Film learning as aesthetic experience

Dwelling in the house of possibility

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AUTHOR’S DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

I. this thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy Degree
II. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used
III. the thesis does not exceed the word length for this degree.
IV. no part of this work has been used for the award of another degree.
V. this thesis meets the University of Sydney’s Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) requirements for the conduct of research.

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Date: 9TH MARCH, 2011
Abstract

Drama is an ancient art form and progressive pedagogy in education. It is the collective act of imagining and seeing ourselves in action, in the moment, towards a destiny. Film is a modern art form and an evolving pedagogy in schools. Narratives in moving pictures are a dramatic form of mediated communication. This research concerns drama teachers’ experiences with screen drama and filmmaking pedagogy.

In a rapidly digitised world, mediated forms of communication through technology are a vital source of social connectivity, information and storytelling. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) integration in education is a response to the digital culture but the integration has been likened to the ‘hammer in search of a nail’. ICT in education is demanding the development of pedagogies that connect a deep understanding of technology, curriculum outcomes and teacher professional learning.

This research is concerned with exploring and developing best practice in a creative and critical pedagogy for moving pictures as aesthetic learning in schools. Drama teachers as teachers of aesthetic, embodied, collaborative and narrative learning are uniquely placed to respond to and critique the development of an authentic and effective pedagogy for film narrative. The school and curriculum structures and resources to support film learning are also examined through the drama teachers’ experiences.

The research is praxis-oriented and uses a montage of interpretive practices in a collective case study to explore in depth six teachers’ experience with film learning. The study’s design involves the facilitation of film learning workshops and explores the participants’ aspirations, expectations and realisations for film learning in their schools.

The participants’ experiences highlight the problems, possibilities and opportunities of film learning as aesthetic learning and raise issues about the role of and tensions with arts pedagogy as a learning paradigm in schools and the curriculum. The teachers’ stories reflect an educational culture, leadership and curriculum structure that does not
necessarily allow, support or develop on-going professional learning and teacher innovation for authentic student learning.
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To all creative teachers keep inventing and innovating with your students.
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Introduction

*I Dwell in Possibility –
*A fairer House than Prose –
*More numerous of Windows –
*Superior – for Doors –

_Emilie Dickenson, 1862_

Emily Dickenson’s poem is about her freedom to express through poetry. I have used this stanza not as an exploration of comparative art forms but as a metaphor for dwelling in the ‘house of possibility’ and the freedom of opening doors to new inquiries about arts education.

It was in closing one door and walking across a hall to open another door that this research began. Both the doors led to large, sparsely furnished, school drama classrooms. I had finished teaching a drama class and closed the door behind me. I crossed the hallway to teach my next class and was struck by the feeling I was travelling between two parallel but unique universes. In the hallway I was metamorphosing from drama teacher to film teacher. As I opened the door to the film class my transformation was complete but there were trace elements from where I had been.

What were those trace elements? Why were the drama and film universes parallel yet each was unique? What happened when I metamorphosed? What could be learnt from the dynamic and tension of two distinct forces unifying through change? It was in this moment of metamorphosis that I wanted to understand and explore the newly emerging area of filmmaking in schools through the experience of drama teachers.

It was in introducing and teaching film as an elective subject in years 9 and 10 from 2001, and in making films with students as co-curricula projects that I intuitively felt filmmaking had an inherent pedagogy within it. As a drama teacher I knew drama pedagogical processes of psychophysical embodiment offered a unique way of learning and knowing. I felt that filmmaking processes were another way for students to know and
to learn. This sense of the potential in ‘film pedagogy’ also propelled my research journey.

This study explores an arts learning approach in film by examining the experiences of six secondary drama teachers. These six teachers were participants in professional learning workshops in film learning that I facilitated. The research focuses on the teachers’ experiences before, during and after the workshops.

The inquiry begins with a focus on film learning and drama teachers. The teachers’ experiences open windows to possibilities for film and open doors to wider, systemic problems. The study reveals that a centralised, inflexible curriculum structure focusing on teacher delivery of prescribed curricula does not necessarily allow, stimulate, support or develop teacher innovation. This has consequences for teacher and student empowerment and accessing authentic ways to know and learn.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first four chapters in Part I introduce the rationale, context and design of the research. The eight chapters in Part II explore and analyse the research data and make conclusions and findings.

**PART I**

Film as an art, as technology and as a semiotic has manifested itself in varying ways as learning in the school curriculum. The review of the literature in Chapter 1 reveals how the integration of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in education is demanding the development of pedagogies that connect a deep understanding of technology, curriculum outcomes and teacher professional learning. The study will demonstrate that the expertise of drama teachers in aesthetic, embodied, collaborative and narrative learning uniquely positions them to respond to and critique the development of an authentic and effective pedagogy in film.

Before introducing the design and analysis of the research, the next two chapters provide an understanding of the curriculum context and the film learning introduced to teachers in
the workshops. Both the situated context and the nature of the film learning frame and interact with the perceptions and experiences of the drama teachers in this research.

In Chapter 2, ‘Screen drama and film learning in: the context and intention of the NSW curriculum’, filmmaking in the NSW (New South Wales) secondary curriculum is analysed by examining current syllabus texts as well as considering curricula relevant to the proposed Australian curriculum for the arts. The real-world context in NSW and Australia highlights tensions in curriculum paradigm boundaries and approaches to film and media pedagogies in the arts especially in the context of the incoming Australian Curriculum.

In Chapter 3, ‘Learning in and through film: a sociocultural and aesthetic approach’, film learning is described and analysed as a form of semiotic mediation and cultural tool. Experiential, collaborative, creative, aesthetic, scaffolded and narrative processes inform film pedagogy. Central to film learning is a way of knowing that focuses on the interaction of an individuals cognitive and emotional processes and the social environment, through an aesthetic experience in creating and critiquing communication through film.

Chapter 4 discusses the research methodology and design used to explore the experience of drama teachers with film learning. Fundamental to the design is generating knowledge that values the interpretive experience and qualities of teachers’ in-depth stories to enhance educational practice. The research is praxis-oriented and uses a montage of interpretive practices in a collective case study to explore six teachers’ experience with film learning. The chapter explains how the subjective relativism of the research and the researcher is both a strength and limitation for understanding and interpreting the research data.
PART II

The intervention of the film pedagogy workshop in the research design creates a narrative structure in presenting the analysis of the six teacher participants’ stories as data. The stages are:

(i) The teachers’ aspirations for teaching film before the research workshops.
(ii) The teachers’ expectations for film learning after the workshops.
(iii) The teachers’ realisations after teaching film in their schools.

The following data chapters are shaped by this narrative structure and the patterns and themes arising from the participants’ experiences.

Chapter 5, ‘The teachers’ context and aspirations for film learning’, is both an orientation and an exposition before the drama teacher participants embark on the research workshops. The teachers’ school context and aspirations for film learning are explored as an experiential base with which future experiences may interact. None of the teachers is forcibly required to teach film, they are primarily responding to student interest in film. Despite the teachers’ range of experience with film and varied aspirations for the implementation of film learning in their schools, the teachers have a sense of agency for transforming their teaching practice by gaining deep pedagogical and content knowledge in film learning.

The teachers’ aspirations become expectations after the experience of the film learning workshops. Chapter 6, ‘The teachers’ expectations: responding to professional learning’, examines the participants’ reactions to the workshops as adaptive, experiential and collaborative learning practice. Integral to pedagogical innovation and implementation is the nature of teacher professional learning. This chapter examines how emotional dimensions and re-engaging with old learning in professional learning affect teacher expectations.

Chapter 7, ‘The teachers’ expectations: responding to film pedagogy’, provides a critique of the framework and processes of film learning experienced in the workshops. From the participants’ responses the role of the audience and the construction of narrative, pedagogical processes and developing a metalanguage are key to film learning.
The chapter is an insight into the teachers’ learning in the workshops and the possible affect of the learning on their teaching.

In Chapter 8, ‘The teachers’ expectations: comparing drama and film learning’, the drama teachers’ responses highlight the fusion and fission of the aesthetics and learning processes of film and drama. The participants’ observations of the relationship between drama and film continue the development and critique of a framework for teaching film. Their comparisons have implications for the nature, focus and capacity of learning in film and drama.

Chapter 9, ‘The teachers’ expectations: film as a discipline in the arts’, considers the participants’ response to film as a discrete subject in the arts curriculum. It explores the possibilities and problems for film pedagogy in the arts and as part of the proposed learning area ‘media arts’ in the new Australian curriculum.

After teaching film in their schools the teachers’ expectation become realisations. Chapter 10, ‘The teacher’ realisations: technology and pedagogy’, examines how the teachers’ expectations for film learning are affected by realisations concerning the integration, organization and management of technology in their schools. The teachers’ responses indicate that problems arise if the pedagogical purposes of specific filmmaking technology are not recognised in schools.

Chapter 11, ‘The teachers’ realisations: curriculum issues’, analyses curriculum structures, resources and tensions impeding teachers teaching of film in their schools. Obstacles for the teachers to implement curriculum change for film learning are the uncertainties of where and how the curriculum can accommodate film learning. It highlights the ideological stakes of policy and funding in curriculum construction, and how a centralised, delivery curriculum can foster compliance rather than innovation from teachers.

Chapter 12, ‘The extreme long shot: agency and creativity for teacher innovation and film pedagogy in the curriculum’, concludes that teachers and students can be empowered if
there are opportunities in a flexible curriculum for teachers to innovate. These opportunities can arise if teachers have the agency in a professional culture that promotes action learning communities within and across schools with links to academic partnering. More specifically in the NSW and Australian context a flexible and empowering curriculum could allow for teacher innovation in aesthetic film pedagogy.

This research endeavours to recognise teacher wisdom and give voice to teachers’ stories in the hope that their stories shape the architectural structures and culture of education. Allowing teachers to be creative, collaborative and innovative in on-going professional learning can create a dynamic, sustainable educational culture that better supports the professional wellbeing of teachers, and the learning and wellbeing of their students.
Chapter 1
Literature review: film and learning

The film screen is Athena’s polished shield.
Siegfried Kracauer, 1960

From its beginning as a technical novelty in the late 19th century, motion pictures have gone on to affect profoundly the way we experience our world. Robert Edmund Jones (1941/2004) claims motion pictures are an art form that evoke the “rhythm of the thought-stream” and the projection of “pure thought, pure dream, pure inner life” (p. 4). Moving images are also a multinational entertainment and communication industry, weapons of propaganda, tools for advertising and consumerism and a pervasive means by which we communicate in our mediated world.

The impact of moving pictures cannot be underestimated in our personal, local or global context. This is reinforced by film theorist Siegfried Kracauer’s (1960) use of the Perseus and Medusa myth as a metaphor for film’s relationship between image and reality. So as not to turn into stone by looking directly at Medusa, Perseus beheads the Gorgan by looking into the reflection of Athena’s polished shield. The shield represents the film screen as a mirror of reality and to avoid the horror of reality, we confront it through film. The myth can also be read as saying, the reflection led Perseus to the horror of slaying Medusa. Film then, Kracauer (1960) says can corroborate and debunk images of the physical world. The screen as Athena’s polished shield illuminates the powerful and
potent nature of moving pictures to explain, explore and see the world from different perspectives.

The advent of affordable and user-friendly digital technology has allowed students in schools to make films (Buckingham, 2003; Burn, 2009) and this brings another dimension to Kracauer’s metaphor. Students can now corroborate and debunk images of the world through their own film creations. In this way students can know about the world by learning about, learning in and learning through moving pictures. As ‘spect-actors’, to use Boal’s (2002) term, students can actively participate and learn as creators and spectators of film.

This chapter explores the possible roles moving pictures or ‘film’ has in current educational practice and unveils the context, concerns and tensions that have led to this study’s enquiry into drama teachers and their experience with film learning. The literature suggests the potential of filmmaking for teaching and learning in the curriculum is problematic and under-researched. The need for effective and authentic learning using digital video technology informs this research. This literature review considers the context and forces shaping film learning in the curriculum and the issues arising from that.

**What does film learning mean?**

Digital cameras and editing software has given access to students to make ‘movies’. In this thesis the capability to produce moving pictures and learn is referred to as *film learning*. The word film does not indicate the physical medium of film stock. The word film is a reference to the film language of moving images, and includes any recording medium for moving pictures such as celluloid, digital video and hard drive recording, and any screen display, such as cinemas, televisions, computers, and mobile phones (Carroll, 2006). The term film is associated with the cinematic experience and it is a word at variance with the usage and development of new media as digital screen forms.

Manovich (2001) argues that the cinematic way of seeing the world, the structuring of time and narrating a story are being extended to become the ‘visual Esperanto’ of using
and accessing all data on the computer screen. According to Manovich the film aesthetic is not a linear march towards a single possible language but a history of successive developments. Television and computerisation offer new opportunities for the development of film language. Bolter and Grusin (1999) contend new visual media ‘remediates’ all visual media such as film, television and painting and that by paying homage to, rivalling and refashioning it, then achieves cultural significance. In film learning the practices of students’ storytelling with moving pictures transcoded from the cinematic tradition to the digital form is also evolving.

Moving pictures in this research is described as film. It is term that draws on the significant genesis, influence and role of the cinematic, narrative tradition. The nomenclature and understanding to describe and explore the aesthetic of the moving image in student learning may evolve with the experience and development of pedagogy in this area.

Film is not a language system but it does perform many of the same functions of communication as language does (Monaco, 2000). The use of a system of codes and tropes to communicate meaning can be referred to as film language or the aesthetic of film. The aesthetic of film refers to moving pictures formal elements and the relationship between its formal elements and content, and the features that make a work the work of art it is (Devereaux, 1998). Film learning in this study refers to students producing moving pictures or filmmaking and using film language and the film aesthetic for learning. The doing and making processes characteristic and intrinsic to film creation also contribute to film learning as a process.

The ontology of film fragments the understanding of film into varying perspectives: film as art, film as technology and film as a semiotic. These perspectives impact on how film learning has been shaped and defined in education. Film learning occurs in school curricula as:

(i) a learning strategy or ‘tool’ across all curriculum areas to enhance pedagogy,
(ii) a media or visual literacy and text in English or media studies,
(iii) a design tool in an ICT subject, and
Film as art

The ontology of film has been a constant source of discussion by screen theorists since the Lumiere brothers screened their first moving pictures in 1895. To begin, film was seen as a technological novelty of sideshow entertainment, and like photography had difficulty in being recognised as an art form (Carroll, 2006). Film was viewed no more than a photographic instrument of mechanical reproduction but advocates of the ‘photoplay’ argued motion pictures had the elements and perceptual experience of a mature art form (Lindsay, 1915/2006; Munsterberg, 1916/2002; Read, 1932/1966).

The photoplay shows us a significant conflict of human actions in moving pictures which, freed from the physical forms of space, time, and causality, are adjusted to the free play of our mental experiences and which reach complete isolation from the practical world through the perfect unity of plot and pictorial appearance. (Munsterberg, 1916/2002, p.167)

Film as art has had varying philosophical and aesthetic paradigms to describe its form, such as expressionism (Arnheim, 1958), formalism (Balazs 1945/1970; Pudovkin, 1926/1970; Eisenstein, 1949), realism (Cavell, 1971; Kracauer, 1960) and neorealism (Bazin, 1967/2005; Godard, 1972; Truffaut, 1980). Film has been described as a mirror held up to reality (Kracauer, 1960) and as a ‘dreamed reality’ (Jones, 1941/2004; Langer, 1953). Langer (1953) claims film is a new poetic mode that:

Like dream, enthral and commingles all senses; its basic abstraction – direct apparition – is made not only by visual means, though these are paramount, but by words, which punctuate vision, and music that supports the unity of this shifting ‘world’. It needs many, often convergent, means to create the continuity of emotion which holds it together while its visions roam through space and time. (p. 414)

Although a realist, Cavell (1971) also has a poetic vision of film, saying it presents the world magically, “Not by literally presenting us with the world, but by permitting us to view it unseen” (p. 40).
In viewing films, the sense of invisibility is an expression of modern privacy or anonymity. It is as though the world’s projection explains our forms of unknownness and our inability to know. The explanation is not so much that the world is passing us by, as that we are displaced from our natural habitation within it, placed at a distance from it. The screen overcomes our fixed distance; it makes displacement appear as our natural condition. (Cavell, 1971, pp. 40-41)

For Cavell it is the technology of film’s projection through a ‘magic lantern’ that roots film in the magic associated with religion and the arts. According to Scruton (1983) film is not an art as it is not a ‘representational mode’. He argues the camera is unable to analyse what it shows and moving pictures are simply the creation of an illusion. As a life-like semblance of the world, moving pictures create the gratification of beguiling fantasy and in so doing defeat the aims the artistic expression.

To counter Scruton’s argument is the ensemble of choices made to create a film and how they function to realise a purpose such as expression of thought and emotion (Carroll, 1999). Intent, choice and control create form, clarify expression and specify style (Carroll, 2006) and in these ways sustain aesthetic interest and effect. The film aesthetic is a perceptual and cognitive experience (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004; Branigan, 1992) that can be likened to a dream or magic. It extends human awareness and expression by making strange our everyday perceptions and conceptions (Shklovsky, 1990).

**Film as technology**

Film, like all art forms, is shaped by politics, culture, philosophy, economics and technology. Film is inherently dependent on complex, ingenious, and ever more sophisticated technology and its evolution is driven by its technical capacity (Monaco, 2000). It is film’s technical capability to develop and change that has allowed it to be utilised by students in schools and homes. In the current educational setting the access to affordable and user-friendly digital authoring has made filmmaking learning possible (Buckingham, 2003; Burn, 2009; Carroll, Anderson and Cameron, 2006). There are however issues of inequities with access to, management and use of technology in under-resourced and disadvantaged schools (Solomon, Allen and Resta, 2002).
The role of technology is integral to film, but Carroll (1996) argues moving pictures cannot be identified as a specific type of technology or medium. Carroll’s definition counters the doctrine of medium-essentialism, which defines an art form by a distinctive medium or material. This has implications for describing film in education. Carroll uses five necessary conditions to define moving pictures:

1) the detached display of a screen
2) images that technically create the impression of movement,
3) a ‘performance’ as generated from a template cannot change (a token), unlike a play (a type) which is interpreted in performance,
4) the token of screening as a technical task is not an artistic act, and
5) two-dimensionality. (pp. 49-74)

Carroll’s five conditioning factors encompass the stylistic diversity and technological transformations of motion pictures since their inception in the late 19th century. The non-medium essentialist definition allows for instance that the technology of photographic capture can be celluloid or digital and the technology of screening can be a projector or computer. Despite film being a changing and evolving technology, Carroll’s five conditioning factors define moving pictures as a constant form. Different structural and stylistic forms of film such as narrative, abstract, rhetorical, associational and categorical (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004) are accommodated by Carroll’s definition.

