of 3 or 4 students.

**Purpose:** To predict the ending of the story using inference and comprehension skills.

**Description:** In small groups, students considered what could happen next and how the story might finish knowing that there were only a couple of pages left of the book. Students were to create two Freeze Frames which depicted the two illustrations on the following pages. We shared these as a class.

**Read:** We read the ending of *Tricycle*.

**Discussion:** As a class, we had a brief discussion about *Tricycle*, what we thought about the final image of the smoking volcano and why perhaps the author has left the story open-ended.

We then moved onto *The Island* by Arman Greder.

**Strategy: Word Banks**



**Groupings:** Six groups of students (about 5 students in each group).

**Purpose:** To consider some of the themes in the text, focus on comprehension of themes and infer and predict what the story might be about.

**Description:** Each group was placed in a large circle with a piece of butchers' paper that had a theme word on it (difference, prejudice, peer pressure, fear, shelter, refuge, power). Students had a few minutes to jot down ideas that connected to the theme word on their Word Bank page. They then moved onto the next Word Bank, considering what their peers had written down and adding their own thoughts that connect to that new Theme Word. This continued until each group had explored each theme word. They then returned to their home word and read through and discussed what their peers had added.

### **Strategy: Sculpting**

**Grouping:** In pairs.

**Purpose:** To embody the two meta themes in *The Island*, inclusion and exclusion.

**Description:** In pairs, one student became the sculptor and the other became the thinking clay. The sculptor sculpted their partner into an image of 'inclusion'. They then swapped roles and the new sculptor sculpted their partner into an image of 'exclusion'. All those sculpted as 'inclusion' formed a large circle around the outside of the classroom space and took up their pose. The rest stood opposite their partners. I played quiet music and those of us who were not in the pose, walked slowly around the room looking at each sculpture of 'inclusion' and considered what was unique and different, what was similar, what stood out etc. We then swapped over.

**Reading the cover image:** We looked at the cover image of *The Island* of a large grey wall. I asked the students to call out 'I wonder' questions.

Note: Before we started reading the book, Leanne explained to the class that the book was very mature and usually for Year 7 students and that there might be an image that some students may find confronting. She invited them to speak to her if they needed to.

**Read:** We read from the start of the book to the end of page 4 "... we have to take him in."

### **Strategy: Tableau and Tap In**

**Groups:** Groups of 6.

**Purpose:** To embody a critical moment in the story of the villagers seeing the stranger on their island for the first time.

**Description:** Groups discussed this critical moment and then devised a Tableau based on this moment, including the strange man. We tapped into each group using a different question (as we did with *Tricycle* above).

### Brief Reflection – Workshop Five

Following this workshop we had a focus group with some students after the lesson and then I had a long interview with Leanne which was great to reflect on the work so far, particularly after moving onto a new text.

### Workshop Six

**Thursday 23/11/2017**

**First Period 9:30 to 11:00am**

**Warm Up: Cat and Mouse**

**Read:** We re-read the start of the book and looked at the images of the dark and rough ocean and ominous sky on pages 5 and 6.

**Strategy: Gossip Mill**

**Grouping:** Whole Class in two concentric circles facing each other.

**Purpose:** To engage in role and build belief about the situation while brainstorming ideas about the stranger.

**Description:** In two concentric circles the class formed pairs and went into role as the town gossip. I explained that gossip had been spread across the island since the stranger arrived on the island that morning and that when I clapped the clapping sticks they would come to life as a town gossip who sees a friend (the person opposite) the other biggest gossip in the village and share what they had heard about the stranger. When I clapped the sticks, the outside circle moved clockwise to engage in a new conversation with a new person. This was repeated several times and then I asked the class to share any outrageous gossip that they had heard.

**Strategy: Town Meeting**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To build belief in the drama and to infer the different views that the people of the island might have.

**Description:** I explained that we were going to have a town meeting and that I would need five people to come up to the front of the room one at a time, introduce themselves (their name and what they did on the island) and to tell us what they thought we should do with the stranger. I asked the class to turn to the people next to them and have a bit of a chat about a role that they could take on. Then I went into role as the Mayor's assistant who was going to chair this town meeting. I used my trusty scarf to symbolise that I was in role and then invited students to come up and introduce themselves to the class, give their name and their job and what their perspective was about the situation. Then the rest of the class asked questions (in a similar fashion to group hot-seating) to either individuals or the panel. Leanne and I also asked questions and provoked the panellists.

**Strategy: Conscience Circle**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To explore the consciences of the villagers.

**Description:** In a large circle the students were given a letter 'A' or 'B'. The A's were to think of an argument of why they should take the stranger onto their island and the Bs were to think of the opposite, why they should not take the stranger onto their island. I walked around the circle and as I stood in front of each student, they shared their argument with the rest of the class.

**Read:** We read from page 7 to the end of page 9 (and looked at the illustrations on pages 7/8 and 9/10) to "... what it had always been."

**Strategy: Visualisation**

**Groupings:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To visualise and add to the mental picture that the students might have of the island.

**Description:** Students sat on the floor of the classroom and I played some quiet music. I asked them to close their eyes and imagine that they were somewhere on the island and that they were invisible. I asked them to imagine what they could see, what they could hear, what they could smell and what they could feel. When I tapped each of them on the shoulder they shared a phrase that began with one of the above starters.

**Strategy: Mapping**

**Groupings:** Groups of 4 or 5

**Purpose:** To illustrate what has been comprehended about *The Island* and what has been inferred.

**Description:** In groups students mapped the island where this story could take place. Each group then showed the rest of the class their map and talked through it.

## Workshop Seven

**Wednesday 29 November**

**Middle Session 11:00am to 1:00pm.**

**Warm Up: Nuclear Ball**

**Read:** Page 11 “Then one morning the man appeared in town” (and look at the illustration on page 12).

**Strategy: Two Freeze Frames**

**Grouping:** Groups of 5 or 6 students.

**Purpose:** To embody and analyse this critical moment where the stranger appears in town.

**Description:** In groups, students devised two Freeze Frames based around page 11 and 12 of the text. The first Freeze Frame depicted the scene 30 seconds before the villagers saw the stranger (however the stranger may be somewhere in the frame) and the second Freeze Frame depicted the scene at the moment the villagers reacted to seeing the stranger. Once each group had devised their Freeze Frames, students morphed from one to the other when presenting them.

**Strategy: Soundscape**

**Grouping:** Three large groups.

**Purpose:** To explore the auditory qualities of the scene depicted on pages 11 and 12.

**Description:** In three large groups, students devised a 30 second soundscape which represented the time between the first and second Freeze Frames from the previous activity. This might start off with the noise and sounds of life on the village and finish with the villagers being confronted by the stranger. Each group shared their soundscape while the other two groups formed an audience

who closed their eyes and imagined what could be taking place on the island during this sound scape. I asked the students to share what they could see when they were hearing the soundscapes.

**Read:** We read the first half of page 14 to up “This frightened the people.”

**Strategy: Role Play/Improvisation**

**Groupings:** Groups of 3.

**Purpose:** To explore the critical moment of the conversation depicted on pages 13 and 14.

**Description:** In groups of three, students devised a short rehearsed improvisation of no more than 6 lines of dialogue (2 each). One person would be the fisherman and the other two people would be villagers.

**Read:** We continued reading the rest of page 14 to the end of page 20 “... the newspaper in big black letters.”

**Strategy: Hot Seat the Fisherman**

**Groupings:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To explore the inner thoughts and feelings of the Fisherman.

**Description:** A group of 5 students sat on chairs at the front of the class and took on the role of the fisherman at this point in the story and took turns to answer questions from the rest of the class.

