As You See It: A Documentary Exploring Student Perceptions of a Performance-based Class

By

Laura Barbara Angrove
B.F.A., University of Victoria
B.Ed., University of Victoria

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

© Laura Barbara Angrove, 2012
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

As You See It: A Documentary Exploring Student Perceptions of a Performance-based Class

By

Laura Barbara Angrove
B.F.A., University of Victoria
B.Ed., University of Victoria

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Wanda Hurren (Supervisor)
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Monica Prendergast (Committee Member)
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Wanda Hurren (Supervisor)
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Monica Prendergast (Committee Member)
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

ABSTRACT

As a high school drama teacher, I have taught senior performance classes for the last five years, and have always believed that the yearly school theatrical production was the best way to approach drama in high school. Over the last few years, I started to question this approach and to wonder how the students felt about it. The purpose of this arts-based video-documented case study is to understand the perceptions of high school students as they relate to a performance-based theatre class. I hope that through this arts-based study I will be able to ascertain both the educative value of a performance-based approach in drama education and the value of a video-based approach to data analysis in arts-based research. A group of senior high school students are documented as they engage in a production, starting from the audition process through to the final performance. Data was gathered through on-site observations over a period of four months in the form of field notes, student journals, and video digital recordings of interviews, group discussions, rehearsals, and performances. I used video data and presented it in a documentary film as the major form of representation for my study. I chose to make a film because of my experience in this genre, and I believe it is an immediate venue through which to experience my study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Supervisory Page ii

Abstract iii

Table of Contents iv

List of Figures vii

Acknowledgements viii

Dedication ix

Chapter One: Introduction to the Study 1

Setting the scene 1

The Dog and Pony Show 5

Purpose of the Study 6

Research Questions 9

Interview Questions 9

Structure of the Study 10

How Did I Get Here? My Theatrical Roots 13

Dropped into Drama (poem) 17

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature 18

Introduction: What is Theatre? 18

The State of the Arts in Curriculum 20

Hierarchy of School Subjects 22

Rationale for the Arts in the Curriculum 28

The Lived Curriculum 36

The Individualized Learner and Multiple Intelligences 38

Art as a Way of Knowing 43

High School Theatre Programs: Performance-based or Process? 45

Final Thoughts 52

Chapter Three: Research Methodology 54

Introduction 54

Research Design 55

Scarf People 59

My Journal 62

Participants' Journals 66

Poetic Inquiry 68

The Interviews 71

Interview one 72

Interview two 73

Interview three 74

Digital Video as Research: The Medium is the Message 76

Chapter Four: Data Analysis 85

The Medium is the Message 85

As You See It: A Documentary Film 86

Poetic Inquiry 88

Drama (poem) 90

Auditions (poem) 91

Rehearsals (poem) 92

Performance Week (poem) 93

Chapter Five: The End is the Beginning 95

Looking for Life's Beauty and Joy 95

Problems Inherent within a Performance-based Class 97

Alternatives to the Traditional High School Approach 101

And Miles to go Before I Sleep 104

References 108

Appendix A: Consent Forms 117

Student Consent Form 118

Parental Consent Form 120

Video Release Form: Student/Teacher 122

Parental Video Release Form 123

Video Release Form for Non-participant Students 124

Appendix B: Interview Questions 125

Interview Questions: Student 126

Interview Questions: Teacher 128

List of Figures

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy.....23

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to all of my instructors, and the many wonderful classmates I have met along the way. The feedback you gave me was invaluable and each little bit helped to shape my thesis. I owe a debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Wanda Hurren who showed me support, encouragement, and knowledgeable guidance. She is an inspiration to me and I would have been truly lost without her. I extend many, many thanks to Dr. Monica Prendergast who always had an open door and a listening ear. She provided me with invaluable advice and guidance as I carried out my research. I am indebted to the district, the school, the drama teacher, and the students who helped me with my research. Their kindness, enthusiasm, and welcoming spirit were very much appreciated.

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my husband Mike who showed patience, encouragement, and support throughout my graduate studies, and spent many evenings alone as I hurried off to a night class. Also to my two children, Gillian and Michael, who are currently working on their law degree and Masters Degree, respectively. You motivated me on a daily basis, and urged me on with your positive spirits. To my mother and father, who instilled the love of education in me from an early age and a strong work ethic, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. And to my dog, Tasia...I am sorry for the missed walks.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

Setting the Scene

I never set out to teach drama as a high school subject. My career in education began with an assignment teaching grade seven, the level I had desired when I entered my program at university. I happily worked at the same elementary school for fifteen years before I decided I needed a change. I applied for a position teaching English at the high school. As fate would have it, the drama teacher was resigning her post, and my first degree, a BFA, was in theatre. During my interview for the English position, the principal asked me if I would consider taking over the entire drama program. I eagerly accepted and prepared for the move to high school, which would be a difficult transition for me to make.

Before I go any further, I should explain that there are two basic approaches to drama as a subject in high school: process and product driven. The former is an approach that allows the student to experience drama through dramatic exercises, activities, and exploration. The latter is focused upon a main stage production, otherwise known as the high school play or musical. A more detailed difference is offered by Weltsek-Medina (2008):

Process Drama:

1. The emphasis is placed on participants experiencing personal growth through an exploration of their understanding of the issues within dramatic experience.
2. The generated topics are explored through improvisation.
3. Student and teacher share equal places in the development, analysis, and production of the drama.
4. The drama is not normally performed for an audience.

Product Driven Drama:

1. The student's personal growth is measured through the learning of skills.
2. The study is facilitated through a scripted work not of the student's making.
3. The teacher transfers her or his interpretation and analysis of the drama.
4. The primary objective is formal play production.

The B.C. Ministry has both approaches within the curriculum known respectively as Drama and Theatre Performance. The focus for most high schools remains entrenched in the yearly school theatrical production through the Theatre Performance course. According to the B.C. Integrated Resource Package (2002) the description of this course is:

> In Theatre Performance 11 and 12 courses, students gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become theatre performers through a study of exploration, analysis, body and voice skills, characterization, historical and cultural contexts, and the interrelated roles that comprise a theatre company. (p.13)

When I accepted the high school drama position, I was assigned to teach a Theatre Performance class to a mixed class of grade ten, eleven, and twelve students. The expectations for a yearly production were already in place, and I fell in line. I struggled through my first year, but managed to put on a one act musical I had written, and a variety show. The second year, I felt more comfortable, and had the students do a full-fledged musical, *Bye Bye Birdie*. By the third year, I felt disconnected with the musical scene, and switched to Shakespeare, my true love. The following two years, I knew my heart was not in it but I ploughed through anyway, still directing the school's yearly productions.

There were many things that bothered me about this 'course' that I was teaching. Amongst them was the fact that only a couple of students had big roles, and the remainder had

supporting roles, were extras, or were the chorus. These students with minor roles did a lot of *sit and wait*, and did not receive a lot of my time. When I looked at the curriculum, I knew that the PLO's (prescribed learning outcomes) were not being met. There simply is not enough time to rehearse for a production, and cover all of the PLO's for each student. Another thing that bothered me was the competitive nature of the audition process which goes against what I believe students should experience in theatre. To me, high school theatre should be a collaborative and supportive environment. There is enough competition after high school for the few students with thick skins who decide to pursue a career in theatre.

Research and studies have shown the many benefits of drama within the curriculum, but doubts started to creep into the crevices of my brain about the value of this product-driven course. I began to question: how educative is this process of auditioning students for a few coveted roles, followed by an intensive rehearsal process, during which time the majority of students 'sit and wait' for their one appearance on the stage? During the run of the show, these same students with minor roles wait backstage for their one, possibly two entrances. What were they learning, I wondered? How did this product-driven approach benefit the students? Were the students simply memorizing lines, or did it go deeper than that?

Neelands (2009) and Bolton (2010), both strong proponents of process-based drama, would acknowledge that the ensemble approach can be a positive and valuable learning experience stemming from the group processes. Neelands (2009) goes further by suggesting it could be a model "of how to live together in the world" (p.184), where everyone works together, cooperating for a common goal and in the process form tight bonds. I saw this effect following the final performance of every show I had directed: euphoria would sweep through the students as they felt a strong bond with their fellow classmates, and some would express the powerful

transformation within themselves. Well, there was value, I thought, but is it enough to make the entire process educative? I began to have doubt.

It was almost a year ago that I took a course, *Writing as Research*, with Dr. Wanda Hurren. One of my early entries in my journal shows my meandering style of finding my way:

> *The difficulty for me in research is not knowing exactly what I want to research. Each course, I have changed my mind. The only commonality is that the topic always involves theatre. (Jan. 26, 2011)*

By the end of the course, I had written the following:

> *I have a direction now...Wanda says [it] is quite doable. (March 17, 2011)*

I began to question the educative value of a performance theatre program, and decided that my research would focus on the values, as perceived by the students themselves within a performance-based class, and to do this, I would follow a group of high school students through the entire process of producing a show. This would be a case study and I would observe the students through the auditions, the rehearsal process, and the performances, all the while trying to gain the students' perspectives about the experience. I wanted to know how it is educative, how the students perceive the artistic experience of putting on a play, and if perceptions were the same for each student, regardless of role size.

I also wanted to explore the possibilities of video data, analysis and representation. The written portion of this thesis addresses the scholarly expectations of fulfilling the requirements of my degree. The documentary film represents the major portion of the data collection and analysis as well as the representation of my findings. Although I love to write, my heart is in film making, and I hope that the documentary film reflects this.

The Dog and Pony Show

Having been unexpectedly thrust into teaching high school theatre, as previously described, I began to wrestle with an internal conflict regarding the form my pedagogical approach should take. I had quickly understood that a production-based class was desired from the administration, and expected from both my colleagues and students, all of whom hoped that the end result would be a sold out show with plenty of 'PR' attached to it. I have struggled with the educative value of this commercial approach and decided that I needed to explore this further. Through my writing course with Dr. Hurren, I came to identify and accept this internal conflict.

> *My research into the value of theatre arts in education in today's world? At my school? Am I wasting my time? Disheartened, deflated after the high of an amazing show- I ask, why? (March 3, 2011)*

I kept coming back to the value of a theatre arts education, or the perceived value of it. I have often felt, as a teacher-artist, that my program is valued for little more than a public relations tool. Two years ago, my vice principal encouraged me to take my students to our feeder elementary schools and put on short performances, saying that what we needed was a 'dog and pony show'. She meant it in a positive way in which to 'sell' the high school as a viable option for students to attend. After researching the origins of the term, I explored what a 'dog and pony show' was in today's lexicon:

> It was in the 1960s that the term began to appear in print as a metaphor for some event that was more pizzazz than substance, like the tinsel and glitter of a circus ring. (www.worldwidewords.org/qa/qa-dog3.htm)

In my five years of teaching high school drama, the sense that the drama program was more “pizzazz” and less “substance” became clearer with each passing year. I wanted to be taken seriously as a teacher-artist and the only “tinsel and glitter” I wanted to see was on my Christmas tree. However, I continued to focus on the yearly show in the form of a Broadway musical, something that I attempted even with the limited resources and small budget, inexperienced student-artists, and the lack of a facility. How could I expect these students to put on a show meant for the Broadway stage when I did not have a stage to rehearse upon, nor a dance teacher to choreograph routines, nor a sufficient budget to cover the costs of sets, costumes, theatre rental, and licensing fees. As Lazarus (2004) would posit, I was “setting up students to fail” (p.36).

Although the literature is abundant with studies regarding the benefits of drama, in terms of social, intellectual, aesthetic and emotional development, it continues to be marginalized (Fiske, 1999; Eisner, E.W., 1999; Fowler, C., 1996; Heymsfeld, C., 1997; Jensen, E., 2001; Noblit et al., 2009). Within my school, drama was seen more as a frivolous subject, seemingly valued more for the publicity it might achieve rather than for the development of each student within the program. Was it all just a ‘dog and pony’ show? I needed to further explore this question.

Purpose of the Study

I knew how I felt about theatre in education, specifically at the high school level, and I had a pretty good idea of what my administration and my colleagues thought, but I did not have the students’ perspectives. As I began to read the current literature, questions arose which framed my ideas and opinions in a new light. I realized that the students’ perspectives would be

invaluable. I decided that I would follow a group of high school students through a production from start to finish, interview and observe them, and have them complete journals. In this case study I hope to capture their perspectives on the entire process in order to determine what educative value there might be in a product driven theatre course; what kind of experience this is for the students; and what, if any, changes they would like to see. By answering these questions I hope to gain some insights into what could make this experience an educative one for all those involved. It is hoped that this study will also influence and direct my evolving philosophy towards teaching a high school performance class.

In order to ascertain the students' perspectives, and to be as unbiased as possible, I decided to conduct my research at another school where I was not known as the drama teacher. I needed participants who would trust me, confide in me, and tell me the truth, and I believed my own students who were eager to please me, might say what I wanted to hear. Throughout my five years as a drama specialist, I was a member of both the local and the provincial drama specialist groups. I met many drama teachers, and found them to be incredibly supportive and generous. The teacher who agreed to participate in my study was a member of the provincial drama teachers' association, and he enthusiastically supported me, and generously allowed me access to his drama classes, the rehearsals, and his time. For some teachers, this might be an intimidating process, to be watched and scrutinized, and many would shudder at the prospect of having an outsider in your class every day for four months. I am indebted to him, and thank him for his support, time, candour, and generosity.

I made the decision to use video as part of my data collection as well as part of the dissemination early on in my program. I have been 'playing' with video for a few years now and by documenting the case study on video, I will have concrete data to review, and I will also have

a creative outlet for my final thesis. By transforming the video clips into a documentary film, my aim is to more accurately and honestly capture the participants' perspectives and I will also have something to 'give back' to my participants.

The footage of the film shows the progression from the auditions through the rehearsals and into the performances. It was natural to divide the process into pre-production, production, and post-production, and to interview the participants at these three key stages in a production. The film documentary is presented in chronological order, featuring clips of the three key stages in a production. These clips are supported with the voices of the students and the teacher through their interviews. This three-stage timeline allowed me to gain a wider and more accurate view of the students' perspectives, and the film format allows a representation that is immediate, and true to the students.

The documentary film is presented in two versions: a student version and my Masters version. The purpose of the former is simply a documentation of the play production, which was a gift to the students, and the latter is a more critical analysis of the process. The key differences were outlined to the participants and include: my narrative voice-over, removing any background music that would violate copyright, removing the blooper sections, and inserting a few of my childhood film clips to place me as the researcher-participant.

As the major portion of the analysis chapter, the documentary film carries my voice, as researcher-participant, to express my reflections and my findings throughout the entire process. I used a voice over and written text throughout the film to help lead the viewer through the study and to describe my analytical approach to the data.

Research Questions

In this case study, the main question is centred upon the students' perspectives on a performance based theatre class. Informed by the tension that came out of Britain in the early eighties (O'Toole, 2006), I questioned the educative value of this type of class as opposed to a more process driven drama class. I also questioned the ability of a drama teacher to ensure each student received the entire curriculum when attempting to direct and produce a show meant for public performance. There is very little written about this tension in Canada, and even less from the students' point of view.

My philosophy of teaching informs my research, in particular, the belief that every student deserves to 'shine' in the spotlight, and that learning should be individualized. I am influenced by both Gonzales (2006) and Lazarus (2004), both of whom offer alternate approaches to the typical high school play or musical. My evolving philosophy regarding product-driven high school theatre is discussed in the concluding chapter which also offers considerations for thinking about the future of high school drama. My hope is to provide options for a more positive and balanced educational experience in drama.

Interview Questions

As previously mentioned, the interview questions for the students were divided into three sessions: pre-production, production, and post production. This is a natural division for anything related to theatre as these are the three main stages of any production. The drama teacher had only one formal interview during the pre-production stage, but he was open to discussion and questions throughout the study both in person and by electronic mail. All of the formal

interviews were conducted using a video camcorder. The students and the teacher signed waiver forms, and the parents of the participants also signed waiver forms (Appendix B).

The interview questions were written in an order to best achieve my goals of gaining the participants' trust, their honest and candid responses, and their individual perspectives. Because it was my first foray into the academic world of interviewing, I followed the advice taken from Kvale's (1996, pp. 124-157) book, *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Although I had a set of questions (Appendix A), in a particular order, I took a semi-structured approach and remained open to the possibilities of what each participant had to offer me. If a student wandered off topic, I was ready to bring them back, but if they offered something related to my study that I had not taken into consideration, I listened and adjusted my structured list of questions.

The interview questions I had for the drama teacher were different than those for the students. I needed background information regarding this particular course and the choices he made (e.g. the play he chose), and I was eager to ascertain his philosophy regarding theatre education in high school. He was open and candid within his discussion and shared some of my concerns regarding students who received small roles.

Structure of the Study

This thesis is written in five chapters. In this first chapter I give an overview of the study, what it is and why I did it. The second chapter is a literature review of how drama is used within the curriculum, and how it is perceived as a subject. I also discuss the differing opinions on how best to promote drama as a valuable subject within the education of every student. The third chapter describes the methodological approaches I used within my study. This particular chapter

is more narrative in style and includes found poetry, as well as descriptive narrative. The DVD of my documentary film makes up the bulk of the fourth chapter in which I have a brief introduction to describe the film, followed by poetry based on the students' weekly journal responses. In the fifth and final chapter of this thesis, I reflect upon my thoughts, ideas, and opinions, and consider the implications in regards to drama in education, particularly in theatre performance classes.

The study itself was an intensive one that required a large time commitment on my part. I took an educational leave of absence in order to complete the observation period which ran from the start of November 2011 to the end of February 2012. I visited the class every afternoon during the last block of the school's schedule, usually running seventy-five minutes. Because I was eager to take in the entire process and I did not want to miss a potential 'nugget', the only classes I did not attend were those that were interrupted by school assemblies or holidays.

My eleven participants ranged from grade nine to grade twelve, and included students with very small (extras) roles, supporting roles, and lead roles. The class itself had twenty-eight students, and was a year-long drama course which included the four month period of preparation for the play. The teacher had another group of drama students during third block that also spent months to prepare a play. In addition, he taught a musical performance class after school. In total, he directs three full productions each year! I chose to follow the fourth block class for a couple of reasons. First, the after school musical involved an even greater time commitment and students would not be required to attend every class. I would be observing some students some of the time, and I wanted to observe all of the students each time I was there. Second, because the students were required to attend every class during fourth block drama, I was interested in how they 'filled' the time when they were not required on stage.

In consultation with the teacher, I became a participant/observer. I felt that if I did not participate, I would be seen as an intrusive outsider with a camera pointed at their every move. As a participant, I engaged in warm-up activities, improv games, and I also choreographed one of the fight scenes within the play. I gained the students trust quickly, and they began to treat me as a member of the class, sitting with me, talking to me, and asking advice of me, both during the audition and rehearsal periods.

In order to make this study as effective as possible, I used multiple forms of data; I made every attempt to assess the data accurately in order to reflect the participants' views; I spent an extensive amount of time in the field which allowed me to develop closeness to my participants, thereby developing their trust; I wrote detailed description contained within the written portion of the thesis; and finally, in terms of validity, I believe that the film footage offers a visual and auditory detail that would not be possible by using the written word alone.