Audience interactivity with film through technological innovation in new media does challenge our definition and relationship with film as a fixed template of performance. Carroll, Anderson and Cameron (2006) demonstrate how computer-mediated role playing can be aligned to performative, process drama learning. They describe how digital interactive environments blur the boundaries between author and spectator, actor and character and engage participants in an improvisation-like performance. Interactivity affects the mediated relationship between technology and ‘performance’ but the use of

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1 The advent of 3D film and television and the possibility of a holographic film experience in a virtual arena appear to challenge the condition of two-dimensionality. The counter-argument is that 3D in these forms is really 2D for in reality they are not solid figures. Alternatively, it can be argued that a holograph is 3D and hence not a moving ‘picture’ (see Carroll, 2006).
the semiotic language and aesthetic representation of the film form remain (Manovich, 2001).

**Film as a semiotic**

Film as a semiotic or system of signs is another way to describe and analyse film. In the 1950’s and 1960’s the approach of treating film as a language of signs dominated the study of film (Smith, 2005). Central to film semiotic theory was Metz (1974) who devised a linguistic paradigm to account for the compositional elements of film. Metz theorised, “It is not because the cinema is language that it can tell such fine stories, but rather it has become language because it has told such fine stories” (p. 47).

Semiotics analyses how meaning is produced through the function of structural relationships within a system (Hayward, 2000). Signification through denotation, connotation and ideology in film are analysed to reveal meanings. An illustration of semiotic analysis (see Hayward, 2000) is how a photograph of Marilyn Munroe at a denotative level is an image of herself as a movie star. At a connotative level there is an association with her mythic ‘star’ qualities of glamour, sexuality and beauty but also her demise into depression, drug-taking and early death. It evokes the Hollywood myth of creating dreams but also the crushing of them out of expediency. Ideologically the photograph represents the film industry of Hollywood as a rich and powerful institution that inspires aspiration and demands conformity.

The semiotic approach to film theory diminished the focus on film as art:

> Questions concerning art and the aesthetic were dissolved into the broader notions of symbolism, language, representation, mind and culture; in some quarters, the aesthetic is not merely ignored or marginalized, but explicitly attacked as an outmoded and bankrupt notion. (Smith, 2005, p. 604)

Semiotics according to Monaco (2000) cannot completely explain the metaphysical nature of film as an artistic activity. He uses the word ‘trope’ to indicate that film is more than a semiotic code or language with quantifiable discrete units. The concept of tropes is to describe the unusual way codes, signs and technology are used to produce unexpected meanings in the arts. An example of a trope in film is Alfred Hitchcock’s montage of
fifty fragmented shots from numerous angles in *Psycho’s* (1960) two-minute murder scene in the shower. The unusual perspectives, images and cross-cutting rhythms to create the effect of frenzied tension was a new way of manipulating montage to engender meaning.

A system of art can be described generally in semiotic terms as a collection of codes but the unique activity of an art lies in its tropes (Monaco, 2000). Therefore film is a semiotic language of sorts, it:

- consists of short-circuit signs in which the signifier nearly equals the signified; and
- depends on a continuous, nondiscrete system in which we can’t identify a basic unit and which therefore we can’t describe quantitatively. (Monaco, 2000, p. 160)

As a form of signification, film is difficult to analyse because the signifier and the signified are almost identical.

Despite the limitations of film semiotics, film does possess a “vocabulary of forms – the explicit, complex, and discusssable technology of camera movements, cutting, and composition of the frame that goes into making a film” (Sontag, 2001, p. 12). Film has culturally derived codes and conventions distinctive to its own form, as well as ‘translating’ codes from other art forms such as music, novels and the theatre (Monaco, 2000). The semiotic understanding of how film communicates allows the development of critical tools in both analysing and creating film (Bennett, Hickman, Wall, 2007; Burn and Durran, 2007; Burn and Parker, 2003; Monaco, 2000). These tools are useful to interpret and produce film as form of literacy and communication within a socio-cultural construct (Buckingham, 2003; Burn and Durran, 2007; Kress, 2003).

Film is defined and described by its technological capability, its aesthetic expressivity and semiotic capacity. The ontology of film is an insight into how and why film has emerged in different ways in education. By examining education’s relationship to technology, the arts and semiotics, the role of film learning in the curriculum can be explicicated. The discussion reveals the problems and issues for film learning in education, and the possibilities for research.
Technology and education issues

How we view technology and its relationship to humans has implications for the way we envisage technology’s role in education. Societal concerns with technology have been articulated since the time of the Ancient Greeks. Plato had issue with the ‘technology’ of writing because unlike oral discourse it didn’t allow for a dialogic or ‘Socratic’ exchange of ideas (Gee, 1991). The technology of writing according to Plato had the power to control thought rather than to question it. In a similar vein, Walter Benjamin (1935) argued the technology of mechanical reproduction such as printing, photography and film is a means for social control. Benjamin was concerned that mechanical reproduction of art denies social participation in authenticating the creation of the artwork. Instead of being based on ritual, artistic production is based on politics.

Marshall McLuhan (1964/1994) continues the discussion of society’s relationship with technology by contending technology must be viewed as an extension of ourselves. Technology doesn’t profoundly change what humans do, just the speed with which they do it. It eliminates “time and space factors in human association” (McLuhan, 1964/1994, p.9). Common to Plato, Benjamin and McLuhan’s ideas is how technology affects human experience and the way humans associate with each other. Technology is not a neutral tool (Ihde, 1995), it is an instrument of culture (Vygotsky, 1978) and this is significant to its use in education.

Bowers (2000) questions the neutrality of technology in learning and examines how computer technology affects cultural diversity and ecological sustainability. He argues for a more critical study of technology’s role and integration into education and the need for a conceptual framework to understand technology as more than a tool of efficiency and expression of human evolution. Bowers (2000) criticises Peters and Lankshear’s (1996) claim that cyberspace in education “potentially offers new accessibility to the power to inform and be informed” (Peters and Lankshear, 1996, p. 64). It fails to acknowledge that computer-mediated communication involves a commodified relationship and represents the ideology of Western liberal individualism.
Buckingham (2006) claims viewing technology as a neutral tool and as independent to human society is symptomatic of technological determinism.

From this perspective, technology is seen to emerge from the neutral process of scientific research and development, rather than from the interplay of complex social, economic, and political forces. It is then seen to have effects – to bring about social, psychological, and political changes – irrespective of the ways in which it is used, and of the social contexts and processes into which it is used, and of the social contexts and processes into which it enters. (Buckingham, 2006, p.9)

Media education in schools aims to address the issue of technological determinism by critically studying media technology’s social, political and economic context. Media education aims to develop both critical understanding and active participation with media technology (Buckingham, 2003).

The complex forces shaping humanity’s relationship with technology determine our view of technology’s role in education and as a consequence the role of film learning in schools. Of concern is the unquestioning way technology has been integrated into education as a neutral tool when significant and powerful cultural and economic forces are shaping its use (Apple, 2004; Goodman, 1995). Ferneding (2007) asks, “What can we endeavour to achieve, pedagogically, if we will fully adhere to naïve assumptions about the nature of media technologies?” (p.1331). Further she suggests that:

…the danger exists that we, as educators, take such phenomenon as electronic media…at face value and do not question or engage a reflective position. This outcome is evidenced in terms of how Information and Computer Technology (ICT) has been diffused within typical K-12 settings over the past 20 years whereby the diffusion of technological systems superceded issues germane to social justice and pedagogy. (Ferneding 2007, p.1331)

How to critique the economic and political structures supporting the use of technology in society through pedagogy is a developing research area in media learning. Burn and Durran (2007) present a critical media literacy model that examines cultural contexts, social functions and semiotic processes of media. Burn (2009) confesses the discourse of post-structuralist and post-modernist theory and the political reading of media texts in this approach are obscure and abstract for school students. This study endeavours to
interrogate the way filmmaking technology is used and critiqued pedagogically in the aesthetic curriculum.

**Aesthetic curriculum issues**

The main issue for arts education is its marginalisation in the curriculum (O’Toole, 2009c). According to Pinar et al (1995), “…the aesthetic dimensions of curriculum tend to be underemphasized. This has been the case historically…The marginalisation of the arts continues to the present day. Even in educational research it is underemphasized, despite its acknowledged importance… (p. 567). This research aims to develop understandings of the underemphasized aesthetic dimension of the curriculum.

The rationale for the arts in education is reflected in the writings of Maxine Greene and Elliot Eisner. According to Greene (1995), the arts move young people “to imagine, to extend, and to renew” and as active learners they are “awakened to pursue meaning and to endow a life story with meaning” (p. 132). Eisner (2002a) argues that our consciousness is affected by the arts, and the arts “refine our senses so that our ability to experience the world is made more complex and subtle” (p. 19). The report, *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts* report (McCarthy et al, 2004) identifies the potential benefits of the arts as *intrinsic* to the arts experience and of value in themselves, and *instrumental* as an indirect outcome of the arts experience.

The intrinsic benefits described in the McCarthy et al. report (2004) include:

- Captivation and rapt absorption in a state of focused attention
- Pleasure and revelation in the imaginative experience
- Expanded capacity for empathy through different cultural experience
- Cognitive growth through making sense of art and new perspectives
- Creation of social bonds in the shared experience of the arts
- Expression of communal meanings when works of art are conveyed in the public sphere.

Instrumental benefits from participation and learning in the arts are examined in The Arts
Education Partnership report, *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (Fiske, 1999). The report found that learners attain higher levels of achievement across learning domains through engagement with the arts. Fiske’s (1999) findings indicate that the arts when well taught:

- engaged students who had difficulty engaging with school
- as a different learning style were a bridge to learning and eventual success in other areas of learning
- changed student attitudes about themselves, others and school culture
- provided new challenges to those already successful at school
- connected learning experiences to the world of real work.

To better understand the cognitive and social effects of the arts in education, the Arts Education Partnership undertook a compendium study in *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* (Deasy, 2002). 62 studies were used to demonstrate that the arts contribute to academic achievement, student engagement, motivation and social skills. Winner and Hetland (2003) contest that the conclusions made from the compendium studies ignore limitations when making interpretive claims.

Carey (2006) claims there is no evidence that exposure to the arts makes ‘better people’ but does suggest that active participation and achievement in the arts contributes to a sense of personal fulfilment. The results of Catterall’s (2009) longitudinal study in *Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art: The Effects of Education in the Visual and Performing Arts on the Achievements and Values of Young Adults* strongly connect arts learning with academic success and pro-social outcomes.

Based on indications from *Critical Links*, the Arts Education Partnership’s report *The Arts and Education: New Opportunities for Research* (Deasy, 2004) provides a research agenda that pursues increased knowledge about the specific characteristics and learning in the arts. The agenda is concerned with (1) the cognitive processes and expressive abilities developed in arts learning experiences, (2) the processes that promote social and personal development, (3) the affect of arts learning on teaching, relationships and school
culture, (4) the role of the arts in creating community and democratic values and (5) examining the status and condition of arts instruction and achievement.

The Evaluation of School-based Arts Education Programmes in Australian Schools (Department of Education, Science and Training, 2004) substantiates evidence the arts has a beneficial impact on student engagement and learning, and provides opportunities to explore strengths and intelligences that do not receive a lot of emphasis in other curriculum areas. Ewing (2010b) argues that given the growing evidence about the arts being central to deep learning and cognitive and emotional well-being, arts education needs to be accessible to all students and core to the Australian curriculum. In her review, The Arts and Australian Education: Realising Potential (2010b) she posits:

There is a need to reframe both research and pedagogy in the Arts to focus on understanding the possibilities for learning and teaching in, through and about the Arts, in schools, but also the need to use the Arts as a catalyst for social justice in the community more broadly. (Ewing, 2010b, p.10)

Investigating drama teachers and film pedagogy in this study aims to develop further knowledge about the specific characteristics, processes and benefits of learning in the arts with filmmaking technology.

**Arts education and technology issues**

Deasy (2004) presents a research agenda for arts education that highlights the need to examine how teachers are using technology “both in the teaching of the arts and in bringing the arts into teaching of other subjects” (Deasy, 2004, p.19).

New technologies have also led to the creation of whole new artistic media and forms. To date, little research has explored the particular cognitive and physical demands and possibilities inherent in work in these new media. Further research might be done to explore the consequences of pursuing work in these new media and forms. (Deasy, 2004, p.19)

Ferneding (2007) argues that an important course of action is to explore how arts educators can engage in the act of questioning technology from an “aesthetic position” to understand with a critical awareness what it means to live in a technological society.
Artists, by the very nature of their inquiry, can articulate the tactile experientiality of electronic technology. Understood as one aim of arts-based media literacy, such experiential articulations contextualized by a sociopolitical understanding can begin to create an embodied and conscious antidote to present psychic and physical numbing induced by electronic technologies. (Ferneding, 2007, p. 1347)

The intersection of the arts and new technologies provides opportunities to develop and reform pedagogies in response to ICT integration in schools (Ferneding, 2007).

Drama education’s engagement with technology is a part of this new frontier. According to Carroll, Anderson and Cameron (2006), drama teachers as specialists in communication through the physical body and live performance can “look at this evolving digital world with a critical eye” (p.18). Research in the area of drama education and technology is still in its infancy.

Research has not reported on current practice and has not tried to form and describe drama education’s future. Teachers working within the field of drama and technology are not yet supported by a body of research or sets of theoretical principles to guide their practice. (Carroll, Anderson and Cameron, 2006, p. 142)

The aim of this study is to extend the research and re-establish principles in learning with filmmaking technology. The experience and perceptions of drama teachers’ can be instructive for other teachers working with film learning such as English and media teachers.

**Media literacy in education issues**

The pervasiveness of a visual, technological, consumer culture, in the form of films, television, online viewing, mobile phone communication and interactive computer and video games has led to the critical study of ‘new’ literacies in schools (Buckingham, 2003; Goldfarb, 2002, Kress, 2003; Lankshear and Knobel, 2006). These changes are profoundly affecting the shape of knowledge and human engagement with the world (Kress, 2003). The pedagogy of multiliteracies questions the dominance of the written word in literacy learning and believes students should engage with multimodal literacy forms beyond just the printed word so that students can be designers of their social future (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000; New London Group, 1996).
…the multiplicity of communications channels and increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in the world today call for a much broader view of literacy than portrayed by traditional language-based approaches. Multiliteracies…overcomes the limitations of traditional approaches by emphasizing how negotiating the multiple linguistic and cultural differences in our society is central to the pragmatics of the working, civic, and private lives of students. (New London Group, 1996, p. 60)

While multiliteracy may be new to educational theory, as social practice it has always been part of human development (Daley, 2003).

The concept of a language composed of elements other than word and text is neither fundamentally new or particularly revolutionary. Rather, this concept is an evolutionary development of the ideas and practices that have been with us since people first struggled to leave records and tell stories. Technology is simply enabling these alternative ways of communicating to penetrate our lives more directly and in more powerful ways (Daley, 2003, p. 187).

Film as a multiliteracy is a multimodal form of images, sound, music, speech and graphics (Monaco, 2000) and encompasses varying modes of communication and social contexts (Burn and Parker, 2003). The study of film as a form of multiliteracy may be in English, or media studies. Theories in critical literacy (Friere, 1970/2006; Freebody and Luke, 1990; New London Group, 1996) and literacy theories of social practice (Barton and Hamilton, 2000) view film as a visual text to be critiqued in terms of ideology, identity, values, power and social practices.

There is evidence to suggest that when creativity is developed with literacy, students achieve stronger outcomes in both areas (Ewing, 2006; Safford and Barrs, 2005; Warhurst et al, 2009). The study, *Creativity and literacy: many routes to meaning* (Safford and Barrs, 2005) examined a range of creative projects in primary classrooms and their influence on children’s language and literacy learning. The study found that in effective creative learning contexts, literacy and arts making flourished together.

There is no quick or simple transition from creative arts to literacy, but the creative arts, because they are fundamental ways of symbolising meaning, provide a powerful context for developing language and literacy…Where reading, writing, talk, and the creative arts in classrooms enable children to tell their stories, to communicate and make meaning in real and imagined worlds, the literacy that emerges is complex and diverse. (Safford and Barrs, 2005, p.199)
Buckingham (2003) argues for creativity and critical literacy because “young people need to be equipped with the ability to understand and to participate actively in the media culture that surrounds them” (p.203). Burn (1999) and Sefton-Green (1995) contend that students creating their own digital production empower them as media consumers more generally. Buckingham (2003) points out that creating with technology does not in itself empower critical literacy, “it is primarily a question of pedagogy” (p. 186).

The key point here is that the potential benefits of digital technology will not be realised without informed intervention on the part of teachers – and, in a different way, of peers. There remains a need for reflection, deliberation and dialogue; opportunities and requirements for these things need to be systematically built in to the process, even if they seem like a distraction from it. (Buckingham, 2003, p. 187)

**Pedagogy and technology issues**

Digital video technology can be used as a tool to motivate students’ engagement with learning (Prensky, 2010) but it can also simply facilitate indiscriminate use, arbitrary experimentation or the creation of a polished product that communicates little (Buckingham, 2003). Rather than emphasise technological innovation, Buckingham (2003) argues further attention needs to be given to pedagogies that facilitate critical dialogue, discrimination, skills and competencies in student use of digital technology. According to Hobbs (2004), the future of working with technology in schools will be in aligning it more with media literacy and process-oriented cognitive, communication and problem solving skills.

Educational technologists seem finally to have recognized that any vision of 21st century learning must de-emphasize the “tool focus” that has been prevalent in much scholarship about technology throughout the 1990’s, and emphasize instead the development of students’ critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. (Hobbs, 2004, p. 54)

Reflective teaching and learning, and creativity and literacy with digital technology, is not necessarily encouraged by current educational practices and curricula, as Tyner (2003) points out: “The problem is that applied, directed, and delivered pedagogies dominate the curriculum, leaving little breathing room for reflective, inquiry-based,
student-driven, and experimental processes that are central operating principles for critical literacy practices” (p. 380).

**Teacher professional learning and pedagogy**

To move to more reflective, inquiry-based, collaborative pedagogies with technology is problematic. Goodman (1995) examines how the principles of social functionalism, efficiency and productivity, individualism, and expertism will likely reinforce existing school practices and pedagogies. Goodman (1995) argues for alternative principles to restructure schools in the technology age based on “Socio-utopian rather than socio-temporal, social democracy rather than social functionalism, existential experience rather than efficiency and productivity, collectivist learning rather than individualism, and teacher-driven reform rather than expertism” (p. 23). Transforming pedagogy then is more than a training and structural change, it is a profound socio-political and socio-philosophical shift in theoretical underpinnings and educational practice (Goodman, 1995).

Changing educational practice through pedagogical innovation requires a socio-cultural, conceptual framework and meaningful teacher professional learning (Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009). Engagement with deep conceptual and pedagogical change takes time and sustained learning opportunities and leadership for teachers (Spillane, 2004). Relevant to the development and sustainability of reform in educational practice is the capacity of teachers, school communities and school systems and teacher professional learning processes (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace and Thomas, 2006). Fullan, Hill and Crévola, (2006) recommend a system for implementing and sustaining pedagogical and curriculum change involving personalising the student’s learning needs, precisely meeting those needs and delivering on-going organisational and collaborative professional learning for teachers.