**Read:** We read from page 21 to the end of page 25 “... and pushed him out to sea.”

**Strategy: Postcard**

**Grouping:** Whole Class.

**Purpose:** To embody a range of views at this critical moment in the story.

**Description:** Together as a class we placed the fisherman (one of the students) in the classroom space and then one at a time, each student entered the space, placed themselves and said who they were and what they were doing. An example might be someone moving close to the fisherman and saying “I’m the fisherman’s wife and I’m putting some bread on the man’s raft so he has something to eat”.

**Read:** We read the rest of the story.

**Strategy: Two Freeze Frames**

**Groupings:** Groups of 5 or 6 students.

**Purpose:** To consider the community on the island one year on to see if anything had changed.

**Description:** In groups, students devised two Freeze Frames depicting life on the island one year after the stranger was pushed out to sea. Students added a word, a line of dialogue or a caption to each Freeze Frame. Each group shared their frozen images.

## Appendix D – Pre- and Post-Program Student Surveys

### Pre-Program Student Survey

#### **Section One – Personal Information**

First two letters of first name:

First two letters of last name:

School:

Year/Grade:

Age (in years):

What language is most spoken at home?

What is your gender? (Female, Male or Other)

Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander?

#### **Section Two – School experience**

2. Overall, I get along with the other students in my class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

3. When I do my schoolwork, I try to do it better than I've done before.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

4. I cope with well with stress at school.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

5. I enjoy being at school.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

6. I participate fully in class activities and discussions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

7. Overall, I am liked by other students in my class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

8. Overall, I like other students in my class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

9. Overall, I like school.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

10. I get involved when we do group work in class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

11. I don't let a bad mark affect my confidence.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

12. At school I usually feel happy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

13. How would you rate your motivation at school? (Eg. How motivated are you to do well at school? (On a scale of 1 to 10 - 1 being not motivated at all and 10 being highly motivated)).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not motivated				Neutral					Highly motivated

14. How would you rate your engagement at school? (Engagement being defined as your interest in school). (On a scale of 1 to 10 - 1 being not engaged at all and 10 being highly engaged).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not engaged				Neutral					Highly engaged



15. How would you rate your confidence when speaking in front of your class? (On a scale of 1 to 10 - 1 being not confident at all and 10 being highly confident).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not confident				Neutral					Highly confident

16. How would you rate your creativity? (On a scale of 1 to 10 - 1 being not creative at all and 10 being highly creative).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not creative				Neutral					Highly creative

17. How would you rate your abilities in English and literacy?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Very low ability				Neutral					Very high ability

18. How easily does writing generally come to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Writing does not come easily to me				Neutral					Writing comes very easily to me

19. When you read a book, how strong is the connection you feel to the character(s)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low connection				Neutral					Highly connection

20. I like reading books.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

21. My parents read a lot.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

22. There are a lot of books in my house

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

23. I find school interesting.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

24. I am interested in subjects like Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths at school.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

25. **How often do you complete your homework** (circle one)

- 1- Never
- 2- Not very often
- 3- Some of the time
- 4- Often
- 5- Always

26. **How often do you attend school** (circle one)

- 1- Never
- 2- Not very often
- 3- Some of the time
- 4- Often
- 5- Always

### **Section Three – Non-academic outcomes**

27. Overall, most things I do turn out well.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

28. Overall, my life is really good.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

29. I worry more than I need to.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

30. I consider myself to be a confident person.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

31. I am a nervous person.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

32. I can get upset easily.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

33. I often feel confused and mixed up.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

34. Overall, I have a lot to be proud of.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

35. Outside of school, how often do you read fiction books? (circle one)

- 1- Never
- 2- Not very often
- 3- Some of the time
- 4- Often
- 5- Very often

36. Outside of school, how often do you engage in cultural activities like going to the theatre, art galleries, music concerts etc? (circle one)

- 1- Never
- 2- Not very often
- 3- Some of the time
- 4- Often
- 5- Very often

#### **Section Four – Open-ended questions**

37. How would you describe your regular English and literacy lessons?

38. How would you describe the best way to learn new things?

39. If you had the option of working by yourself or with a group, what would you choose? And why?

40. Do you have many drama lessons? How do you find them?

## Post-Program Student Survey

### **Section One – Personal Information**

First two letters of first name:

First two letters of last name:

School:

Year/Grade:

Age (in years):

What language is most spoken at home?

What is your gender? (Female, Male or Other)

Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander?

### **Section Two – School experience**

2. Overall, I get along with the other students in my class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

3. When I do my schoolwork, I try to do it better than I've done before.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

4. I cope with well with stress at school.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

5. I enjoy being at school.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

6. I participate fully in class activities and discussions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

7. Overall, I am liked by other students in my class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree
-------------------	--	--	--	-------	--	--	--	--	----------------

8. Overall, I like other students in my class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

9. Overall, I like school.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

10. I get involved when we do group work in class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

11. I don't let a bad mark affect my confidence.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

12. At school I usually feel happy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

13. How would you rate your motivation at school? (Eg. How motivated are you to do well at school? (On a scale of 1 to 10 - 1 being not motivated at all and 10 being highly motivated).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not motivated				Neutral					Highly motivated

14. How would you rate your engagement at school? (Engagement being defined as your interest in school). (On a scale of 1 to 10 - 1 being not engaged at all and 10 being highly engaged).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not engaged				Neutral					Highly engaged

15. How would you rate your confidence when speaking in front of your class? (On a scale of 1 to 10 - 1 being not confident at all and 10 being highly confident).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not confident				Neutral					Highly confident

16. How would you rate your creativity? (On a scale of 1 to 10 - 1 being not creative at all and 10 being highly creative).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not creative				Neutral					Highly creative

17. How would you rate your abilities in English and literacy?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Very low ability				Neutral					Very high ability

18. How easily does writing generally come to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Writing does not come easily to me				Neutral					Writing comes very easily to me

19. When you read a book, how strong is the connection you feel to the character(s)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Low connection				Neutral					Highly connection

20. I like reading books.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

21. My parents read a lot.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

22. There are a lot of books in my house

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

23. I find school interesting.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

24. I am interested in subjects like Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths at school.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

25. **How often do you complete your homework** (circle one)

- 1- Never
- 2- Not very often
- 3- Some of the time
- 4- Often
- 5- Always

26. **How often do you attend school** (circle one)

- 1- Never
- 2- Not very often
- 3- Some of the time
- 4- Often
- 5- Always

### **Section Three – Non-academic outcomes**

27. Overall, most things I do turn out well.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

28. Overall, my life is really good.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

29. I worry more than I need to.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

30. I consider myself to be a confident person.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

31. I am a nervous person.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree



32. I can get upset easily.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

33. I often feel confused and mixed up.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

34. Overall, I have a lot to be proud of.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

35. Outside of school, how often do you read fiction books? (circle one)

- 1- Never
- 2- Not very often
- 3- Some of the time
- 4- Often
- 5- Very often

36. Outside of school, how often do you engage in cultural activities like going to the theatre, art galleries, music concerts etc? (circle one)

- 1- Never
- 2- Not very often
- 3- Some of the time
- 4- Often
- 5- Very often

#### **Section Four – Open-ended questions**

37. How would you describe your regular English and literacy lessons?

38. How would you describe the best way to learn new things?

39. If you had the option of working by yourself or with a group, what would you choose? And why?

**Open-Ended Post Program**

40. How would you describe learning in *School Drama* compared to a traditional English or literacy class?

41. Do you feel like doing *School Drama* has helped you with your English and literacy? Why/why not?

42. Do you feel like doing *School Drama* has helped you infer and fill in the gaps in the story? Why/why not?

43. Do you think you make stronger connections to the characters that were explored in the *School Drama* program than when you just read a book in class?