Through the three interviews, the daily observations, field notes, video data, and a weekly reflective student journal, I collected the data necessary to collate the students' perspectives on their experience of a performance-based class. I used a personal journal to keep field notes and be reflective, and I interviewed the teacher and spoke with him on a daily basis. I also communicated with him electronically via email. I found that the design of my study evolved and changed as my research developed and my review of the literature deepened. This study also affected and changed my philosophy of teaching drama in high school.

How Did I Get Here? My Theatrical Roots

My introduction to theatre came in grade five when my teacher took the class to see *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, playing at the Neptune Theatre in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I

can remember the theatre in detail, and I can recall moments from standing outside to sitting in the rows near the front of the stage where the excitement of attending a live performance buzzed through my body. Following that performance, there would not be another one until my senior years in high school, but I was no longer an audience member; I was acting in the play. I never consciously chose theatre as a path to follow. Instead, it seemed theatre chose me, or more accurately, I seemed to be continuously dropped into theatre by others who thought they knew what was best for me.

As a teenager, my parents pulled up their roots and moved from the eastern shores of Nova Scotia to the west coast on Vancouver Island, leaving behind all of our extended family members. At the vulnerable and difficult age of fifteen, I arrived at a new school two months into the year, which meant that I did not have the luxury of choosing my electives. I was given courses in which there were spaces, and that meant drama. Although I had always been a camera seeker with my father, I was an extremely introverted child. I was that student whose eyes avoided contact with the teacher; the student who did not question authority; the student who spoke as little as possible. So, although the idea of a drama class intrigued me, the possibility of speaking in front of others terrified me. I spent the final two years of high school revelling in drama, developing life-long friendships, blossoming into a confident young person, and developing a love for all things theatrical.

When I finished high school, I left theatre, putting it behind me like an old suitcase of toys packed away in the attic. At my mother's insistence, I enrolled in my first year of university, taking a general array of first and second year courses, none of which involved theatre. That year was a tortuous year of boredom, skipped classes, and incomplete assignments. Believing that my future lay in law school, I took a recommendation to complete a degree in an area which

interested me. Once again, I found myself dropped into drama for the next four years of my Bachelor of Fine Arts.

However, once graduated, I turned away from theatre once again and continued my university training by taking a degree in education, with the hopes of becoming an elementary school teacher. I eventually became a grade seven teacher and although I worked drama into some aspects of the curriculum, I taught the 'core' subjects that demanded the greatest percentage of class time as determined by the ministry of education. After fifteen years at both the same grade level and the same school, I decided I needed a change, and so I applied for a transfer to the high school, teaching English. As mentioned previously, the drama teacher was leaving that year, and during my interview, the principal asked me if I would teach drama. I nodded, thinking she meant in addition to English. She clarified it by saying, full-time drama. And so, I found myself dropped into theatre yet again.

For the next five years, I taught hundreds of students in drama, performance, and production from grades eight through twelve. Although I have enjoyed working with the students, and watching them grow through the performances we worked on together, it has not been an entirely positive experience. My colleagues, the administration, the parents, and many students have not considered drama to be a serious contender as a curriculum subject. Unfortunately, too many individuals are unaware of the value of theatre in education, and as a drama educator, I find myself defending it, ready to explain the benefits gained through a course in drama. For the most part, it seems to fall on deaf ears.

Not only is drama relegated to the bargain basement floor as a subject area, but it can quite often be physically removed in terms of geography and location. The portable up the hill

from the main school building within which I teach is what Neelands (2004) refers to as the "metaphor of the lonely hut or mobile building reserved for drama in the borderlands of the school landscape" (p.55), and it is in this dilapidated space that the theatre students congregate, "lower their barricades" (p.47) and call home (Neelands, 2004).

By taking theatre in high school, and in particular, by performing in school productions, I gained confidence, life-long friends, a love of the arts, the ability to speak with clarity, creative thinking skills, an open mind, empathy, and many other skills that helped to make me the person I am today. Bailin (2001) asserts that through performance and becoming a character, a student develops a perception that she sees as pertinent in developing empathy, and giving an "understanding from inside" (p.73).

The experience of participating in a play has value, but I was ambivalent as to what extent it is educative. I know that my theatre classes changed my life. Whether this was due to the live performances, or the daily dramatic exercises, I developed skills I never had before, and I started to see things differently, and to accept and to like myself. I have seen this in many of my students, some of whom are very surprised by what they can do, and who they can be. A few have gone on to study theatre, but most have not. What they have gained is a better understanding of themselves and of others and how they work in relationship with each other. This is the human experience that Eisner (2002) acknowledges:

> Work in the arts is not only a way of creating performances and products; it is a way of creating our lives by expanding our consciousness, shaping our dispositions, satisfying our quest for meaning, establishing contact with others, and sharing a culture. (p. 3)

Throughout my life, I have been intermittently immersed in theatre; each time, I have left, only to be drawn back into it. I resonate with Carl Leggo's (2004) poem regarding his

experiences with teaching, and the manner in which he ended his stanzas: “and left, and left, and left” (p.172). It parallels my journey in theatre which has become a pattern in my life. Theatre in education has played a prominent part in my life, and I believe more students would benefit greatly with participation in theatre, whilst others would have their interest in theatre affirmed as a valid and viable career option. The common perception of theatre as a flaky-pastry pie course needs to be changed and the public still needs to be convinced of the values that theatre offers to young people. If theatre in education is to grow and flourish and take a place at the table with the core curriculum, more research is needed. It is my ultimate goal to be a part of this research and bring theatre to the foreground rather than the outskirts of the curriculum.

I have decided to embrace my love of theatre, start researching its role in education, and stop walking away from it. I have taken my personal experiences in theatre throughout the years, and written them in poetic form: *Dropped into Drama*. In the following three-part poetic timeline, I use an “autobiographical art form” (Prendergast, 2009, p.xxii) to re-present my life experience as part of my data since it shapes who I am as a researcher.

Part 1: High School 1979-80

A new arrival from the east coast

Starting late, electives are full

Not many choices, *let's put you here*

The only course with any free spots

You'll like it, they sound too reassuring

Suspicious, unwilling, or unable to speak

Tentative at best, I move forward

A fall into theatre, a drop into drama

Welcome; this is where you belong

It doesn't feel like I belong

It's uncomfortable; doesn't feel quite right

But I grow into it; slowly at first

Reaching places I had never gone before

A new outlook, a different approach, confidence

To speak, to stand up, to be heard

Embracing this new me, stepping back

Looking myself up and down, I smile, nod

I allow this drop into drama.

Part 2: University 1980-90

Economics, English,
Philosophy, Psychology, French
First year courses, 100 and 200 levels
A bumpy transition on the road to post secondary
Wrought with the potholes of skipped classes and failure
An ill-fitting program like a dress too tight,
Like a triangle into a circular hole
This is the wrong place
The Phoenix has not yet had its rebirth
But the old huts will do
Cold and barren, old and barely holding together
The door opens, *welcome*
This is where you belong
And I still do not see it
It is standing there in front of my eyes
And when the curtain opens, and I am the first to cross the new stage
I remain blinded,
And although I have been embraced by the love of theatre
I will not embrace back, not now, not yet,
I am dropped into drama, for this moment.

Part 3: Teaching 1991-2006

Generalist elementary school teacher
Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies
Time allotments for each core subject
An hour a week for art, for drama, or for music
French with Madame Rodriguez, with the Spanish accent
P.E. with the whistle blowing athletic director
15 groups of students, 15 graduating classes 15 camp trips, 15 fond farewells
And then…a rebirth through change, another phoenix rising
A move to the high school, English, junior grades
Five pairs of intimidating eyes stare across the table
Questions come from each one, and then a smile, a laugh
A feeling of comfort, caught off guard in the moment
And the question is asked:
Drama instead of English?
The door opens, *welcome*
This is where you belong
I nod yes, and once again, I am dropped into drama.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Introduction: What is Theatre?

Help Our Conversation (Saxton & Miller, 1998, pp.168-70)

We need a common basic vocabulary
So we speak the same language
With a semblance of understanding
That we are within the same discipline
Familiar words, not so familiar
With meanings changed
Replaced or erased
The terms are many
Interchangeable or not
And although language evolves and dissolves
New vocabulary is to be learned
And old vocabulary reinterpreted
It could be possible
It should be possible
To agree upon basic definitions
So that we can talk about our work
More effectively, precisely, creatively...
Together.

It's All Theatre (Bolton, 2010, pp. 163-72)

Whether you call it theatre, drama or play
Ensemble, performance, teacher-in-role
Street theatre, workshops, or mime
Drama in Education
Theatre in Education
Is there a difference?
Movement, lessons, applied or not
Drama studies, speech training
Child-based, creative drama
Process or production?
Education in or through art?
Political factions divide us
A gulf separates us
One who teaches theatre
The other something less
We are all working in theatre
Choose the appropriate genre
Branch out, experiment, and then...
Give it your own special name.

In terms of education, what is theatre? It's all theatre according to Bolton (2010), and he would encourage you to name "your own form of theatre practice by its own special name" (p.172). In doing so, we will recognize that its roots are theatre, allowing for "a greater tolerance of diversity" (p.172). When we educate children in theatre, no matter the genre or the name, it is

all theatre. On this, I wholeheartedly agree, but a basic vocabulary which theatre advocates could use consistently, would ease the tension in a "century of confusion" (Bolton, p.165), and "not only serve our students, and most particularly, our graduate students, but will also serve our advocacy" (Saxton & Miller, 1998, p.169). In order to be successful, advocates for theatre in education will need to stand united, recognize the diversity of methods, and resist the urge to divide into two camps. Dorothy Heathcote, the founder of the teacher-in-role, guru of the mantle of the expert, the process drama queen if ever there was one, questions the polarization of the two approaches to drama. Whether it is process (applied, creative...) drama or play production, Heathcote (1985) does not see the need for this barrier to be put up, and for educators to takes sides. She states, "If our purpose in education is that children should learn by doing as much as by listening to, then both these fields of activity, the so-called formal and the so-called informal are only two views of the same thing" (p.89). Bolton (2010) agrees, "...both are effective means to an end" (p.46). Now, if we could only agree on consistent terminology!

In this chapter, I look at the literature regarding the arts in education, with an emphasis on theatre as a curricular subject. I start by reviewing the general state of the arts in schools today, and then analyze the hierarchy of school subjects which has plagued the arts for decades. Next, I review the rationale for the arts in the curriculum particularly related to the academic, social, and emotional benefits to students. Within this section, I discuss how theatre can bring life to the curriculum, how theatre includes individual learners and multiple intelligences, and how theatre and the arts in general are a *way of knowing.* Lastly, I compare the two current approaches to theatre as a subject area in high school: performance-based and process drama. For purposes of clarification, I use the term *theatre in education* to refer to theatre as a subject area within the

school system. I use *performance-based* class to refer to a theatre class with the main directive of producing and performing a scripted play.

The State of the Arts in Curriculum

If you are really good, we might just skip the spelling dittos and act out one of the stories from your reader. But only if you are really good. (Saldaña, 2005, p.73)

This quote, taken from a teacher's account of his experience as expressed in an ethnodrama entitled, "The Chalkboard Concerto", is indicative of how the arts, theatre in particular, have been 'taught' in the past: as a reward for good behaviour. Fortunately, more and more research is being conducted to show the immense value of the arts not only within the school system, but to humanity in general. Sadly, the research is not enough. In a "society that values measurements and uses data-driven analysis to inform decisions about allocation of scarce resources" (Fiske, 2000, p. iv), the arts continue to struggle. Despite the fact that advocates for the arts persist in extolling the benefits of the arts and have been doing so for well over a hundred years, change within the curriculum has been slow to come.

In a 1922 publication, an author states his purpose: "This book is a plea for the recognition of the theatre as an educational force." (Barker as cited in Jackson, 2007, p.264), and almost a century later, drama is still contested as a valid subject area. Today, as theatre educators, we are faced with the daunting task of trying to convince the policy makers of the importance and the value of the arts in education. We stand at the base of the mountain, looking up at the hierarchy of subjects within our school systems, calling out the rationale of an arts based curriculum, and wonder if the echoes of our voices are heard by anyone other than us.

In her collection of essays, *Releasing the Imagination*, Maxine Greene (1995) passionately describes how she feels about the arts in education: "Art offers life; it offers hope; it offers the prospect of discovery; it offers light... we may make the teaching of the aesthetic experience our pedagogic creed" (p. 133). This passion is echoed by Dewey (1934) in *Art as Experience*, "We are carried out beyond ourselves to find ourselves" (p. 195) and by Elliot W. Eisner (2002) in his book, *The Arts and Creation of Mind*, "art is a mode of human experience" (p. 9). It is this "human experience" that so many students are missing when they do not participate in the arts in education. Oscar Wilde is credited with saying, "I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being" (as cited in Hillary, 2007).

This sense that theatre helps students understand what it means to be human is echoed by A.P. Jenson (2008). She states that the skills learned through drama, "allow students to articulate who they are in the world" and "prepares us to inquire about and understand how the contemporary world is shaped" (p.25). Eric Jensen (2001) explains in his book, *Arts with the Brain in Mind*, how art "makes us human" and "most complete as people" (p. vii). Jensen has acknowledged the contributions of science whilst sharing the limitations of technology:

> ...technology will calculate, sort, summarize, write, edit, translate, compose, and present knowledge in unimaginable ways. But what makes us human is what will be the most desirable commodity. That's the ability to thoughtfully regulate, express, and channel emotions into arts such as music, performances, movement, painting, and design (p.vii).

Dorothy Heathcote, a leader in the field of education, also emphasizes the human experience of the arts, most notably theatre. She shares her beliefs that drama builds upon the students' past experiences, giving them "a deeper knowledge not just of themselves but of what it is to be human, as well as an understanding of the society they live in and its past, present, and

future" (in Johnson & O'Neill, 1985, p.12). Heathcote highlights the very basis of what it means to be human in that "the greatest skill lies in how we relate to people" (1978, p. 18). She expresses her irritation that "people have perceived the work as related with play, fiction and pretence...it has so much more potential for society...in art, we reflect upon nature, people's affairs, ideas, and behaviours"(1980, p.177). Bolton (2010) also links the idea that drama is a way to know who we are as humans, "...to help young people know the world, to examine how they relate to the world and to test their society's values" (p.154). As social beings, we interact and relate to each other. Through drama, students can explore and develop these skills.

So, the arts define who we are as humans and after a century of advocacy, research, and studies, they continue to require justification in order to maintain even a marginalized position within the curriculum. Why?

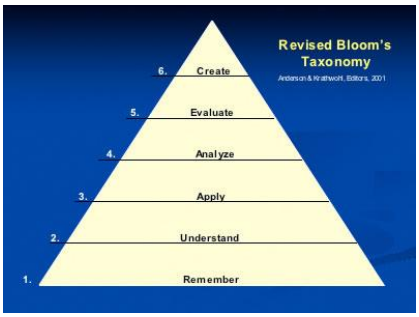
Hierarchy of School Subjects

Unfortunately many students will continue to skip over the arts in elementary school and be denied the arts in high school because our current school system is based upon a model that was developed for the industrialized world; a model that emphasized math and science in order to be prepared for jobs in an industrialized economy. More than one hundred years later, we continue this tradition.

There is an explicit hierarchy of subjects taught within our schools (designed for the industrialized world at the turn of the 20th century) and theatre is at the bottom, falling below music and visual art, but slightly above dance (although this may change with the advent of popular dance shows on television). According to Fowler (1996), budgets are often cut based upon this hierarchy of subjects, "some of which they feel are more important than others" (p.31).

The arts are rated “as having a low priority in relation to what they believe are a higher order of essentials” (p.31). If I compare this hierarchy to a pyramid, math and science would be the gilded apex, the humanities would come next, and the rest of the subjects would fall in place beneath it. The arts would come at the bottom of this pyramid, and theatre arts in education would be found in the unfinished chamber found beneath the pyramid itself. Heathcote tries to explain this division: “We often consider the creations of scientists as being more authentic than those of artists because artists’ products are related (and relegated?) to the enterprise we call play whilst those of scientists are deemed to be of more serious intent” (1980, p.174).

Ironically, in a diagram of a revised Bloom’s taxonomy, the hierarchy is reversed, with creativity and evaluation at the top, and these are skills that are inherent to theatre. In fact, theatre skills cover all of the levels of Bloom’s taxonomy, from basic knowledge through to creativity.



(www.english.waketech.edu/)

In addition to the cognitive domain, theatre also develops skills within both the affective and psychomotor domains. Many people may be under the misconception that theatre is solely for students who are interested in acting or working in the theatre in another capacity. In *Strong Arts, Strong Schools*, Charles Fowler (1996) points out:

> We do not need more and better arts education to develop more and better artists any more than we need mathematics in the core curriculum primarily to develop mathematicians. Rather, we need more and better arts education to produce better-educated human beings (p. 13).

In Fowler's words, "the arts do not currently have the status of math and science within the curriculum" (p.104). Students at academic schools, like mine, are encouraged to take all of the sciences and as much higher mathematics as they can. In their electives, they are encouraged to take such locally developed courses as Quantum Physics, Marine Science, or Astronomy. As Fowler (1996) notes: "But even in exceptional high schools that might be considered to have ample courses in the arts, relatively few students enrol in them. They are often advised to concentrate on academics and to elect additional courses in science and math rather than the arts" (p. 86). Consequently, these students ignore the fine arts and develop the belief that the arts do not provide anything meaningful.

To address why theatre has been left in the background of the curriculum, Gullatt (2007) notes that as a society, we have become "consumed with mathematics and science education" (p.216). We seem obsessed with all things technical and we are hungry for scientific advancements.

To be fair, the onset of the space race in the 1950's pushed science and mathematics to the forefront of priorities. A humanist in 1957 responded to the "narrowness of scientific outlook among experts" (Bush, 1960) when the experts had made predictions for the year 2057 which included such things as the regulation of offspring, vegetable steaks, and advanced psychology based upon machines:

> The author laments the omission of the humanities, stating that "Man reared from a test-tube baby to machine-conditioned psychology and eating vegetable steaks seems scarcely worth sending to Mars if that is the best he can do with himself." (p. 176)

In his defence of the humanities during a period when the sciences were held in the highest regard, Bush (1960) asks, “should we have ‘faith in machinery’ or faith in humanity, and all that it means to be human”(p.177). In the ‘age of science’, Bush states, “the humanities are a prime practical necessity if men and women are to be fully human; they are in fact *the* prime necessity, since they are a part of our everyday living and being” (p.182).

Bush laments the view that “...scientists ...have assumed that there is only one kind of truth, one kind of reality-that which is discovered, measured, and verified by science” (p.172). Artists have long known that there is more than one truth; more ways to interpret; more ways to represent. Fowler (1996) stresses that “the arts show us that there are many more avenues to human understanding than just those through science” (p.41). Bush (1960) gives a laudable example when he makes the prediction that future generations may not be able to understand Shakespeare, yet alone say, “They fell in love and married.” In his outlook, the future generation is apt to replace those words with that of more scientific language, cold and devoid of feeling:

> *Their libidinal impulses being reciprocal, they activated their individual erotic drives and integrated them within the same frame of reference* (Trilling, as cited in Bush, p.178).

Although both interpretations carry the same message, one is quite preferable over the other. Herbert Read (as cited in Fowler, 1996), a British aesthetician and critic, says: “Art is the representation, science the explanation of the same reality” (p.51). In saying this, Read meant that the “arts and the sciences relate different aspects of that reality. They provide another panorama of meaning and knowing” (p.51). The human spirit, or what it means to be human, defines what the arts do. Fowler says “science and technology do not tend to our spirit, but the arts do. That is their role, and it is why and how they complement and counterbalance the rest of the curriculum” (p.54).