To meet student’s personal needs in classrooms requires a precise understanding of filmmaking as pedagogy.
Issues with filmmaking and pedagogy

As cameras and editing software have become accessible in schools, filmmaking has been utilised as a tool or strategy for learning. With ICT integration across the curriculum, filmmaking has been recognized as a motivational tool for learning with the capacity to develop analytical and social skills (Burden and Kuechel, 2004; Christie, 2004; Hofer and Swan, 2005; Hoffenberg and Handler, 2001; Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002; Swain, Sharpe and Dawson, 2003) and provide opportunities for authentic learning (Kearney and Schuck, 2006). Working with digital video can encourage creativity in students (New, 2006; Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002) and accommodate and develop a range of learning styles (Burden and Kuechel, 2004; Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002) and promote collaborative, problem solving, negotiation, thinking, reasoning and risk taking skills in students (Burden and Kuechel, 2004; Christie, 2004; Hofer and Swan, 2005; Hoffenberg and Handler, 2001; Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002; Swain, Sharpe and Dawson, 2003).

However, technology integration across the curriculum has been likened to the “hammer in search of a nail” phenomenon where the implementation of technology is “contrived or incongruent with classroom practice and discipline-specific pedagogy” (Hofer and Swan, 2005, p.102). Hofer and Swan (2005) made the following observations from a social studies task involving documentary filmmaking:

According to classroom observations, students who struggled seemed to do so because they were seduced by the bells and whistles of the technology and lost sight of the primary goal of the assignment – to uncover the collective memory of a historical event. As a result, several projects lacked substance, specifically in the area of historical analysis, interpretation and comprehension. (Hofer and Swan, 2005, p.107)

In their conclusions, Hofer and Swan (2005) recognize it is a challenge for teachers to manage and scaffold multiple layers of learning that involves historical thinking skills and filmmaking skills. They recommend research to “assist classroom teachers to harness the potential of digital moviemaking to effectively connect technology, pedagogy and content” (Hofer and Swan 2005, p. 108). Staples, Pugach and Himes (2005) find it
critical for professional learning to address the relationship between a deep understanding of technology and curriculum outcomes.

The concern with technology integration and discipline-specific outcomes is reflected by Queensland Education’s evaluation of an *ICT Curriculum Integration Performance Measurement Instrument* (Finger, Jamieson-Procter and Watson, 2005), which seeks to measure curriculum enhancement, and transformational dimensions in relation to ICT use by students. The NSW Board of Studies since 2006 has mapped the integration of ICT skills to curriculum content and outcomes in revised Stage 4\(^2\) syllabus areas so “all students have the opportunity to become competent, discriminating and creative users of ICT, and that they are better able to achieve syllabus outcomes through effective use of ICT for enhanced learning” (Board of Studies NSW Educational Resources).

Specific to digital video use in schools, *The Evaluation Report of the Becta (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) Digital Video Pilot Project* (Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002) found the integration of DV (digital video) technology into teaching and learning had the potential to enhance learning but that DV technology use across the curriculum did not automatically improve student outcomes. Digital video alone did not improve the quality of work or standards of attainment and that “high quality teaching remains the key factor in raising achievement” (Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002, p.3).

The findings from the Becta report suggest teachers were 1) unclear about what constituted creativity in DV work, 2) unsure about their role in the students creative process and 3) uncertain to how to evaluate the quality of their student’s work. The report also found the higher-quality student work “showed a greater attention to the uniqueness of the ‘language’ of the moving image” (p.3) and “that understanding and control of this language, rather than simply of the technology, gives pupils access to expression through DV”( Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002, p.4).

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\(^2\) Stage 4 refers to learning in years 7 and 8.
Concurrent to these findings Kearney and Schuck (2005) found “students need moviemaking skills and a basic understanding of the ‘language of the medium’ for the technology to be seamlessly integrated into the learning process” (p. 2869). The Becta DV Pilot Project (Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002) made the following suggestions as a result of the evaluation of the impact of DV technology on student learning:

- in working with DV, teachers and pupils need to recognize the distinctiveness of the moving image as a unique mode of expression and communication
- teachers will require knowledge of and training in, the language of the moving image before DV can be integrated fully in the curriculum
- pupils will need more than ‘one-off’ opportunities for using DV if its potential to enhance their learning is to be realized (p. 4)

The Becta DV Pilot Project recommends examining the impact of DV work based on a greater understanding of the language of the moving image, and developing and applying a clear model of creativity in DV that “both suggests criteria for evaluating the quality of DV work, and structures the teacher’s role in the creative process” (Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002, p. 4).

For teachers to use digital video technology and software across the curriculum they need to be not only proficient in using and integrating the technology with their curriculum-specific pedagogy and outcomes, they and their students require skills and knowledge about how moving pictures communicate (Kearney and Schuck, 2005; Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002). These ideas demand pedagogic structures and training for teachers (Burn, 2007) and curriculum-strategic support (Burden and Kuechel, 2004). This study focuses on the need to explore the development of film pedagogy in curriculum structures by examining the experience of drama teachers.

**Drama and film pedagogy issues**

There are recommendations that the arts may provide direction in the development of media and film pedagogy (Anderson and Jefferson, 2009; Burn, 2007). Burn (2007) suggests media collaboration with arts specialists would be beneficial in realising the complexity of media’s capacity to communicate.
…we might hope that teachers across the arts can collaborate with media specialists, so that aspects of visual design, the role of music in film and games, or the dramatic functions of film, television drama, and games, can all be considered in a multidisciplinary way which realizes the complex nature of multimodal texts and cultural practices. (Burn, 2007, p. 273)

Drama teachers have the potential to play a dynamic role in the development of media pedagogies such as film because drama pedagogy is embedded with understanding of dramatic function and dramatic embodied performance (Burn and Durran, 2007; Carroll, Anderson and Cameron, 2006; Jefferson and Anderson, 2009). Burn (2007) predicts collaboration and integration of such different pedagogic traditions in the arts and media will be difficult in the often rigid compartments of curriculum design, at a local and national level.

In an arts-based media literacy curriculum, Ferneding (2007) says various disciplines have influenced the approach to the study of visual media:

For example, those who teach in the area of communication arts emphasize production and the study of media genres and the media industry. Instructors from a media arts background, however, focus on the aesthetic elements of media and creative self-expression and those who teach from a fine arts perspective emphasize the creative use of film, video, and so on. (Ferneding, 2007, p. 1335)

Ferneding (2007) is not concerned with the variations in focus and approach as any arts-based approach emphasises critical thinking skills and responsible self-expression. However, Ferneding’s ideas do imply that communication arts, media arts and fine arts have varying pedagogical approaches to media and film in the curriculum. Kim (2003) argues the medium of film does not provide a specific pedagogy, as the process of arts making is irrespective of the medium used. This research aims to probe further the pedagogical nature and possible specificity of film learning in the aesthetic curriculum.

Mooney (2004) examines the relationship between film learning and drama and describes screen drama as a transcodification or morphing of live drama pedagogical experiences. She explains that:

Morphing…refers to drama students moving from the field of live drama to screen drama, from the narrative and mimetic codes of dramatic theatre to the
Mooney (2004) argues transcodification of drama making to filmmaking needs to be explored more explicitly in curricula and recognised as part of a ‘new’ act of drama-making and meaning-making. The ‘new’ art of filmmaking by students, she says, is a “technical paradigm shift in the developing field of drama education and the creative industries” (Mooney, 2004, p.103). Transcodification implies links between the aesthetic and pedagogy of drama and film but also substantial differences in the experience of learning (Jefferson and Anderson, 2009).

In the English curriculum Carroll (2008) suggests the application of drama techniques to a video making approach.

> For students of English, a drama-based improvised video approach makes the theoretical distinction between the performance of an authentic video role and ‘acting’ very clear in a concrete and accessible way...Improvised drama techniques also emphasise the levels of performance literacy students will need if they are to succeed in producing effective video for the English classroom. (Carroll, 2008, p.191)

The transcoding of drama pedagogy into filmmaking by Mooney (2004) and Carroll (2008) is a new and developing aesthetic and experiential approach to film and media learning.

As a critique of new literacy studies and its non-aesthetic, experiential approaches Leander and Frank (2006) question the separation of media texts from aesthetics, sensation and the body as social practices of identity.

> …multimodal perspectives often place much more emphasis upon meaning-making than on affective or aesthetic attachment. The relations of persons to texts are strategic and rational, involved in ‘design’ and ‘work’, including the ‘design’ of ‘social futures’ (New London Group, 1996), rather than embodied, sensual, and involved in personal attachments and cultural affiliation…we question the extent to which social practice perspectives have created new autonomies and separations, including the separation of texts from sensation and from the body. (Leander and Frank, 2006, p. 186)
Leander and Frank (2006) argue greater attention to aesthetic attachment supports understanding of visual literacy, social relations and social capital. It is from an aesthetic attachment and embodied perspective of media learning, that drama can potentially critique and develop new media and film literacy as a pedagogy.

**Conclusion**

The relationship between drama learning and the development of film pedagogy is under-researched. Drama learning as a physical embodiment of the arts offers potential insights into the mediated processes of film technology. Arts education is recognizing the possibilities in the intersection between creative arts learning and technology. The Arts Education Partnership report suggests, “from a methodological perspective, this is an exciting area of research” (Deasy, 2004, p. 23). Researchers in drama education need to examine how new technologies apply to and extend creative learning possibilities (Anderson, Carroll and Cameron, 2009).

The literature review suggests drama teachers’ experience with film learning is a new and emerging area in educational inquiry. Research concerned with pedagogic and strategic school structures and professional learning can provide direction and support for teachers, students and schools to teach and learn dynamically and authentically with film. Film as a technology in learning is not a neutral tool and as a cultural artifact requires a critical, inquiry-driven pedagogy. Drama teachers are well placed to examine the concerns surrounding ICT integration of film technology particularly in the secondary curriculum context of NSW where screen drama can be explored in the subject of drama.

The curriculum of NSW is a shared socio-cultural context for the teachers in this research. It is also a real-world context revealing the inner workings of curriculum and pedagogy. The next chapter examines how film learning is embodied in the NSW curriculum context through syllabus texts.
Chapter 2
Screen drama and film learning: the context and intention of the NSW curriculum

*Movies possess unlimited power to entertain. They have, however, no power whatever to teach.*

*David Mamet, 2007*

American playwright and filmmaker, David Mamet (2007) argues movies have no didactic capacity to teach people but he contends: “Interpretation, in the artist and in the viewer, is always and inevitably taking place, and the more the creator is aware of this, the better able both he and the viewer will be to seek out the *essential* truth of a story” (p.155). The capacity of film-stories to be interpreted by the maker and the audience is a reason why filmmaking *does* have the power to teach students.

This chapter analyses the context for filmmaking as learning in the NSW secondary curriculum. The curriculum is “a collective story we tell our children about our past, our present and our future” (Grumet, 1981, p. 115). It is a story ‘told’ through the structure and subject matter that is selected, classified, framed and realised as a version of knowledge, skill, competence and intellectual work (Deng and Luke, 2008). Curriculum and schools act as agents of cultural and ideological hegemony (Apple, 2004).

The formal curriculum interpreted and implemented by teachers is embodied and prescribed by curriculum syllabus texts. There are aspects of curriculum that are hidden and tacitly learnt (Apple, 2004) and learning that is explicit and implicit in schooling as a cultural system (Eisner, 2002b). The null curriculum is that which is not taught (Eisner, 2002b). The formal curriculum is the perceived curriculum and its ideals and intentions are specified in syllabus documents (Ewing, 2010a). Curriculum texts tell ‘a truth’ and create ‘a truth’ for learners (Freebody, 2003). To better seek out the ‘essential truth’ of the educational context is to be aware of the curriculum story shaping it (Ewing, 2010a).
To examine curriculum documents as cultural artifacts is to understand how they organise and construct an experience of knowledge and a way of knowing through film learning.

The foundation of arts education is also concerned with learning as an agency to interpret a truth rather than receive didactic information (Dewey, 1934; Greene, 1996). John Dewey explains in *Art as Experience* (1934) that to perceive art the beholder must create his own experience for “there is work done on the part of the percipient as there is on the part of the artist” (p. 54). It is this sensibility for creativity through the experience of participation and interpretation that is integral to arts learning and underpins the approach of this research and the film learning introduced in the next chapter.

This chapter frames the situation and perceptions of the drama teachers and their experience with film learning in NSW. Their situation is a manifestation of NSW syllabus texts. Outside NSW in other states and in the proposed Australian Curriculum, syllabus texts have another curriculum and pedagogical history. These in-situ perspectives of film learning are considered in order to contextualise the drama teachers experiences with film learning in this study.

**Curriculum texts as context**

Curriculum can be described as being constructed and enacted at three levels (Deng and Luke, 2008):

- the institutional level that accounts for the creation of subject matter associated with ideology and the public policy nexus of schooling, learners, culture and society
- the programmatic level as an industrial, professional and political economic contingency where subject matter is the translation of institutional curriculum into school subjects for classroom use
- the classroom level where teachers interpret, determine and shape the meaning of subject matter according to the understanding of the learner, their cultural milieu, the dominant media and modes of representation and discourse in classrooms, and the local pedagogical possibilities in a particular classroom context. (Deng and Luke, 2008)
Teachers and students mediate the curriculum context through their interpretation of the syllabus texts. Their experience is defined, regulated, legitimised and transmitted through syllabus texts and in that ‘governance role’ these texts need to be analysed (Freebody, 2003). Miller (1997) argues, “Texts are an aspect of sense making activities through which we reconstruct, sustain, contest and change our senses of social reality” (p. 77). The examination of these texts in the NSW curriculum is to understand the context for film learning, and how film learning knowledge is represented and conceived in varying curriculum areas as a result of perspective and history.

(Educational texts) have histories of victories and defeats – certain ways of organizing education, of thinking about what knowledge and learning are, and of conceiving the nature of learners’ development and expertise – all of these that we now recognize have come to predominate because of their, potentially temporary, defeats of other contesting ideas and practices. (Freebody, 2003, p. 179)

Curriculum documents are cultural artifacts that communicate meaning to teachers, who interpret them and shape student experiences of learning in classrooms. Texts such as syllabus documents mediate the inter-relationship between the sociocultural context and individual learning (Freebody, 2003).

Describing and analysing syllabus texts as cultural artifacts are a matter of interpretation. There are, as Brady (2008) points out, ‘perceptual obstacles and epistemic interference’ with textual analysis:

Texts are an important avenue to the discovery of place in its diverse purchases and appearances everywhere, but using them as evidence for anything is problematic, in part because of the creativities inherent in text construction and reception that change with contexts of interpretation…(Brady, 2008, p. 521)

To apply the criterion of utility (Barone, 2000) is to consider whether the interpretation of the texts is purposeful, valid and of value to the reader in a particular context. “An idea, like a tool, has no intrinsic value and is ‘true’ only in its capacity to perform a desired service for its handler within a given situation” (Barone, 2000, p. 169). The purpose of examining the syllabus texts is to interpret the curriculum ‘intentions’ for film learning in
NSW and provide a context for understanding the drama teachers’ perspectives of film learning in the research.

In NSW and other states filmmaking is explicitly or implicitly explored in certain curricula as forms of knowledge and a way of knowing. Filmmaking can be used a tool for learning across the curriculum (Burden and Kuechel, 2004; Christie, 2004; Hofer and Swan, 2005; Hoffenberg and Handler, 2001; Kearney and Schuck, 2006; Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002; Swain, Sharpe and Dawson, 2003). There are issues however with filmmaking as a learning strategy meeting specific curriculum outcomes when there is a lack of film pedagogical knowledge (Hofer and Swan, 2005; Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002).

This chapter examines curricula that explore learning with film in their syllabus texts. These curriculum areas link filmmaking directly to subject knowledge and pedagogy. Pedagogy is a “teaching and learning relationship that creates the potential for building learning conditions leading to full and equitable social participation” (New London Group, 2000). How curriculum areas conceive the shape, nature and focus of film teaching and learning depends on their view of knowledge creation.

Knowledge is never ideologically and sociologically neutral, it reflects the historical situation and acts of human interests (Habermas, 1987). Eisner (1997) argues knowledge has a multiplicity of representations that shape experience and enlarge understandings. Recognising alternative forms of knowing and knowledge activates wider varieties of human intelligence and stimulates new questions, possibilities and ways of seeing things.

Each variety of knowing bears its own fruits and has its own uses…knowing is a multiple state of affairs, not a singular one. In pragmatic terms knowing is about relationships. We need to know different things for different purposes, and sometimes we know some things for some purposes but not for others. (Eisner, 2008, p. 5)

For different purposes filmmaking is explored in varying curricula to know different things.
Filmmaking in the secondary NSW curriculum

In the previous chapter, the literature review explored how film has been viewed historically as an art form, a technology and as a semiotic language (Monaco, 2000). These varying perceptions of film have influenced the emphasis and focus of film learning in the curriculum. This is apparent in the secondary school NSW Board of Studies syllabus texts. Filmmaking can be explored in three Key Learning Areas:

(i) English,
(ii) the creative arts (visual arts and drama) and,
(iii) technological and applied studies (design and technology).

Student literacy in English is to develop the ability to convey, interpret and reflect through the language systems of written, spoken and visual texts (Board of Studies NSW, 2003; 2009). It includes the study of film as a visual text. A diversity of text types is studied in English “to meet the growing array of literacy demands, including higher-order social, aesthetic and cultural literacy” (Board of Studies NSW, English Stage 6 Syllabus, 2009, p. 6). In English the emphasis is on film as a visual form of semiotic language for media literacy learning (Burn and Durrant, 2008; Burn, 2009).

In design and technology (Board of Studies NSW, 2003; 2009) the emphasis is the conceptual and creative application of technology to design projects responding to, and impacting on society and the environment. In this context, film is a possible communication technology and system that may fulfil a functional design need. The focus is to utilise film as learning about designing technology for a social purpose.

The focus of the creative arts is to create through and respond to the sensory and symbolic forms that are the arts (Sinclair, Jeanneret and O’Toole, 2009). Meaning and feeling are explored and communicated by shaping the unique symbol systems of art forms (Abbs, 2003). Film is explored in the visual arts as a four-dimensional artwork (Board of Studies NSW, 2003; 2009) and in drama as narrative screen drama (Board of Studies NSW, 2003; 2009). The focus in both curriculum areas is to explore filmmaking as an artwork.
To understand how filmmaking is explored as learning in the NSW curriculum it is useful to compare how these particular curriculum areas utilise varying forms of film for knowledge and knowing.