44. Is there a particular drama strategy that you really liked? And why did you like it? (E.g. Freeze Frames, Dream Sequence, Hot-Seating, Mapping, Conscience Circle/Conscience Alley, Visualisation, Tableau & Tap In, Proximity, Postcard, Role Play etc).

45. Do you think that you've learnt more or less from working as a class in *School Drama*?

46. Do you think there are benefits to using Drama in the classroom? If so, what are these benefits?

47. Is there a moment that stood out for you in Drama this term? If so, what was it and why did it stand out?

### **Section Five – Post-Program Statements**

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

48. I learn better when we use Drama in the classroom.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

49. I have changed the way I think about characters as a result of Drama.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

50. I have found *School Drama* Scary.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

51. I find it easier to write following Drama sessions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

52. I think my writing is more creative when I've done some drama.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

53. I feel more confident after the *School Drama* program.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

54. I feel more engaged in school after participating in drama.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

55. I feel more motivated to do better at school after the *School Drama* program.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

56. *School Drama* has made me dislike school.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

57. I would hate to miss a day at school when we have *School Drama*.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

58. Drama has helped me see the world through different people's eyes/ different perspectives.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

59. I feel more confident in sharing my ideas with my class than I did last term/before *School Drama*.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

60. I think I've learnt to work better with my classmates through *School Drama*.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree

61. I think I've become a more empathetic and caring person through *School Drama*.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Strongly Disagree				Agree					Strongly Agree
----------------------	--	--	--	-------	--	--	--	--	-------------------

62. Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions! Do you have any final comments to make about *School Drama*?

## Appendix E – The University of Sydney Ethics Approval



Research Integrity & Ethics Administration  
Human Research Ethics Committee

Wednesday, 26 April 2017

Dr Robyn Gibson  
School of Education and Social Work Research Operations; Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
Email: [robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au](mailto:robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au)

Dear Robyn

Your request to modify this project, which was submitted on 2 April 2017, has been considered.

The project has been approved to proceed with the proposed amendments.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Project Title: School Drama: Beyond Engagement with the Program

Project No.: 2014/551

Next Annual Report due: 25 July 2017

New Approved Documents:

Date Uploaded	Type	Document Name
02/04/2017	Version 2	Participant Consent Form (Teacher)
02/04/2017	Version 2	Participant Consent Form (Parent/Carer)
02/04/2017	Version 2	Participant Information Statement (Parent/Carer)
02/04/2017	Version 2	Participant Information Statement (Teacher)
02/04/2017	Version 1	New pre-program student questionnaire
02/04/2017	Version 1	Student post-program questionnaire

Please contact the Ethics Office should you require further information or clarification.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Fuller'.

Associate Professor Stephen Fuller  
Chair  
Modification Review Committee Chair (MCR 3)

The University of Sydney HRECs are constituted and operate in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) and the NHMRC's Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007).

Research Integrity & Ethics Administration  
Research Portfolio  
Level 2, Margaret Telfer Building (K07)  
The University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 Australia

T +61 2 9036 9161  
E [human.ethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@sydney.edu.au)  
W [sydney.edu.au/ethics](http://sydney.edu.au/ethics)

ABN 15 211 513 464  
CRICOS 00025A

## Appendix F – State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP) Approval



Mr John Nicholas Saunders  
22/13 Oatley Road  
PADDINGTON NSW 2021

DOC17/795108  
SERAP2017333

Dear Mr Saunders

I refer to your application to conduct a research project in NSW government schools entitled *School Drama: Beyond Engagement with the Program*. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved.

You may contact principals of the nominated schools to seek their participation. You should include a copy of this letter with the documents you send to principals.

This approval will remain valid until 27-Jul-2018.

The following researchers or research assistants have fulfilled the Working with Children screening requirements to interact with or observe children for the purposes of this research for the period indicated:

Researcher name	WWCC	WWCC expires
John Nicholas Saunders	WWC0356037E	28-Apr-2019

I draw your attention to the following requirements for all researchers in NSW government schools:

- The privacy of participants is to be protected as per the NSW Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
- School principals have the right to withdraw the school from the study at any time. The approval of the principal for the specific method of gathering information must also be sought.
- The privacy of the school and the students is to be protected.
- The participation of teachers and students must be voluntary and must be at the school's convenience.
- Any proposal to publish the outcomes of the study should be discussed with the research approvals officer before publication proceeds.
- All conditions attached to the approval must be complied with.

When your study is completed please email your report to: [serap@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:serap@det.nsw.edu.au)  
You may also be asked to present on the findings of your research.

I wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Stevens".

Dr Robert Stevens  
Manager, Research  
27 July 2017



School Policy and Information Management  
NSW Department of Education  
Level 1, 1 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst NSW 2010 – Locked Bag 53, Darlinghurst NSW 1300  
Telephone: 02 9244 5060 – Email: [serap@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:serap@det.nsw.edu.au)

# Appendix G – Teacher Participant Information and Participant Consent Form

## Teacher Participant Information Statement



Faculty of Education and Social Work

ABN 15 211 513 464

Dr Robyn Gibson  
Associate Dean  
Learning and Teaching

Room 412  
Building A35  
The University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA  
Telephone: +61 2 9351 6423  
Facsimile: +61 2 9351 4580  
Email: [robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au](mailto:robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au)  
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

### School Drama: Beyond Engagement with the Program

#### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT (Questionnaire/Benchmarking)

**(1) What is this study about?**

You are invited to take part in a research study that aims to explore the efficacy of Sydney Theatre Company's School Drama program in participant schools. The study's primary focus is on teacher learning during the 7-week literacy through drama program.

You have been invited to participate in this study because as a teacher you are either currently involved, or will be involved in the School Drama program (SDP). This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. So it's up to you whether you wish to take part or not.

By giving your consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read
- ✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below
- ✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.

**(2) Who is running the study?**

The study is being conducted out by the following researchers:

- *Dr Robyn Gibson, Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching, The University of Sydney.*
- *Assoc. Prof. David Smith (Hon), The University of Sydney.*
- *Prof. Robyn Ewing, The University of Sydney*
- *John Saunders, The University of Sydney/Sydney Theatre Company*



John Saunders is conducting three of the case studies as the basis for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) at The University of Sydney. This will take place under the supervision of Prof. Robyn Ewing.

**(3) What will the study involve for me?**

You will be invited to respond to 2 x written questionnaires, before and after the SDP. It is expected that it will take no longer the 15-20 minutes to complete each questionnaire, and these will form part of the of the study's data collection. The questionnaires will equal 40 minutes in total for each teacher participating in the study.

You may also be asked to benchmark student learning during SDP. If you agree to this, it will be negotiated with you; any benchmarking procedures should not take more than a total of 1x hour of your time and it is expected that this will form part of your usual classroom assessment. If applicable, benchmarking will take place before and after the 7-week SDP.

**(4) How much of my time will the study take?**

The study will take place during the school Terms 2 or 3 or 4, 2017, depending on when SDP is coming to your school. During that time you will be asked to take part in 2 questionnaires, equalling 40 minutes in total. You may also be asked to benchmark student learning during SDP. If you agree to this, it will be negotiated with you to ensure that the time needed to do this would not exceed more than 1x hour of your time, if needed at all.

**(5) Who can take part in the study?**

All teachers in schools involved in the School Drama program may take part in this study.

**(6) Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney or the Sydney Theatre Company.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can do this by advising Dr Robyn Gibson (contact details are above on the letterhead).

You are free to not complete the questionnaire, or if applicable the benchmarking. Unless you say that you want us to use them, all information you have provided will not be included in the study results. You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer in the questionnaire.

If you decide to withdraw from the study, we will not collect any more information from you. Please let us know at the time when you withdraw what you would like us to do with the information we have collected about you up to that point. If you wish your information will be removed from our study records and will not be included in the study results, up to the point that we have analysed and published the results.