It is important that we take note of the words: complement and counterbalance. The arts are not meant to replace the sciences, but rather, to add another level of depth to our understanding of our place in this world. The idea that the arts must be in constant competition with other subjects is perpetuated because of the struggle arts advocates have endured in order to gain and maintain a small foothold within the curriculum.

In an arts-based school reform, known as the A+ Schools Program, "one important strategy in legitimizing the arts was to show that they could complement rather than compete with what many viewed as the school's traditional academic mission" (Noblit et al., 2009, p.94). As explained in this program, "the arts have struggled repeatedly to find a permanent home in schools. The problem is not so much lack of appreciation of the arts but priorities. They are not "core" subjects. Their instructors are not "regular" teachers...they remain add-on programs" (p.35).

Another arts-based school program is the well known Waldorf schools, found throughout the world. The arts are heavily infused within the curriculum of these schools. The students do not use textbooks, yet learn a tremendous amount of science, literature, and math; they do it through the processes of the arts (Jensen, 2001, pp.11-12).

Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (1999) do not feel that subjects within the curriculum should be competing with each other:

> No subject has prior rights over any other subject, for to diminish one is to diminish the possibility and promise of them all. If the arts are to help define our path to the future they need to become curriculum partners with other subject disciplines in ways that will allow them to contribute their own distinctive richness and complexity to the learning process as a whole. (p.45)

In their study, they found that teachers of non-arts subjects, such as math and science, commented on the difference the arts made to the students in their classes. These teachers witnessed thinking that was creative and flexible, different perspectives when approaching problems, a more imaginative approach, and thought-layering in the problem-solving process. The researchers concluded that this "mix of intuitive and logical thinking is...highly typical of most creative artists, scientists and thinkers in general" (p.43). This is reaffirmed in Heymsfeld's (1997) article, "Art-The Fourth 'R'", when she quotes biochemist, Robert Root-Bernstein: "The same tools of thought that an artist needs...are those which a scientist needs...but these skills are not taught within any standard scientific...curriculum. Virtually their only source is in the arts" (p.322).

Jensen (2001) takes a close look at studies which explore how the brain is engaged when the arts are taught. In his book, *The Arts with the Brain in Mind*, he shows data that exists to "overwhelmingly support the fundamental value and role of arts on equal standing with every other so-called academic discipline, including science, languages, and math. It can no longer be called a 'cultural add-on' or a 'right-brained frill'" (p.vi). He continues by stating that those people who are "critical of the arts are stuck in the old dichotomy between the arts and sciences" and that "they often pit the arts and sciences against each other". He gives examples of research and studies which "demonstrate that both the arts and the sciences use both sides of the brain and in fact, some of the arts may use more of the brain than most science" (p.10). He explains that physically moving our bodies, as we do in drama, means "using more of the brain than what we typically use for seatwork" and that during a drama activity, we might "make rapid decisions, keep... attention up, monitor emotions, remember our past, be alert for potential problems, create

solutions on the spot, keep our balance, watch the expression of other faces, move quickly and gracefully, and somehow remember the point of the activity" (p.72).

The arts challenge us to look deeper within ourselves to make new connections and new discoveries. They complement the other subjects and should not have to compete for a legitimate spot on the school timetable. Seidel (1999) has said, "In our over-emphasis on math and science we have left out our imagination" (p.83), and as Lindsay has stated, "without imagination there could be no science" (as cited in Bush, 1960, p.211).

Heathcote has her own belief as to why drama, in particular, should be a part of the school curriculum: "Drama is concerned with the thoughts, words and actions which people are driven to use because they can do no other, and it is this which if carefully used in education, will release the energies of our children. This is the reason for putting the word drama on a timetable in a school curriculum" (1973, p.89). Heathcote's view is just one belief in a field of many. The rationale for the arts within the curriculum varies, and often can cause people to take sides. Rather than be divisive, perhaps we should accept the diversity of rationales within the arts, and the many ways in which they support and advance learners.

Rationale for the Arts in the Curriculum

One of the most often cited rationales for the arts in the curriculum is that of the correlation between an arts-based approach and academic achievement. This is a contentious issue which has divided arts advocates.

Students who are actively involved in the fine arts have higher academic achievement, and it seems to be highest with theatre arts students. Students score higher on standardized tests in both mathematics and language skills, and the longer they study the arts, the better their scores

on SAT's (Fowler, 1996, p. 139). Fowler states that studies in elementary schools which have implemented an hour per day of arts instruction (music, visual art, theatre, dance, media arts) show " improved attendance and reduced discipline problems" and students "perform better in all aspects of school, including academic achievement" (p. 7). In study after study, positive results have been found linking academic achievement to involvement with the arts (Catterall et al., 1999; Burton et al. 1999; Jensen 2001; Fowler, 1996; Noblit et al.2009).

Elliot Eisner (1999), a strong proponent of the arts, speaks openly and writes extensively about the rationale for the arts in the curriculum. "We do the arts no service when we try to make their case by touting their contributions to other fields". Eisner's belief is that by putting all of our eggs into this basket of arguments, we leave the "arts vulnerable to any other field that claims that it can achieve the same aims faster and better" which would relegate the arts to the backroom once again. In his book, *Theatre, Education and the Making of Meanings*, Jackson (2007) poses this very question, stating that we have become a culture consumed with "targets and outcomes" (p.198). As a result of using drama solely as a "tool" (p. 198) in order to develop transferable skills for other subject areas, we lose sight of the true value of the arts in education. Jackson concludes that the "supposed dichotomy between 'aesthetic' and 'instrumental' theatre is a false one" and we need to embrace the artistic core in order to share the 'educative force' of it (p. 272).

As Eisner (2002) warns, if scientists were to show a correlation between eating ice-cream and higher scores on the SAT's, would we be feeding the students ice-cream every day? He argues that the value of the arts in education is much more than providing improved academic achievement. In fact, it could be a dangerous value on which to perch the argument for daily arts in education. For, if further research indicated that higher achievement could be achieved by

doing other activities (e.g. eating ice-cream), would that then dismiss the arts even more? According to Eisner (2002), the value of the arts has more to do with the distinctive contributions it offers to students that they could not receive in other areas of the curriculum. These unique contributions are: "the communication of distinctive forms of meaning, the development of forms of thinking ...occasioned by both the creation and perception of objects and events as art forms, and...the provision of aesthetic experience" (p.234).

The other values associated with the arts, like self-esteem, are what Eisner (2002) calls "extra-artistic" (p. 235) and although they are positive, he believes they should not be the primary justification for arts in education. Eisner has no reservations about "arts for arts sake":

> Sometimes it is better not to give the customer what they want but, rather, to help them understand what they ought to want. We must interpret what arts education can contribute to the young. We need to help parents understand what the arts can mean as a part of their children's education, and we must cease trying to become whatever people want us to be. (1999)

The rationale for the arts has divided many advocates, and more specifically, the issue of transfer from the arts to other subject disciplines. Burton et al. (2000) lament that "unhappily it has almost come to define what we do" (p.228). The ever-persistent arguments of whether the arts should be taught 'in the curriculum' or 'through the curriculum' or as an 'aesthetic' or 'academic' tool, is a barrier to advocacy, and one that should be put to rest. Rather than argue one primary justification for the arts in the curriculum, perhaps it is time to join forces, and recognize the multitude of benefits the arts provide our children.

In arts-based schools, the arts are seen as both aesthetic and academic tools, and are taught as a separate subject as well as integrated into other subject areas, with positive results for the students. In *Strong Arts, Strong Schools*, Fowler (1996) sees the argument for one approach or

the other as “unfortunate, wasteful, and harmful...and has weakened the case for the arts” (p.37). He supports the idea that several rationales would be more effective than just one, and is of the opinion that values and beliefs do not have to “clash”. Both views can build a case for the arts in the curriculum, and he feels that we need to “strike a balance between the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge” (p.104). Noblit et al., agrees with this approach, and in the A+ schools program, “arts-for-their-own-sake” is taught in conjunction with “arts-as-instruments-for-facilitating-content-acquisition” (p.6). This A+ program lists seven arguments, or rationales, for giving the arts a place within the curriculum:

1. The arts are worthy of attention for their own sake, primarily they inherently enrich those who participate in and appreciate creative endeavours.
2. The arts enable moral and social development.
3. Learning about the arts is an essential ingredient of becoming culturally literate.
4. The arts can be an instructional tool that more effectively allows students to acquire and process content in “core” subjects.
5. The arts are a vehicle for tapping into the multiple intelligences prevalent among students...to learn in the style that best suits them.
6. The arts increase students’ interest in school, especially those who have previously been unengaged
7. The arts enable students to develop “workplace” skills and understanding such as critical thinking, teamwork, creativity, and communication. (pp. 36-7)

There have been several full-scale investigations into the impact the arts have on students. One such study was the *Champions for Change* which involved several research projects involving tens of thousands of students over periods of many years. The purpose was to “explore why and how young people were changed through their arts experience” (1999, p.xii). In their study of more than 2000 grade four through eight students in arts-rich schools, Burton et al. found five specific dimensions of ability promoted through the arts:

■ Express ideas and feelings openly and thoughtfully;

■ Form relationships among different items of experience and layer them in thinking through an idea or problem ;
■ Conceive or imagine different vantage points of an idea or problem and to work towards a resolution;
■ Construct and organize thoughts and ideas into meaningful units or wholes; and
■ Focus perception on an item or items of experience, and sustain this focus over a period of time (p.42).

They also found that the students involved in the arts were "more cooperative and willing to display their learning publicly" as well as "strong in their abilities to express thoughts and ideas, exercise their imaginations and take risks in learning" (Burton et al., 1999, p.36). They discovered that the students showed "collaboration and cooperation" and were more willing "to share and learn from each other...to reveal accomplishments, to garner appreciation, and to learn from the critiques of others". Overall, the students seemed to "acquire a sense of confidence in themselves (p.40) and have a "...good rapport with their teachers" (p.41). These researchers argue that the idea of transfer from one subject to another is limiting and really the relationship is much more complex, deeper, richer, dynamic and interactive. An added discovery was the direct and positive benefits that both the teachers and administrators received as a result of working within an arts-rich school. In the words of one principal, "I couldn't work anymore in a school that wasn't totally immersed in the arts" (p.36).

In another study, involving 25 000 high school students over a ten year span, Catterall et al. (1999) focused upon students in general arts programs during the first phase, and moved to focusing on students in what they defined as "intensive" arts programs, in the second phase. Over this period of time, they found that there were "gains in reading proficiency, self concept and motivation, and higher levels of empathy and tolerance for others" (p.2). They also made links to student motivation and engagement in school, both of which are attitudes that contribute

to academic achievement. The researchers found reading proficiency to be higher amongst those students who were involved in a theatre program. Theatre students also showed "positive peer associations" which the researchers linked to a stronger community leading to empathy and a "general attachment to the larger values of the school" (p.4). They realize that although the work is not definitive, it does have "strong suggestions" (p.17) and they recommend further studies involving the meaning of art experiences to the individual students or instructors. With further research, the knowledge base will grow.

Other authorities also list the attributes of the arts on learning. Heathcote (1980) identifies some of these as: "processes of communication, private and public language, listening skills, avoidance of polarization in social encounters, respect for the quality in language choices in such encounters, toleration of others' ways of doing things, and, because it is an art, application of critical thought to them" (p.196). Fowler (1996) adds to this list with the view that arts require "divergent rather than convergent thinking. They ask students to come up with different, rather than similar, solutions" (p.47). Belarie Zatzman (2003) states that "drama educates through reflection, helping young people to retell, reshape, reinscribe, as they figure out who they are in the world" (p.36).

Jensen (2001) proposes that "emotional skills may be far more important to a child's success than cognitive skills" (Goleman as cited in Jensen, p.80), and then lists more attributes of students immersed in the arts:

> Fewer dropouts, higher attendance, better team players, an increased love of learning (and with this, intrinsic motivation for learning, no need for rewards, for children learn best when they want to learn), greater student dignity, enhanced creativity, a more prepared citizen for the workplace of tomorrow, and greater cultural awareness as a bonus. (p.vi)

Jensen (2001) continues by identifying what future employers are asking for: “We want thinkers, we want people skills, we want problem solvers, we want creativity, and we want team work” (p.9). Saxton and Miller (1998) add to this with an extensive list of the skills required by the employers of the 21st century and state that these skills can be found in a “rich drama program” (p.172).

The list of benefits for theatre in education is far-reaching. In the B.C. Ministry of Education IRP’s (2002), the rationale for theatre is comprehensive and includes aesthetic, social, emotional, and intellectual development. According to this document: drama is a “powerful mode of expression”, interactive, engages students, provides a unique opportunity to foster respect for and “appreciation of a variety of values and cultures”, helps learners make sense of their world, helps students to make choices, to take responsibility for their actions, learning in drama “enhances learning in all other areas” (p.1). Gullatt (2007) adds to this list with even more outcomes, emphasizing the necessity of the arts. He notes a “causal link found between classroom drama and verbal skills” (p.217). Gullat has cited numerous scholars and research studies promoting the arts as pertinent to the curriculum, but his argument has relied heavily upon the research showing academic improvement within arts-based schooling. He argues that:

> The deterioration of the arts is ironical because research findings show that the performing and visual arts challenge students to use reasoning skills both concrete and abstract to draw conclusions and formulate ideas. Arts encourage creativity and imagination...and have been found to enhance learning for students. (p.211)

According to a UNESCO (2006) report on the instructional time and the arts in education, the true value is “to appreciate and build an informed awareness of arts, fostering aesthetic appreciation and sensitivity, arts also aim to develop certain personality traits, such as creativity, imagination and expressivity, as well as self-confidence, perseverance, and a critical

spirit" (p.3). This report cites studies that show drama's effect on improved reading comprehension, vocabulary use, and writing quality. The report also shows that through involvement in drama, students show "gains in self-concept and motivation and higher levels of empathy and tolerance towards others". This report emphasizes the "immeasurable long-term outcomes the arts may have on individual development and also the well being of society" (p.4).

Active participation in theatre also helps to develop self-esteem, emotional and spiritual well-being, and individual vision. Fels and Belliveau (2008) see theatre in terms of how we fit in and how we relate to others: "Theatre has a long history of provoking, evoking, questioning, and re-imagining how we might engage in our communities and relationships" (p. 31). They make a valid point, in that theatre demands introspection, making us question and reflect upon who we are and how we connect to this world. Eisner (2002) makes a similar point when he explains how "the arts liberate us from the literal, to step into the shoes of others and to experience vicariously what we have not experienced directly" (p. 10).

For example, in a recent performance of *A Streetcar Named Desire,* we not only feel the anger and the loneliness of the two main characters, but we also feel the intense heat inside a tenement building in New Orleans, and even though we may never have been there, we experience it. Theatre arts have the innate ability to tell us how different places and relationships feel, allowing students to grow personally, and to make discoveries about their individuality and how they connect to others. This is the human experience. Eisner (2002) states it clearly:

> Work in the arts is not only a way of creating performances and products; it is a way of creating our lives by expanding our consciousness, shaping our dispositions, satisfying our quest for meaning, establishing contact with others, and sharing a culture. (p. 3)

The Lived Curriculum

Maxine Greene (1995a) declares that "education is in constant tension with the institution called schools" (p.305). From a very early age, students learn that efficiency and speed are highly valued in our educational system; they come to "understand that schooling is about efficiency...not looking for independent thought but rote answers" (Lapthorne & Lonheim, 1999, p.3). For many teachers, the creative task has become how to fit everything into the school day-to "cover" material quickly and move on to the next topic (Noblit et al., 2009, p.37).

In this fast forward approach to teaching, we are failing the students who cannot keep the pace of the sprinter. Some students are more akin to the marathon runner, who must approach the race differently; otherwise, they will not complete the entire course. Students are not a one-size-fits-all, and they cannot cover the same material in the same time with the same approach. As teachers we need to determine what works best for each student, and to achieve that, we must know them.

Early in my own teaching career, I learned from my students how to become a better teacher, and this meant recognizing that one size does not fit all. I could not expect students to learn the same material at the same rate in the same manner. Tomlinson (2003) sees four traits that teachers must address in order to be effective in the classroom: "readiness, interest, learning profile, and affect" (p.3). Students come from vastly different backgrounds with different interests, they have different styles of learning, they are at different levels of readiness, and they have distinct feelings about themselves and their school work. As educators, we should not feel rushed, and pressured to fill young minds with an endless supply of facts. Jensen (2001) believes that students need time to "ponder and reflect" (p.10); they need time to attack the bigger, more difficult questions, not memorize trivia and facts that they will forget once the test is finished.

Tomlinson (2003) concurs when she states that we should be delivering a focused curriculum, one that "seeks to make meaning" (p.58), with classes that teach less but teach better. We should also realize that 'coverage' is not possible in this world of information which continues to grow exponentially. The alternative, according to Tomlinson, is to teach "a curriculum a mile wide and only an inch deep" (p.60). It is this ploughing through the curriculum that will lead us to the graveyard of teacher burnout. I believe we need to park our ploughs, and wander through the fields of young minds in order to breathe life back into the curriculum. Lapthorne & Lonheim Barrett (1999) ask: "Where is the life in this profession? Where is my life in all of this?" (p.6). We need to bring the curriculum to life and discover the "fine art of how to deliver curriculum in ways irresistible to young minds" (Tomlinson, 2003, p. 62). Greene (2005b) suggests the manner in which to do this is to engage the active learner, "awakened to pursue meaning and to endow a life story with meaning" (p.305).

According to Dorothy Heathcote (1987) learning goes through phases. To be effective educators, Heathcote calls the initial phase of instruction as the "hook". Once we have gained the students' attention, we must attract them to the concept. If they show interest in it, they will become involved, and if they become involved, they may become concerned; become invested in it. Once invested or concerned, they become obsessed and when they get here, they are learning. Heathcote (1980) emphasizes the importance of the engaged learner:

> Many teachers care passionately about their subjects...but are unable to take their pupils into their subjects through the doorways of attraction-attention, interest, involvement, concern-to investment and, hopefully, productive obsession which thoroughly engages them for a period of time, sometimes for life. (p.178)

If we are to avoid the "robotization of teaching" by delivering the "programmed learning packages" (Aoki, 1992, p.18), I believe we must follow Aoki's recommendations to pay attention to the lives of both teachers and students. By sharing our lived experiences, cultures, and stories, we turn the daily planned life of a school into a breathing lived curriculum. Eisner states that "the arts are at the forefront in the celebration of diversity, individuality, and surprise" (2002, p.235). Drama is truth. It is life. It is the human condition. What better way is there to share our stories with each other and to bring life to the curriculum, than through the arts?

The Individualized Learner and Multiple Intelligences

For many years, actually going back decades, there has been discussion about the individualized learner. Educators have recognized that learning happens in a myriad of fashions, and the diversity of our students demands a different approach to teaching. It is not seat work, in the traditional sense, our students need in order to become 21st century learners. Instead, Jensen (2001) recommends "hands-on learning, which is more robust, age independent, easier to learn, cross cultural, intelligence-independent ...individualized...it is not the talking head which many teachers use" (p.74).