**Varying film forms and pedagogy in the NSW curriculum**

Film forms are not articulated in the syllabuses but are implied by the focus of the curriculum area and the way in which the filmmaking projects are prescribed and assessed in the syllabus documents. Film form implies there is a pattern in the construction of a film; it is an internal system that governs the relationships amongst its parts to engage an audience in a particular way. Bordwell and Thompson (2004) argue the audience’s perception of a film’s subject matter is shaped by the film’s form. A film’s form or structure cues the audience to frame certain expectations or draw certain inferences. The function of film’s form is to create a particular perceptual experience.

Bordwell and Thompson (2004) delineate the structural forms of film primarily as narrative and non-narrative. Non-narrative can be broken down further into categorical, rhetorical, abstract and associational forms. Each formal system may contain other forms (Leitch, 1986) but ultimately one form is the overriding structure used to communicate and be perceived in a certain way. Table 2.1 categorises the nature of the film forms and gives examples according to the definitions put forward by Bordwell and Thompson (2004).
Table 2.1 An explanation and example of different film forms based on Bordwell and Thompson’s (2004) definitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film form:</th>
<th>Definition:</th>
<th>Example:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>narrative</td>
<td>Narrative films tell a story structured by a chain of events in cause-effect relationship occurring in time and space.</td>
<td>The film classic Citizen Cane (1941) by Orson Welles, although unusual in terms of style, utilises principles of narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>categorical</td>
<td>Categorical describes documentary films that use groupings to organize information and a view of the world.</td>
<td>Leni Riefenstahl’s Olympia (1936) as a record of the Berlin Olympics is a classic example of categorical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rhetorical</td>
<td>The goal of a rhetorical film is to persuade the audience of a certain point of view.</td>
<td>Guggenheim’s film about climate change, An Inconvenient Truth (2006) presented by Al Gore, is rhetorical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstract</td>
<td>Abstract films use the material qualities of film’s form as a medium for expression. This is done through the shaping and patterning of visual aesthetics of colour, shape, size and movement and the aural aesthetics of sound.</td>
<td>Fernand Leger and Dudley Murphy’s influential Ballet mecanique (1924) is one of the earliest examples of abstract films.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>associational</td>
<td>Associational form is like poetry of imagery with metaphorical connections and unlike abstract film, interpretations from the juxtaposed images can be made in associational film.</td>
<td>The images in Baraka (1992) by Fricke and Magidson depict the beauty and destruction of nature and humans without a narrative.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Film forms are instructive in explaining how filmmaking is used as learning in the various secondary curriculum areas in NSW. In the curriculum areas featuring filmmaking in their syllabus texts the learning appears to be linked to the perceptual experience of certain film forms. Table 2.2 illustrates how the curriculum subjects, design and technology, English, drama and visual arts use filmmaking to emphasise different areas of learning by using varying film forms. Each curriculum has two secondary syllabuses, Stages 4 and 5 for years 7 to 10, and preliminary and Stage 6 for years 11 and 12. Photography and digital media is a visual arts course for Stages 4 and 5.
Table 2.2: Filmmaking as a focus of learning in NSW curriculum areas based on Board of Studies NSW syllabus documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSW Board of Studies Curriculum and Syllabus</th>
<th>Place in syllabus</th>
<th>Nomenclature</th>
<th>Emphasis of learning</th>
<th>Learning and assessment components</th>
<th>Film forms associated with learning area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Design and Technology Stages 4 and 5       | Focus area of design | Digital media | Context for design project work | • holistic approach  
• design processes  
• activity of designers | Mostly categorical |
| Design and Technology Stage 6              | Major design project | A product or a system or an environment | Product and design response to a genuine need | • project proposal and project management  
• project development and realisation  
• evaluation | Mostly categorical |
| Drama Stages 4 and 5                       | Dramatic context of study | Small screen drama | Collaboration to create dramatic meaning using screen production technology | • making  
• performing  
• appreciating | Narrative |
| Drama Stage 6                              | Individual project: choice of project area | Video drama | Drama making: narrative and director’s concept/vision | • directorial concept/vision  
• production  
• post-production | Narrative |
| English Stages 4 and 5                     | Outcome | Text | Use of technology to affect and shape meaning | • responding  
• composing | Narrative  
Associational  
Rhetorical |
| English Extension 2 Stage 6                | Major work: extended composition choice in print, sound, film or multimedia | Video, film | Sustained composition that may be imaginative, investigative, interpretive, analytical or combination | • textual integrity  
• quality of insights and concepts  
• manipulation of features that shape meaning and response  
• quality of reflection statement | Mostly associational  
and rhetorical |
| Visual Arts Stages 4 and 5                 | Essential course content: Study of at least two broad areas, 2D, 3D and/or 4D forms | Video, digital animation | Investigation of a range of materials, techniques and procedures to make artworks in 4D form | • artmaking  
• critical and historical studies | Abstract  
Associational |
| Visual Arts Stage 6                        | Body of work: choice of expressive form – four dimensional works/time-based work | Film and video, digital animation | Artmaking: visual and aesthetic form and conceptual strength | • conceptual strength  
• resolution | Abstract  
Associational |
| Visual Arts – Photography and Digital Media Stages 4 and 5 | Essential course content: making and interpreting photographic and digital works | Interactive, moving | Artmaking: practice, conceptual frameworks and cultural historical frames | • making  
• critical and historical interpretation | Abstract  
Associational |
In design and technology the making of a film screen form is a possible design project that must fulfil a societal or environmental application. The design project may be in the form of an instructional video for example and is most aligned with the categorical form that uses groupings to organise information. The creativity in the project is to meet a practical design need for a product, system or environment.

In English, screen forms are analysed and creatively used as a language form of visual and aural text. In this way English can explore most of the film forms, except the non-representational abstract kind. The conceptual and analytical emphasis of English’s major work’s composition suggests the films made in English most resemble the associational and rhetorical forms. Meaning through metaphor and interpretation from images categorises the associational form and the persuasive discourse describes the rhetorical form. The English Extension Course 2 syllabus (Board of Studies NSW, 2009) assesses the major work in the visual medium not on its artistic merit but on the contribution it makes to the completed product of an extended composition.

In the NSW creative arts subjects of visual arts and drama, learning involves the making of film as an art form. The aesthetic forms and purpose of the filmmaking in the two curriculum areas are as distinctive as the curriculum areas themselves. Visual arts use the aesthetic of visual representations to explore concepts through the material, physical and virtual properties of expressive forms. When working with four-dimensional time-based works such as film and video, artistic expression in visual arts is mostly through the associational and abstract film structures. Abstraction explores the shaping and patterning of film’s material form such as its visual aesthetics. The photography and digital media course in visual arts focuses on still, interactive and moving media images, and explores artmaking as practice, conceptual frameworks and cultural historical frames. Making meaning in visual art films is communicated through concepts, cultural frames, visual and aesthetic form and technical resolution.

Filmmaking in screen drama involves narrative construction. Narrative events are linked by cause and effect occurring in time and space and dramatic action is carried forward by
the organisation of a plot. Storytelling is an instrument of the drama aesthetic and fundamental to drama pedagogy (Morgan and Saxton, 1987). Video drama involves creating a narrative, creating a directorial vision and manipulating the elements of drama and film language to engage an audience.

Examining the focus of filmmaking in these curriculum subjects highlights how the making of different film forms is being utilised by different curriculum areas. The variance in the internal patterning in each film form determines a perceptual activity and experience that suggests a particular way of knowing inherent to the knowledge and pedagogy of the subject. Although all the forms use the same technology and the same aesthetic such as shot framing and editing, the purpose of making the film forms emphasises different learning experiences.

In design and technology and in English, the purpose and contribution of the film to achieve a completed product is the focus, rather than the skill in manipulating film aesthetics. The completed products however are for very different purposes, in design and technology the purpose is to design film as a technology for a social function and in English the film’s function is communicate a composition of conceptual literacy. Hence the different utilisation of film forms and their perceptions of knowing: the categorical for design and technology, and the associational and rhetorical for English.

In the creative arts subjects of drama and visual arts, the emphasis is on the skill to manipulate aesthetics in different perceptual form systems. The narrative film form defines video in drama, but in visual arts the film form is abstract or conceptual through the association of images. Video drama as a narrative form appears in both the drama curriculum and the English syllabus but there is a difference in pedagogical emphasis. Drama is bound by the aesthetic code of dramatic enactment of storytelling for learning whereas English embraces the aesthetic code of language for learning. It is the emphasis of what is learnt through and about filmmaking, and the film form used, that defines film’s varying pedagogical uses in the curriculum.
The curriculum areas of English, drama, visual arts and design and technology in NSW are all using filmmaking but the focus, perspective and perception of the learning varies. These curriculum areas have appropriated filmmaking since the 1990’s as a mandatory or optional area of learning and way of learning. It is in this landscape that NSW drama teachers and their experiences with film learning are contextualised. Specific to the drama curriculum and the drama teachers’ experience in this research is filmmaking as the aesthetic and narrative expression of the student.

The context for other states in Australia is different. NSW is the only drama curriculum in Australia that includes screen drama. Unlike NSW, Victoria and Queensland have media in the arts curriculum, and the study of media can include filmmaking. The context beyond NSW is another perspective of film learning and it also points to the proposed Australian Curriculum developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). The Draft Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA, 2010) includes ‘media arts’ and this will be a future context for drama teachers and film pedagogy in NSW.

**Film learning in media**

The states of Victoria and Queensland have well-established media courses in the arts and illustrate the position of media education in Australia. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority’s (VCAA) Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) curriculum area ‘media’, studies audiovisual, print-based, digital media technologies and cross media processes (VCAA, VCE Media, 2005). The emphasis of media education in Victoria is to examine the structure and features of a range of media texts, technologies and processes, their industry and distribution context, audience reception and social impact. The analytical study of media processes and products is integrated with the design and production of media.

‘Film, television and new media’ is the senior media curriculum area in the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA Film, Television and New Media, 2005). It focuses more specifically on the technology of moving-image media and the ways in which it
represents and interacts with the world. The key concepts of technologies, representations, audiences, institutions and the ‘language’ of images are investigated through designing, producing and critiquing moving-image media.

The Australian Curriculum defines media arts in the draft shape paper (ACARA, 2010) as the creative use of communications technologies and lists platforms such as television, film, newspapers, radio, video games and the worldwide web as examples. Learning in media arts involves the skills to produce media technologies and knowledge in critical reflection about media. Emphasis is given to understanding media through the five key concepts stated in the Queensland Film, Television and New Media syllabus. Table 2.3 represents the forms of media learning in Queensland, Victoria and the proposed Australian Curriculum in the arts.

The pedagogical framework for the study of media broadly includes representation, institution and audience, but as Burn (2008) points out in a discussion of the UK experience, there are various media pedagogies: “Legitimate variations of approach and emphasis exist in current media education practice; and to some degree, these reflect both the background of particular teachers and the curricular location of media education in particular schools” (p. 260). In Australia, media is positioned in the arts learning area, which should clarify its pedagogy in comparison to the UK experience.

Media in arts education

Although media in Victoria and Queensland has been placed under the arts rationale, little in the VCAA and QST media syllabus documents detail what the National education and the arts statement (Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs and Cultural Minister’s Council, 2007) describes as inherent to the creative process in the arts – the aesthetic and sensory, cognitive, physical and social. According to Eisner (2003) the arts “celebrate the consummatory, noninstrumental aspects of human experience and provide the means through which meanings that are ineffable, but feelingful, can be expressed” (p. 19). Pedagogically media can explore these aspects of human experience but it is not embraced as a perspective in the syllabus documents for
media in Victoria, Queensland and the media arts strand in the Australian Curriculum. Instead the emphasis is on texts, technologies, industry and social contexts.

Table 2.3: Focus of media learning in Queensland, Victoria and the proposed Australian Curriculum based on Queensland Studies and Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority syllabus documents, and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment Reporting Authority shaping paper for the arts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Learning area and syllabus</th>
<th>Nomenclature of Syllabus</th>
<th>Emphasis of learning</th>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
<th>Media forms associated with learning area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Studies Authority</td>
<td>Arts Senior syllabus (Years 11 and 12)</td>
<td>Film, television and new media</td>
<td>Media products, contexts of production, contexts of use, moving image</td>
<td>• design</td>
<td>Film, television and new media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Queensland Studies Authority (Years 7 to 10)</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Still and moving images, media techniques and practices, representations and context</td>
<td>• knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>Still and moving images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority</td>
<td>Arts Victorian certificate of education (Years 11 and 12)</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Media forms, media and cross media processes, relationship with society and culture.</td>
<td>Knowledge and skills in:</td>
<td>Range of media forms: audiovisual, print-based, digital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VELS Arts Levels 5 and 6 (Discipline based-learning)</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Range of media forms (media products, media texts)</td>
<td>• creating and making</td>
<td>Range of media forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian Curriculum, Assessment Reporting Authority</td>
<td>Media arts</td>
<td>Skills to produce media, and knowledge in critical reflection of media</td>
<td>• generating</td>
<td>Range of media forms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Media education historically derives from the ideas of Raymond Williams and cultural studies (Burn, 2009). In curriculum making media is aligned with a poststructuralist, deconstructed postmodern paradigm that engages modes of cognition, methods of critique and analysis, and versions of contemporary culture and history (Pinar et al, 1995). Arts education with subjects such as dance, drama, music and visual arts have historically been aligned with the aesthetic and phenomenological curriculum paradigms (Pinar et al, 1995). Phenomenological inquiry focuses on human perception and the aesthetic qualities of human experience (van Manen, 1991). The aesthetic curriculum is to experience a plurality of visions and multiplicity of realities (Greene, 1977) and concerns encounters with the arts that “leave us less submerged in the everyday, more likely to wonder and to question” (Pinar, 2008, p. 499).

Media education’s postmodernist paradigm is in tension with the aesthetic, phenomenological paradigm of the arts. Burn (2009) explains that aesthetics has a problematic history in media education and has been either relegated to the study of “style divorced from meaning (eg. the visual style of Ridley Scott); or neglected altogether as a category belonging to élite art forms and their study” (p. 10). The move in media education to media production and creativity has seen a shift in the media paradigm. Digital authoring technologies have profoundly affected media learning practice. The capacity to create media has seen media move into the arts curriculum in recent years. Burn’s (2009) observations of the United Kingdom experience in media education mirrors in part the Australian experience:

The blossoming of such work shifts the balance away from the analytical practices which dominated media education for so long, under the model of academic studies and sociology and also under the influence of approaches to media education based in ideology theory. The shift can also be seen as a move away from the metaphor of literacy and towards the Arts area of the curriculum, where making creative products in Art or Music has tended to be less encumbered with ‘theory’. (p. 17)

Burn (2009) argues for a meeting point between media and arts education by combining the critical approach and the creative. Ferneding (2007) contends that a critical approach is inherent to the aesthetic, phenomenological approach of creating in the media arts.
Artists, because they engage in self-reflection about their emotional experiences, are poised to reflect upon and actualize the phenomenological reality of the mediation process to which we all are exposed within a technological society… Art as a creative endeavour stands in a privileged position regarding the social construction of reality. (Ferneding, 2007, p. 1332)

Historically, the aesthetic position of the arts to view and construct the world has determined aesthetic curriculum perspective (Pinar, 2008). The moving of media education into the arts has created a tension between the postmodernist paradigm of media as literacy and the aesthetic, phenomenological paradigm of media as an art. In the UK context, Burn and Durren (2007) recognize a tension between models of media literacy and media education historically associated with English, language and the literacy curriculum, and models which pull towards other areas of the Arts curriculum. It is a tension that may well contextualise the future experience of drama teachers and film learning and the proposed Australian Curriculum for the arts. This research about drama teachers and film pedagogy is an opportunity to explore and interrogate aspects of the tension between media and arts paradigms.

Within the context of drama education there is also a tension in the drama pedagogy paradigm with regard to screen drama.

The drama pedagogy paradigm

After tracing the protean development of drama education, O’Toole and Stinson (2009) recognize drama’s boundaries as blurred but they map the common features of drama in education as: acting, performing and role-play, presenting human images in public, exploring relationships and feelings, cognitive models and fictional situations, body and sensory and kinaesthetic activities, aesthetics, play and playfulness. Drama is an embodied form of arts learning that communicates through the aesthetic of role and images. It is a definition that does not necessarily discount using the technology of digital capture and screen display.
Carroll, Anderson and Cameron (2006) explore technologies role in drama pedagogy. They argue drama education’s commitment to physical embodiment and “the power of the imagination, the central place of the child in learning, and the importance of connecting with the audience” (p. xvii) provides a pedagogical approach well placed to both use and interrogate technology.

Mediated performance, digital pretexts and video offer teachers and students the possibility of extending the experiences they already have in drama into new digital spaces. These spaces are not in opposition to the embodied (real) and traditional drama and theatre approach but are a natural partner to what drama educators do on a daily basis…(Carroll, Anderson and Cameron, 2006, p. xvi)

The integration of digital technology and drama learning is a theme explored in a collection of studies and essays in Drama, Technology and Education (Anderson, Carroll and Cameron, 2009). In it there are discussions of pedagogic models that are “both consistent with the core values of the historical paradigm of drama pedagogy and also pushing the boundaries of what has become possible because of the new” (Neelands, 2009, p. xiv). Haseman (2004) argues for the re-fencing of the field of drama education and the need for drama teachers to re-position themselves with a pedagogy engaging with the digital age.

We need to ‘connect’ our classrooms and studios so the creative and research possibilities of digital technologies can be powerfully linked with our distinctive pedagogy…this paradigm shift centres on the way drama educators frame the claims they make for drama, and challenges us to freshly contextualise Drama’s potent and longstanding claims for this contemporary moment. (Haseman, 2004, p. 22)

The ‘pushing of the boundaries’ by exploring digital technology does raise questions about where the drama paradigm begins and ends and how to accommodate diversification and new directions in teaching and learning. Martin-Smith (2005) expresses these concerns:

While welcoming the use of new technologies in drama and the unique aesthetic patterns, one wonders how much the aesthetics of process drama or of theatre in education can stretch before a new aesthetic pattern emerges, perhaps closer to visual arts in its emphasis on constructed images over live relationships, and in
which the written word may be privileged over the spoken word. (Martin-Smith, 2005, p. 10)

The inclusion of screen drama in NSW challenges the drama pedagogy paradigm but it equally challenges perspectives of media education and film learning.

**Screen drama and pedagogy**

From the NSW experience of screen drama in drama curriculum, Mooney (2005) argues for a technological paradigm shift in drama education. Students creating videos for the NSW Drama HSC she argues have created a ‘new’ pedagogical space. By transcoding live classroom drama conventions of mimetic theatre to the mimetic codes of the screen, students have engaged in an act of ‘morphing’ across drama fields (Mooney, 2005). Transcodification is the phenomenon whereby semantic information can be translated from one system to another (Elam, 2002).