**(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?**

Aside from giving up your time, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any direct benefits from being in the study.

(9) What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

Your information will be stored securely and your identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but you will not be individually identifiable in these publications.

(10) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.

When you have read this information, *Dr Robyn Gibson*, Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching, The University of Sydney will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact *Dr Robyn Gibson*, Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching.

Email: [robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au](mailto:robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au);

Phone +61 2 9351 6423

(11) Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by indicating that you are interested in receiving feedback by ticking the relevant box on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a report, but there will also be a one-page summary. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

(12) What if I have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney [*INSERT protocol number once approval is obtained*]. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the manner this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the University using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- Telephone: +61 2 8627 8176
- Email: [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au)
- Fax: +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

***This Information sheet is for you to keep***

## Teacher Participant Consent Form



Faculty of Education and Social Work

ABN 15 211 513 464

Dr Robyn Gibson  
Associate Dean  
Learning and Teaching

Room 412  
Building A35  
The University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA  
Telephone: +61 2 9351 6423  
Facsimile: +61 2 9351 4580  
Email: [robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au](mailto:robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au)  
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

### School Drama: Beyond Engagement with the Program

#### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (Questionnaire/Benchmarking)

I, ..... [PRINT NAME], agree to take part in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:

- ✓ I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be asked to do, and any risks/benefits involved.
- ✓ I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been able to discuss my involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so.
- ✓ The researchers have answered any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.
- ✓ I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and I do not have to take part. My decision whether to be in the study will not affect my relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney or the Sydney Theatre Company, now or in the future.
- ✓ I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.
- ✓ I understand that personal information about me that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about me will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.
- ✓ I understand that the results of this study may be published, but these publications will not contain my name or any identifiable information about me unless I consent to being identified using the "Yes" checkbox below.

☐ Yes, I am happy to be identified.

☐ No, I don't want to be identified. Please keep my identity anonymous.

I consent to:

- |   |     |                          |    |                          |
|---|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| • Audio-recording                                       | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Two interviews as stated on the information statement | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Would you like to receive feedback about the overall results of this study?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If you answered YES, please indicate your preferred form of feedback and address:

☐ Postal: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Appendix H – Student Participant Parents and Carers Information and Consent Form



Faculty of Education and Social Work

ABN 15 211 513 464

Dr Robyn Gibson  
Associate Dean  
Learning and Teaching

Room 412  
Building A35  
The University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA  
Telephone: +61 2 9351 6423  
Facsimile: +61 2 9351 4580  
Email: [robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au](mailto:robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au)  
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

## School Drama: Beyond Engagement with the Program

### PARENTAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

#### (1) What is this study about?

Your child is invited to take part in a research study about the efficacy of the School Drama program (SDP). Specifically to investigate to what extent the learnings of teachers, previously engaged in SDP, have been sustained and extended in participant schools beyond the 7-week SDP intervention. Thus this study's primary aim is to focus on the sustainability of SDP, and evaluate its impact in 5 participating schools which have had SDP for at least a year or more.

Your child has been invited to participate in this study because their teacher and school, are involved in the Sydney Theatre Company's School Drama program (SDP). This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to allow your child take part in the research. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you don't understand or want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. So it's up to you whether you wish to let your child take part or not.

By giving your consent you are telling us that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have read
- ✓ Agree for your child to take part in the research study as outlined below
- ✓ Agree to the use of your child's personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Parental Information Statement to keep.

#### (2) Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researchers:

- *Dr Robyn Gibson*, Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching, The University of Sydney.
- *Assoc. Prof. David Smith (Hon)*, The University of Sydney.
- *Prof. Robyn Ewing*, The University of Sydney

- *John Saunders, The University of Sydney/Sydney Theatre Company*

John Saunders is conducting three case studies as the basis for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) of Education at The University of Sydney. This will take place under the supervision of Prof. Robyn Ewing.

**(3) What will the study involve?**

The study will be primarily evaluating your child's teacher's professional learning during the SDP. During the course of the study, your child may be invited to take part in a focus group discussion to find out what their experience has been during their drama classes. It is expected that these sessions will be audio recorded and/or video recorded and will form part of the study's data collection. During the drama class photographs may be taken to assess teacher learning.

These sessions will take place in class time, during or after the drama lesson. These focus groups will have between 5-20 children and are expected to be no longer than 10- 15 minutes. If your child does not wish to take part in the focus group sessions the classroom teacher will offer different activities for your child to do within the classroom. These sessions will occur during the 7-week Sydney Theatre Company's School Drama Program that your child taking part in.

Types of questions asked will focus on:

- What do you like about drama?
- What do you think your teacher has learned about drama during the School Drama Program?
- What do you think you have learned during your time in the School Drama Program?

Students will also be invited to participate in a pre-program and post-program questionnaire exploring their academic and non-academic outcomes.

In keeping with ethical considerations, at no time will any child, teacher, or school be identified in any report associated with the study. Also your child will not be expected, or coerced to participate if they do not wish to.

**(4) How much time will the study take?**

Your child will already be participating in the School Drama Program as part of their English curriculum literacy learning. This will take place in class time, the focus groups will be part of the class activity.

**(5) Who can take part in the study?**

Any child participating in the School Drama Program may take part in the study.

**(6) Does my child have to be in the study? Can they withdraw from the study once they've started?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary and your child does not have to take part. Your decision whether to let them participate will not affect your/their relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney or Sydney Theatre Company now or in the future.



If you decide to let your child take part in the study and then change your mind later (or they no longer wish to take part), they are free to withdraw from the study at any time. They may tell their classroom teacher or yourself and she/he will notify the researcher who will act in accordance with the child's wishes. This will not affect your/their relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney or Sydney Theatre Company now or in the future.

If your child takes part in a focus group, they are free to stop participating at any stage or to refuse to answer any of the questions. However, it will not be possible to withdraw their individual comments from our records once the group has started, as it is a group discussion.

If your child withdraws from the study, we will not collect any more information from them. Please let us know at the time when they withdraw what you would like us to do with the information we have collected about them up to that point. If you wish, their information will be removed from our study records and will not be included in publications, up to the point that we have analysed and published the results.

(7) Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?

Aside from giving their time to the drama/literacy class and focus group within that, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study for your child.

(8) Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?

We cannot guarantee or promise that your child will receive any direct benefits from being in the study.

(9) What will happen to information that is collected during the study?

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about your child for the purposes of this research study. Their personal information will only be used for the purposes outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise.

Your child's information will be stored securely and their identity/information will be kept strictly confidential, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, but your child will not be individually identifiable in these publications. Such publications may be student theses, journal publications, conference presentations, reports to agencies and organisations

(10) Can I or my child tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.

(11) What if we would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, *Dr Robyn Gibson*, Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching, The University of Sydney will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you or your child would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact *Dr Robyn Gibson*, Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching.

Email: [robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au](mailto:robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au);

Phone +61 2 9351 6423

(12) Will we be told the results of the study?

You and your child have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by indicating that you are interested in receiving feedback by ticking the relevant box on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a report, but there will also be a one-page summary. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

(13) What if we have a complaint or any concerns about the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney [*INSERT protocol number once approval is obtained*]. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*. This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you (or your child) are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:

- Telephone: +61 2 8627 8176
- Email: [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au)
- Fax: +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

*This information sheet is for you to keep*



## Parent/Carer Consent Form



Faculty of Education and Social Work

ABN 15 211 513 464

Dr Robyn Gibson  
Associate Dean  
Learning and Teaching

Room 412  
Building A35  
The University of Sydney  
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA  
Telephone: +61 2 9351 6423  
Facsimile: +61 2 9351 4580  
Email: [robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au](mailto:robyn.gibson@sydney.edu.au)  
Web: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/>

### School Drama: Beyond Engagement with the Program PARENT/CARER CONSENT FORM

I, ..... [PRINT PARENT'S/CARER'S NAME], consent to my child  
..... [PRINT CHILD'S NAME] participating in this research study.