As stated, the individualized learner for the 21st century is not a new idea. In 1960, Douglas Bush lamented the disregard for individuality: "The only kind of individuality that is generally admired is skill in sport or smartness in business; the individuality of the cultivated mind and taste meets only indifference or antagonism, in school, college, and in society. Our democratic religion is the worship of commonness" (p.178). This "commonness" is our middle ground to which we teach, hoping that everyone else in the class will fall in line. As Heathcote (1972) states "many teachers emerge with the skills to teach about 5 percent of the school

population, the ones committed to learning" (p.31), thereby omitting the rest of the student population. One expectation of the A+ schools program is to avoid this approach by having their teachers "tap students' multiple intelligences (beyond books, lectures, and pencil-paper- tests)" (Noblit et al., 2009, p.6).

Maxine Greene (1995b) speaks of "tapping the full range of human intelligence and that as part of our pedagogy, we enable them to have a number of languages to hand and not verbal or mathematical alone. Some children may find articulation through imagery; others, through body movement; still others, through musical sound" (p. 57). In *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, Howard Gardner (1983) argues that the current school system focuses upon two intelligences, the linguistic and the logical/mathematical, and he goes on to explain five other intelligences, and theorizes that there may be even more than what he has compiled. Gardner points to our current education system, as mentioned earlier with a focus on linguistics and the math and sciences.

> The modern school places increasing premium on logical/mathematical ability and linguistics intelligence. The remaining intellectual capacities are, for the most part, consigned to after school or recreational activities, if they are taken notice at all. (p. 353)

Logical/mathematical ability and linguistics ability are the standards by which we measure intelligence, immediately marginalizing those students who do not fall neatly into these categories. By stating that one child is intelligent and that another is creative, do we infer that the creative child is not intelligent? Gardner argues that individuals have different intelligences, and rather than focus on uniformity, schools need to assess the intelligence profile of each child. He is quick to admit that more research is required and his suggestions need to be "amply discussed and tested" (p. 392) before being implemented. His theories continue to be discussed, and

Gardner (2006) himself revisits the theory of multiple intelligences, adding to his list "conservatively" (p.27) by addressing spiritual, humour, and moral intelligences.

Although more educators recognize this need to move away from uniformity, they remain stuck in an archaic system that emphasizes the two intelligences. In his book, *The Element*, Ken Robinson (2009) hears too many stories of people who felt "that what they're good at isn't valued at school" (p. 11). Robinson also rephrases the question "How intelligent are you?" to "How are you intelligent?" (p. 42). Like Gardner, he feels there are a variety of ways to express intelligence, and we are not giving all students the opportunity to show their style of intelligence. This is especially true of students who feel driven by the arts, but must adapt to a school system not geared to their interests. In Maxine Greene's (1995b) words, "boredom and a sense of futility are among the worst obstacles to learning" (p. 149). In order for all students to succeed, they must feel engaged in what they are doing, and they must feel there is some meaning for them in the learning process.

In order to present material in a less than uniform manner, and to keep the interest of students, some science and math teachers are now finding more creative ways to implement the curriculum, but many feel restricted by exams mandated by governments. Consequently, these teachers feel pressured to just get through the content. Apple (1986) quotes one teacher as saying, "I just want to get this done. I don't have time to be creative or imaginative" (p. 206). In our current system of education, Eisner (2002) notes that emphasis is placed upon "facticity, correctness, linearity, and concreteness" (p. 198) and less on imagination, diversity, ambiguity, and the element of surprise. He states, "It is from surprise that we are most likely to learn something" (p. 8). Surprise during the learning process gives us the positive attributes of

satisfaction, motivation, and pleasure, along with a sense of discovery, and it is also a key aspect of drama.

Rather than having a cookie cutter education system in which students enter kindergarten like pieces on a conveyer belt, and then pop out the other end in grade twelve, educators and policy makers need to recognize that students learn in different ways, and have different intelligences. Greene (1995b) argues that in the current system, students are seen as "human resources rather than persons...as if they were raw materials to be shaped to market demand" (p. 32). It is a factory mentality, born of the needs of an industrialized world at the turn of the last century, which saw little need for the arts in education.

Jensen (2001) does not claim that the arts will be the cure for all of education's ills, or that they are a "magic pill" (p.vi), but he goes on to stress that "...humans are unique and educators need different approaches and strategies to reach a wide range of learners. ...many schools... have been using a powerful solution for decades. It's called the arts" (p.vi).

The arts resonate with the multiple intelligences identified by Gardner. Schools rich in the arts offer an open and flexible approach, allowing students to use more than one form of intelligence: linguistic intelligence, inter and intra-personal intelligence, kinaesthetic intelligence, spatial intelligence. The idea of a uniform education is no longer feasible. The arts accommodate the idea of individualized learning (Catterall et al,1999; Burton et al, 1999; Fowler, 1996).

The arts reach across all abilities, and they seem almost inherently differentiated. Theatre classes attract students from a range of academic, social, and emotional abilities, including students considered "at risk". According to the UNESCO (2006) report on aesthetic education,

"youth who are considered 'at risk' benefit the most from aesthetic education, with demonstrative correlations to cognitive development, to test scores in other subject areas, and to the motivation to learn" (p.6). Although they are not the "panacea", Fowler (1996) believes that the arts create a positive influence upon "at-risk" students as well as a possible "remedy" (p.93) to prevent them from dropping out of school. The arts can do this by "engaging the internal self, urging their beings to life...and give them a personal and meaningful focus" (p.95).

This was also found to be true in several studies conducted for *Champions of Change* (1999), a project designed to investigate how youth are changed through arts experiences. The researchers found that the arts provided a reason, and sometimes the only reason, for being engaged with school or other organizations. These "problem" students often became the high-achievers in arts learning settings (Fiske, p.ix). The studies contained within this report also found that the arts affect high achieving students who are often bored in regular classroom. Arts activities provide new challenges for those students already considered successful by offering "open-ended assignments where the sky is the limit, where creativity is valued" (p.ix). Additionally, Fowler (1996) found that the arts also have positive effects upon special needs students, in terms of expression, communication, and creativity. The arts can be "empowering" (p.92) to these students, and because they seem to be inherently differentiated, they do not limit their potential.

The arts embrace students of all abilities, and in *The Fourth R*, Heymsfeld (1997) states "the arts reach across culture, language, and social barriers, they create a sense of inclusion for students who might otherwise be alienated from school and learning" (p.322). Heymsfeld makes the argument that the arts help students at risk, students who struggle with the written word, as well as English language learners (ELL), culturally diverse learners (CDL), and gifted students.

In conclusion, she states that the arts create a sense of inclusion for all students, and especially those who have traditionally felt excluded.

Art as a Way of Knowing

Elliot Eisner (2008) writes that as far back as Aristotle, we have recognized different ways of 'knowing': theoretical, practical, and productive. Initially, art would have fallen within the latter category as it was a productive knowledge of "how to make something; to create" (p.4). Art as a way of knowing progressed from the mere creation of something to something deeper and more meaningful. We recognize the arts "provide access to qualities of life that literal language has no great power to disclose" (p.7). Eisner states that we can know something about feeling that cannot be known through scientific knowledge. He cites Dewey (1934), who says: "science states meaning, art expresses it" (p.8).

Eisner (2008) documents four contributions of arts to knowledge. The first is the ability to see significance within the subtle and sense the nuance of situations; develop these "habits of minds" (p.11). The second contribution to knowledge is the development of empathetic feeling: the innumerable ways in which art can move us; touch us; create powerful imagery through which we see our world. Eisner states: "Art does not always imitate life. Life often imitates art" (p.11). A third contribution to knowledge is the constant freshness of art; the ability to reinvent and create anew so we do not fall into "stock responses". Instead, we "seek new ways to perceive and interpret the world" (p.11). The fourth contribution is to emotional knowledge. "Becoming aware of our capacity to feel is a way of discovering our humanity. Art helps us connect with personal, subjective emotions, and through such a process, it enables us to discover our own interior landscape (to discover who we are as individuals)" (p.11).

In *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, Eisner (2002) dedicates a chapter to what education can learn from the arts. He lists several lessons the arts teach about the practice of education. The first lesson, starting to be adopted in other subject areas, is that multiple solutions and answers are desirable; "variability of outcome is okay" (p.196). This lesson is being used in math classes, where students may be asked for multiple ways to solve a problem. In a grade eight drama class, when asked to use a wooden crate for a purpose other than a chair, students will devise over one hundred different uses. Another lesson to be learned is that form and content are both important. An actor knows this well, especially the actor who only has one line in the production. In a recent school performance, that I directed, an actor made her one and only line become a highlight of the show. She knew it was not just what she said, but how she said it.

A third lesson Eisner (2002) explains, is that imagination is "central to our cultural development" (p. 198). Maxine Greene (1995) believes that the role of imagination is "to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, unexpected" (p. 28). Both the artist and the scientist rely on the imagination "not to see what is there but to see what might be there and then pursue what they have imagined" (Eisner, 2002, p. 199). In this way, people advance their knowledge because of their imagination.

Another lesson which Eisner (2002) includes is the understanding of relationships within humanity. This is important to any subject, but it is within theatre that a student will be immersed in relationships. Theatre arts have an intrinsic value and this is an important lesson for all students to grasp: not everything has extrinsic rewards. Yet another lesson that Eisner (2002) pointed out is that literal language and quantification are not the only means to show understanding. Many educators right through to post-secondary institutions are allowing students to submit work in a variety of formats such as film, poetry, or art. Those involved in the arts,

especially in theatre, recognize that specific outcomes are not always possible, or even desirable. This is another lesson to be taken from the arts. Flexibility, with a purpose, within a lesson is important. Eisner (2002) and Dewey call it "flexibly purposive" (p. 206). The definition of a teacher's living hell, for both instructor and students, is to go into a classroom determined that his/her lesson plan will not change.

Finally, Eisner (2002) describes one last lesson that other subjects can learn from the arts. That is to savour the moment, thus enriching the experience. When we stop and savour the moments, we can say that science is an art, teaching is an art, or carpentry is an art. Fields are all potential art forms if we take these lessons to heart and we use them within our specialized areas.

Fels and Belliveau (2008) are among many scholars who believe that learning happens through creative drama. They speak of "aha" (p. 37) moments when students make discoveries through performative inquiry. They describe these moments: "Something happens when individual and shared worlds of experience, knowledge, memory, and performance intersect. Imagination, experience and enquiry collide, resulting in startling moments of recognition" (p.29). Gavin Bolton (2010) agrees, saying that "dramatic activity is always...related to knowledge...related to values, principles, implications, and responsibility" (p.53), and he believes "it opens up new ways of looking at things. Through theatrical metaphor, the world we live in is explored" (p.52).

High School Theatre Programs: Performance-based or Process Drama?

As mentioned previously, a performance-based class is one in which the students, under the direction of the teacher, produce and perform a scripted play. In this approach, students develop technical skills, expand subject knowledge, and ultimately complete a finished product

in the form of a play. Process drama, according to Neelands (2009), places the "emphasis on decentring the power of the teacher, negotiated learning and encouraging deeper contextual explorations of the bigger questions of life" (p.178). In process drama, students explore issues through improvisation, and may work in conjunction with the teacher in the development of the drama as a collective creation. Whether the approach is performance-based or process driven, Neelands (2009) believes that drama needs to be both "artistically and socially progressive for young people" (p.180).

In O'Farrell's (1998) response to the Canadian approach to high school theatre classes, he believes that teachers in this country have "found an effective means of bridging the process-product divide in a multi-level programme" (p.116), and that drama education in Canada is "eclectic" (p.118). For the most part, O'Farrell's *Canadian* approach to drama refers to the Ontario educational system. He makes one reference to the approach used in British Columbia as having a "discipline orientation" with a "strong emphasis on production, particularly in the senior years" (p.117). In my personal experience, this is very true of the high schools situated in Victoria, B.C., where productions include the yearly Broadway musical.

John O'Toole (2006), an Australian drama educator/researcher, believes that drama educators there have had a "much smoother path to establishment...than in the UK" (p.xvi). Due to the unity of the drama education community within his country, O'Toole feels they have "managed to avoid many of the process v. product, artistic v. instrumental (*sic)* learning schisms that have bedevilled British...education" (p.xvi). Rather than create a divide between philosophical beliefs, the Australians have been unified in their advocacy for drama education.

Although Fowler (1996) dislikes the goal of mainstream drama "to teach production to the talented" (p.104), he supports the idea of performances in high school because "it remains an essential means of learning about...theatre" (p.104). He also feels we should be striking a balance between "the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge" (p.104). Saxton and Miller (1998) view the current approach as one that values the process work we do as 'lesser' and they have difficulty with the "notion that production is the *only* legitimate end-purpose" of drama (p.174). Fowler (1996) feels that "students will be shortchanged if the emphasis is strictly on production", and stresses that "an approach that gives a broader perspective does not need to ignore creation and production" (p.129). He goes on to quote Nellie McCaslin: "To deprive students of the experience (of a play) would be to withhold the ultimate satisfaction" (p.89). The A+ Schools program also believes that "celebrating the arts through student performances...decidedly enriched school life" (Noblit et al., 2009, p. 175). Dorothy Heathcote (1973) believes that by the time students reach senior levels at high school, they should be ready and quite capable of interpreting other people's ideas; that is, performing a scripted play.

What are the benefits of a production-based class that values the process just as much, if not more than the final performance? How can teachers be convinced to let go of the directorial power, strike a balance, and to "alter their ways" (Fowler, 1996, p.129)?

Performing a play is a completely different experience than merely reading one. Shosh and Wescoe (2007) contend that the reading of a play in English class is a very passive experience. In essence, it is boring for the student, and rather than sit, memorize, and regurgitate information, students should be actively engaged and "creating meaning for themselves" (p.42). Plays were written to be interpreted and performed, and the word "play" has the connotation of action and movement. Shakespeare is studied throughout high school English classes, and when

we ‘study’ his plays, we must remember that they were written by a playwright, for the players to play in a playhouse.

Bailin (2001) supports this “creative enterprise” of interpreting a play and that this “activity has considerable educational value” (p.72). Advocating for play production, Bailin echoes the idea of theatre encapsulating the idea of what it means to be human, and focuses upon the “rich possibilities for educational development” (p.67) through the performing of plays, which in her view, provides an opportunity for students to “participate actively in this striving to understand” (p.75) themselves and the world. The idea of sitting in a classroom, reading parts aloud, dissecting the meaning of each word, and answering questions created by the teacher sends shudders through my body. Shosh and Wescoe (2007) recount how students describe reading a play as a “one-dimensional” experience, whereas “performing, on the other hand, is as three-dimensional as someone can get” (p.43).

Shosh and Wescoe also state how surprised they are when they send out an invitation to other classes to attend a school day performance, and teachers cite “too much material to cover to give up a class period to enjoy a play” (p.46). Through performance, students learn to develop their own unique interpretations of what the playwright intended, rather than be told what was significant or implied. Bailin (2001) asserts that through performance and by becoming a character, a student develops a perception that she sees as pertinent in developing empathy, and giving an “understanding from inside” (p.73). She reiterates the idea that performed plays give students “access to ways of being that go way beyond our own experience” (p.73). Seidel (1999) agrees in saying: “Acting the plays is a way at arriving at insights, making connections, developing appreciation and understandings that are not available through lecture, formal discourse, or silent reading” (p.87).

Performance has its merits, but in order to be highly educative, it should be student-centred. Rather than bark out directorial commands, telling each student when, where and how to move, students would benefit more if they had control over the creative process. Gilbert (2003) feels that theatre should be a place where:

> Self-creation, imagination, and dialogue are still possible; where the engagement of people in productive conflict and thought can be generated. Theatre should, in education, afford a place of freedom**,** thought and creation, subverting the ever-increasing demands of product and commerce, and be a place of action and not submission. (p.113)

John Murrell (2003) recognized much later in his life how he, as director, controlled all aspects of play production, whilst ignoring the students' "superior freshness in the art, their purer experience of life, their more primal instincts" and he reminds himself that "teaching which does not include an equal measure of learning is tyranny, not to mention a waste of precious time" (p.81). Danby & Upitis (1989) address the question of ownership in educational theatre. They put it simply: "if children own what they act, they act better, enjoy more, and learn more than if they do not own what they act" (p.2), otherwise, the end result is an "over-rehearsed and over-directed travesty" (p.3). Although Danby and Upitis were looking at the elementary school years, this move to a more meaningful, creative, and critically conscious theatre program is creeping through high schools where the idea of the traditional play or musical is being questioned.

Jackson (2005) favours a more dialogic approach in which both the students and the teacher are engaged equally, and where "listening and two-way communication happen in a collaborative spirit" (p.113). He does not believe that educational theatre is a "set of pre-packaged, fixed ingredients" (p.113) and he goes on to suggest that the "dichotomy between instrumental and aesthetic theatre *is* a false one" (p.117).

Both Jo Beth Gonzalez and Joan Lazarus have written books addressing the new possibilities of high school drama programs. In *Signs of Change,* Lazarus (2004) states that the traditional approach is "hierarchical, teacher-centred..." with a focus on the Broadway musicals or plays, which are "unrelated to the lives of the majority of students" (p.5). She would prefer to see a program that is "learner-centred, socially responsible, provocative, and connected to the world in which students live" (p.6). Like Jackson, Lazarus sees the role of students as "colearners and collaborators" (p.11).

Gonzalez (2006), writes in *Temporary Stages,* that she would also prefer to see a shift in power; one which "demystifies the director/teacher as an all-knowing authority" (p.18). She does not desire students who "echo" her, but students who "will create new sounds" (p.21). Although Gonzalez has several programs designed for students to create and develop their own productions, she is open to the idea of a traditional play. She does emphasize that the "students' learning will be longer lasting and their insights deeper if they take ownership" (p.76). If the students do not care about the work they are producing, if they do not have a vested interest, she believes the "result will be much less than excellent" (p.108).

Lazarus (2004) also believes the type of plays chosen is quite often part of the problem. She firmly believes that "inexperienced student-artists, limited facilities, and small budgets to produce plays created originally for Broadway...are setting up students to fail" (p.36). Rather than wondering about the logistics to produce a particular play, she challenges educators to ask: How can producing this play be both an artful and learner-centred experience for all? As part of the ensemble, each student should "own" the production, by participating and contributing throughout the process, including play selection.

The definition of the *company* or the *ensemble* of theatre is the bringing together of all "engaged in a work on a given production" (Lazarus, p.17). Bolton (2010) stresses the importance of the ensemble:

> Not only does drama rely on group interaction in terms of its product, but part of its uniqueness as a learning context stems from the group processes which assist that learning: it provides a unique opportunity for learning from each other. (p.57)

Working in a democratic process, students and teachers learn together, pose questions of each other, consider ideas from all those involved, "investigate topics, and reflect on discoveries" (Lazarus, p.20). Lazarus sees the theatre as a laboratory and the rehearsal as "times of exploration, experimentation, and discovery" (p.32), and by doing so, "the production processes yield investment, ownership, and performances of great depth, interest, and vibrancy" (p.32).