Producing a hyper-experience for others is the outcome of the transcoding operation when drama students cross over to the new space of screen drama. In this process, drama conventions such as improvisation, hot-seating, dream sequences and playbuilding are familiar techniques developed and refined through experiential knowledge. They adapt these and live theatre conventions with evolving information communications technology and ‘new’ pedagogical drama practices. (Mooney, 2005, p. 34)

Transcodification from live drama to the screen results in a hybrid genre blending drama education conventions, dramatic sign systems, filmic codes and small-screen codes (Mooney, 2005). Transcodification of drama pedagogy to the screen necessitates explicit learning and the development of new, adaptive pedagogies as a response to new technologies (Mooney, 2005).

To accommodate the need for new, adaptive pedagogies, Carroll (2008) developed an improvised video production model integrating process drama pedagogy with video production. It is a scenario-based model rather than script based and aims to address the difficulties of: student directors creating narrative screenplays, dialogue and using untrained actors. It uses role-based characters and process drama-based improvisation to create video dramas with the authenticity and conventions of docudrama.
The use of process drama-based scenarios driven by dramatic tension and improvised dialogue produces a veracity that parallels the ‘reality’ of television and film genres…it sidesteps the production constraints of the commercial and industrial process so deeply embedded in mainstream film and video and genre-specific television studio drama. As well as providing an alternative production model for students, it deals with the central issue of poorly developed scripts and the use of untrained actors. It does this by capturing the authenticity of the spontaneous response within an improvised narrative framework. (Carroll, 2008, p.183)

In the English curriculum, Carroll (2008) argues an industrial or professional, craft-based model for film is unavailable or unsustainable in a school setting because of the expense in time and energy. The ‘improvised video’ pedagogy is an approach to create an achievable and effective narrative video genre for the drama and English classroom. Improvised video, like process drama is an accessible tool for using filmmaking as learning. It is a model aimed to address concerns of student filmmakers working individually and their lack of aesthetic control in narrative screenplay writing, acting and production aesthetics.

Both Mooney (2005) and Carroll’s (2008) ideas for filmmaking in learning have developed from the NSW context and are rooted in an aesthetic understanding of curriculum. Both are drawing on drama pedagogical practice to inform the development of learning with film in drama and English. In contrast to media education’s critical literacy framework they are developing film pedagogies underpinned and focused by experiential aesthetic learning. The film learning introduced in this research has also been developed from the aesthetic tradition. It aims to explore further the pedagogical potential of filmmaking in the curriculum.

**Conclusion**

As much as the curriculum is “always others’ stories” (Pinar et al, 1995, p. 448) it is a real-world context or life situation for teachers. The syllabus texts create and embody curriculum and they are made meaningful by the thoughts and actions of teachers who work with them and ‘in them’ (Freebody, 2003). Aoki (1988) argues “The rules for the understanding of meaning are constructed actively by those who dwell within the
situation” (cited in Pinar at al, 1995, p. 412). Teachers construct meaning from their specific context and this chapter has examined syllabus texts and film learning as an embodiment of that context.

Interpreting the curriculum context for film learning in NSW is more than a backdrop for the research. It is a context that *interacts* with the drama teachers’ experiences of film learning. According to Dewey (1938), “Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which the experiences are had” (p. 39). The interaction between the drama teachers’ experiences and their context is a focus of this study.

The conditions for film learning in NSW entail curriculum areas such as English, design and technology, drama and visual arts developing specific learning with filmmaking. Differing film forms of narrative, categorical, rhetorical, associational and abstract are used by these curriculum areas to explore specific perceptual experiences and activities that are related to a distinctive way of *knowing*. The film form, subject matter and purpose are all linked to learning in the curriculum areas. In the drama curriculum the learning is based on storytelling and the aesthetic experience of filmmaking.

Film learning for drama teachers in the NSW context highlights certain tensions in curriculum paradigms. Screen drama in the drama curriculum raises issues about paradigm boundaries in drama pedagogy and whether drama adapts to embodied and mediated performance. There are tensions too with the proposed Australian Curriculum and the introduction of media in the arts. The aesthetic phenomenological tradition of arts learning is in tension with the post-modernist, critical literacy tradition of media education. For drama teachers to undertake filmmaking in the proposed media arts syllabus may be problematic given the differing emphasis of pedagogy in the curricula. The postmodernist discourse is focused on learning about media whereas the aesthetic approach emphasises the experience of learning in and through media creation.
Bowell and Heap’s (2001) description of drama for instance typifies the aesthetic education emphasis of learning in and through an art form.

[Drama] is a potent means of collaboration and communication which can change the ways people feel, think and behave. By its combination of the affective and effective, it sharpens perception, enables personal expression and the growth of intellectual and emotional literacy. It provides a framework for the exploration of ideas and feelings and the making of meaning. (Bowell and Heap, 2001, p.4)

This is in contrast to the post-structuralist, critical literacy tradition in Buckingham’s (2003) focus on learning about media.

[Media education]…aims to develop both critical understanding and active participation. It enables young people to interpret and make informed judgements as consumers of media; but it also enables them to become producers of media in their own right. (Buckingham, 2003)

The drama teachers’ context in NSW illuminates paradigm tensions that will shape and interact with the drama teachers’ experiences. To return to Mamet, the essential truth can be better understood with an awareness of the interpretation of and participation in the curriculum story. The development of film learning in the NSW context demonstrates how curriculum areas are exploring how ‘movies do have the power to teach’ through creative filmmaking learning.

The next chapter introduces an aesthetic approach to learning in and through film that aims to empower students to tell their own film stories and seek out the essential truth of the film stories around them.
Chapter 3

Learning in and through film: a sociocultural and aesthetic approach

\[\textit{Culture creates special forms of behaviour, it modifies the activity of mental functions, it constructs new superstructures in the developing system of human behaviour.} \]

\textit{Lev Vygotsky.}

A sociocultural framework explains that culture “shapes human life and the human mind and gives meaning to action by situating its intentional states in an interpretative system” (Bruner, 1990, p. 34). Education and research are cultural constructs; they are interpretative systems that situate and modify human learning and development. They are in Vygotskian terms, “superstructures in the developing system of human behaviour” (1997a, p.18). This chapter introduces an arts-based pedagogy for film framed by a sociocultural perspective of human activity. Teachers in professional learning workshops experienced the pedagogy as part of the design of this research. A sociocultural approach to learning in and through the aesthetic of film can be explained by using the film framing analogy of a ‘wide-shot’.

![Figure 3.1: The Piano (1993) illustrates the focus and tension between the character and context in a wide shot.](image)
In a wide shot, the context around a subject such as a landscape is the focus as much as the subject itself. The wide shot is usually about the dynamic relationship between the context and the subject. An example is the shot of Ada, her daughter and the grand piano on the isolated and windswept New Zealand beach in Jane Campion’s *The Piano* (1993) (figure 3.1). The incongruous image reveals two forces at play. The remote, wild coastline represents the forces of the external world. These are the circumstances, the context that Ada has thrust herself into by travelling from the other side of the world. In tension with these external forces of the context is the internal force of the subject, the character of the mute, strong and wilful piano playing Ada.

Sociocultural theory is a frame, a ‘wide shot’, that focuses on the dynamic and tension between the subject and the context, the individual and culture. The sociocultural lens is a way in which to see the world, focus our understanding of the world and transform the nature of the world. It is a framework to explain and focus understanding of the processes of learning in the film aesthetic.

Film learning will be discussed through a sociocultural framework. This framework explains:
(i) how film is a mediated cultural tool, and
(ii) how film as a *productive pedagogy* (Hayes et al, 2006) facilitates sociocultural processes in experiential, collaborative, creative, aesthetic, scaffolded and narrative learning.

**Sociocultural theory and cultural tools**

Sociocultural theory is mapped by Prior (2008) as the tangling of three philosophical traditions: Marxism, pragmatics and phenomenology. Rather than being an eclectic mix, sociocultural theory is a reflection of how the three traditions converge on key tenets. These tenets, according to Prior (2008) are in understanding:
• human activity and thought through concrete and everyday activities
• the everyday world as a rich and continuous ground for human action
human consciousness as focused on the actual practices of people attending to how people are socialized into cultural patterns of perception, thought and action. Sociocultural approaches were first systemized and applied by the psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) and his collaborators in Russia and have since being interpreted and expanded by scholars in psychology, anthropology, sociology, education and linguistics (Rogoff, Radziszewska and Masiello, 1995).

Central to the sociocultural discourse “is to explicate the relationship between human action, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical contexts in which this action occurs, on the other” (Wertsch, 1998, p. 24). Embedded in sociocultural theory is Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of the human mind as mediated through tools and activities of the social world.

Sociocultural theory argues that activity is situated in concrete interactions that are simultaneously improvised locally and mediated by prefabricated, historically provided tools and practices, which range from machines, made objects, semiotic means (e.g., languages, genres, iconographies), and institutions to structured environments, domesticated animals and plants, and, indeed, people themselves. (Prior, 2008, p. 55)

According to Vygotsky (1978), cultural tools, such as language, facilitate the interaction of individual mental processes and the social activities of humans. Through the interaction, cultural tools are further developed. Bruner (1962) describes this concept of semiotic mediation in this way: “Man, if you will, is shaped by the tools and instruments that he comes to use, and neither the mind nor the hand alone can amount to much…” (p. vii). In other words, humans can only develop when the mind of the individual and the cultural tools of society work together.

Vygotsky (1997a) theorised that “the mental nature of man represents the totality of social relations internalised and made into functions of the individual and forms of his structure” (p. 106). Individual mental processes and learning are internalised and developed through the experience of external, social phenomenon. The internal forces of personality and the external forces of culture are interdependent and cyclical in their affect. In the following diagram (figure 3.2), Moran and John-Steiner (2003, p. 64)
represent Vygotsky’s conception of internalisation and externalisation as domain-changing creative transformations that expand both the self and culture.

Figure 3.2: Moran and John-Steiner’s visual representation of Vygotsky's dialectical conception of development and creativity.

![Diagram showing the dialectical relationship between culture and development](image)

Education in schools is an acknowledgement of the critical relationship between internal, individual processes and the external context of social learning (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). A sociocultural approach to learning values the ways students represent and appropriate knowledge through culturally developed means. Learners integrate social and individual experiences through the culturally shaped artifacts available in their societies (John-Steiner and Mahn, 2003). The moving imagery of the film aesthetic is one such culturally shaped artifact (Metz, 1991; Monaco 2000; Wollen 1972). Learning about film and learning through film is an example of a sociocultural approach in education (Anderson and Jefferson, 2009; Buckingham, 2003; Ferneding, 2007).

**Film as a mediating cultural tool**

Semiotic theory explores how humans create meaning from signs and sign systems. “Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign” (Eco, 1976, p. 7). Words, images, sounds, gestures and objects are signs that mediate human understanding.
of the world. Most contemporary semioticians consider the sociocultural context as intrinsic to the meaning of signs (Chandler, 2007).

...semiotics has undergone a shift of its theoretical gears: a shift away from the classification of sign systems – their basic units, their levels of structural organization – and towards the exploration of the modes of signs and meanings, the ways in which systems and codes are used, transformed or transgressed in social practice. (de Lauretis, 1984, p. 167)

According to Vygotsky, human action is mediated by psychological or cultural signs. Representational activities such as language, algebraic symbol systems, mechanical drawings, works of art and writing are the semiotic means by which knowledge is constructed (Vygotsky, 1981). These tools alter mental functions, “just as a technical tool alters the process of a natural adaptation by determining the form of labour operations” (Vygotsky, 1981, p. 137).

In the 21st century, the pervasive language of moving picture imagery on computer, television, phone and computer screens is a cultural tool. Film is a form of semiotic mediation (Kress, 2003; Metz, 1991; Monaco, 2000; Wollen, 1972) In a sociocultural approach, mediational tools are key to learning in cultural and institutional settings because it is they that shape and provide the cultural tools for individuals to form mental functioning (Wertsch, 1994). Wertsch terms mediational means as “‘carriers’ of sociocultural patterns and knowledge” (1994, p. 294) and without these tools, humans are not “‘naked apes’ but empty abstractions” (Bruner, 1996, p.3).

Moving pictures are part of students’ social context (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000; Golfarb, 2002; Kress, 2003; Lankshear and Knobel, 2006) and film learning is a cultural tool of mediation in that context (Anderson and Jefferson, 2009; Burn and Durrant, 2006). A sociocultural approach to education argues cultural context and cultural artifacts such as film learning are significant to the creation of knowledge. Lima (1998) argues this point in relation to her study of the Amazonian Tikuna tribe and their use of drawings and graphic representations:
...the success of educational experiences depends on methods that foster cultural development, methods that have as a starting point the developmental processes of students and their accumulated knowledge, the developmental milieu, social practices, and the political meaning of education itself. (p. 103)

In first world countries, students are saturated by the semiotic mediation of moving pictures, “- we are all part of a moving-image culture and we live cinematic and electronic lives” (Sobchack, 2000, p. 67). Kress (2003) argues the proliferation of images and the screen “will have profound effects on human, cognitive/affective, cultural and bodily engagement with the world, and on the forms and shapes of knowledge” (p. 1). Like talking and writing the proliferation of moving images is a pervasive mediation tool in the evolution of cognitive constructs (John-Steiner and Mahn, 2003). Film as a symbolic tool reveals ways in which humans, think, reason and form concepts.

The film learning introduced in this research recognises the film aesthetic as a mediating semiotic tool of culture and knowledge. It is a pedagogy that aims to empower students with that knowledge through learning in the film semiotic. Film is a sign system but it is difficult sign system to discern because moving imagery closely resembles the reality of daily life (Metz, 1991; Monaco, 2000). Learning in film discerns the sign systems or codes of film by deconstructing the semiotic in order to use the aesthetic.

Living in a world of increasingly visual signs, we need to learn that even the most ‘realistic’ signs are not what they appear to be. By making more explicit the codes by which signs are interpreted we may perform the valuable semiotic function of ‘denaturalizing’ signs. In defining realities signs serve ideological functions…The study of signs is the study of the construction and maintenance of reality. (Chandler, 2007, p. 15)

Film learning as a sociocultural approach is a way of knowing and a way for students to participate and collaborate in an on-going social world through experiential practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991).
**Film learning as experiential learning**

Filmmaking is experiential and situated, and provides creative and real-world experiences for students. Students learn in film by problem solving in the making and appreciating of the film aesthetic and by negotiating in the dynamic interactions of human, technical and natural resources to realize the communication of their ideas and stories. The teacher’s role in the learning is to shape and contribute to the experience, in what Dewey (1938) describes as “a co-operative enterprise, not a dictation” (p. 72). As a facilitator, supporter and provocateur, the teacher leads students to a deeper level of engagement with the experience of working creatively and analytically with film.

Kolb (1984) argues experiential learning is “…the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (p. 41). Like Dewey, Kolb contends a tangible experience alone is not enough; it is how the experience engages and transforms learning. A pedagogy in experience “should do something to prepare a person for later experiences of a deeper and more expansive quality” (Dewey, 1938, p. 47).

In this view, experience is not sufficient on its own. Experience must be grappled with, reflected upon and changed, to make it meaningful for the learner. Students interpret and reflect on their past experience of film appreciation and practice, and internalise it by applying it to their current and situated experience of filmmaking. They endeavour to communicate their stories with greater aesthetic control. Students in film learning also deal with the challenges of adapting their skills to a dynamic learning situation. For instance, if they are going to shoot a film and their project is interrupted by weather, misfortune or other factors, they must improvise a response using creative group problem solving. These are skills demanded for living as an active and productive world citizen in the twenty-first century.

Experience-based learning is perhaps one of the most difficult areas with which to engage in the curriculum for “There is no discipline in the world so severe as the discipline of experience subjected to the tests of intelligent development and direction” (Dewey,

**Film learning as collaborative learning**

A Vygotskian sociocultural approach posits individuals in isolation do not invent symbolic tools of mediation. Symbolic tools are products of culture and evolve through individuals engaged in social or communal practices (Vygotsky, 1999). The collaboration of others instigates and consolidates the development of cultural tools and the continuance of knowledge. Learning requires collaboration, and filmmaking facilitates this aspect of learning.

Filmmaking is a collaborative art form, even the *auteur*\(^3\) relies on others to act and design the films they make (Kawin, 1992; Watson, 2003). Filmmaking lends itself to be a collaborative, interactive pedagogy (Anderson and Jefferson, 2009; Burden and Kuechel, 2004; Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002) that values and communicates the sociocultural context (Anderson and Jefferson, 2009; Kearney and Schuck, 2006; Reid, Burn and Parker, 2002). Film director, Jean-Luc Godard (2002) recognises sociocultural processes when he discusses the necessity of collaborative practice in filmmaking and creativity:

> I think it is of primary importance for a filmmaker to be able to gather around him a group of people with whom he can communicate and, most of all, exchange ideas. When Sartre wrote something, it was the result of endless conversations with forty or fifty people. He didn’t come up with all this just sitting alone in his room. (p. 210)

In education, Vygotsky’s theory of the zone proximal development explains the necessity of students collaborating with other students and collaborating with teachers as mentors. A student’s development, Vygotsky (1978) argues, is informed by a dynamic threshold of what the student is capable of learning through interaction with others, rather than the capability of what they can already achieve alone. Vygotsky (1978) describes this dynamic threshold or ready potential in students as the zone of proximal development: “It is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent

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\(^3\) *Auteur* refers to directors who infuse their films with a distinctive personal vision through the manipulation of film technique (Watson, 2003).
problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult supervision or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86).

Fundamental to Vygotsky’s theory is the role of the social context to facilitate and consolidate learning. The collaborative nature of filmmaking supports the Vygotskian sociocultural notion of learning in the zone of proximal development. Expanding on Vygotsky’s ideas, Moran and John-Steiner (2003) discuss how collaborative practice develops creativity.

Collaboration is a particularly fruitful social venue for people on the edge of transforming their domains because it provides scaffolding in expanding social meaning…Through collaboration, individuals can form thought communities and mutual zones of proximal development in which to continue their own and each other’s creative development. (Moran and John-Steiner, 2003, pp. 82-83)

In the Vygotskian framework, Moran and John-Steiner (2003) explain how collaborative creativity in learning is a scaffold that “…forms a lifelong zone of proximal development that contributes to the sustained development of a creative personality” (p. 78). The development of the creative imagination and the transformative capacity of creativity to shape future possibilities are emphasized in film learning.

**Creativity and film learning**

The U.K report *All our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* (Robinson, 1999) defines creativity as “imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value” (p. 30). The fluidity and flexibility of human thought characteristic of creativity (Sternberg, 2003) are inherent to the imaginative and creative processes of learning in the arts (Ewing, 2010b). When students are taught to think creatively their achievement increases (Sternberg, 2003) and by engaging in creative activity, the day-to-day experiences of life become more vivid (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Creativity is “everywhere human imagination combines, changes, and creates anything new” (Vygotsky, cited in Smolucha (1992), p. 53). Vygotsky (1997a) theorised that the creative imagination develops higher mental functions and makes people more adept at
manipulating cultural tools and adapting to their social environments. He conceptualised creativity and communication in the arts as a process of individual subjective experience being brought into the realm of objective form and meaning in the social environment. The intertwining of imagination, thinking and the creation of the representational signs of the arts is then integral to human development (Vygotsky, 1971).