In giving my consent I state that:

- ✓ I understand the purpose of the study, what my child will be asked to do, and any risks/benefits involved.
- ✓ I have read the Information Statement and have been able to discuss my child's involvement in the study with the researchers if I wished to do so.
- ✓ The researchers have answered any questions that I had about the study and I am happy with the answers.
- ✓ I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary and my child does not have to take part. My decision whether to let them take part in the study will not affect our relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney or Sydney Theatre Company now or in the future.
- ✓ I understand that my child can withdraw from the study at any time.
- ✓ I understand that my child may leave the focus group at any time if they do not wish to continue. I also understand that it will not be possible to withdraw their comments once the group has started as it is a group discussion.
- ✓ I understand that personal information about my child that is collected over the course of this project will be stored securely and will only be used for purposes that I have agreed to. I understand that information about my child will only be told to others with my permission, except as required by law.
- ✓ I understand that the results of this study may be published, and that publications will not contain my child's name or any identifiable information about my child.

1 of 2

I consent to:

- |                               |     |                          |    |                          |
|-------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| • Audio-recording of my child | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Video-recording of my child | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Photographs of my child     | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Would you like to receive feedback about the overall results of this study?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If you answered YES, please indicate your preferred form of feedback and address:

☐ Postal: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/carer's signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix I – *School Drama Classic* Teacher Pre- and Post-Program Survey

### Teacher Pre-Program Survey

#### *School Drama* Pre-Program Survey

1. Your details

Name:

School:

Year Level:

2. Did you attend the pre-program professional development workshop with STC? (Please circle)

Yes

No

3. If yes, did you find the workshop helpful in preparing for *School Drama*?

4. Were there any aspects of the workshop that could be improved?

5. How important do you consider the following aims of *School Drama*?

	Most Important	Very Important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important
To support primary teachers to engage with drama within their classroom					
To provide rich professional learning experiences through STC Teaching Artists					
To model the use of drama strategies and techniques as a tool of learning and teaching, particularly in English and literacy					
To improve student outcomes in English and literacy					
to create a sustainable model for artists and teachers to work together in schools to enhance curriculum outcomes, rather than the traditional 'artist in residence' approach					

6. What has been your experience with using drama teaching strategies to date?

--

7. Rate how you agree with the following beliefs:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Drama strategies should be embedded in the teaching of literacy in the primary classroom.					
Drama can enhance student learning in other Key Learning Areas in the primary classroom.					
I feel confident in teaching drama to primary students.					
I see myself as creative when planning drama activities to enable students to respond to literature.					

8. What are you hoping to take away from the *School Drama* experience?

--

9. Through participating in *School Drama*, I hope to:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Develop increased confidence in using drama strategies in English.					
Develop increased confidence in using drama strategies to improve students' literacy.					
Increase my own creative capacity in planning drama activities within literature.					

10. In thinking about my professional learning in drama and literature, I expect to benefit from:  
(rank in order of importance to you, with 1 being the most important)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
One-on-one learning opportunities with a mentor						
Applying the learning as soon as I can in another context						
Working with a tertiary industry leader						
Connecting with a theatre professional						

Developing a relationship with a state theatre company						
Connecting with other teachers involved in the <i>School Drama</i> program						

11. What do you believe your students will gain through the *School Drama* program?

12. What do you think the STC Teaching Artist will take away from working with you on *School Drama*?

13. What aspect of literary do you want to focus on?

- ☐ Comprehension and inference
- ☐ Confidence in oracy
- ☐ Descriptive language
- ☐ Creative/imaginative writing

14. What do you want to focus on this aspect of literacy?

15. Do you have any final comments or concerns before you start the *School Drama* program?

## Teacher Post-Program Survey

1. Name:
2. School:
3. Accreditation Number (for NSW Teachers who would like their hours accredited by NESA):
4. What has been your experience of taking part in *School Drama*, in regard to your professional learning?

5. What has been your experience of taking part in *School Drama*, in regard to your personal development?

6. What do you believe your students have gained from being involved in *School Drama*?

7. Has the *School Drama* program met your literacy development objectives? Why/why not?

Rate your own professional beliefs in each category

8. Drama strategies should be embedded in literacy teaching in the primary classroom.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	----------	----------	-------------------

Comment:

9. Drama can enhance student learning in other Key Learning Areas.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	----------	----------	-------------------

Comment:

10. I feel confident in teaching drama to primary students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	----------	----------	-------------------

Comment:

11. I see myself as creative when planning drama activities to enable students to respond to literature.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	----------	----------	-------------------

Comment:

As a result of the *School Drama* program, I have:

12. Developed increased confidence in using drama strategies in English.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	----------	----------	-------------------

Comment:

13. Developed increased confidence in using drama strategies to improve students' literacy.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	----------	----------	-------------------

Comment:

14. Increased my own creative capacity in planning drama activities with literature.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
----------------	-------	----------	----------	-------------------

Comment:

15. Reflecting on these possible professional learning outcomes, please rank all relevant responses in order of importance to you (1 being most important and 6 being least important).

	1	2	3	4	5	6
One-on-one learning opportunities with a mentor						
Applying the learning as soon as I can in another context						
Working with a tertiary industry leader						
Connecting with a theatre professional						
Developing a relationship with a state theatre company						
Connecting with other teachers involved in the <i>School Drama</i> program						

16. How likely are you to continue to use drama in English and literacy lessons? (please circle)

- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Not at all

Comment:

17. How would you describe the relationship between drama and literacy learning?

18. What do you think the Teaching Artist has taken away from working with you on the project?

19. Who was your Teaching Artist? Do you have any comments about their work or suggestions to help them improve their practice?

20. What are the strengths of the *School Drama* program?

21. What are the weaknesses of the *School Drama* program?

22. What improvements would you make to the program?

23. Do you feel the *School Drama* program provided value for money?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

Comment:

24. Do you wish to make any other comments about the program?



## Appendix J – Sample Benchmarking Task and Rubric (Comprehension and Inference, 2017)

### Comprehension and Inference Pre-program Student Benchmarking Task 2017 STAGE 3

**Teacher:** Below is an example only, drawn from *The City* by Armin Greder. Teachers are encouraged to choose a text that was studied in class during Term 1 (or the term prior to doing School Drama) and identify a central character and a situation that the students can infer their comprehension of the text.

**Student:**

1. You are to write a diary entry as The Boy, a character in the story *The City* by Armin Greder when you entered the city for the first time (at the end of the book).
2. You should have 5 minutes planning, 30 minutes writing and 5 minutes editing.
3. Remember to;
  - Plan your writing before you start
  - Write in sentences and paragraphs
  - Pay attention to the words you choose (as you are writing as a particular character and not yourself)
  - Use appropriate language
  - Use the existing story but build upon it and fill in the gaps in the story
  - Take on the perspective of the character whose diary entry you are writing
  - Use examples from the text.

### Comprehension and Inference Post-program Student Benchmarking Task 2017 STAGE 3

**Teacher:** Below is an example only, (if you were using *The Burnt Stick*) and teachers are encouraged to use the text that was the focus of the School Drama program. The post-program task should focus on a character and situation that the students can infer their comprehension of (ie something they can build on).