This democratic experience is echoed by Jonathon Neelands (2009), who sees it as a "model of how to live together in the world" (p.184), where students work together in the "social and egalitarian conditions of ensemble-based drama" (p.182). He also emphasizes the need to be "self-managing, self-governing, self-regulating" and to "co-create artistically and socially" (p.182). In being democratic, dramatic processes strive for "inclusivity and equality" and to achieve this, Nicholson (2010) feels it is important to be "constantly vigilant about what or who is included, and who may be marginalised, silenced, or disposed" (p.151). As Heathcote (1969) states, "drama cannot properly function unless the children agree to tolerate generously, and put to work, differing personalities, points of view, information, speed of working, and levels of attention" (p.56).

According to Cousins (2000), "it could take a huge effort to change the current status of drama in education" (p.92) and it may mean taking performance classes in a different direction, one in which the students are given a chance to express their opinions. Bailin (2001) agrees and

suggests that students take an "active role in interpreting plays" which would also include taking on "some aspects of the directorial function" (p.73). Cousins (2000) suggests we adapt the traditional, mainstream school play to "accommodate students' diverse backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, and creativity" (p.93) then we truly may be providing an education that is student driven. As Cousins has said, it may mean "telling principals that the material might not be sweet and safe" (p.92). We should not feel obliged to adhere to the standard approach to performance theatre; instead if we offer a dialogic approach, we challenge our students to take ownership in educational theatre. By doing this, the entire process, from the rehearsals to the final performance, becomes educative.

Final Thoughts

The 'power' of drama involves a transformation of some form. Neelands (2004) calls these transformations 'miracles' which refers to the "students 'discovering' a voice in drama", or dysfunctional students who manage to find "some sort of 'home' in the drama room" that allows them to "reveal 'hidden' sides to their characters" (p.47). Neelands asserts that drama cannot do this on its own, "it is what we do with drama" (p.48) that determines its power and its ability to transform lives. In order to discover the transformation felt by students, it is important that we carry out studies that include their individual perspectives. A recommendation of the *Champions of Change* (1999) report on the arts in education, was the need for more studies to "explore why and how young people were changed through their arts experiences" (p.x). Catterall et al. (1998) asserts that what will benefit us the most in our advocacy is the "accumulation of case studies" (p.13).

Another recommendation is that of "adequate staff training and strong administrative support" (Fiske, 2000, p.x). The idea of strong administrative support is repeated throughout the literature; for without it, arts educators will continue to feel marginalized and frustrated at the lack of understanding and encouragement. Such support would come in the form of administrators who "encourage teachers to take risks, learn new skills, and broaden their curriculum" (Burton et al., 1998, p.40). Gonzalez (2006) advises building administrative support by involving them from the start. By engaging administrators in the process, they feel ownership and more motivation to help financially and/or to help with scheduling conflicts. Learning through and/or in the arts is "dependent upon enlightened administrative support, professionally informed teachers, and the provision of sufficient opportunities to study the arts in various forms..." (Burton et al., 1998, p.36).

The arts make the "learning experience less ordinary and more extraordinary" (Fiske, 1998, p.xii). If we are to be successful in our advocacy, we cannot be fractious amongst ourselves or it will weaken our case. Fowler's (1996) advice to "never argue, just persuade" (p.200) is wise if we wish to sway and influence others in a professional manner. The rationales for the arts are varied and numerous, and clearly the arts have far too many benefits to the learner to be continually marginalised. Rather than competing for time within the curriculum, we will eliminate the conflict between the arts and the sciences and work together, for "to diminish one is to diminish the possibility and promise of them all" (Burton et al. 1998, p.45). If 'all the world' is truly a stage, perhaps arts advocates can become the "artistic actors in the direction of our realities" (Neelands, 2009, p.186) to bring about change in the curriculum.

CHAPTER THREE
Methodology

Introduction

What are theatre students' perceptions of a performance-based class? What is the value of theatre in high school, and does a production make for an educative experience? I set out to discover the students' perspectives and what, if any, implications that has for the future of theatre curriculum and education. This chapter will detail my methodology, including my research design and methods I used throughout both the observation time and the analysis of the data through the production of the video documentary. The observation period was a total of four months, and included the daily drama classes as well as weekends and evenings the week before and during the show's performances.

During this period, I kept a personal journal in which I recorded field notes, reflections, and memos. I also had the participants complete weekly journals by responding to prompts I would give them. As another method of data collection, I interviewed the participants three times: before rehearsals started, just before the show opened, and lastly, following the closing night. Throughout the entire process, I used a small handheld camcorder to record the interviews, the rehearsals, daily class activities, and the performances. As I reviewed and analyzed the data, I used poetic inquiry with the students' journal responses and I used video footage to create a documentary film, which would become the arts-based representation for my research. The preferred method for human science "involves description, interpretation, and self-reflective or critical analysis" (Van Manen, 1997, p.2). In this chapter, I will weave an interpretive, narrative voice with a critically reflective approach.

Research Design

Throughout the first year of my graduate program, I tried to untangle the knotted yarn of my thoughts. I knew that theatre would be my area of focus, but I could not pinpoint the exact topic I wanted to explore. Initially, following a volunteer project at an organization in Vancouver, I considered a narrative approach to investigate an applied use of theatre as intervention against the street life for BC high school students. Then I considered performative theatre as defined by Fels and Beliveau (2001) which uses theatre to enhance curriculum areas such as science and social studies. Perhaps I could carry out my research and continue to teach? However, as I continued my course work and my ideas slowly untangled, I began to focus on the perceived value of theatre in education. There seemed to be a lot of 'sit and wait' for the majority of the students involved in a performance-based class. I started to question my performance-based approach to theatre in high school and I challenged the educative value of it.

There is an inherent hierarchical design to the typical high school production. A couple of students will receive the line-laden, lead roles, and the remaining girls and boys will be assigned a variety of minor roles, some with few or no lines, and limited stage time, leading to many hours of 'sit and wait'. What value, if any, does this have for the latter students? Or even for the former with more than their fair share of stage time, and teacher time? As a high school drama specialist, I 'fell in line' with what was expected of me: a school production. Every year, I would 'transform' students, who would approach me privately, thanking me for "changing their lives". I felt confident that a performance-based class had profound effects for some of the students.

It is evident to me that theatre has many benefits for the students: socially, academically, and emotionally. Yet, I feel that my specialty area is not perceived as important by colleagues, parents and students in general. Remnants of past conversations echo through my memory:

> *Drama is flaky-pastry material*; *You teach drama? Oh...you don't really teach.*; *It's time to pull out the dog and pony show.*; *My teacher wants me to skip drama and attend a science review. Is that okay?*

The literature continues to espouse the value of the arts in the curriculum, in many different forms, and I am puzzled why the marginalization issue persists. The studies have repeatedly shown the many positive benefits of the arts, theatre in particular, to students. Yet, they continue to be seen as a frill, as a subject less valuable than other subject areas. Some of the literature suggests that further studies, particularly from the students' points of view would help further the cause of advocacy (Fiske, 1999). By the start of the second year of my program, I formalized my research question and proceeded to put together a proposal for my thesis.

The entire process of identifying my methodology was dependent upon my research question. In fact, as Van Manen (1997) suggests, my method was secondary. He states that "the questions themselves and the way one understands the questions are the important starting points, not the method" (p.1). He goes on to state that the "choice should reflect more than mere whim, preference, taste, or fashion" (p.2). Once I identified the focus of my research, I needed a methodology that would 'fit' with my idea; in Van Manen's words, one that would "maintain a certain harmony" (p.2). In order to observe and document the students' perspectives within a performance-based class, I realized with absolute certainty that I wanted to view the entire experience and would have to follow the class through a production from start to finish. This meant a huge time commitment since I wanted to be thorough and attend every rehearsal. I did not want to miss a single moment and so, I followed O'Toole's (2006) advice that "the whole

creative sequence needs to be studied" (p.46). In order to do this, I chose to take a year's leave of absence and focus on my role as a researcher.

As Van Manen (1997) describes it, "to do research is always to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings" (p.5). I wanted to know how one group of young people experienced their world of performance-based theatre, and what insights they would be able to offer me, the researcher. Although I considered an ethnographic approach, I quickly realized that it would not meld with my research question. I was not studying the culture of theatre students, although a bit of that did surface during my observations and interviews. My focus was on this one particular event in this specific time period with one group of participants. Thus a case study approach was the best fit.

My investigative study is based on lived experience and focuses on "a certain situation, a group...for what goes on there, how these individuals or members of this group perceive things" (Van Manen, p.22). I would follow and observe one group of theatre students and their perceptions of one particular event. O'Toole (2006) emphasizes, "drama is by its very nature...a non-reproducible experience" whereby the participants "create a unique set of social relationships" (p.46). *As You Like It*, set on this stage during this particular moment, with these specific students, can never be replicated. It is a "non-reproducible experience".

I knew inherently that survey methods, questionnaires, statistics, and other quantitative procedures would not be appropriate for my investigation. I was interested in the structures, the processes and the outcomes of this performance-based class. I was focused on the lived experience (time, space, body, human relation) in order "to construct a full interpretive

description of some aspect of the lifeworld" (Van Manen, 1997, p.18). This approach of a performance-based 'lifeworld' would become my case study.

Creswell (2007) defines a case study as:

> The investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving **multiple sources of information** (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reports a case **description** and case-based themes. (p.73)

In defense of the case study, Saldaña (2011) cites anthropologist Harry F. Wolcott who addresses the common criticism of this type of methodology when challenged with: "What can you learn by studying just one of anything? His classic reply: All you can!" (pp.8-9). It made sense to me that following a group of students through their performance process over a period of four months with detailed data collection from multiple sources would be an arts-based case study.

I have several reasons for referring to my case study as arts-based. The case itself is based within the arts curriculum, in particular theatre performance. I have used a poetic/narrative voice within my analysis and as representation of the data. This was natural because as Connelly and Clandinin (1990) state, "teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and other's stories" (p.2). I have also chosen to create a documentary film based upon the video recordings of the process, the interviews, and the theatrical performances. As a teacher-artist, I look for creative outlets, and my research is no exception. Arts-based research (ABR) has gained in popularity and more importantly, in acceptance, so I had no qualms about using ABR to analyze and then represent my data (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Cahnmann, 2003; Honan, 2008; Leavy,

2009; Neilson, 2008; Prendergast, 2009; Steffler, 1994). I chose a variety of ABR formats for my representation, including a video documentary, a narrative style of writing, and poetic inquiry.

I used a personal journal, as well as students' journals, to collect data. Throughout this paper, I have employed both my poetic and narrative voice in order to analyze and represent the data. O'Toole (2006) sees this strategy as one which can "provide a balance between rigour and creativity, imagery and accuracy, the individual and the collective" (p.59). My poetic voice also emerged in the literature in the form of found poetry. I describe my methodology using a narrative voice, which is what follows. My goal in this case study is to be creative in order to engage and enlighten my audience, whilst honouring the voices of my participants.

Scarf People (Participants & Research Setting)

I stand in front of 28 students ranging in age from 14 to 17. This is a year-long drama class for grades 9-12, with an emphasis on the performance of a Shakespearean comedy, *As You Like It*. They sit quietly as they receive the attendance day question, and then the teacher (Mr. Burke, a pseudonym) introduces me. He gives a bit of cursory information, mostly that I would like to carry out some research within the class, and asks the group to be respectful listeners. I step in front of the class. They are seated in the red-plush theatre seats occupying a good part of the first three rows. I introduce myself, and then look down at my scripted paper, mandatory for my ethics' approval, and I realized that in order to save paper I reduced the font to 10, and I do not have my glasses. I glance past the students to the fourth row of seats where I left my bag which has *I ♥ New York* written boldly across the centre of it. I will bring this bag to every observation period, every audition, every rehearsal, and every performance. It carries my journal, my camcorder, a set of pens, and the students' journals. It also has my glasses. I make the

decision not to stop my ‘spiel’, and decide to wing it. I am okay with this tactic as it is more natural than reading from a piece of paper.

I am nervous, and my words start to jump around, omitting some information. One very astute student quickly picks up that I have not identified the specific purpose of my research. “Why are you doing this research?” she asks. It dawns on me that I have not mentioned this...I look down at my paper. It is just a blur to my middle-aged eyes. I relax and remind myself that I am a drama teacher. I take the time to explain why I am doing research in this area, and I speak about the arts and advocacy. They seem to appreciate this, and a few students nod their heads in agreement. I go on to explain that I want their perspectives on the experience they are about to undertake.

The teacher interjects at this point and ‘poses’ a question: “What about confidentiality?” he asks. I know this is a prompt and I have missed it in my explanation. It is in my script, and now I wish I had taken the time to grab my glasses. I continue and explain that their names will not be revealed; I will use pseudonyms for them; no one else will see their journals, including their teacher. I assure them that if they decide to be participants, it will have no bearing on their grades. I ask for a show of hands how many might be interested. Four or five hands go up. Two more raise their hands once they see that others are interested.

One student has a concern about the video portion, and asks: “Can you be a participant if I don’t want to be filmed?” I briefly consider the question, and then say “Yes”. My thoughts are that I really want their feedback, and the video documentary is secondary to the research. Another student raises her hand. “What if you don’t want to do the journal writing?” she asks. I don’t want to discourage her, but I think the journals are a private conduit into their thoughts,

and I really want them. I answer her, “You don’t have to do the journals, but I would prefer that you at least tried. You will find that keeping a journal of your thoughts and feelings will help you develop as an actor, and ultimately help you discover something about yourself as a learner. I keep a journal myself.” I hope I have answered her question, and that she is not deterred from participating, but I am unsure.

I thank them and proceed to distribute the forms to all of the students in case some of them change their minds. I know that most of these will never make it home. I will be asked several more times: “Do you have another copy of the permission form?” I am prepared for this, and have made many more copies than I need. And so, my research has started and a small smile breaks upon my face.

At the request of their teacher, the class gets up to go onto the stage for some drama activities. Two students walk toward me. They ask me where I got my scarf, and tell me that they are “scarf people”. I take this as a good thing. It is my artsy Russian scarf I bought years ago in St. Petersburg, and I tell them. “We like you already,” they tell me. My smile widens as I thank them. I am on my way to being accepted and trusted, an important step in this kind of research.

Over the next two weeks, permission forms trickle in. Eventually, I have eleven full participants. I am pleased with this, as I had thought that I would be lucky to gather six students for my study. Because I am using video and would like to include all the students in the final documentary, I give video forms to everyone, including the teacher. These prove very difficult to collect, and for one particular student, it is only on the fifth form that he finally returns it, signed with parental approval. In all, my eleven participants vary in gender, in grade level, and also in size of roles: from leads to extras without a line. Within my group, I have four boys and seven

girls. There is one grade nine, four grade tens, one grade eleven, and five grade twelves. The class itself has eighteen girls and eleven boys (one girl dropped the course before the run of the show), and I immediately set about to learn all of their names. All names within this thesis have been changed to pseudonyms for reasons of confidentiality.

The teacher helps with my 'entry' into this group and I participate in some activities in order to become more accepted. I am a participant/observer, and will eventually stage one of the fight scenes. I am included in every attendance day question. When asked, I contribute to class discussions, and I participate in some of the team building activities. Students soon begin to ask me questions and my opinion, and I answer as honestly as I can. I have cleared this with the teacher, and he is in agreement with me. I become part of the class rather than an outsider watching their every move.

The high school is located in south Vancouver Island, and has just over 1100 students in grades nine through twelve. This intensive drama class is at the end of each school day and rather than fight the crowds and the long line of cars waiting to exit the area, I make the decision to stay within the theatre space and write field notes, and reflective memos in my journal. Playing with the idea of perceptions, and the title of their play, *As You Like It*, I change the title of my study to *As You See It: A documentary exploring student perceptions of a performance-based class*. Over the next four months, from November to the end of February, I will observe, write, interview, and videotape on a daily basis.

My Journal

I arrive with a coffee in hand, *grande in a venti* cup, 3 *Equal*, and filled to the top with skim milk. It must be almost cold by the time I give it to him. Still, he is appreciative. I am just

in time; I climb to the fourth row, and settle in to one of the red, plush, velvet seats typical of theatres across North America. So 'dramatic', those red seats! I ensconce myself into one, and pull out my pen, glasses and the spiral bound notebook I am using for my journal. Early on I decide that I will weave my field notes and my reflections together as this method will be useful to me as a researcher. It is "imperative" (O'Toole, 2006, p.100) that I write from the very beginning of the study right through to the final performance. I write before the class starts, during the class, and following the class, at the school or in the local coffee shop...

Sipping hot, green Zen tea, sweetened with a spoonful of honey, I watch the line-up surge and disperse as people satisfy their daily caffeine needs. I look around, seeking another table- a more private one. The small round table at which I sit, seems situated in an odd location. The line snakes around me at times, and several people bump the table. Although I am annoyed, I look up and smile. There are no other unoccupied tables, and so I continue to write. Soon it is time to make my way to the class. When I arrive and enter the theatre, the students mill about whilst waiting for class to begin. Two girls dance and sing *I'll Always Love You*. I take note of the camaraderie amongst the students, as I make my way to my 'usual' spot in the fourth row. I tuck my journal safely into my bag, surreptitiously remove the camcorder, and then zip my bag closed.

My journal never leaves my side for fear that I will lose it, or somebody will read it. Within it I write some of my opinions, which venture into criticisms, and I am reminded of O'Toole's (2006) caution to "keep a cool strip" (p.102). Although he does not explain what he means, I feel sure that I should aim for objectivity within my observations, and to keep my emotions in check. I use a selective lens through which to observe, knowing that I cannot capture every detail. I record my actions, and date every entry. My entries vary from descriptive to

reflective, including my thoughts on what has happened during each session, or describing a discussion with the teacher or my supervisor.

Some days I describe the setting:

> *The set is gone, and the stage is repainted black again. The odour is akin to a sweaty hockey dressing room. The drapes in the wings are knotted and hanging above the floor, probably to avoid wet paint...students wander in and out. (Dec. 6, 2011)*

Other days I record conversations:

> *Students nervously pace and run through their monologues.*
> *"I am not going to go today."*
> *"You have to."*
> *"I can't."*
> *"Whenever you're ready, my dear." (Dec. 14, 2011)*

And my reflections are caught throughout:

> *Students love to share their stories and the teacher has to cut them off to "move along". In the school day, are they heard? Does any other teacher engage them and offer them time to share. This is community building and he always includes me. (Dec. 13, 2011)*

Sarah peers over towards my notebook. "Are you writing about me?" she asks. I smile. "Not right now," I answer. She is one of my participants, and she has formed a bond with me. "No singletons," the teacher calls out, and she moves to be next to another student. The students clearly understand and accept this expectation of the group process. I decide that I like the "no singleton" rule, and I write about it in my journal. I write down other ideas that I snatch from this class. The research in terms of both observation and my scholarly readings, inform my teaching and my evolving philosophy of high school drama. I write, read, and write again. I read and reflect, and write. I embrace the quiet moments when I can immerse myself into journal writing.