Pedagogies in the arts allow students to experience an aesthetic form in everyday life (Eisner, 2002a). For teenagers and adults, these experiences are critical in synthesizing emotional and intellectual development (Vygotsky, 1998). Film learning aims to offer challenging and pleasurable experiences for students through the development of the creative imagination in the arts. Anderson and Jefferson (2009) describe the processes in film learning that allow students to experience creativity collaboratively:

Students discuss the development of a shooting script, provide different perspectives over the development of images and dialogue on a storyboard, direct acting for the camera, discuss the placement of characters within a shot, and examine how the rhythms of the piece can be manipulated through the editing process. The learning taking place here relies on the student working with the group in cooperation with the aesthetic demands of the form. (p. 26)

The creation of stories and ideas in the film aesthetic involves imaginative thinking and imaginative activity. When Bernardo Bertolucci (2002) (The Conformist, 1971; 1900, 1977; The Last Emperor, 1987) speaks of what filmmaking means to him, we gain an insight into the creative processes of filmmaking:

Seemingly a film is the setting of an idea to images. But, more secretly for me, it has always been a way of exploring something more personal and more abstract. My films are always very different in the end from what I actually imagined. Therefore it’s a progressive process. I often compare a film to a pirate ship. It’s impossible to know where it will land when you leave it free to follow the winds of creativity. (p. 54)

Creativity however does not necessarily happen by merely being exposed or engaged with an arts process of making. A learning environment that promotes making and

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4 The researcher was co-author of *Teaching the Screen: Film Education for Generation Next* (2009).
appreciating through aesthetic control and aesthetic understanding enhances the potential for creativity in the arts (Greene, 1995).

Aesthetic control and understanding

The dichotomy of making and appreciating is a familiar structure to most learning in arts education. Arts educator Maxine Greene (1995) argues for the combination of these twin approaches so students are empowered agents in the communication and reception of the arts. It is a sociocultural viewpoint that claims making art is not autonomous or private, but of the social world. This is because art is an act of communication.

We are fully present to art when we understand what is there to be noticed in the work at hand, release our imaginations to create orders in the field of what is to be perceived, and allow our feelings to inform and illuminate what is there to be realized. I would like to see one pedagogy feeding into the other: the pedagogy that empowers students to create informing the pedagogy that empowers them to attend (and, perhaps, to appreciate) and vice versa. (Greene, 1995, p. 138)

A model for aesthetic film learning (Anderson and Jefferson, 2009) is represented graphically in Figure 3.3. It illustrates the interplay of making and appreciating in film learning but it also makes explicit the connection of these twin learning goals to aesthetic control and aesthetic understanding. The term aesthetic control refers to the ongoing command a student has over the aesthetics or artistry of film. Aesthetic control is how students make choices to manage and manipulate the filming, directing and editing processes in their films to engage an audience.

Aesthetic control and aesthetic understanding is a pedagogy of ‘praxis’. It involves combining action and reflection, practice and theory in an explicit way (Friere, 1970). An example of the links is if a student is developing a reverse narrative where the end of the film is chronologically at the beginning, they might watch Momento (2000) to appreciate the way this kind of film narrative can be constructed. Another example, would be to examine the creation of tension in a scene by analysing the western shootouts in Sergio Leone’s spaghetti westerns. Students would then explore tension by endeavouring to film
their own imaginative shootout scene, such as a soccer shootout, or race to be first out the door when the bell goes.

Figure 3.3: A pedagogical model for film learning (Anderson and Jefferson, 2009)

The emphasis of the model is to focus on the film aesthetic to enhance students’ creativity and engagement with film as a cultural tool. Greene (1995) argues it is through the attention to aesthetics that students make sense of what they see and hear. The arts are then transformative for young people’s development as a way of knowing. Transformation is achieved through the relational activities of experience and perception, and the interdependence of individual and cultural processes.

At the heart of what I am asking for in the domains of the teaching of art and aesthetics is a sense of agency, even of power. Painting, literature, theatre and film – all can open doors and move persons to transform. We want to enable all sorts of young people to realize that they have the right to find works of art meaningful against their own shared lives. (Greene, 1995, p. 150)

Screen theorist James Monaco (2000) discusses how recognising aesthetic choices in film increases people’s perception and active participation in the process of art ‘consumption’.

The better one reads an image, the more one understands it, the more power one has over it. The reader of a page invents an image, the reader of a film does not, yet both
readers must work to interpret the signs they perceive in order to complete the process of intellection. The more work they do, the better the balance between observer and creator in the process; the better the balance, the more vital and resonant the work of art. (Monaco, 2000, p. 159)

Working in the aesthetic of the arts heightens and refines feelings, consciousness and an awareness of our experience of the world (Eisner, 2002a). Moran and John Steiner (2003) explain in Vygotskian terms this is because “the creative process builds on the externalisation of emotions, imagination, concepts, and the varied meanings and senses of words as they are synthesized and transformed into creative products” (p. 75). Of the film aesthetic, director Ingmar Bergman (Smiles of a Summer Night, 1955; The Seventh Seal, 1957; Persona, 1966) says, “Film as dream, film as music. No form of art goes beyond ordinary consciousness as film does, straight to our emotions, deep into the twilight room of the soul” (1988, p. 73). Eisner (2002a) describes the aesthetic experience as an arts-way of thinking that celebrates “the consummatory, noninstrumental aspects of human experience” and provides “the means through which meanings that are ineffable, but feelingful, can be expressed” (p. 19).

Film learning aims to create experiences in the aesthetic praxis of making and appreciating films. These experiences are structured as scaffolded learning based on the Vygotskian principle of the zone of proximal development.

**Scaffolding film learning**

‘Scaffolding’ in education describes the instructional support a teacher provides for a student’s construction of their own learning (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976). A teaching scaffold is a form of collaborative learning. The teacher as collaborative mentor provides a bridge between a student’s actual level of development and their potential level of development by providing processes, metalanguage and tasks to engage, facilitate and guide learning. The construction of learning begins from the ground up, and therefore teachers scaffold new learning from a foundation of what is known and can be achieved to what is unknown by their students (Bruner, 1960). Scaffolding is not a simple process for students moving from the known to the to-be-known, it is an active process of problem solving, analysing and interpreting (Tharp, Estrada, Dalton and Yumuchi, 2000).
A scaffolded learning structure is constructed by developing learning from fundamentals or essentials and allowing students to discover their own learning in the scaffolded structure. Jerome Bruner (1960) explains the key to continued learning lies in providing the fundamental principles as well as a structure in which those principles can be applied: ‘Mastery of the fundamental ideas of a field involves not only the grasping of general principles, but also the development of an attitude toward learning and inquiry, toward guessing and hunches, toward the possibility of solving problems on one’s own’ (Bruner, 1960, p. 20).

The structure of scaffolding in learning encourages a deep understanding of essential principles and fundamental structures in the aesthetics of film praxis. Fundamentals help explain complexity and make learning comprehensible. From fundamentals in the film aesthetic, students can generalise from what they have learnt to what they will encounter later on. For instance scaffolded film learning in the framing and composition of ‘film language’ lays the foundations for further learning. From the fundamentals a sequence or program of learning is built that spirals the learner along a scaffolded structure that consolidates past learning (an example is shown in Appendix A). The scaffold offers challenges for new learning in controlling and understanding the film aesthetic. From the fundamentals the learning focuses on other film elements and becomes more integrated, complex and sophisticated (examples are shown in Appendix B).

Scaffolding the learning is an important structure in the social environment of learning for students. Vygotsky (1997) uses the metaphor of gardening to explain how the teacher’s construction of the learning environment is vital.

The social environment is the true lever of the educational process, and the teacher’s overall role is reduced to adjusting this lever. Just as a gardener would be acting foolishly if he were to affect the growth of a plant by directly tugging at its roots with his hands from underneath the plant, so the teacher is in contradiction with the essential nature of education if he bends all his efforts at directly influencing the student. But the gardener affects the germination of his flowers by increasing the temperature, regulating the moisture, varying the relative position of neighbouring plants, and selecting and mixing soils and
fertilizers. Once again, indirectly by making appropriate changes to the environment. Thus, the teacher educates the student by varying the environment. (p. 49)

Pedagogy in film is a constructed learning environment to guide and support learning by scaffolding skills, knowledge and understandings from fundamentals. The learning aims to be both comprehensible, engaging and challenging for students. The film pedagogy scaffolds learning in the aesthetic of film and the experiential processes of creating in the aesthetic.

Learning about and learning through the film aesthetic provides the possibilities of a transformational experience in the sociocultural interplay and dynamic of individual development and the social context. Film learning as a cultural tool of mediation can also be linked to an individual’s personal development of self and identity through storytelling. Learning in the aesthetic of film narrative can be viewed as part of the ‘cultural tool kit’ that organizes the perceptual experience of life events through narrative construction (Bruner, 1986, 1987, 1996; Wertsch, 1997).

**Narrative in film learning**

This learning in film focuses on film narrative because stories are viewed as vital to the way cultures pass on knowledge. Narratives construct meaning about the world and construct our identity. This is not to suggest that non-narrative forms of screen expression (see chapter 2) are less valid but this film learning utilises the perceptual experience of narrative construction in the learning.

Bruner (1986) argues narrative is a way of thinking, a way of organising experience and constructing a reality. Imagining a narrative, he says, leads to “good stories, gripping drama, believable (though not necessarily ‘true’) historical accounts. It deals in human and human-like intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course” (p.13). We engage fundamentally with stories because they deal with the changing fortunes of human intentions. Bruner (1986) links narrative construction to an understanding of our perceptual experience of self and others:
Insofar as we account for our own actions and for the human events that occur around us principally in terms of narrative, story, drama, it is conceivable that our sensitivity to narrative provides the major link between our own self and our sense of others in the social world around us. The common coin may be provided by the forms of narrative that the culture offers us. (p. 69)

The telling of our own life as a narrative is shaped by culturally shaped cognitive and linguistic processes (Bruner, 1987). In other words, our ability or means to tell stories shapes the stories we tell of ourselves to construct our identity.

Narrative, according to Barbara Hardy (1977) is a “primary act of mind transferred to art from life” (p. 12). Humans think in stories and their thinking is shaped by the culture of stories around them. This pedagogy for film aims to engage students to be active participants in the creation and critiquing of film stories. Students learn to construct stories, inhabit stories, communicate stories, and appreciate stories. The storytelling potential of film learning presents an opportunity for students to imagine and explore the narrative of human consciousness and a version of reality (Brockmeier and Carbaugh, 2001; Green, Strange and Brock, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1988). Film stories are complex constructions, and creatively imagining and making them challenges students’ thoughts, feelings and ideas. Film learning is ideally placed to fit within the productive pedagogies, new basics or quality teaching movement.

**Film as a productive pedagogy**

Emerging from American research into authentic pedagogies (Newmann and Associates, 1996) was the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS, 2001), which provided the recent impetus for the productive pedagogies approach. This research argued for four dimensions of classroom practice that particularly supported learning of students that had been marginalised by traditional schooling (Hayes et. al., 2006). The dimensions the QSRLS (2001) uncovered were:

- intellectual quality
- connectedness
- supportive classroom environment, and
• working with and valuing difference. (Haye et al, 2006, pp. 22-23)

How film learning fulfils the dimensions and elements of productive pedagogies is outlined in Table 3.1 (in Anderson and Jefferson, 2009, pp. 9-11).

**Table 3.1 The dimensions of productive pedagogies (QSRLS, 2001) and film learning.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of productive pedagogies</th>
<th>Elements of productive pedagogies</th>
<th>Film learning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual quality</td>
<td>Higher-order thinking</td>
<td>Understanding the relationship of film form and function, and filmic codes and conventions as social, cultural constructs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Deep knowledge</td>
<td>Creating film by constructing and deconstructing cinema aesthetics for narrative meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deep understanding</td>
<td>Problem solving through the augmenting and dialectical process of creativity in the filmmaking process</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Substantive conversation</td>
<td>Communicating using metalanguage to create film media and critically appreciate it, orally and in writing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge as problematic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metalanguage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Knowledge integration</td>
<td>Integrating knowledge of filmic form in a world of pervasive mediated reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Background knowledge</td>
<td>Understanding their world through creativity of self expression in filmic form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connectedness to the world</td>
<td>Interacting with ‘real world’ phenomenon and concerns through the experience of filmmaking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem-based curriculum</td>
<td>Collaborative processes of film involving communication, negotiation and problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive classroom environment</td>
<td>Student direction</td>
<td>Processing the reception of spectators perceptions of screened film works</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explicit quality performance criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of difference</td>
<td>Cultural knowledges</td>
<td>Group practice of collaboration with peers in filmmaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inclusivity</td>
<td>Undertaking and recognising the symbiotic roles involved in filmmaking and recognising their contribution to the process and its outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Engaging theoretical understanding of cinema aesthetics and film form and function, orally and in writing through the practical process of film making</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group identity</td>
<td>Recognising how form and function criteria can structure and measure outcomes in process learning and screened outcomes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Active citizenship</td>
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</table>


Conclusion

A sociocultural approach is the foundation of the educational processes in the introduced film learning of this research. Sociocultural theory is based on Vygotsky’s ideas that humans construct their minds and develop higher mental processes through the internalisation of interactions with the external world of nature and with other humans. The interpersonal or social process between people is transformed into an intrapersonal or individual process inside a person (Vygotsky, 1978). A sociocultural approach explores the intersection of sociocultural and individual processes and the dialectical tension of development or transformation that occurs through that interaction (John-Steiner and Mahn, 2003).

In table 3.2 film learning explores the interaction and tension of sociocultural and individual processes in a number of ways. Human action mediated by cultural signs constructs knowledge. Film is a culturally constructed semiotic that carries sociocultural patterns and knowledge and as a mediating cultural tool it can facilitate the interaction of mental processes and social learning. The mind develops by using cultural tools and at the same time culture develops through that interaction. Film as learning is a form of semiotic mediation empowering students to see, understand and transform the nature of the world.

A sociocultural approach is evident in film learning processes. The learning recognises the on-going social world by being experiential, collaborative and scaffolded. Expressing the creative imagination through the representative signs of the film aesthetic externalises subjective experience to the social realm and according to Vygotsky (1971) this process is integral to human development. Narrative structures are a way to organise, explore and represent human experience and link the self to the social world (Bruner, 1986).
Table 3.2 Processes of learning and development in the pedagogy for film as a sociocultural approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The pedagogy in film is learning <em>in</em> and learning <em>through</em>:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mediating cultural tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The film aesthetic is a mediating cultural tool in the 21st century and as such plays a role in the construction and appropriation of human knowledge. Humans engage with cultural tools through experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Filmmaking is a kinaesthetic activity that provides learning in an on-going world; it is experiential, situated and transformative. Experiential learning is deepened through collaborative practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Film learning is a collaborative process instigating and consolidating learning through social practice. Collaboration enhances creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Film learning encourages creative imagining and creative action with cultural tools and synthesises emotional and intellectual development. Creativity is heightened in the arts through aesthetic learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic control and aesthetic appreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Making and appreciating through aesthetic control and understanding empower students in participating in the arts as cultural tools of communication. The learning of these tools is effective when scaffolded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaffolding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In a collaborative environment scaffolded learning in the film aesthetic provides processes, metalanguage and tasks to support and guide students’ on-going development. Aesthetic experiences can be developed through narrative learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Making and appreciating film narratives as cultural artefacts is a way of thinking, a way of organising experience and constructing a reality and identity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A sociocultural perspective recognises the relevance and impact of culture on cognition, and the role of the learner as an active participant in that culture. It centres on the feedback loop of human action and cultural context. Learning and development of knowledge as a sociocultural phenomenon is in analysing the role played by *culture* in shaping both thinking and culture (John-Steiner and Mahn, 2003). Central to knowledge
about human action is the relationship between an individual’s cognitive and emotional processes and the social environment. That relationship is mediated through cultural artifacts such as film learning.

The metaphor of the wide-shot in film and the tension between character and context explains the dynamic forces at play in a sociocultural understanding of the world. The piano in the film *The Piano* (1993) can also be used as a metaphor for understanding semiotic mediation and the significance of cultural tools in learning. Playing the piano for the mute Ada becomes a mediating cultural artifact that links her inner emotional life with her new life in the far-flung reaches of New Zealand. The piano is a cultural tool that changes Ada and the social environment around her. Similarly a sociocultural and aesthetic approach to film pedagogy endeavours to transform students’ learning experiences with film.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology and design used to explore the experience of drama teachers with film learning.
Chapter 4
Research methodology

González Iñárritu’s film *Babel* (2006) interconnects three seemingly disparate stories from around the globe (figure 4.1). Although the stories do not synchronise in space or time, they gradually weave together as one narrative. The narrative structure of the film is a metaphor for how human events around the world appear disconnected but are in fact connected. The film is about how the difficulties of disparity, real communication and empathy must be overcome to realise that connection. The *way* the story in the film is told reflects the meaning of the film and the *way* it is to be understood by the audience.

![Figure 4.1](image-url) The three images from the film *Babel* (2006) illustrate three separate but interconnected stories: an American tourist couple frantically struggling to survive an accidental shooting in Morocco, a nanny illegally crossing into Mexico with the American couple’s children, and a rebellious Japanese teenager whose father is sought by the police in Tokyo.

This research is like the storytelling of the film *Babel*. The unique stories of individual teachers interweave to form the coherent narrative of this research. The *way* the research has evolved is also consistent with the knowledge being created and the *way* it is understood and used. Eisner (1997) argues:

There is an intimate relationship between our conception of what the products of research are to look like and the way we go about doing research. What we think it means to do research has to do with our conception of meaning, our view of cognition, and our beliefs about the forms of consciousness that we are willing to say advance human understanding – an aim, I take it, that defines the primary mission of research. (p.5).
This study endeavors to unify the relationship between what the research is concerned with, the way it is undertaken and the way it is to be understood. What the study is about is the experience of drama teachers with film pedagogy. The way this study is researched is through a methodology that acknowledges the experiential and interpretive qualities of knowledge and knowing generated by an arts and humanities approach to education (Eisner, 1997). Through the experience and qualities of these teachers’ stories we can interpret or understand how educational practice may be enhanced. In a dynamic and changing society, research in education must “provide principled bases for ‘knowing’ to guide practice and policy” (Freebody, 2003, p. 20).

This chapter on methodology charts the development of the research design as it evolved to address the research questions.