**Student:**

1. You are to write a diary entry as John Jagamura, a character in the story *The Burnt Stick* by Anthony Hill when you arrive at Pearl Bay Mission for the first time.
2. You should have 5 minutes planning, 30 minutes writing and 5 minutes editing.
4. Remember to;
  - Plan your writing before you start
  - Write in sentences and paragraphs
  - Pay attention to the words you choose (as you are writing as a particular character and not yourself)
  - Use appropriate language
  - Use the existing story but build upon it and fill in the gaps in the story
  - Take on the perspective of the character whose diary entry you are writing
  - Use examples from the text.



## Appendix K – Sample Teacher Interview Transcript

**Waratah Grammar School**

**Teacher Interview #1 – Following Workshop Four**

**Date: 31/05/2017**

**Participating Teacher: Mr Dane Everhart (DANE)**

**Interviewer: John Saunders (JOHN)**

JOHN: So, maybe we should just start off with any observations that you have, that have jumped out at you? Or things that have surprised or? I mean, you've done School Drama before.

DANE: Well, what I've noticed is that over the four weeks they've gradually become more in tune with this style of working. I think at the beginning they found it really difficult to kind of tune into being in that space and working in this way, but compared to today, being four weeks in, they are far more able and a bit more mature and serious about working in this way. That's by biggest observation. And today was really quite outstanding. Some of the freeze frame and their thoughts about being able to put their ideas into these sort of frames was far more advanced than where it was at the beginning of the four weeks ... Umm yeah. And their responses as well, during the hot seat, I thought were yeah were quite advanced some of them and thoughtful.

JOHN: Mmm and I think the questions too have become more sophisticated even than when we did it last week. I think there is a sense of being 'in' the story or 'out' of the story or 'on the edge' of the story when we were hotseating those characters and I don't know whether I've seen that before, yet. Have you noticed any shifts in their ... with their literacy even quite broadly over those four weeks.

DANE: It's hard to kind of ...

JOHN: Well our focus is on inferential comprehension, I suppose, and we started talking about that today. Do you think that it's (the drama) helping them infer in different ways or shifting their thinking about the characters?

DANE: Absolutely. I mean, it's probably more obvious when we are having a discussion or having dialogue, as opposed to in their writing, yet. Because I mean we've done probably to pieces of writing based on *The City* and they've been able to infer quite well in that ... and draw connections with the text in their writing. But the biggest and most obvious improvement in inference or their ability to infer is in that dialogue and through that hot seating, even through the tableau images, their showing me their ability to infer.

JOHN: It would be really interesting to hear their discussions in their group work.

DANE: Yeah! And they are all so different too! It would be interesting to see their different thought processes. That are manifesting themselves in the physical form. Yeah. Um.

JOHN: And sort of non-academic, I guess that's the other hypothesis, if there are any non-academic changes in motivation, engagement, confidence, empathy, umm ... you know that have come through or that drama has allowed any of those to be developed? Any thoughts?

DANE: Yeah I think confidence is a big thing.

JOHN: Yeah it was interesting hearing from the kids.

DANE (Interrupts): Yes, that's right. It's coming straight from the horse's mouth, hearing them say that they are more confident in being able to express themselves through drama and I found that really interesting what Cassandra was saying that Drama was all about being silly and trying to make people laugh and joking around, but now she's thinking that actually thinking that 'I can be a bit more serious about this' and that drama is a way that I can express my feelings and emotions instead of something that is a bit silly. So yeah, getting that sort of shift has been really interesting.

JOHN: Mmm and in the hallway just before with that little focus group, Cassandra was saying that she was really connecting to The Mum character and that umm, and I um thought that was really interesting because when I've used this book before the kids have usually identified more strongly with The Boy character and not the Mother character. And she was talking about how she felt heartbroken for her and that she has made all these sacrifices and done all of this stuff for The Boy sort of not be happy.

DANE: That's really interesting.

JOHN: Yeah! And I hadn't heard that before when I've done this book. Yeah.

DANE: She's a quite high level thinker and she is quite empathetic and she can see things from another perspectives. Um yeah.

JOHN: Do you think that drama work helps or provides opportunities for kids to um like stand in the shoes of those characters and connect with them on a different level and empathise with them?

DANE: Yeah, absolutely! Absolutely. I mean, that's the whole point, isn't it? Especially when you step into role in the hot seat, you are that person. And they are responding as that person. So yeah.

JOHN: And do you think ... have you noticed anything to do with their motivation or engagement within the lessons?

DANE: Within the drama lessons or within lessons in general?

JOHN: Both and either.

DANE: I think yeah, well when I told them you weren't coming yesterday, they were very sad about that. They were like 'what's going on? Why don't we have drama now' and I was like "we've got it tomorrow" so they got over it. But obviously you can tell by the way that they are super excited about doing drama but also so engaged in the text, cos every time, you know when you tease them and say that 'we'll just read one page' they all really want to know what's happening next and that's evidence that they are connected with the story and connected with the characters. Because they really want to know what's going to happen next. It's a very powerful sort of ... the techniques you use are very powerful for engagement. You can see that. They are obsessed haha.

JOHN: Haha! And you can see the tension that builds, you know, using the episodic pre-text or just taking a page and taking your time to let things unravel, it builds the tension and it keeps building. And it's funny, like in that first lesson when we only looked at the cover of the book and we didn't

have any of that tension at all, that we were only just starting to think about the world of the text, and the meta ideas and themes that are in there, and I just didn't feel like it connected to the kids at all, but then once we introduced the characters and situation in the book, then I just felt a shift in the group, that there was much more focus. Did you notice that?

DANE: Yeah! Because they are not used to having a book stopped to do things with it, to do activities around what has been read ... they aren't used to that sort of episodic way of working. They are used to going to the library, and have the librarian read front to back the full, complete story, having a bit of a chat, and going 'that was a boring book' or whatever. So they're not used to that. So I guess they were with the expectation that it would be the same and they weren't as engaged, but as soon as you started breaking it up and getting them to dive deeper into it and the different parts of the book, and the characters and what's going on, um yeah then they have obviously become far more engaged.

JOHN: And I think the richness and the depth of the learning, can be ... well I think richer and deeper when we are taking that time to explore those critical moments or a really juicy gap in the story. Especially in a picture book, especially in a book like *The City* that is really very text light, you could quite easily sort of tzuje through it and skim through it without going into that level of depth I think.

DANE: Yeah!

JOHN: Or even talking about those critical moments is different from their discussion, their embodiment, their sharing. Yeah I think it's interesting.

DANE: Yeah, I love it! I think it's a really great way of learning ... a bunch of different skills. And not just inferring but yeah confidence and empathy, just everything that goes with ... you know life sort of skills, you know. It all kind of comes in and teaches them and helps them build those capacities to be good little human beings.

JOHN: Yeah! To be productive in the world!

DANE: Yep!

JOHN: We talked about this before, but the dynamic of the class, they are really smart, but often find working with different people difficult, would that be a ...

DANE: Fair judgment?

JOHN: Yeah.

DANE: Totally. Absolutely.

JOHN: And do you think that's shifted at all?

DANE: I do, I do. I felt that today. There was less of the moaning about not being with their friends. I think we've now set the expectation that ... and we've discussed it too. We've spoken about the importance of working with different types of people and being in a variety of groupings. So now they understand that this is how it's going to be, you know, they just have that expectation now. And they don't worry about that. Um so yeah um maybe initially they thought that drama was about just getting up and having fun and just being with their friends, but now I think that that shift has taken place and they realize that it's more academic and that there are outcomes and for a purpose.

It's not just to have fun with their friends. And even that partner work that they did today, working out that dialogue, they did that really well! Bar probably one group. They worked exceptionally well all together on that, and that made me realize that yeah, they can work with other people.