One such quiet moment is during the first week of performances when I find a loft area on stage right. I arrive when the actors are scurrying about downstairs in preparations for the show. A darkened, deserted stage waits eagerly for the first few audience members to enter and take their seats. I look up, knowing that I would be undisturbed up there to write my notes from the previous night. It is difficult to maneuver as I crawl up a wide series of rungs made of two by fours. It does not feel secure as my foot balances on each narrow slat which threatens to give way, sending me crashing to the floor to shatter the sanctity of the fourth wall. With my bag slung over one shoulder and my tripod tucked under my other arm, I carefully make my way to the top, give a sigh of relief, and wonder how I will reverse the process, but I decide to worry about that later. Using my puffy, down-filled jacket as a cushion, I sit, and attach my book light to my journal. I start to write:

> *I am perched backstage up in a loft so I am looking down upon the stage. I am hoping to get different angles up here and be stealthy with my camera...I don't think I will stay up here for the entire first act....too long and I will probably drop something. (Feb. 15, 2012)*

I watch as several students walk below me, unaware that I am up here. The stage manager is ensconced in her focus as she scurries behind the backdrop curtains. Gradually, the students take their places in the wings below me, speaking softly to each other, stepping with light feet as they await their cues. Eventually, Sarah looks up, and smiles as she notices me. "Hey, what are you doing up there?" she asks. "Different view," I whisper back. The others look up and we wave and smile at each other. The show is about to start, and so I turn off the little lamp, put my journal away, and take out my camera.

I do not record every moment, every word. It is not possible, nor is it desirable. I filter and focus the ongoing action through a "selective lens" (O'Toole, 2006, p.101). I write on a daily

basis, describing what I see and hear; I comment on the physical environment including the smells and the temperature within the theatre:

> *I am back at the theatre and it reeks of green paint. Mr. Burke painted the floor after school and he should have done it on the weekend! It is just past seven and my head aches. The paint is still sticky and he has fans on it trying to rush a dry on it. (Feb. 13, 2012)*

I also use this journal as a forum for any of my immediate responses, my feelings, and my thoughts and opinions about what occurs during the class:

> *We just read through and discuss the meaning and costumes...it is taking some time, but I think it is worth it for the students to really grasp the meanings and I understand Mr. Burke's initial statement about providing the bones and it is up to students to put the meat on it. (Jan. 17, 2012)*

When I have moments of doubt, frustration, or difficulty, I record them as a form of "negative data" (O'Toole, 2006, p.102). Writing about these moments also serves as a release for my stress and helps me to stay positive, sometimes in a humorous way:

> *The other night I lay down, closed my eyes and saw highlighted text which began to scroll uncontrollably... (Jan. 18, 2012)*

Besides being an invaluable source of data, my journal and the process of writing in front of the participants, sets a positive example for their own journals.

Participants' Journals

I have several four-packs of Hilroy notebooks- pink, blue, green, and yellow. Flashbacks of elementary school and the soft colours of the notebooks warm my soul. I will let the students choose the colour they want, and the notebooks will become the participants' journals for the

duration of the study. Rather than allowing the students to free-write, I have decided that the participants will write a response to a specific question which I have framed. I do this because I hope that it will provide insights into what the students are thinking, and also, that it will ask the students to become reflective thinkers about what has happened during the rehearsals.

The questions I frame are related to their work, and ask them for their opinions or thoughts. The journals are prepared on a weekly basis, with the question typed and glued into each notebook. I decide that it will be a weekly response, and that I will collect the notebooks following each entry. My reasons are twofold: Firstly, the journals will always be with me and will not get lost or forgotten at home or in a locker. Secondly, I can take them home and transcribe the responses on a weekly basis. I made the decision not to do the daily entry as it would become onerous for the students who may start to regret joining the study, and it would create an overabundance of data for me to transcribe and analyze.

I have arranged for the writing to take place immediately following class on Wednesday afternoons. As Mr. Burke dismisses the students that first Wednesday, I call out a reminder for participants to meet me outside the lighting booth. I call down again, and the students slowly make their way up the stairs behind the seating. I have brought cookies. I see this not as a bribe, but as a snack for hungry teenagers who are asked to stay later after school. I often bake as I find it relaxing and almost therapeutic when I need to think things through. They are gracious and eagerly take a cookie to eat whilst writing.

“What if you can’t read my writing?” Ben asks. I assure him that I am pretty good at deciphering others’ writing and if I cannot understand something, I will ask for clarification the following day. “What about spelling and stuff?” Cam asks. “I am not worried about spelling or

grammar," I tell him. I remind them that I want their perspectives, and if they want to write in a different format, poetry or prose or point form, that would be fine with me. I encourage them to free-write based upon the prompt I will give them, and if they want to write about something else, they may do so. I also emphasize that these are strictly confidential, and that the teacher will not be reading them.

My first prompt gave a description of the process:

> *Your entries are free-writing. I will give you a sentence starter and you can write for the next 5-10 minutes. I will collect your journals, and bring them once a week, when we will gather at the end of class. I wish that you be as honest as possible, and know that you can write about the good, and the bad, the surprising or the mundane. The point of the journal is for me to get a view of your lived experience in a theatre performance class. I want to discover what it is you gain from this class, how you feel about the class, and I want to learn as much as possible from your perspective.*
>
> *For me, the experience of the audition process and the casting was...*
> *(Nov. 9, 2011)*

I take the journals home, and over the weekend, I read through and transcribe each entry. I notice some patterns, and start to formulate ideas of how to analyze and ultimately how to represent this data. I have decided to use a poetic voice with the students' journals. I am concerned about 'interpreting' the students' words whilst honoring their voices. So, I had a conversation with some authorities on the subject.

Poetic Inquiry

Me: I am not a poet.

Leggo (2008): We are all poets. (p.170)

Cahnmann (2003): We may not all write great popular or literary poems, but we can all draw on the craft and practice of poetry to realize its potential. (p.35)

Me: But I have never had a poem published. Is it presumptuous of me to think I can write poetically?

Leggo (2008): Play with the possibilities of language. (p.170)

Butler-Kisber (2002): Anyone and everyone can be artful. (p.238)

Swanson (2008): Provide a vivid, lyrical perspectival, and engaging expression of research. (p.86)

Me: Vivid? Lyrical? What about technique and form? Should I follow a certain form?

Honan (2008): There is no one singular direction, no one method to follow and certainly no prescriptive recipe. (p.93)

Cahnmann (2003): Explore poetic techniques and strategies. (p.35) Consider what poets do and learn how to incorporate rhythm, form, metaphor, and other poetic techniques. (p.29)

Prendergast (2006): Play with line breaks, patterns on the page, parentheses, and the occasional use of repetition for emphases. (p.372)

Steffler (1994): **Break all the rules**. There's more to poetry than decorated statement. (p.47, emphasis added)

Me: What more is there?

Neilsen (2008): Poetry is a tough master. (p.106)

Cahnmann (2003): Poetry is a risky business. (p.30)

Leggo (2008): Poetry seeks the truth about human experience. (p.171)

Steffler (1994): Poetry doesn't know anything. It tries to capture things, find things out. (p.51)

Eisner (1998): Poetry was invented to say what words can never say. (p.5)

Steffler (1994): Any strict categories about what poetry is or isn't, or about what it must involve or exclude by definition, are bound to be quickly refuted. (p.47)

Me: How will I know if my poem is good?

Leggo (2008): Perhaps the more important question is: What is a poem good for? (p.169)

*Me: Okay, what **is** a poem good for?*

Prendergast (2009): The best poetic inquiry will carry within it the power to move its audience affectively as well as intellectually. (p.xxii)

Neilsen (2008): Make sense of the world through poetry or narrative. (p.109)

Butler-Kisber (2002): I decided found poetry might offer a viable way of portraying what I was finding. (p.232)

Prendergast (2006): Its unique ability to capture and present aspects of the past (in memory), present (in experience), and future (in hope/fear). (p.370)

Me: What about honoring the participants' voices? If I play around with their words, won't I be manipulating the data?

Neilsen (2008): When I write expressively, and I try to make sense of the world through poetry, the poetry asks back in ways that conventional academic discourse does not. (p.109)

Butler-Kisber (2002): Found poem is my interpretation; a way of representing holistically what otherwise might go unnoticed. (p.234)

Cahnmann (2003): I have used poetic sensibilities to delete some words. The difference between truth and Truth is a controversial topic. (p.35)

Me: Hmm, before I start, is there anything else I should know?

Neilsen (2008): Exhausted metaphors: quilting, walking, journeys, gardens. (p.107)

Me: I'll avoid those. Thanks.

I am wary of simply centring my data, or writing "phrases on the page, undistilled, clichéd, clumsy and purpled and generic" (Neilsen, 2008, p.107). Neilsen goes on to encourage poets to "take me there...show me...use vivid, sensory language...that makes the world come alive (p.109), but I do not want to manipulate the language to the point of misinterpretation of the data. I struggle with this, but am buoyed by Leggo's (2008) words in regards to poetry, "we are all poets" but "have lost our creative energy for living poetically" (p.170) and Eisner's (1996) words regarding ambiguity in alternative forms of research as a "potential source of insight" and offering "multiple perspectives" (p.9). I decide to play with the words, use poetic techniques, interpret the data, and strike a balance between creativity and honoring the participants' voices. In using poetic inquiry, my goal is similar to Butler-Kisber's (2002): to "bring the researcher

closer to the data in different and sometimes unusual ways that can yield new and important insights" (p. 235).

The Interviews

"Should I look into the camera or at you?" he asks. "At me," I reply smiling. He has asked this same question for each of the three interviews and I am surprised that he does not remember.

The next participant sits down facing me and the camera. Her eyes look towards me and then at the camera. "You can look at me," I tell her. "Okay. Is it on?" she asks. "Yes, there's just no red light," I answer, and we both start laughing. I don't know why. Maybe it is nervous laughter on both of our parts.

Addressing the concerns and questions of the participants was the least of my problems in using video whilst conducting the interviews. The first difficulty was choosing a convenient time that would suit both me and my participants. After school did not work for many students due to their commitments in other classes, such as musical theatre. Also, many were involved in sports, or had after school jobs. The only viable option was to conduct interviews during the school day, which was approved by both the classroom teacher and the administration, provided I did not interrupt the learning within the class itself. This led to another problem: finding a quiet space in which to conduct interviews within an over-populated school. I initially went in the hallway but soon found it was not only a very disruptive place with noisy students and staff members, but the sound quality was poor, and our voices echoed. I moved to the booth enclosed by glass, and then the costume area below the stage, but the voices from the theatre were heard clearly in both of these spaces. It was not until the third round of interviews that the teacher found me a small

space inside the school's office. Although I could hear the exterior door to the office open and close, it was the best choice I had.

"This is where we got our shots in grade nine," Alli confides in me. "I was so scared." In support, I disclose my fear of needles too. I tell her that at least the interview won't hurt. We both laugh.

My interview questions have been formulated well before I ask them. They were scrutinized by and received approval from both the university's ethics board as well as the school board (Appendix A). I decide that three sets of interviews will complement my study. The timing is of utmost importance, as I need to gain their perspectives before the formal rehearsals start, just prior to the performance week, and after the final performance. It will be my first time as a researcher-interviewer, and I refer to Kvale's (1996) book, *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing* to gain some insight on the process. Once I have garnered a sufficient number of participants, I am eager to begin the interviews. With eleven students, I know the interviews will require at least a week to complete.

Interview one

The paper with numbered questions in one hand, and the pen grasped between the fingers of my other hand lend a formality to the procedure. However, once I start the process, I invoke a natural and open approach with each participant. I set them at ease simply by laughing at some inconsequential thing such as a loud voice in the background or re-positioning the camera. Paul (pseudonym) is the first interviewee and we set up in the hallway. There is an assembly going on in the theatre, so it is quite noisy and there is a steady stream of students in the hall. I pause each time one passes. It is disruptive and I lose my train of thought more than

once. I turn the video off and wait patiently when there is a group of students walking past. I realize quickly that this spot is not suitable. We manage to finish the interview, but I am not satisfied with this area, and as Paul returns to his class, I search for other options. I find an alcove with walls adorned with students' modern art. It seems fitting to have this as a backdrop, and it is aesthetically more pleasing than the grey lockers and the white-painted cement blocks of the previous setting. However, it is still in the hallway, which means I continue to have issues with both sound quality and interruptions as students walk pass. I thank the second participant and as she leaves, I proceed to collapse the tripod.

The next day I continue my interviews. This time, I set up in the booth in the hopes of a more private and quiet location. A lighting board, a computer, and some sound equipment contained within the booth provide ambience. I am pleased that there are no disruptions, but it is not as quiet as I had hoped. I can hear through the glass enclosure, and I am sure that this will be picked up on the video. I think ahead to the documentary I hope to make and wonder if I will be able to use any of this footage. With Julia, I move the interview to the costume room, and although I can hear the class working, it is more muted than in the other locations. She brings up the accepting nature of the typical theatre student, and describes them:

> Julia: *Well, I think I'm a little biased...but I honestly think they're a lot more accepting of people who are considered kind of like weird or not quite in with the group because we do get a lot of, we're kind of misfits (laughs). I think we're definitely a lot more accepting and outgoing. Like you get a lot of confidence from this course I find. (Nov. 18, 2011)*

I decide that I will ask the other participants this question as well. The themes of acceptance of others and self-confidence recur many times throughout the interviews.

Interview two

The technical run is held on the Sunday prior to the opening week. Each student has brought a potluck item, and we will gather in the staff room for dinner later in the afternoon. Although the run through starts at 10 am, I arrive after lunch in order to conduct the pre-performance interviews. How are the participants feeling about the show? What are their frustrations? What are their challenges? I set up my camera in an alcove flooded with natural light. It is a Sunday and there are no interruptions by other students or staff members. The sound continues to be an issue as the participants' voices echo during the interview. I manage to get through all but one interview, and decide that I will complete that tomorrow. I begin each interview by asking if there are any frustrations or challenges. The participants are candid and some themes such as boredom, role size, and lack of understanding of director's vision are repeated.

> Sarah: *I haven't been able to get that much of a part. I just got my line within the last month of rehearsals. (February 12, 2012)*
>
> Rebecca: *A bit of frustration only because I have a small role. It's just you're kind of bored the whole time and you don't get to experience a whole lot. But I mean, it's still fun- but you don't get to do a whole lot. (February 12, 2012)*
>
> Alli: *I think the whole 1960's thing was kind of frustrating for me especially when costumes came round 'cause I don't think he was very accurate with the costumes. (February 12, 2012)*
>
> Dana: *Frustrations kind of with the set 'cause I thought it was going to look a bit different. (February 12, 2012)*
>
> Ben: *And then one of my frustrations is I can't seem to get what Mr. Burke wants and then every rehearsal he'll tell me the same thing. (February 12, 2012)*

Interview three

The week following the final performance, I return to the class in order to carry out the last of the interviews. On the Tuesday, we form a semi-circle on the stage, and we conduct a discussion panel. In light of a small nine person audience on one evening, the students reflect on a two week run, and whether or not it should be continued. It is an open forum, and it is informal as students share opinions with each other. The general consensus is that regardless of how many audience members there are, a two week run is a worthwhile experience in order to further develop each actor's character. I record this exchange as part of a focus group interview, and will only use the portions in which the participants spoke. Over the next three days, I complete the post-performance interviews on an individual basis. The teacher has found a quiet room within the office, and I wish that I had used it for the previous sets of interviews. Both the lighting and the sound are good. Two participants have been ill, and I must return the following week for their final interviews. There is a short interruption as schools are closed for three days due to teacher action and contract negotiations, but I am able to complete the interviews and I am satisfied. I ask Paul, the final participant, to give me a metaphor for the journey he has taken in drama from grade nine through twelve. He is well known for his metaphors which are usually preceded by a groan from the other students, and although his words can be convoluted, they are entertaining, and usually receive laughter from the class:

> Paul: *Drama is like grocery shopping. You start off and you have a cart with you, and it's like all the food items are experiences you take with you...right?...there's a lot of selection there, and you don't really know what you're getting...and that's like the grade nine year...you see other people and you say: How do you know what meat to buy? You keep going to the next aisle- grade ten. And you're more familiar with soups and pastas...And you get a little more comfortable...and you're in the cereal aisle. I'm familiar with this; I'm happy with this. I love Captain Crunch; put that in there. You go around and you're in the bulk food*

section. I have enough groceries, I don't really need anything, but I'll get a bag of candy too. Then you go to the check out, and as you're leaving the grocery store, you're looking at all these things, and say: Oh yeah, I bought this meat when I was not that comfortable in the grocery store and cereal too. You kind of look back on your experiences when you're done drama and you've taken in a different kind of experience for each year and that's what you leave with when you're done. (March 9, 2012)

Digital Video as Research: The Medium is the Message

Found Poetry: Digital Video as Research (Shrum, Duque, and Brown, 2005)

A primer on digital video
for those of you new
to this technology
and that seems almost
impossible
in today's world,
the twenty-first century
where video is a part
of the social landscape
a camera consciousness.
MTV, CCTV, LCD, DVD
The digital era arrived and
the hardware is
smaller, lighter, cheaper
easier to operate
edited and copied indefinitely...
indefinitely...
viewed, copied, published
indefinitely...
for delivery anywhere in the world,
a host of ethical issues.
Decisions, decisions, decisions:
where and how long to film?
placement of camera?
choice of frame angle?
use of dramatic camerawork?
Explain what you are doing and
turn the camera on yourself
let them film you
and you become both

participant and observer;
they become filmmaker and
the boundary is blurred,
creating complex research protocols
new dimensions of this
digitalized life world.
Methodologies of the new millennium.

"I promise," I assure them, "I will be judicious with my filming." My committee members' concern is that I will be inundated with video footage to sift through and they both caution me to carefully choose what and when I film. In so far as my data collection goes, my video footage is by far the vastest. I do not film constantly, and I make every attempt to keep my clips under a minute at any given time. I know that when the time comes to analyze the footage, in order to edit it, I will not want to watch hours of film. Short clips are easier to navigate. I also set up files on my laptop to categorize the type of clips I shoot. For example, I have a file for audition shots, and another file for improvisation games. I have separate files for each of the three interview sessions. In all, I have created over a dozen files. I upload the video clips on a regular basis, and sort them into the appropriate files.

Mervyn (2008) posits that "video ethnography is arguably the twenty-first century version of the case study" and that it "lays out the story visually" (p.124). I agree with her, particularly when she states that she cannot capture in words the "beautiful and emotionally charged moments and relationships" (p.127). I have several film clips that capture moments that were surprising and unexpected. The expressions on the faces are animated and unique, yet ephemeral and not likely to have been documented effectively in writing. When Marshall McLuhan states "the medium is the message" (as cited in O'Toole, 2001, p.154), I realize that my documentary film will be the message: it will document the students' perspective far better

than I could relate it in writing. It will be more engaging and enlightening. By using film as my primary form of representation, I also hope to reach a wider audience making the research more accessible.

In earlier years, this kind of creative approach to filmmaking would have been disregarded as un-scientific. In the past, authentic researchers would "avoid close-ups and attempt to film 'whole' contexts, activities and actions...minimally edited and use only original synchronous sound" (Pink, 2001, p. 139). The main purpose of the film footage was to be data "stored as a film archive" (p.79) and not meant for the general public. My intention is to represent the individuals, and make a more creative and expressive film. As Pink states, it will be one in which the "individuals rather than 'whole cultures' dominate and the subjectivities of both filmmakers and subjects are appreciated" (p.139).

It was natural for me to want to use film as a method of collecting data and then take that data and represent it creatively as a documentary film. Like Leggo (2008), who "lives in a world as a poet" (p.165), I live in a world of film: I see everything in video form; I see shots and angles; I see stories and movement; I see transitions and cross fades. Similar to Christini Ri (2008), I am "seeing the world of my research through the lens of my cameras and analyzing my material with a mind of a filmmaker" (p.139). My interest in filmmaking started in childhood, but I did not take a formal film-making class until I was in my forties. As part of my professional development, I enrolled in a summer, week-long, intensive filmmaking course for adults held at GIFTS (Gulf Islands Film and Television School). That September, I started the first *Film and Television* course at my high school for grades eleven and twelve.