**A problematic situation and knowledge**

The research began from a relevant and problematic issue. The emergence of filmmaking and the critical appreciation of visual text in the NSW secondary curriculum demand the acquisition of new skills, knowledge and understandings for teachers and students. In this context this study explored the experience of secondary drama teachers and the challenge of teaching film in schools. Rather than describe the experience as it presented, this study involved an intervention. The intervention was the facilitation of film pedagogy workshops for teacher participants. The workshops served to be productive and generative for the teachers’ educational practice, the research inquiry and the researcher. The aim of the workshops was twofold: to empower participating drama teachers with film pedagogical knowledge and to empower teachers as joint stakeholders in the creation of knowledge about the experience of film learning.

Knowledge and knowing is dependent upon the kind of problem pursued and how an inquiry is undertaken (Eisner, 2008). In this research the Aristotelian *phronesis* best describes the way knowledge and *knowing* is created. *Phronesis* is knowledge that is collaboratively designed by legitimate stakeholders in a problematic situation (Greenwood and Levin, 2008). It is a praxis-oriented way of knowing (Friere, 2006/1972).
that is collective, participatory and legitimate, in the way of a ‘community of practice’ (Wenger, 1998). The process of learning and of knowing is through social participation and active engagement with the world (Wenger, 1998). Knowledge is to struggle actively with knowing how to act in real-world contexts with real-world materials (Greenwood and Levin, 2008). The premise that knowledge and knowing derive from the practice of real-world, collaborative and interpretative experience has led this research to be a qualitative inquiry.

**Choosing qualitative inquiry**

There are many ways of knowing, and we need to know different things for different purposes (Eisner, 2008). Qualitative inquiry describes research emphasizing the qualities of entities, processes and experiences. Qualitative researchers “seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p. 14). In this research the object of study and the way the research is constructed is qualitative. It stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the significance of the situated context of what is being studied and the situated context of the research itself (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). It is cognisant with a way of seeing the world and knowing the world through “the local, variable, contingent and multiple nature of cultural, social and institutional practices” (Freebody, 2003, p. 35).

Quantitative inquiry focuses on standardized measurement and the causal relationship between variables. From a post-structural and post-modernist point of view, the positivist tradition of quantitative inquiry is viewed as another form of knowledge creation or “one way of telling stories about societies or social worlds” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p. 15). Qualitative inquiry like quantitative inquiry aims to achieve what all research aspires to achieve: “a systematic attempt to re-see the everyday” (Freebody, 2003, p. 42). This study aims to observe systematically and rigorously the everyday through detailed and rich descriptions of six educators’ experiences because the qualities of those descriptions are seen as valuable knowledge. It is these kind of descriptions that are emphasised in qualitative research approaches.
The choice of how knowledge is created signifies more than the choice between measurement of *quantity* and the description of *quality*. The relationship of quantitative and qualitative traditions in education is “a contrast between approaches of competing philosophical approaches to cultural experience” (Freebody, 2003, p.43). The research question is posed from an epistemological standpoint and where the researcher stands pedagogically should be in harmony with the method of inquiry.

…the way in which one articulates certain questions has something to do with the research method that one tends to identify with. So there exists a certain dialectic between question and method. Why then should one adopt one research over another? The choice should reflect more than mere whim, preference, taste or fashion. Rather, the method one chooses ought to maintain a certain harmony with the deep interest that makes one an educator (a parent or teacher) in the first place. (Van Manen, 1997, p. 2)

Pedagogically this study aims to construct knowledge and knowing by interpreting the qualities of educators’ real-world experiences. It is a pedagogical approach that has its roots in the philosophical tradition of phenomenology.

The German philosopher, Husserl (1931) first used phenomenology to describe how perception and consciousness can be attributed to the interpretation of sensory experience. Not to be confused with phenomenology as a methodology of study, phenomenology as a perspective justifies the methods of qualitative inquiry. The assumption is *we can only know what we experience* if we attend to the perception and interpretation of the meaning of our experiences (Patton, 2002). To do so, qualitative researchers often use multi-perspective and interconnected interpretive practices to better understand perceptions of experience in the world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). The interpretative experience of qualitative inquiry can be illustrated through the metaphor of filmic montage.

**Interpretative practice as montage**

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) use the metaphor of montage to explain the construction of qualitative research. They explain how in editing a film: images, sounds and understandings are juxtaposed and superimposed on one another for the viewer to
construct an interpretation. The viewer’s perception and interpretation of montage is not one shot at a time, but shots put together to create a meaningful whole. The film theorist, Monaco (2000) describes the synthesis of meaning through filmic montage in the following way:

- a dialectical process that creates a third meaning out of the original two meanings of the adjacent shot; and
- a process in which a number of short shots are woven together to communicate a great deal of information in a short time. (Monaco, 2000, p. 216)

Monaco (2000) points out that a dialectical process is inherent in all montage whether it is conscious or not. The dialectical process of montage helps to explain how the putting together of slices of reality in research creates “a psychological and emotional unity – a pattern – to an interpretative experience” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p. 7). The concept of montage illustrates how the complexity, detail and richness of interpretative experience can be interconnected to form a whole. The methodology of this research aims to create meaning and knowledge from an interpretative structure that is likened to montage.

Montage uses brief images to create a clearly defined sense of urgency and complexity. It invites viewers to construct interpretations that build on one another as a scene unfolds. These interpretations are based on associations among the contrasting images that blend into one another. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p. 6)

The specific method used to create the effect of interpretive montage evolves from the research question.

**The research question**

In response to the emergence of digital technology and filmmaking in NSW classrooms, the following research question and sub-questions were constructed:

What is the experience of secondary drama teachers with film learning in NSW classrooms?

(i) What are the resource implications for teachers of film?
(ii) How do systemic, curriculum and school structures support syllabus expectations of film learning?
(iii) What is the relationship between film and drama learning?

The word experience in the research question values the creation of knowledge from the subjectivity of teachers’ described realities and reflections of lived experience. The sub-questions focus and clarify key issues in the exploration of the teachers’ experience.

A major resource implication for teachers to teach film is to have skills, knowledge and understandings in film pedagogy. Part of the research involved 36 hours of film pedagogy workshops facilitated by me as teacher-researcher. The film learning is discussed in Chapter 3. In the workshops the teachers experienced a method of how to teach film, as well as developed foundational skills, knowledge and understandings in film learning.

The focus of the research is the drama teachers’ experience with film learning. The chosen methodology and methods of the research aim to allow for the voices of individual teachers to describe and reflect on their experiences. Since I as researcher determined the question and the research process and analysis, the research also consciously reflects my experience.

**Subjectivity and multiple perspectives**

The notion of multiple perspectives in qualitative, interpretative practice recognizes the situated position of the researcher behind and within the generic phases of the research process. The researcher is situated in the world and his/her personal biography shapes the nature of the research. The researcher speaks from a gendered, multicultural perspective and approaches the world with certain theories, epistemologies and methodologies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). An ontologically objective view of the world cannot be secured since “our experience of the world is a function not only of its features, but of what we bring to them…We make our experience, not simply have it” (Eisner, 1991, p. 60).
Seeing the world through the experience of the researcher is a position from which to understand the world, as Peshkin (1985) explains:

My ideas are candidates for others to entertain, not necessarily as truth, let alone Truth, but as positions about the nature and meaning of a phenomenon that may fit their sensibility and shape their thinking about their own inquiries… By virtue of subjectivity, I tell the story I am moved to tell. Reserve my subjectivity and I do not become a value-free participant observer, merely an empty-headed one…(p. 280)

The acknowledgement of the researchers’ perspective is an interpretive position from which others interpret their own understanding. Subjectivity, argues Van Manen (1997) orientates the researcher in a strong, unique and personal way in relation to the object of study. To describe the object richly and deeply, the research must be insightful, discerning and purposeful (Van Manen, 1997).

Subjectivity and objectivity in the post-modern age according to Barone (2000) are concepts that have drained their usefulness and no longer have meaning. He argues that if all discourse is culturally contextual, then pragmatism determines that the criterion for what is ‘true’ is the capacity of research to be useful for a particular purpose in a given situation. Pragmatically, research is designed in a certain context with a specific audience in mind (Patton, 2002). Paradigmatically, the researcher enters the research process from a distinct interpretative community and biographically situates the researcher behind all phases of the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

To clarify my paradigmatic and pragmatic orientation and to explain the construction of this research I have used Denzin and Lincoln’s five phase research process (2008).

**Phase 1: The researcher**

A characteristic of qualitative research is *the self as an instrument* (Eisner, 1991). The self as researcher makes sense of a situation through perception and interpretation. As an instrument of the research, my insights come from the perspective of my personal history and world-view. This subjective response, is referred to by Eisner (1991) as a *unique*
signature, which rather than being a liability, is what shapes individual insight into a situation.

**My experience**

I am a 48-year-old female teacher who from 1986 has worked primarily in secondary school education. I have taught English and history, but for the most part of the past 25 years I have been involved in the teaching of drama and, more recently, film. I have taught in metropolitan and regional NSW, Victoria and the UK, and in schools from the state and private sector. My involvement in creative arts education became more focused when I was teacher and head teacher of drama at a specialist performing arts high school from 1992 to 2005. I became particularly interested in researching film education after writing and introducing a NSW Board of Studies endorsed film course and undertaking several extra-curricula film projects with students.

In my teaching career my interest in the development and benefits of drama education at a school and curriculum level can be described as committed and passionate. Ten years ago I developed a similar attitude to film education. Teaching film gave me the experience and awareness of the educative potential of combining filmmaking and film appreciation as an arts-based pedagogy in schools. To teach film as a discrete subject outside the drama curriculum allowed me a perspective and reflection of film’s aesthetic and pedagogical possibilities.

My experience and interest with filmmaking in schools and the apparent lack of pedagogical resources for teachers encouraged me to co-author a book, *Teaching the Screen: Film Education for Generation Next* (Anderson and Jefferson, 2009). *Teaching the Screen* presents a pedagogical model for film learning that aims to support teachers teaching film. I currently teach drama curriculum and film workshops to pre-service teachers at tertiary institutions, and teach in-service teachers in drama and film through professional teacher organizations.
As supervisor of marking for Higher School Certificate (HSC) drama\(^5\), a syllabus writer for drama in NSW and head teacher drama at a performing arts high school I observed increasing ICT integration in NSW schools and curricula in the 1990s. In the Drama Years 7-10 Syllabus (Board of Studies NSW, 2003), ‘small screen drama’ can be explored as a ‘dramatic context’ and in the Drama Stage 6 Syllabus (Board of Studies NSW, 2009) video drama is one of five options in the mandatory individual project. As students show an increasing interest in video drama, the challenge for drama teachers has been how to introduce filmmaking into their programming and pedagogy. English and visual arts teachers in NSW have experienced similar issues with the integration of ICT, new media and new literacy in their curriculum areas. It was these concerns that led to this research.

My professional networks with NSW drama teachers through regional and state drama festivals and camps, professional teacher organisations, workshops, conferences, Board of Studies Syllabus committees and HSC marking can be described as a community of learners\(^6\) (Brown, 2005). The professional practice of teachers as a community of learners is a “lived culture of learning where membership in the community actively challenges teachers to move beyond their established competencies and to access communal resources in support of their co-construction of more sophisticated ways of knowing and doing in the classroom” (Brown, 2005, p. 10). I see myself and other teachers evolving and changing over time as we interact within this collaborative, networked community.

In this community of learners I perceive myself and other teachers to be peers with a diversity of viewpoints, experiences and expertise. In this professional learning space knowledge is jointly constructed and mutually supported through collaboration. This

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5 In NSW, the Board of Studies externally examines drama in the final year of secondary school. Around 5000 students elect to do drama as part of the Higher School Certificate each year and are involved in performance, projects and written examinations.

6 Lave and Wenger’s (1991) notion of a community of practice theorises that a person’s intention to learn, and the meaning of learning are configured through the process of practice and apprenticeship. A community of learning more specifically refers to employing an inquiry of learning through a community with multiple voices and divergent goals that come together to negotiate meaning and explore and employ varied approaches to classroom practice (Brown, 2005).
research has developed as part of my involvement with the teaching and learning of the drama teacher community of learners in NSW. Through drama and film workshops, and drama HSC marking I made contact with teachers who were interested in attending film learning workshops and being involved in the research. I have had to refer to my peers and fellow stakeholders from this community of learners as participants in the research. Referring to them as teachers was confusing since teachers at large are discussed more generally. The teachers in the research are called participants without any intent to objectify their status in relation to me as researcher.

My close familiarity with the area of study and the participants can be viewed as proximity for accessibility and insight, but also proximity for possible bias. Being too familiar can mean the researcher feels too close and biased to study the situation, or ‘knows’ the answers ahead of time, or may not be accepted by the participants in the role of researcher. Ely (1991) argues that this concern of being too familiar “is less a function of our actual involvement in the setting than it is of the research stance we are able to adopt within it” (Ely, 1991, p. 16). In qualitative inquiry the researcher’s stance must be credible, authentic, empathically neutral and self-reflexive. Schwandt (2003) explains a central concept of qualitative research is to gain an ‘inside’ understanding of a situation, but this involves “acknowledging the ongoing liminal experience of living between familiarity and strangeness” (Schwandt, 2003, p. 322).

My interest to pursue this study was to better understand the circumstances of NSW teachers teaching the emergent area of filmmaking. The research aimed to inform stakeholders in education on the issues associated with the introduction of film technology and visual literacy in learning. My familiarity with the topic allowed me to recognize problematic issues in the area to formulate the research question, and have access to teachers dealing with these issues. Film education is relevant across curriculum areas however I focused on the specific pedagogic and programming concerns of secondary drama teachers and their experience with filmmaking since it is the area I have had the most experience.
Phase 2: Interpretive paradigms

Within research there are a variety of theoretical interpretive paradigms to frame a “basic set of beliefs that guides action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17). This research asks for a description and interpretation of the experiential phenomenon of drama teachers teaching film. The interpretive approaches of phenomenology, hermeneutics and critical theory distinguish the nature of this inquiry and they are paradigms characterised by the relativist ontology, interpretive epistemology and interpretive, naturalistic and interventionist methods of qualitative research. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

Hermeneutic phenomenology

Phenomenology focuses on people’s experience and how it is that they experience what they experience. It is a “systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meanings of lived experience” (Van Manen, 1997, p. 10). A phenomenological approach assumes that a shared experience has an essence or essences. These core meanings explain a phenomenon that is mutually experienced. In this study the drama teacher participants experience the phenomenon of professional learning and film learning. Although each participant’s view is unique, phenomenology “assumes a commonality in those human experiences and must use rigorously the method of bracketing to search for those commonalities” (Eichelberger, 1989, p. 6).

Hermeneutics focuses on the ‘negotiating’ or ‘understanding’ of reality through interpretation and perspective. Hermeneutic research establishes context and meaning for what people do and considers the conditions for which something took place. Meaning depends on the cultural context in which something was originally created and the cultural context within which it is then interpreted (Patton, 2002). Eichelberger (1989) describes hermeneutic researchers in the following way:

They want to know what meaning people attribute to activities…and how that relates to their behaviour. These researchers are much clearer about the fact that they are constructing the ‘reality’ on the basis of their interpretations of data with the help of the participants who provided the data in the study. (Eichelberger, 1989, p.9)
Meaning is then like engaging in a dialogue, it is “negotiated mutually in the act of interpretation; it is not simply discovered” (Schwandt, 2003, p. 302). The focus of this study is to understand the conditions relevant to the drama teachers' experiences with film learning, and the conditions relevant to the interpretation of that experience. Understanding, in philosophical hermeneutics, is interpretation and operates as a basic structure of our experience of life (Schwandt, 2003).

To combine phenomenology and hermeneutics is to be attentive to both description and interpretation. Hermeneutic phenomenology describes how things appear but recognises that there are no such things as uninterpreted phenomenon (Van Manen, 1997).

**Critical theory**

Critical theory in research aspires to critique and change a social system by approaching analysis with an agenda to elucidate power inequalities and emancipate consciousness through praxis (Friere, 1970/2006; Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005). The collaborative, participatory and transformative orientation of critical theory allows research participants to reflect upon and understand their own situation and support future action. The stance of the researcher is to regard the inquiry as a political or interventionist act that aims to redress the inequities of a situation. Research in the critical tradition identifies with empowerment and is informed by the self-conscious awareness of ideological imperatives and epistemological presuppositions (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005).

**Phase 3: strategies of inquiry and interpretive paradigms**

The strategies of inquiry implement and anchor paradigms in specific empirical sites or in specific methodological practices (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). In this study the *qualities* of teacher *experience* are explored through a case study methodology.

**A case study**

A case study is the story of a *naturalistic-experiment-in action* (Freebody, 2003). In education it documents “the routine moves educators and learners make in a clearly known and readily defined discursive, conceptual and professional space (the ‘case’)”
The case study focuses on the particular instance of an experience and attempts to gain theoretical and professional insights from a full documentation of that instance (Freebody, 2003). The case is studied “as a single instance of more universal social experiences and social processes” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 378). This notion of connecting the instance to the universal is explicated by Jean-Paul Sartre: “…a man is never an individual; it would be more fitting to call him a universal singular. Summed up and for this reason universalised by his epoch, he in turn resumes it by reproducing himself in its singularity” (Sartre, 1981, p. ix). To study the particular is to study the universal.

Rather than focusing on the singularity of one case this study examines a number of instances to investigate whether there are common phenomena or conditions in the chosen cases. Stake (2008) refers to this type of case study research as a collective case study. The collective case study is when a number of cases are used jointly to explore a phenomenon because “understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases” (Stake, 2008, p.123).

To provide insight into a phenomenon six particular cases are examined. The particularity of an instance means a case study has a bounded system (Stake, 2008). In this study the instance is defined and determined by the teachers who teach or are interested in teaching film and who undertook film learning workshops with me as part of the research. This instance is the boundary of the collective case study, but the relevance beyond the bounded system is universal.

Case studies in education aim to bridge research and practice, and allow research and practice to impact on or refine one another (Freebody, 2003). The benefit of case study research in education is to use localized experience in order to appreciate and integrate the complexity and uniqueness of practice, and to avoid theorizing ‘in a vacuum’ (Freebody, 2003).
Phase 4: methods of collecting and analysing empirical materials

A case study is an analysis process of gathering systematic and in-depth information about cases and then the analysis process results in a collective case study as product (Patton, 2002). For each case a diversity of sources such as questionnaires, interviews, reflective logs and observations make up the raw empirical materials for case analysis.

Choosing teacher participants for in-depth analysis

Cases are units of analysis (Yin, 2009) and the units in this study are the drama teacher participants. Purposive sampling of variation and information-rich cases was used to select teachers from the workshops to be participants in the research (Stake, 2008). The workshops came at no cost to the participants. The 17 who attended the workshops were a mixture of pre-service, early, mid and late career teachers. At the conclusion of the workshops six teachers were chosen for in-depth analysis.