JOHN: Yeah I felt the same way as well. I think they've taken a big step in their group work, but also in the quality of the work that they share. And I wonder if that's because of their investment in the story. And as that grows, then they take more care with it, they take more time with it, they think more deeply and critically about those characters and what's motivating them. You know, it's not one drama lesson that's a one off. You know ... which is what I think lots of teachers after School Drama do, like 'oh we'll just do a hot seating' or whatever and that's it, but I think it is actually like the sustained nature of what we are doing that we are seeing that develop each week.

DANE: Yes, because they are becoming familiar with the different techniques, so they can then build on their confidence in using these techniques and they get a better understanding about how to do it.

JOHN: It becomes less about 'I'm feeling uncomfortable because we are doing something new' to more like 'oh I get it, we've done a frozen image before, so this is just an extension of that, so I'm not going to be embarrassed in front of my peers perhaps.

DANE: Yep. Yep.

JOHN: Great! Thanks Dane. Now to transcribe it.

DANE: Haha. Actually I was going to say that what was most surprising was Chase's response because normally he isn't one to vocally express himself very often. He's quite an intelligent kid, but he won't often speak up about his ideas and thoughts, so the fact that he was willing to do that today, was an amazing thing. And that was because of the drama. Because he was able to get up and move around and build that confidence through being .... I don't know, yeah, so that was quite nice to see.

JOHN: He made some fascinating comment outside about, as everyone was running off, he had something that he really wanted to say, it was about imagination and how it helped his brain, I'll have to follow him up on that next week. Because I'd like to understand what he meant by that. You know, I don't know these kids very well, but I think I've seen a shift in him, you know, in those early few weeks he was really quite and really wouldn't ... but now I'm starting to learn his name because he is contributing ideas and volunteering to be hot seated ... yeah so that's really interesting.

DANE: Yeah. Yeah. And most of them are pretty confident kids, so it's nice to see the ones that aren't and who don't usually put up their hand or share their ideas, actually starting to come out of their shell a little and being a bit more confident.

JOHN: Yeah. Their confidence in speaking. Their confidence in sharing.

DANE: I mean, they are all pretty good readers, they are really quite advanced in their reading skills, but that doesn't translate to their writing, so it will be interesting to see how that changes over the 7 weeks.

JOHN: Yeah, well if there is any shift.

DANE: There is bound to be a shift! Absolutely.

## Appendix L – Sample Student Focus Group Transcript

**Waratah Grammar School**

**Focus Group #3 – Following Workshop Six**

**Date: 13/06/2017**

**Participating Students: Morgan, Zara, Charlotte, Reese, Mackenzie.**

**Interviewer: John Saunders (JOHN)**

JOHN: Ok, so because we are voice recording, can you please just say your name before you speak?

ALL: Ok.

JOHN: Ok and thinking big picture about drama, is there anything that stands out about drama and what you think we are doing compared to your normal English lessons?

REESE: Um I think it's more engaging and everyone has a go and you get to work with different people that you haven't worked with before and yeah, it's very interesting.

JOHN: And what makes it engaging do you think?

REESE: Um probably cos just um, cos not just talking to like one person or something, the making sure that everyone is included and it makes it fun for everyone.

MACKENZIE: I think that because we are doing it in the classroom, it's like, you are doing it with your friends and you are going to enjoy it more than doing it out of school or as a club, because you have people that you know there and sometimes it's hard to socialize with people that you don't know. It's also really fun, it's also really interesting because everyone gets a say and because it's a bigger group, compared to the small groups that I'm with on the weekend. It's really nice and you are always able to find someone else to work with who has the same kind of personality as you.

CHARLOTTE: Umm I think that it's like no rules and you get to move around and you can learn new things. Like if you do an English lesson you learn things but with no brightness in them, but when we do drama, it's kind of bright, not dark.

JOHN: Oh ok, that's really interesting. What do you mean by the brightness and darkness?

CHARLOTTE: Cos like everyone's happy that we're not doing school work.

Everyone laughs.

JOHN: So even though like we are learning stuff, because we are not staying like sitting at desks ...

CHARLOTTE (cuts in): We are expressing our feelings instead of writing it and getting it checked and getting it back and redoing it. Doing it once (in Drama) there's no right or wrong, there's listening, there's no 'you can't do this.'

JOHN: Um and do you think it's helping, we are talking about inference and how we are filling in difference gaps and inferring, connecting dots, reading between the lines, I guess in a book. So that's our literacy focus for our time together. Do you think that the drama work we are doing is helping with that?

(Students agree)

JOHN: How so?

REESE: I don't know exactly, by it is.

CHARLOTTE: I think that it is kind of like mindfulness and stuff and it kind of like relaxes you a bit.

MACKENZIE: And gets you to stop stressing about school working.

REESE: Yeah it's more relaxing yeah.

MACKENZIE: Yeah because you get to move around and enjoy being with other people and have fun with them.

ZARA: It also like lifts up your imagination cos you have to think in your head and then say it. So you can express yourself a little more.

JOHN: I was talking to another group a couple of weeks ago and they were talking about imagination as well, so how do you think that drama helps with your imagination? So how does your imagination work differently when you are in Drama than when you are in a traditional English lesson?

MACKENZIE: Well I think it's because you go deeper. You go deeper. You don't go to the standard of reading the words, you go deeper, you hear the words, you hear the adjectives and the descriptive words, you hear the different things that spark different ideas. And because that's sparked your ideas your becoming more imaginative.

MORGAN: It's not just one topic. Everyone has different ideas and you can learn from those different ideas and you can be a happier person I guess, because um it's not so stressful, it's fun to do.

MACKENZIE: It's kind of like a stress-reliever.

REESE: Um being imaginative, I think like every two pages you stooped it. And then we did an activity about it that made us really think about what's happened so far. And I think that really helps our imagining a lot.

CHARLOTTE: Yeah like if you read the book just straight through, we would have kind of forget what happens and if you asked 'questions anyone?' then we would like all have a blank mind, so um I liked the way that you stopped it. And everyone was a little bit like disrespected by going 'Nooo', because mostly adults are the people who know more than you.

JOHN: And do you feel like that's true in drama? That adults know more than you in drama?

CHARLOTTE: Well, adults might know a bit less because you all have different ideas to them.

REESE: Um kids usually have more of an imagination and if you stop reading the book to us slowly, it goes through our mind and we really think about what you are reading to us.

MACKENZIE: Yeah and if you read 'farstly' then it would go in one ear and out the other.



ZARA: Yeah for children they would read through the book quickly and be like 'oh that was fun' so I'll get another book, but they don't really express themselves. And they don't really go through the process of reading the book slowly and imagine things, especially if it doesn't have pictures. But you can look at the pictures and that would take a longer time.

ZARA: It's funner to imagine pictures in your mind instead of looking at the pictures that someone else put in there for your mind.

MORGAN: Yeah um picture books are ok, but they aren't the best, because its already giving you your imagination which you should use your imagination with words. And imagine what would happen. And um when you read um there might be two meanings for it, but you'll be like 'that doesn't make sense', well it doesn't make sense because you are reading it faster and you might miss some words and some sentences.

ZARA: and if imagine the picture you can see it moving, except if someone else drew it for you, its still. You don't' really connect to the picture. As much as you do imagining the picture in your own mind.

JOHN: So do you think, do you feel like a different connection to the characters? Like a stronger connector or a weaker connection with the characters?

REESE: I think um like I said, I said I was like Tom (The Boy) for the postcard that we did today and yeah you sort of learn more about the character if you act as them. It's very interesting. Yeah.

MACKENZIE: It's kind of interesting to see, because you are re-enacting the characters from the book, it's interesting to see what everyone else has to show, because sometimes for example, when we did the showed off the postcards today?

JOHN: Oh the two photographs? Those two freezer frames?