I was introduced to film-making at the early age of nine when my father started using Super 8 mm film to document our family's 'story'. This meant short, silent films of the four children figure skating, knitting, exploring a park, attending the fairgrounds, and performing a play in full costume. Today, I dig through an old, white shoebox (Shoes Shipyard; Size 9 ½) filled with small reels of Kodachrome film. The box is held together with remnants of thick tape long past its ability to stick: dry, brittle and yellowed with age. I reminisce as I read the titles upon each little Kodak box with their signature colours of yellow, red, and black. I find the one I am looking for: *The Poisoned Apple starring the Duncan children*. I instantly recognize my mother's familiar handwriting; and I already see the footage of us 'Duncan children' dressed in the costumes she so lovingly made for each of us.

By using some of the clips from this little grey, plastic reel that looks almost toy-like, I place myself as researcher within my project. I have taken Pink's (2001) words to heart, that home movies may become ethnographic "when they are implicated in an ethnographic project" (p.79). I have connected my past experiences in film and drama to my current investigation, and will interpret the video clips to creatively edit and construct a documentary film that I hope will tell an expressive narrative that is contextual; one that evocatively represents the participants' story.

In documentary film making, I have many choices to make and several problems to address. Before I start any filming at all, I must have equipment. However, I do not have a budget from which to operate. I borrow an old tripod and an HD camcorder from a colleague, and I use my weary and overloaded laptop to temporarily store my video files until I can purchase a new computer and some editing software. This will be a zero budget film, but I am determined to make an excellent film; one with the potential to enter film festivals.

The ethics process is particularly arduous when it concerns video and students. I have two consent forms for the participants: one for the individual participant to sign, and one for his or her parent(s) to sign. Both forms grant consent for me to film the student and display the finished film in a variety of settings (Appendix B). I also have a form for the rest of the students who are non-participants. This allows me to film these students as well, and both student and his/her parent(s) must sign it. Although the documentary will focus upon the participants, the other students are part of the process, and it would be near impossible to film this process without group shots. The teacher has a video consent form that he has signed, as he will also be part of the documentary. In total, five students do not return forms, and although I try to avoid filming them, it is difficult due to the many group activities involved in a drama class. I will make sure that if any of the five appear in my shots, I use an editing technique, such as blurring, to ensure each one's anonymity.

All of the students in this class have used cameras, and they do not seem surprised or annoyed that an observer will be filming them. The vast majority of the students not only agree to be part of the film, but many enjoy the idea that I will be capturing them on film, and creating a documentary about their performance class. I have told them that I will preview it in the first week of June, before I submit it as part of my thesis, and they are eager for my return when I show them the final film. By allowing the participants to view the film first, I hope to receive feedback which will allow me time to make any necessary changes. I indicate to all the students participating in the film that I will make copies for each of them. By doing this, I feel that I am giving something back to them; something that in essence, we 'created' together. As Pink (2001) has suggested, a copy of the DVD could be an "appropriate return" (p.45) to the participants.

Over the course of my observation period, I encounter a number of problems in using video as a method. Collecting permission forms from all of the students in the class is my first hurdle. Whether the five students do not want to be in the film, or they just keep losing the forms, I do not know. Because I do not have waiver forms, I cannot have them in any video clips, and as mentioned previously, I will have to use editing techniques to remove them. This is unfortunate as it means I will be unable to use most of the large group shots.

Another difficulty with video concerns the technological aspects of it. There are a limited number of electrical outlets within the theatre, so my battery is fully charged each day, and even then, I run low on power. A spare battery is a good idea. Also, although the camera is high definition, it is by no means a piece of quality recording equipment. Even so, I make do, and am grateful to the colleague who lent it to me. The camera has an internal microphone, and attaching an external one is not an option. This is unfortunate given that external microphones give better sound quality whilst internal ones often pick up sounds from the camera. Also, I continually struggle with lighting and sound from the theatre. The school, like most, is lit with fluorescent lights which give inconsistent colour and intensity. I do not have lighting kits, and as I am a one-woman film crew, I make do. The walls are echo-y in the hallways and the front foyer, and within the theatre, the fan runs until 2:30 pm, well into the class. Again, I do the best I can, and will ‘play’ with the sound editing when the time comes.

A third difficulty, which Shrum et al. (2005) identified, was that of “people continually mugging for the camera and referring to the fact that they are being filmed” (p.10). My use of the camera appeals to this particular group of people who love to perform. Unfortunately, they also see the camera ‘rolling’ and decide to put on a performance of a different sort. This happens several times throughout my observation period, and I immediately turn the camera away from

them. They soon learn that I am not interested in this type of performance, and it occurs less frequently. The teacher is also guilty of this, as he ‘directs’ my attention to capture a specific person or discussion on film. Although I am appreciative of this ‘help’, I desire a more spontaneous form of filming.

Spontaneity allows me to capture those unexpected moments, but I also miss a few ‘nuggets’. Although I regret those misses, I do not roll the camera constantly. I am aware that as an observer, I am an intruder and invariably I shift the dynamics of the class. The camera adds to this effect and I use it with discretion, and in a limited fashion. I ask the teacher if I can participate in class activities, and he agrees without hesitation. Immediately I become both observer and participant, which lessens the sense of intrusion. The students and the teacher are very accepting of me, and it does not take long for me to become a member of the class. I am grateful to the teacher who helped facilitate my entry and ultimately my acceptance into this ‘culture’.

The students know from the start that I will be using a camera on a daily basis, but I try to be discrete with it in order to be less disruptive to the class. The camera is stored inside my bag until I need it, and I alternate between a formal tripod method and a more casual hand-held approach. When I step onto the stage to participate with the class, the camera is in my hands, but held to my side. I decide that I will not use the red light indicator, as I find this distracts the students, and encourages the ‘mugging’ effect. By choosing to disable the red light, I am going against the advice of Shrum et al. (2005) who never “advocate filming without” it (p.12). However, I do believe that both participants and the teacher have a final say in what I choose to film. On several occasions, I am asked, by the teacher, not to film something, and I immediately ensure the camera is not running. It is important that I maintain their trust. Often, I inform the

students if the filming I am doing is solely for my records. Like Jackson (2004), some of the shots I take are for my eyes only, “a kind of video note taking” (p.39), whilst others are “earmarked” for my documentary film.

My final film is an artistic interpretation of the students’ story rather than raw and linear footage. I used filming and editing techniques to create a more expressive film. I chose to use both methods of filming: handheld and using a tripod. I also made the conscious decision to film shots that have different angles and close-ups. With few exceptions, I decided when to film, and where to set up my camera. As I edited, I continued to make cinematographic decisions to create a more compelling and evocative film. I recognize the subjectivity and specificity involved in this process and my goal is to focus on the students’ individual experiences.

The entire process of editing is labour intensive, and as my shoulders cramp up, I have utmost respect for people who edit film. Although I love this part of the analysis, I cannot do it for extended periods of time. It is detailed work, and a section of ten seconds of finished film can take several hours to edit. Most often, this is due to the creative process and decision making in terms of: what clips to include and which ones to omit; organizing the clips and how to integrate the interview footage; when to use a voice-over and when to use a narrative subtitle to guide the viewer through the ‘story’. In addition to these decisions come the problems associated with digital video editing:

- Quality of sound, including background noises, internal camera noises, participants who speak quietly or mumble
- Quality of light or lack of light
- Glitches with the software program

- Changing footage to match ratio of 16:9
- Masking students without permission forms who appear in group scenes
- Music used by teacher in performance cannot be included in film due to copyright

When I ‘give back’ to the participants in the form of a DVD copy of my film, it is a small token of my appreciation I have for them. They have allowed me access beyond their physical performances, to their thoughts, opinions, and feelings. I agree with Jackson (2004) who states that the video is “capturing, at the very least, their physical likenesses and, according to some, their very souls” (p.39).

“She’s going to make us famous,” Dana claims. The others laugh, and she joins them. I know that she, along with the other participants, has put her heart and soul into this entire process: rehearsals, performances, journal writing, and the interviews. I am humbled by their dedication and commitment to my research project, and I harness that attitude to pour myself, heart and soul, into the creation of the documentary highlighting these young people’s story.

CHAPTER FOUR
Data Analysis

The medium is the message

What follows is a short introduction to the major approach I used to analyze and represent the data: the documentary film, *As You See It*. The data is presented visually for a number of reasons. In a sense, it is a performative piece in that the viewer is watching the participants as they prepare for a performance whilst they participate in the study, which makes the film a combination of both product and process. By using film as the medium, I am exploring the possibilities of video production as an approach to analysis and representation, and I would invite you, the reader, to view the documentary film after reading this chapter.

In her book, *Method Meets Art: Arts-based research practice*, Patricia Leavy (2009) describes an experience in which she gave her father her published articles to read, and he responded: "looks impressive but there is too much jargon, I just don't get it" (p.vii). I like this story because it seems like something my father would say as well. I decided to use arts-based research because I wanted to reach an audience beyond that of the academic world. I chose to analyze, interpret, and represent my data in two artistic formats: digital film and poetic inquiry. Marshall McLuhan's quote, "The medium is the message" (as cited in O'Toole, 2006, p. 154), sums up the reasons I used film and poetry in my study. Both of these formats reflect my research "in a way that the chosen audience will find appealing and enlightening" (O'Toole, 2006, p. 154).

Also, as a drama teacher, I was drawn to an artistic rather than a traditional approach to my thesis. Leavy (2009) states "art is immediate" (p. 255) and also, it communicates in "an

aesthetically interesting way" (p. 255). According to Leavy (2009), there are two important accomplishments of using art as representation. First, my research has the ability to reach a broader audience, one that is beyond academia. I hope to eventually enter my film in an ethnographic film festival. The second contribution, as noted by Leavy (2009) is that "the arts have the capability to evoke emotions, promote reflection, and transform the way people think" (p. 255). My goal is that both the film and the poetry will raise questions and promote discussion regarding the approach we currently use in high school drama.

In this chapter, I will briefly introduce my documentary film, in DVD format, which represents the analysis of my video data and I will present, in poetic form, my analysis and subsequent interpretation of the data garnered from the students' journals. I saw recurring themes within the students' journal entries and used these themes to create the poetry presented within this chapter.

As You See It: A Documentary Film

O'Toole (2006) refers to filming rehearsals and performances as "a simple, often used strategy" (p.106). I would disagree with the first part of his description, that filming is "simple". I would not describe it as difficult, but I did encounter many problems associated with filming. These problems are outlined in my methodology chapter, so I will not repeat them here. However, I worked through the difficulties and by filming, I was able to capture visual and auditory images that I felt would best represent the data.

I will concede that like all photography and film, it is captured through the photographer's lens and as such, I would agree with Leavy (2009) who states that "visual art production can be likened to journaling" (p.215) because I have created it through my vantage

point. Leavy (2009) also emphasizes that it is important to "provide context" (p.217) within researcher-produced images, and I did this by narrating with a voice-over throughout the film and also by using narrative through subtitles, both of which help guide the viewer through the film.

I had been cautioned to be wary of how often I filmed, as it could leave me with an over abundance of data. Although I tried to be judicious by not filming constantly, I found that my video data was somewhat overwhelming, and it took me longer than expected to sort, collate, and edit the film footage. What I eventually found were recurring themes of anxiety with auditions, the competitive nature of casting, the boredom during rehearsals, drama seen as for the talented, a sense of bonding, relationships, all of which are highlighted in the documentary film, as well as the poetry.

In order to present to different audiences, I have made two versions of the documentary- one for participants and one as part of my thesis for my Masters- and will most likely make a third version for possible submission to film festivals. The version I created for the participants is a chronological look at their production of *As You Like It.* Each student received a DVD copy of this version as an "appropriate return" (Pink, 2001, p.45) for being participants in my study. This version did not include my analysis in the form of a voice-over. It was simply a documentation of their entire experience, including clips from the interviews. When screened for them prior to the end of the school year, their response was to give me a standing ovation. They are aware that other versions will be created, what the key differences are, and who the audience will be for these versions. I entitled the documentary *As You See It*, as a fusion of the play's title and my research question which focused upon the students' perspectives of a performance-based class.

Poetic Inquiry

In creating poetry to represent my data, I hope to create what Leavy (2009) describes as an "*essence*" of my research topic in a "vivid, sensory" way (p.260). Although this involves a "drastic reduction of data" (Leavy, 2009, p.260) I hope to express my "own thoughts and words of others through the re-creation of their texts" (Prendergast, 2006, p.372). The text is taken from the participants' weekly journals, and each poem represents multiple voices. As Prendergast (2009) suggests, I have blended the participants' voices with mine, the researcher. The latter voice is indicated through the use of italics. A different theme is highlighted in each poem, and I have chosen to poetically represent what theatre means to them and how they felt during the three key stages in a theatrical production: the audition process, the rehearsals, and the performance week.

My goal in using poetic inquiry is to offer what Leavy (2009) calls a "*feeling picture"* (p.64) in which the reader receives a sensory view of the students' experiences and perspectives. According to Prendergast (2009), these poems fall within the "Vox Participare" (p.xxii) category since they represent the participants' voices. Although the documentary film represents the bulk of my analysis and representation, I have used poetic inquiry, as Cahnmann (2003) has suggested, to "enhance and add" to my research (p.34).

I will end with the words of Nitya Pandey (2012) taken from "Colours All Around" in the *Kathmandu Post*. Far from home in Nepal, I sat upright as I read this article. I had taken a break from my research to complete a ten day trek through the Himalayas with my husband. Because I did not want to abandon my research completely, I had packed a notebook and a copy of the transcribed notes I had taken from the participants' journals, and in the midst of the hike, I

composed two of the poems that follow. Ms. Pandey's words described how I felt about my interpretation of the data:

> Our interpretations are always a product of our mindsets, environments, and cultures. It is impossible to the paint the world in our favourite colour. So, we see the world through the coloured glasses of our choice. And what we perceive is neither right or (*sic*) wrong. It is just different. (p.7)

DRAMA

(A Great Learning Experience)

Benji: There's no way for me to explain it in depth.
Me: Maybe our collective thoughts can explain it better.
Graeme: No matter your grade...
Me: All of you, grades nine through twelve.
Graeme: It looks like a course being taken just for fun.
Me: Let's see...

In drama, we learn how to...

...act
...public speak
...express ourselves
...take instruction

We...

...cooperate and work with others
...work to make something...big
...go through a process as a team
...get along
...become more social
...get to know people

Each student will...

...set standards for yourself
...develop personal confidence
...be comfortable with who you are
...become far more outgoing
...be braver and confident

Drama makes...

...life more fun
... me the person I am today
...unique opportunities
...good friendships
...bonds and forms a family
...being weird okay.

Auditions

(Could you hear me?)

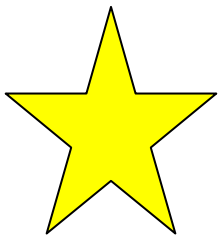
ANXIOUS SHAKEY
SCARY TERRIFYING
NERVE WRACKING
BUTTERFLIES
VULNERABLE

I love competition...
It's enthralling, riveting, exciting.
I did really well.
One of the larger parts!
I'm happy with my role.
Incredibly grateful.

It seemed unfair to me.
I feel naked on stage.
Not my best...
A two-line role?
I am put off.
Disappointed faces.

There's a flaw in this process
A lack of time?
It cannot be perfect.
At least I got a part.
In-ter-est-ing...

I am the



Rehearsals

(Sit and Wait)

If you have lines...fun

If not, boring.

Really boring

Nothing to do

Find something else to do

Assignments?

It's a bit much

Too much freedom?

It isn't the best

Gets dull

It's pretty chaotic

So much work

BUT

When things start to gel

It works really well

With attention to detail

And from the rehearsal,

Comes something magical.

Performance Week

(Bonding)

Rehearsing, bonding, laughing,

Barely able to catch my breath

Stressful, exciting, successful

An incredible experience

Spare time, silliness, together

Hanging in the wings

Exhausting, draining, tiring

Closer as a group

Crazy, doodling, new friends

Our little theatre family

Ridiculous, insane, memories

Gone so fast.

Please view the documentary film at this point:

See
As You ~~Like~~ It:

A documentary exploring student perceptions of a performance-based class

CHAPTER FIVE

The End is the Beginning

Looking for Life's Beauty and Joy...

To me, art in any format represents the beauty we experience in life through all aspects of the emotional spectrum, whether it is joyful or sorrowful. As humans, we are social, physical, emotional, and intellectual beings who express ourselves best through artistic endeavors. Of all the arts, I believe that theatre has the unique ability to truly represent the human experience, for both the participant and the observer. I see beauty and joy in every student, and I know that through theatre, each one of them will go through an exploration of self, and others. The purpose of my study was to discover students' perspectives of a performance-based class. Through this study, I discovered many things about myself, about others, the students in particular, and how drama affects students. I saw Dana's eyes and face light up as she described her feelings about theatre. I witnessed joy in Cam, the dyslexic student who first struggled with the written words and then grew in confidence as the character became his own and he could let go of the script. I experienced the beauty of discovery in Sarah, a student struggling to feel accepted, who found by the end of this class, she had been accepted all the while.

When I started this study, I believed in the transformative power of theatre, and I was adamant that drama class meant that there had to be a theatrical performance as the end product. When I write about my observations of the drama teacher, I am also writing about me. I taught in this manner because I did not think there was another way, and because I thought the students loved the entire process. What I have learned is that they enjoy the end result...the live performances, but not all of them enjoy the process along the way. Because of my findings, I

have turned away from the focus on mainstream musicals and plays for the yearly school production, and turned towards a process-oriented drama class in which the focus shifts from a polished performance to an exploration through drama. I still believe that a performance by students in high school has value, but how much educative value is dependent upon the approach taken. Through my study I have come to the conclusion that drama in an educational setting should allow all of the students to shine, not just the 'stars' of the show.

In the first few weeks of my observation period, I began to feel like I had stepped out of my body and was watching myself teach drama. After all, this was the identical manner in which I taught. I held auditions, I cast amongst a group of anxious students, all eager to receive the leading role, and I held rehearsals for several months before performing to a public audience. In comparison to my fellow drama teachers in nearby districts, I was a relative *newbie*, having only taken over the drama position at my high school five years ago. However, after several shows including musicals, Shakespeare, and romantic comedies, there was something missing. Besides my yearly exhaustion, I began to wonder how educative this entire process was for the students who had minor roles, and were not required to be on the stage very often. In fact, my contact time with them was limited at best. My study began to take form as I questioned the educative value of a performance-based class.

In the end, I found that these young adults who agreed to be my participants were candid, and shared their ideas and opinions through interviews, written journal entries, and open-forum discussions. Although they experienced the euphoric 'high' following the final performance, with glowing, positive reviews of this drama program, they expressed, both directly and indirectly, a need for more. By listening to these students, I realized that the performance class

experience can become more educative for all students, and still maintain that feeling of success and euphoria. In this final chapter, I identify and discuss:

- Problems inherent within a performance-based class
- Alternatives to the traditional high school approach
- Implications for the future of drama in high school.