The six participants were purposefully sampled according to the following criteria:

a) all were in-service drama teachers interested in teaching film and had participated in the research workshops
b) all were compelling, information-rich cases chosen to deepen understanding and knowledge
c) teachers were chosen as representative of a range of schools in terms of government and non-government schools, and gender of the school population
d) teachers were chosen as representative of a range of experience and expertise in teaching film, and teaching more generally.

Six was a number chosen to allow for depth of analysis in each case but also to represent a diversity of experiences. Across the case study was built in variety and acknowledged opportunities for intensive study through purposeful sampling (Stake, 2008).

The cases involved teachers in varying school systems (government and independent), different gender situations (co-educational, female and male single-sex), varying school situations where film was already being taught or was being introduced, and teachers in their early, mid and late career. Common patterns emerging from variation are valuable
when capturing the core experiences of a shared phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Variety was built into the purposive sample however this was balanced with cases that could yield rich-information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge (Patton, 2002).

**Ethics**

An ethics application was approved by the Human Ethics committee of Sydney University for this research in December 2007 and continued to July 2011 (see Appendix C for initial approval and modification of research investigation). All the teachers in the workshops were given a participant information form and consent form before the research began (see Appendix D). The six participants involved in the case study were informed in writing and verbally that they could withdraw from the project without penalty at any time. There were no withdrawals from the study.

**Anonymity and confidentiality**

The participant information form and consent form informed participants their involvement in the study was confidential and their identity would not be revealed. The dominant presumption in research is that the privacy of participants should always be protected. This has been challenged by some qualitative studies that wish to acknowledge participants ‘owning their own stories’ (Patton, 2002). To recognize the teacher as visible participants is to empower them as professional collaborators in the research (Shulman, 1990).

I envisioned the participants as collaborative stakeholders in the research who ‘owned their stories’ however I felt the anonymity of their identity would allow them to be freer to discuss their ‘life-world experience’. Foregoing anonymity can mean teachers and their talk are vulnerable to disapproval from peers and administrators (Shulman, 1990). In the study pseudonyms are used for the participants, and their schools have been described in broad, contextual terms.
The audio recording and electronic and handwritten written data has been seen only by the researcher and will be kept securely for seven years. It will then be confidentially destroyed. As collaborators in the research and for validity purposes and ethical reasons each participant verified their data used in the study. They were able to clarify, qualify, change or withhold their data. The extracts from the interviews and logbooks used in the research were sent via email to the participants in October, 2010 (see Appendix E for request). Three participants made no changes at all to their text. Three participants corrected some spoken grammar, one changed the pronoun I to we to reflect the inclusive intent of her speaking and one made some minimal changes to the description of the school (see Appendix F for example).

**Methods of data collection**

The interpretation of qualitative research has been likened to filmic montage in the way images are interpreted and understood not one by one, but by the associations they make with other images. The parts reveal a whole meaning, and in this way the case study of this research uses a range of methods to gather data to contribute to a meaningful whole.

**In-depth, semi-structured interviews**

“Interviewing provides access to the context of people’s behaviour and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behaviour” (Seidman, 2006, p.10). The interview recognises that other people’s stories are important. ‘Symbolic interactionism’ explains that meaning is created through the defining activities of people as they interact (Blumer, 1968). In-depth interviewing in research is an interaction that assumes “the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that experience” (Seidman, 2006).

It must be recognised that interviews are contextually bound and non-neutral. “Each interview context is one of interaction and relation, and the result is as much a product of this social dynamic as it is the product of accurate accounts and replies” (Fontana and Frey, 2008, p. 121). Interviews are then an insight into an individual’s constructed reality and the way they convey that reality in the dynamic of the interaction of an interview
Interviews themselves must be understood as cultural practices about cultural practices (Freebody, 2003). Being self-reflexive about the interview recognises the researcher and participant as artful cultural agents in the mutually constructed ‘story’ of the interview.

Understanding the semi-structured interview as an interactive, collaborative and cultural act of communication has synergy with the practice and philosophy of drama teachers and their pedagogy.

Drama encourages a cooperative approach to exploring the world through enactment. The collaborative nature of this art form engages students in a creative process of sharing, developing and expressing emotions and ideas... They portray aspects of human experience while exploring the ways people react and respond to different situations, issues and ideas. (Board of Studies NSW, Drama Years 7-10 Syllabus, 2003, p.8)

Drama teachers encourage collaboration, empathy, communication and role-playing in their classrooms to create knowledge and knowing. These ideas are similar to the notion and practice of the interview as a dynamic and empathic social encounter creating a negotiated text (Fontana and Frey, 2008).

Roles and relationships
From a moral point of view the relationship I developed with research participants is based on trust, respect and empathy. Fontana and Frey (2008) point out the empathic approach in interviewing “is a method of morality because it attempts to restore the sacredness of humans before addressing any theoretical or methodological concerns” (Fontana and Frey, 2008, p. 118). I saw my relationship with participants as empathic but my role in the relationship as complex.

As workshop facilitator I had a teacher-student relationship with participants. As researcher I had an interviewer-interviewee relationship, and as another drama teacher I am a colleague and friend to participants. I would describe my relationship as a colleague
and friend as a “We” relationship, but in the researcher/teacher role, the relationship is “I-Thou”.

The “I-Thou” relationship recognises the “Thou” as a person that is close but separate, and when the “Thou-ness” becomes mutual it becomes a “We” relationship (Schutz, 1969; Seidman, 2006). The “We” relationship in discourse becomes a conversation, the “I-Thou”, an interview. An in-depth phenomenologically based interview wants independent responses from the participant in an “I-Thou” relationship that verges on the “We” (Seidman, 2006).

The interviews in this study were focused on the participants’ experiences and my role was to ask open questions and be an attentive and responsive listener. I was very conscious of the “I-Thou” relationship in all the interviews because of the contrast to the “We” relationship I have with participants as colleagues and friends. I felt privileged in the interview situation to listen to the openness and intensity of other people’s stories. This privilege was an empowerment to me as the researcher, but also enabled participants to have their voices and stories heard.

The research centred on the premise that the participants were joint stakeholders in the creation of a praxis-oriented way of knowing and knowledge. Colleagues were participants in this study as a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) of drama teachers interested in learning about teaching film. Seidman (2006) questions the reliability of interviewing colleagues and friends because assumptions in understanding can be made: “The interviewer and the participant need to have enough distance from each other that they take nothing for granted” (Siedman, 2006, p. 42). This research informed by the paradigm of hermeneutics endeavours to take nothing for granted and aims “to examine our historically inherited and unreflectively held prejudices and alter those that disable our efforts to understand others, and ourselves” (Garrison, 1996).
**Recording the interviews**

I interviewed the case study participants 2 to 3 months after the workshops, and held the interviews at locations convenient and comfortable for the participants. All the spaces chosen for the interviews were private with minimal interruptions. The interviews were semi-structured with pre-determined questions focusing on the core issues of teaching film but allowed for follow up questions to explore relevancies in the participant’s talk (see Appendix G for interview schedule).

The interviews were audio recorded and then logged and transcribed by me. Non-verbal communication is an important feature of the social interaction of an interview (Fontana and Frey, 2008) but I decided not to video the interviews. The video camera can make participants initially self-conscious, and I wanted participants to feel comfortable with the interview situation as soon as possible. I believed the small digital recording device would be less intrusive.

**Questionnaires and participant logs**

To gauge the teachers’ situated experience teaching film and their expectations before the workshops, all the workshop participants completed a questionnaire with open-ended responses (see Appendix H for questionnaire). During the workshops, the teachers reflected on their learning and the film pedagogy in a logbook sometimes responding to directed questions (see Appendix I for questions, Appendix J for examples of logbook reflections). Directed questions in participant logs actively aim to encourage reflection and evaluation (O’Toole, 2006). NSW drama teachers are familiar with logs since students in HSC drama are required to document their learning process with personal reflections in a logbook for the group presentation and individual project (Board of Studies NSW, *Drama Stage 6 Syllabus*, 2009). The questionnaire responses and reflective logs were methods of collecting empirical materials for the research as well as consolidating and facilitating the teachers’ learning in the workshops.
Research logs

A logging of reflections by the researcher is a form of field notes that accompanies all the methods of data collection (Ely, 1991). “The log is the place where each qualitative researcher faces the self as instrument through a personal dialogue about moments of victory and disheartenment, hunches, feelings, insights, assumptions, biases, and ongoing ideas about method” (Ely, 1991, p. 69). Through the initial workshops and at other times during the study I maintained a reflective journal (see example in Appendix K).

Reflective practice is a common ideal in teaching from which knowledge is applied and generated (Schön, 1995). A research log contributes to the researcher’s understanding of the self as instrument and being as aware as possible of the ripples caused by their participation in the research (Ely, 1991).

The participants written responses are self-reflections but like interviews they are artfully constructed by directed questions and knowing there is a reader audience, in particular the researcher as reader audience. Interviews and writing are a socially situated and interactive performance and as such are a lens or context through which to view and approach the empirical, qualitative data (Chase, 2008).

Analysing the empirical materials

Analysis as Stake (1995) explains is essentially to take things apart. In case studies it involves mental dissection “to see the parts separately and how they relate to each other, perhaps to see how the parts help us relate this one to other species” (Stake, 1995, p. 72). To find meaning in the research data is “through direct interpretation of individual instance and aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class” (Stake, 1995, p. 74). The search for meaning is to explore the volume of qualitative material and identify core consistencies as patterns or themes (Patton, 2002).

The analysis of this research began by identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labelling the primary patterns in the data (see Appendix L for example). Some patterns arose from the template of the research question and sub-questions, and others emerged unexpectedly in the analysis (Stake, 1995). Analysis has a layered, synthesising effect.
If sensing a pattern or “occurrence” can be called seeing, then the encoding of it can be called seeing as. That is, you first make the observation that something important or notable is occurring, and then you classify or describe it…seeing as provides us with a link between a new or emergent pattern and any and all patterns that we have observed and considered previously. It also provides a link to any and all patterns that others have observed and considered previously through reading. (Boyatzis, 1998)

The process of finding patterns and themes in the analysis involved looking over and over the data, codifying and re-codifying it and challenging any pre-conceptions by “reflecting, triangulating, being sceptical about first impressions and simple meanings” (Stake, 1995, p. 78). Whilst there is openness to patterns and themes emerging in the taking apart of the data, the layering process of analysis also questions and synthesises the data to find essences in meaning (Stake, 1995; Wolcott, 1990).

**Stage 5: the art and politics of interpretation and evaluation**

Findings come from the complex and multi-faceted analytical integration of disciplined science, creative artistry and personal reflexivity with the data (Patton, 2002). The research is not value free or sanitised; it values context, multiple points of view and crystallisation (Richardson, 2008) to portray qualities of an experience (Stake, 1995). Analysis of the data and interpretation of the findings is a construction that is both artistry and politics for there is no one interpretive truth (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). This is inherent in the way knowledge and knowing is constructed. There is:

(i) the teachers’ construction of their experiences through story and the negotiated text of the interview,

(ii) the researchers’ construction and interpretation of those experiences, and

(iii) the readers’ construction of meaning from the research.

Stake (2008) describes this multifaceted understanding of interpretation in the case study:

…ideas are structures, highlighted, subordinated, connected, embedded in contexts, embedded with illustration, and laced with favour and doubt. However moved to share ideas case researchers might be, however clever and elaborated their writings, they will, like others, pass along to readers some of their personal meanings of events and relationships – and fail to pass along others. They know that readers, too, will add and subtract, invent and shape – reconstructing the
knowledge in ways that leave it differently connected and more likely to be personally useful. (Stake, 2008, p. 135)

Case study research is subjective. The power of the account rests with the closeness and details of studying the object of the study, and the rigour of the analysis and reporting (Freebody, 2003). To make empirical data more objective and less subjective, methods of triangulation are used “to tease out what deserves to be called experiential knowledge from what is opinion and preference” (Stake, 2008, p.134).

Validity
Crystallisation as described by Richardson (2008) deconstructs the traditional notion of validity and triangulation. Validity depends upon the “angle of repose” (p. 478) and texts validating themselves through a crystal-like, multi-faced, deepened and partial understanding of a topic rather than a three-sided, fixed point, scientific approach.

I propose that the central imaginary for “validity” for postmodernist texts is not the triangle – a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather, the central imaginary is a crystal, which combine symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, 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 colours, patterns, and arrays casting off in different direction. (Richardson, 2008, p. 478).

This research has endeavoured to ‘crystallise’, form and validate meaning by using the following multidimensional processes (see Yin, 2009):

(i) A multiple-case study research design
(ii) Multiple sources of evidence in the data collection
(iii) Pattern matching in the data analysis
(iv) Explanation building in the data analysis
(v) Addressing rival explanations in the data analysis
(vi) Participants verifying the use of their data in the composition and negotiating any possible changes.
The quality of the naturalistic inquiry of a collective case study is judged upon the
dependability and authenticity of these processes undertaken by the researcher (Lincoln
and Guba, 1986).

**Limitations of the study**
The case study is limited like all research by its perspective and purpose in gathering,
selecting and analysing data. Both the strength and the weakness of the case study is the
qualitative subjectivity of self-reporting by participants and the researcher. Self-reports
by participants and interpretation by the researcher are shaped by mood, experience and
intention and the construction of reality through narrative and audience (Chase, 2008).
The voices of the participants and the researcher are a version of self and reality enabled
and constrained by social resources and circumstances (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002).

The study is also limited by the boundaries of its research design and the naturalistic data
arising from that design. From the participants experiences there are issues and factors in
film learning not explored and examined. For instance the research design and the
participants’ experiences did not allow a deeper exploration and insight into the learning
intrinsic to the content and processes of filmmaking. The particularity of case study
research is to suggest issues and complexities for further investigation and establish the
limits of generalisability (Stake, 2008).

The focus of knowledge in a case study is in understanding the case in its particularity not
its generalisabilty to a wider population (Stake, 1995). Rather than proposing explicated
generalisations the case study offers ‘naturalistic generalisations’ (Stake and Trumbull,
1982). A naturalistic generalisation is embedded in the experience of the reader reading
the descriptions, narratives and assertions in a case study.

Our readers often are more familiar with the cases than we researchers are. They
can add their own parts of the story. We should allow some of this input to
analysis to help form reader generalisations. The reader will take both our
narrative descriptions and our assertions: narrative descriptions to form vicarious
experience and naturalistic generalisations, assertions to work with existing
propositional knowledge to modify existing generalisations. (Stake, 1995, p. 86)
Naturalistic generalisations and modifying existing generalisations are dependent on the capacity of the case study research as a ‘product’ to resonate with the reader. It is a privilege and responsibility of the researcher to make assertions and to invite the reader to make their own interpretations. The readers’ interpretations may well go beyond the capabilities of the researcher’s comprehension.

The researcher struggles to liberate the reader from simplistic views and illusion. The researcher is the agent of new interpretation, new knowledge, but also new illusion. Sometimes, the researcher points to what to believe, sometimes facilitating reader understandings that exceed the comprehension of the researcher. The researcher helps extend the elegant intricacy of understanding but meticulous readers find the infinite void still lying just beyond. (Stake, 1995, p. 99)

**Writing and narrative construction as interpretation**

Writing as a method of inquiry acknowledges that language creates a particular view of reality and of the self, and in itself is a method of knowing (Richardson, 2008). The act of writing this research has been a method of data analysis and interpretation, for “writing *is* thinking, writing *is* analysis, writing *is* indeed a seductive and tangled method of discovery” (St. Pierre, 2008, p. 484). The process of writing and structuring the composition of this research continued the collecting, analysing and interpreting of the data. It explored the interrelationships in the teachers’ stories and in writing I made sense and interpreted their stories to construct a narrative to be interpreted by the reader.

Narrative construction is integral to this research. When the teachers tell of their experiences they construct stories. Experience is temporal and the telling and understanding of experience involves a selective emphasis of the experience (Dewey, 1958). Choices and consequences of choices shape the lived experience, and the representation of those choices over time become stories (Bruner, 1987). Stories not only make sense of our own lives and our experience, the telling of stories are the means by which we can experience others’ experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994).

Narrative is retrospective meaning making – the shaping or ordering of past experience. Narrative is a way of understanding one’s own and other’s actions, of
organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, and of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time. (Chase, 2008, p. 64).

The teachers’ experiences are narratives and the analysis of empirical research itself has a story to tell because it must have a beginning, middle and end (Yin, 2009).

The nature of this study’s design created a narrative structure in the data analysis. The intervention of the film pedagogy workshops constructed three temporal stages in the teacher participants’ experience:

(i) the participants’ aspirations before the research workshops,
(ii) the participants’ expectations after the workshops, and
(iii) the participants’ realisations after teaching film in their schools.

This narrative arrangement was used to give shape and order to the teachers’ experiences and to locate common themes amongst the stories (Polkinghorne, 1995). Narrative does not reflect reality but with the help of the reader, narrative weaves together events, actions, thoughts and interpretations to create meaning and a version of reality (Ely et al., 1997).

**Conclusion**

The narrative and thematic weaving of Iñárritu’s film *Babel* (2006) is a metaphor for the art and politics of this research. Like the film, this research presents a puzzle of stories and ideas, and from a particular standpoint endeavours to find connections to make them comprehensible to others. The research is a construct to make the complexity and chaos of the participants’ experiences with film learning, a structured and meaningful experience for the participant and reader to interpret. In my endeavours to research teachers’ stories I hope to achieve resonance with the reader and contribute to the participant and reader’s understanding of the practice and policy of the newly emerging phenomenon of film learning in schools.

The research honours teachers’ lived experience in the world as a source of knowledge and knowing, and the way of creating that knowledge as a shared, collaborative and empowering process. The strength of the research is its subjective insights and openness
to interpretation but this is also a limitation. As P. G. Wodehouse (1953) explains: “…it’s not all jam writing a story in the first person. The reader can know nothing except what Bertie tells him, and Bertie can know only a limited amount himself” (p. 64). Despite this, the examination of first-hand experience provides “plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world” (Van Manen, 1997, p. 9).

This research is about a specific context: secondary drama teachers in NSW who are interested in teaching film. The particular however, as Sartre argues, is related to the universal. This collective case study aspires to find relevance and resonance through the details of particular and vicarious experience (Stake, 2008). It is through experience that human action and expectation are validated and facilitated (Dewey, 1938). The ‘close-up’ experiences of the drama teachers in this case study may illuminate for the reader ‘long shot’ concerns with film pedagogy, technology in schools, professional learning and curriculum issues. The aspiration of this inquiry is to engage with what Freebody (2003) refers to as a ‘discourse of cultural optimism’ and “to change the social world by discovering better understandings of its qualities” (Freebody, 2003, p. 218).

Part II of this thesis explores and analyses the participants’ experiences and makes conclusions through theoretical propositions and interpretation. The literature and theoretical discussions in Part I emerge and resonant with aspects of the data. The next chapter begins part II by contextualising the participants’ experiences with film learning and examining their aspirations for teaching film in their schools before the research workshops.