MACKENZIE: Yes. The freeze frames. When we did those, it's kind of interesting to see because most people had the idea of the family photo and some people had the idea, the impression that it was going to be like a war still going on, some people had the impression that there was poverty, and some had the impression that it was finished.

MORGAN: When we were doing the whispering and the dreaming, there was not one single person who said the same thing. Some people were talking about the father. Some people were talking about the city, families. But um you could have done how you should have act, instead of just doing. Like it's not like an instruction because he didn't do anything by himself. He only had his mother. And his mother really, really cared about him. And um I think drama is like a different word to everyone. Different meaning. Different way of thinking.

REESE: When you act as a character you can really feel their emotions. And when people are throwing things at you like talking, you can, can really feel their emotions. Like if they are saying 'go to the city' or 'go find a new and better family who will take good care of you', you can feel their emotions.

JOHN: And so when you feel those emotions, as those different characters, like the boy in the dream sequence, or whatever, do you think that like helps you with your writing and your understanding.

REESE: Yeah, yeah.

MACKENZIE: Yes.

ZARA: Yes.

MORGAN: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: Yes, and it gives more expressions and instead of writing like for example 'a cat sat down' instead you could say 'the purple cat sat down on the ... swiftly sat down.'

JOHN: So is that because you hear all these ideas as a class? Like you grow more as a class than individually? Is that it, do you think?

CHARLOTTE: Yep, so if you right like that, 'the cats on the mat' it is getting really dark and then you can't even use your imagination. And if you use more adjectives, nouns, adverbs, and all of that, then um, you can make it more with colour. More enjoyable, yeah and more easy and more expressive.

JOHN: Reese, you talked about being more engaged, but what about motivated. Like if you are asked to do a task in a traditional English class, like if you were asked to write about something or whatever, compared to like doing the dream sequence or creating a freeze frame or whatever, so they are two different tasks but do you feel more motivated to do better in one or the other and why?

REESE: I feel more motivated to do the different drama tasks.

JOHN: Why is that?

REESE: It's just that ... hmm I dunno ... it's just feel a bit easier using it with other people and seeing their ideas and combining them into something very good. Yeah, it's very worthwhile.

JOHN: Yeah, so it's the working with others as well that helps? Yep?

MACKENZIE: I do, I sued to have my favourite subjects as Maths, but because I started doing drama classes and I started expressing and I started finding different ways to express my imagination, I've got more motivation like both in my writing and now my favourite subject is writing.

JOHN: Zara?

ZARA: So if you are reading a book and it's like 'the dog chased the ball' you can really, you can't really imagine .... If you use more expressive words you can imagine more things. So if you are going to write a story, you gotta place in words like 'the golden dog playfully chased the ball across the playground'.

MORGAN: It improves your imagination, doing drama.

CHARLOTTE: So if you imagine one thing and then you imagine another thing, you can go back to that first thing and use it and everyone can hear your ideas. I guess if you can't imagine it, then I guess your brain gets a bit smaller and not more juicy. Like you feel like you are locked up behind bars.

MORGAN: Like your imagination is locked.

CHARLOTTE: But you can imagine that you are in front of those bars and you're doing something different and your brain can get smarter, I guess. And drama is like a different language to everything else.

JOHN: Does anyone want so to say anything else about drama?

MACKENZIE: And another really big thing connected to imagination is drawing. From drama you can express that by doing drawing and sometimes you use different ideas and sometimes a doodle can mean so much. And that's why so much art is so expressive.

ZARA: Building on from what Mackenzie said. When you doodle (giggles) and you just drawn something on a piece of paper, sometimes you can, sometimes you can just draw something weird on a piece of paper, but it turns out to look like something that's actually a real thing. So when you doodle again, you have more imagination, so you can draw it ... it makes the lines a bit more .... You get more imagination.

CHARLOTTE: So leading on from Zara's question, I personally get a piece of paper and draw, but when I get a piece of paper I go blank. So I'm like 'aw what do I draw'? So I just get my piece of paper and drew a blob and it turned into this really cool thing.

JOHN: And do you think that drama has helped you with that? Like with giving ideas to help you when you get stuck with a blank page?

CHARLOTTE: When we do, we were doing the writing task, I wasn't like thinking, I was pretending to be one of the characters, and how they were acting and why they were acting that way.

JOHN: And last question I promise, with drama do you think that, if you had of just read the book, do you think you would have connected to those characters, the mother and the boy, in the same way or differently?

REESE: Um I think, definitely different. If I read it straight through, I don't think I would have even enjoyed the book. But when we were reading it really slowly, I loved it. It was really interesting. Yeah. And the characters, yeah. They are very different and you can tell how they feel about the different things. Like the mother, she didn't like the city at all, and the boy was very curious about different things and he wanted to go.

JOHN: And the book doesn't tell us all of that.

REESE: Yeah it doesn't say that, you just notice it by how they look and what they are saying, even though they aren't saying what you are figuring out.

JOHN: Yeah you are kind of reading between the lines?

REESE: Yeah.

MORGAN: Um in the book on the last page, it leaves you on kind of a cliff-hanger. Like you know he is going to try to go to the city but it make you think where will he go in the city and what will he do? And which types of people will he meet.

JOHN: And do you think you would have thought that if you just had of read it?

MORGAN: Yep.

ZARA: Ahh so, following on from Reese's answer, so the thing is, when you, even though it was a bit frustrating when you wouldn't finish the book instantly, it did make me think, what would happen next, so the next drama lesson you read another page ... and when I was curious and then you read it and I was happy, but then I was like 'what's going to happen next'. So when you go to the end of the book, it made me wonder why did it end like that and what happened next? Will he go to the war? Is the war still going on? So you can kind of imagine the rest of the book ... you just imagine the rest of it which makes you more imaginative afterwards.

CHARLOTTE: so I wondered why you chose that book and why us? And why was there no part of the book when people when tot the carnival? And why did his father die? And like what are we going to do for next lessons?

JOHN: So do you think you would have had those questions if we had of just read the book in class?

CHARLOTTE: No! Because like every session, you always changed it and made us think more and have different expressions and work with different people and when we were doing the two photographs, on the first one, I was thinking like that he could have had a sister who died before and his mother never told him, or for the second photograph, why does everyone have to be so dark? Why can't you make it with sunshine and make everyone happy, I suppose? Instead of staying all black and dark. So it's kind of less polluted, so why couldn't they have made it better?

JOHN: Yep, Mackenzie?

MACKENZIE: Um so, just going back to that first question you asked, I think yes I think definitely, it is different for everybody. The reason why you are getting so many answers that are so similar is because we did it so slowly and because we've already expressed ... like at the start it was like about our own ideas, but then we got to the point where we were like 'well I like this persons idea, this is cool and I'm going to go with their idea' but there was more of the same answer. And so if we just read the book once, either by yourself or all together and you recorded what we think and then we did it again really slowly with drama like this and you recorded what we thought, then I think it would be very, very different.

JOHN: Ok great! Thanks for your time.

ZARA: I think drama is a pretty good idea for children with less imagination than other people, so it brings up their imagination level up top and for their expression word for the top too, so once you are kind of imaginative, you are never going to stop being imaginative. You are always going to have a bit of imagination in you and drama is a pretty good way to let that imagination out and keep growing it.

CHARLOTTE: Ok, so I think drama helps with every single subject we do at school. This school is a really good school and we are really lucky. So if you read a book, when you read a book outloud, it doesn't always make sense cos you aren't reading all the punctuation and like how you use your voice and expression.

JOHN: So how does drama help other subjects?

CHARLOTTE: Well for maths, like problem solving, you can imagine. Like use the maths but imagine maths working like.

JOHN: Ok great. Thanks so much, guys! I really appreciate you answering these questions.