According to Cousins (2000), "it could take a huge effort to change the current status of drama in education" (p.92), especially for high schools so entrenched in the mentality that we must, at all costs, stage a mainstream musical or play. It may mean taking performance classes in a different direction, one in which the students are given a chance to express their opinions, make decisions, collaborate, and focus on their individual learning needs rather than the needs of the institution or the needs of a few who have stars in their eyes. Or it could mean a performance class where the students take on an active role in the rehearsal process and share in the interpretation of the characters, and take on some directorial duties (Bailin, 2001). In any case, the focus should be on the exploration for each student rather than on the end product, a vehicle meant to drive the PR of the school with one or two students in the front seat. By shifting the focus, each student will have the opportunity to shine; drama class will not be for the talented few; and students will have another avenue for finding life's beauty and joy.

Problems Inherent within a Performance-based Class

Through this study, I gained the perspectives of the students who directly and indirectly stated their opinions of the process of participating in a performance-based class. The data I gathered through interviews, journals, video recordings, and observations gave me an insight into the students' world of drama, both positive and negative. It was clear to me that almost all of the

students experienced the positive, euphoric outcome of a performance where everyone has worked together for a common goal and in the process have bonded as friends. However, I had to look beyond that exhilaration which always comes at the end of a successful theatrical performance, and interpret the data which ultimately outlined the key problems of a performance-based class:

- It is not student-centred
- It is competitive
- It is for the talented few

As noted in the literature review, many scholars of drama education (Gilbert, 2003; Murrell, 2003; Danby & Upitis, 1989; Jackson, 2005; Lazarus, 2004; Gonzalez, 2006) advocate against the traditional mainstream high school production led by a teacher-director with little input from the students. By collaborating, sharing ideas, and taking an active role, students become vested in a production and they claim ownership. Using a dialogic approach between student and teacher, results in a creative collaboration that ultimately benefits the students.

If we adapt the traditional, mainstream school play to "accommodate students' diverse backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, and creativity" (Cousins, 2000, p.93) then we truly may be providing an education that is student driven. It is more than likely that this could have an effect on the transformative aspect of theatre performance, the personal development of each student, and the further development of their aesthetic values.

Although Mr. Burke was open to suggestions, and encouraged the students to come prepared with ideas, the teacher-director made all of the major decisions. In order for the students to feel ownership of the production, it needs to start before the planning stage. It may be

frightening to any teacher to start the school year with no solid plan, but in doing so, the drama teacher can truly set the stage for the students to take ownership by being open to their input on play selection. From there, an open dialogue would allow students to discuss and conceptualize their ideas from set design to costumes and make-up. Rather than telling each student when, where, and how to move, the teacher would relinquish some control of the creative process to the students. This is not to say that the teacher has no authority or control, but shifts the process away from being solely teacher-directed and moves towards a more student-centred approach.

The second problem I noticed was the competitive nature of auditions and casting. The senior students seemed more at ease with the audition process, possibly because they had done it several times before, but also there seemed to be the accepted expectation that senior students would have 'paid their dues' and would eventually have a large role. However, it soon became clear, through my observation of students pacing and rehearsing their audition pieces for several days, auditions were a nerve-wracking experience for all of the students and they were filled with the tension that comes with all competitions. The participants also expressed this anxiety and pressure in both the interviews and their journals.

During her first interview following the casting, Dana who was given the lead role, spoke of the excitement of the audition process and stated: "I love competitions." Others did not feel so enthralled. Sarah spoke of her disappointment upon learning that she had been cast as an extra. In order to understand why she did not get a bigger role she said: "I'm going to speak to him after school." A senior student, Rebecca, lamented the fact that she received a minor role and would have liked a bigger part, but said she understood that casting was difficult.

We live in a competitive world, and even schools compete for students, but I do not believe that drama class should be the place for competition. To me, drama should be inclusive and collaborative, not competitive. There are play competitions and improv games in which to compete, but both of these are usually extra-curricular, similar to the competitive sports teams in high school. By having students audition and compete against each other for a few coveted roles, we are setting the majority up for disappointment. Most of the students will receive supporting and minor roles, most likely not the ones for which they auditioned.

The students who receive the characters with no names (the servants, the lords and ladies, or the chorus members) are akin to the students added to the basketball team, but benched for most of the games because they are not talented enough to play. To the credit of drama teachers, they rarely cut students from the 'team' and every attempt is made to assign roles, divide characters' lines or add lines to a scripted play. However, these roles are usually assigned to students who are deemed to have little talent. This leads me to what I see as the third problem associated with these performance-based classes: it is for the talented few.

Drama should allow all students to shine. During the first interview with Rebecca, she said that she could not do musical theatre because she could not sing. Mr. Burke stated: "I always cast based on talent." He did not see another method that would work. Both student and teacher are caught in the principle that if one is not talented, then a lead role is out of your reach; that a student who does not have natural talent, will not improve under the guidance and support of a teacher; that drama is indeed solely for the talented.

In most shows, there are two leads and a few supporting characters, with the remaining roles as extras, chorus, or walk-ons with one line. These students will wait weeks, possibly

months, before being called to the stage for rehearsal. During the run of the performances, these students will spend the majority of their time in the wings and backstage. If the performance class is held during the regular school day, like the one in my study, there will be a lot of 'sit and wait' time for some students. If the class is held after school hours, which is the case for many schools, the students who are given minor roles will seldom be called to rehearsal. They are simply not needed that often. If they attend, they too will sit and wait until their characters make brief appearances on stage. During this 'sit and wait' time, the participants in my study expressed boredom, even though they were free to read, do homework, or talk quietly amongst themselves. In an attempt to address this boredom, Mr. Burke created extra assignments, which seemed to be busy work, and unrelated to the main production.

Is there a solution that would make a performance-based class student-centred, non-competitive, inclusive and equitable for all? It may not be well received, but I believe the performance-based musical or play performed by thousands of high schools each year, cannot address all of these issues. It has the possibility of being more student-centred, but it cannot help but be competitive, exclusive, and inequitable to students. If we want to provide an enriching, meaningful, and educative experience to students, we need to look at alternate ways to approach high school drama.

Alternatives to the Traditional High School Approach

Throughout my observation period of four months, I kept a personal journal in which I wrote my field notes. These included more than a running description of what was being said and done during each class. I included: ideas and activities that the drama teacher used which I also wanted to try, my personal thoughts and opinions, questions for me to reflect upon at a later date,

and ramblings about how to disseminate the data. This personal journal helped me to be a reflective practitioner who questioned what and why something was happening. It also helped me 'see' with new eyes what worked and what did not work in a performance-based class.

What did not work for me was:

- The nerve-wracking audition process that was held over a period of eight days.
- The competitive nature of the casting procedure, and the public posting of the cast list.
- The many students who spent their class time talking with another student in person or electronically.
- The teacher-directed approach.
- The bored students required to be quiet during class rehearsals.
- Being unable to rehearse due to the absence of one or more leads.
- Casting based on talent alone.
- Students stressed, ill, and missing time for homework during performance week.

What did work for me was:

- Attendance question which allowed all students time to share, and get to know each other.
- The drama teacher's openness to students' ideas.
- The suggestion that students with smaller parts work on another play.*
- The enthusiasm and encouragement of the drama teacher who affirmed the ensemble approach that all roles contribute to the success of a production.

*This did not come to fruition.

By reflecting upon these two lists, and combining those reflections with the current literature, I believe that drama in high school needs to change, but I agree with Cousins (2000) when she states that such change will not be easy. Other subject areas, such as mathematics, have seen a dramatic change in teaching philosophy, and change has occurred. Education in B.C. is also at a crossroads as we recognize students as individual learners needing differentiated instruction. In order to address every student's learning needs in drama, there are some alternatives to the traditional performance-based class:

- If a scripted performance is the end product, place the focus on the process. Make it student-centred by accepting the students' input on all aspects of the production, starting with play selection. Determine what interests each student and assign each a project within the production. By allowing the students to take ownership and make decisions regarding the production, the entire process becomes student-driven, and becomes more meaningful, and ultimately more educational. If possible, consider double casting in order to make the roles more equitable.
- Choose an anthology of scenes based on a theme to allow all the students to shine.
- Rather than choosing a scripted play, develop a collective creation written, directed and performed by the students. Through improvisation and scene development, the collective creation can be a series of scenes based on a theme relevant to the students' lives, or it can become a full length play.

In her book, *Signs of Change: New directions in secondary theatre education*, Lazarus (2004) describes today's theatre programs as "hierarchical, teacher-centred" and maintains that the focus is "almost exclusively on the production of plays and musicals from the Broadway and regional repertoire...unrelated to the lives of the majority of students" (p.5). Considering that most

mainstream plays and musicals centre upon white, middle-class, European descended, able-bodied, hetero-sexual people, how can today's multi-cultured, diverse youth feel any connection to the material? Lazarus goes on to suggest that the "alternatives are ripe with hope and rich with possibilities" (p.6). Her book, and Gonzalez' (2006) book, *Temporary Stages: Departing from tradition in high school theatre education* both offer suggestions and strategies to implement a different approach to theatre in high school. Another practical resource for drama educators, Tarlington and Michaels' book, *Building Plays*, provides succinct description and detailed techniques to use in order to build a creative, "collaborative venture" (p.7) with your students. As educators our job is to engage all of the learners within the class, and the traditional high school play or musical cannot do that.

The reality of theatre in high school is that the majority of our students will not pursue a career in theatre. Most drama teachers recognize this fact, and yet we continue to run a drama program geared to those few students who may enter a post-secondary theatre program. Possible reasons for this include: the administration, students and parents expect a 'big show', scripts are safe, and teachers may not feel comfortable with an exploratory approach, there is a strong bond that builds amongst students involved in a production, it has always been done this way, and it works.

The problem is that it does not work for all students. My study showed that many students, especially the ones with minor roles, find a performance-based class to be boring, unrelated to their issues, competitive, and unfair. By using an alternate approach, students will have an experience that is richer and more meaningful. We should not feel trapped to maintain the status quo of the product driven course. However, by going against the status quo, teachers may encounter some resistance and skepticism which will need to be addressed and assuaged. If

we open the process so that students become co-learners and collaborators, we challenge our students to take ownership in educational theatre. By doing this, the entire process becomes educative and the focus is on the process, not the end product.

To address expectations, drama teachers need to educate their administrators, students, and parents so that all involved see the benefits to this student-centred approach. Administrative support is paramount to change. By involving them, and making them feel like they are part of the process, they will encourage drama teachers "to take risks, learn new skills, and broaden their curriculum" (Burton et al., 1998, p.40). Support, teacher training, and encouragement will foster an understanding of the necessity of change. Although I made every effort to maintain validity, my study was from a small sampling of students in one school. Further research in this field is needed in order to build the case for a more educative experience through student-centred approaches to drama.

By taking a leave of absence and focusing my energies into this study, two things happened. The first was my transformation as a drama teacher which came with my evolving teaching philosophy. As mentioned before, I am grateful to Mr. Burke for allowing me access to his teaching, his classroom, and his students. My purpose is not to be critical of his approach, for it was the same one I had used for the past five years. It was only in becoming a researcher-participant that I recognized my focus on product driven drama was not educationally effective. The participants in my study showed me this through their spoken words and their actions. I am grateful to them for their honesty and candour.

The second thing that happened was that during my observation period I attended a play performed by another group of students from a different high school whose teacher had rented

the space at which I held the study and my observations. The one act musical based upon a fairy tale wedding which she chose was teacher-directed and completely unrelated to the lives of the students. As I watched the show, my heart sank as I realized these students had been robbed of a more meaningful experience in drama. The performance was far removed from my new vision of a theatre program immersed in depth, richness and vibrancy, and it seemed to be what Lazarus (2004) calls a "second class of theatre" (p.35), as it was not compelling, artistic, or meaningful. It was bad theatre which Peter Brooke (1968) might call the "deadly theatre" (p.9). In essence, it was theatre filled with jokes that were cliché, one-dimensional, stereotypical characters, and an ending that was predictable after the opening scene. This helped cement my new philosophy regarding drama in high school. It has to be student-centred, educative, and above all, meaningful to the students.

At the end of each school year, my drama colleagues in the surrounding high schools announce, via our specialist-community chat room, the musical they will be doing and when it will run. Although I have always participated in this ritual, I will forego it this year. Instead, when I return to my performance-based classroom in the fall, I plan to have no plans. I say that with tongue in cheek, as I do have a plan for what approach I would like to take, but I do not have a planned production with a script. I will discuss options with my students, discover where each of their interests lie, and go from there. What we decide as a group will shape the rest of the year. It may be experimental but it will be student-centred, and together, we will discover the possibilities of theatre in high school.

According to Lazarus (2004) we need to "reshape, recycle, and reinvent theatre education" (p.12). Nicholson (2012) also calls for a revision of theatre education by "re-imagining the role of theatre-makers in educational settings" (p.6). Because of my research, I am

a recent convert. I have initiated change within my school by discussing the possibilities with my administration. Intrigued and very much interested, my principal is open to some changes, but clings to the desire for the ‘school musical’. I have more work ahead of me, but I have goals to reach, promises to keep, and “miles to go before I sleep” (Frost, 1930, p. 275).

References

Anderson, L.W. & Krathwohl, D.R. (2001). *Revised Bloom's taxonomy* (Image). Retrieved from: http://www.english.waketech.edu/

Aoki, Ted T. (1992). Layered voices of teaching: The uncannily correct and the elusively true. In W.F. Pinar & W.M. Reynolds (Eds.), *Understanding curriculum as phenomenological and deconstructed text* (pp.17-27). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Apple, M. W. (2004). Controlling the work of teachers. In D. J. Flinders & S. J. Thornton (Eds.), *The curriculum studies reader* (pp.199-213). New York, NY: Routledge.

Bailin, S. (2001). In the spaces between the words: Play production as an interpretive enterprise. *Journal of Aesthetic Education, 35*(2), 67-75.

B.C. Ministry of Education. Drama 11 and 12: Theatre Performance and Theatre Production (2002). Retrieved from: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/course.php?lang=en&subject=Arts_Education&course=Drama_11_and_12:__Theatre_Performance_and_Theatre_Production&year=2002

Bolton, G. (2010). *Gavin Bolton: Essential writings*. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

Brooke, P. (1968/1981). *The empty space*. Fairfield, Pennsylvania: Fairfield Graphics.

Burton, J, Horowitz, R. & Abeles, H. (1999). Learning in and through the arts: Curriculum implications. In E.B. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning* (pp. 35-46). Washington, DC: President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, General Electric Foundation.

Burton, J, Horowitz, R. & Abeles, H. (2000). Learning in and through the arts: The question of transfer. *Studies in Art Education, 41*(3), 228-257.

Bush, D. (1960). Science and the humanities. In B. Blanshard (Ed.), *Education in the age of science* (pp.165-226). New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.

Butler-Kisber, L. (2002). Artful portrayals in qualitative inquiry: The road to found poetry and beyond. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *48*(3), 229-239.

Cahnmann, M. (2003). The craft, practice, and possibility of poetry in educational research. *Educational Researcher, 32*(3), 29-36.

Catterall, J.S., Chapleau, R. & Iwanaga (1999). Involvement in the arts and human development: General involvement and intensive involvement in music and theatre arts. In E.B. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning* (pp. 1-18). Washington, DC: President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, General Electric Foundation.

Connelly, F.M. & Clandinin, D.J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 19*(2), 2-12.

Cousins, H. (2000). Upholding mainstream culture: The tradition of the American high school play. *Research in Drama Education, 5*(1), 85-94.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Danby, M, & Upitis, R. (1989). Ownership in school theatre. *PEN 70*. Rozelle, Australia: Primary English Teaching Association.

Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York, NY: Minton, Balch & Company.

Eisner, E. (1998). The promise and perils of alternative forms of data representation. *Educational Researcher*, *26*(6), 4-10.

Eisner, E.W. (1999). Does experience in the arts boost academic achievement? *Clearing House, 72*(3), 143-149.

Eisner, E.W. (2002). *The arts and the creation of mind*. Harrisonburg, Virginia: Yale University Press.

Eisner, E.W. (2008). Art and knowledge. In J.G. Knowles & A.L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 3-12). Los Angeles, US: Sage Publications.

Fels, L. & Belliveau, G. (2008). *Exploring curriculum: Performative inquiry, role drama, and learning*. Vancouver, British Columbia: Pacific Educational Press.

Fiske, E.B. (1999). *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning*. Washington, DC: President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, General Electric Foundation.

Fowler, C. (1996). *Strong arts, strong schools: The promising potential and shortsighted disregard of the arts in American schooling*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Frost, R. (1930). *Collected poems of Robert Frost* (p.275). New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.

Gardner, H. (2006). *Multiple intelligences: New horizons*. New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.

Gilbert, J. (2003). Inside out: Notes on theatre in a tenderized, tranquilized, mediated society. In K. Gallagher & D. Booth (Eds.), *How theatre educates: Convergencies and counterpoints* (pp. 106-113). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Greene, M. (1995a). Educational visions: What are schools for and what should we be doing in the name of education? In J.L. Kincheloe & S.R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Thirteen questions: Reframing educator's conversation (2nd ed.)* (pp. 305-313). New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

Greene, M. (1995b). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Gonzalez, J. (2006). *Temporary stages: Departing from tradition in high school theatre education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Gullatt, D. E. (2007). Research links the arts with student academic gains. *Educational Forum, the, 71*(3), 211-220.

Heathcote, D. (1969/1985). Dramatic activity. In L. Johnson & C. O'Neill (Eds.), *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on education and drama* (pp. 54-60). London, England: Hutchinson & Co.

Heathcote, D. (1972/1985). Training teachers to use drama as education. In L. Johnson & C. O'Neill (Eds.), *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on education and drama* (pp. 26-40). London, England: Hutchinson & Co.

Heathcote, D. (1973/1985). Drama as challenge. In L. Johnson & C. O'Neill (Eds.), *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on education and drama* (pp. 80-89). London, England: Hutchinson & Co.

Heathcote, D. (1978/1985). Excellence in teaching. In L. Johnson & C. O'Neill (Eds.), *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on education and drama* (pp. 18-25) London, England: Hutchinson & Co.

Heathcote, D. (1980/1985). The authentic teacher and the future. In L. Johnson & C. O'Neill (Eds.), *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on education and drama* (pp.170-199). London, England: Hutchinson & Co.

Heathcote, D. (1987). *Dorothy Heathcote in Vancouver* (video recording). Richmond, Canada: Provincial Educational Materials Centre.

Heymsfeld, C. (1997). Art- the fourth 'R'. *Reading and Writing Quarterly. 13*(4), 315-323.

Hillary, B. (2007, June 7). Plays in a barn: An experimental theater opens in Pocatello. *Idaho Arts Quaterly*. Retrieved from: http://www.boiseweekly.com/boise/plays-in-a-barn/Content?oid=932469

Honan, E. (with Moran, J & Swanson, D.). (2008). Voices in the silence. In Four Arrows (Don Trent Jacobs) (Ed.), *The Authentic dissertation: Alternative ways to knowing, research, and representation* (pp.83-94). London, UK: Routledge.

Jackson, A. (2005). The dialogic and the aesthetic: Some reflections on theatre as a learning medium. *Journal of Aesthetic Education, 39*(4), 104-118.

Jackson, A. (2007). *Theatre, education and the making of meanings: Art or instrument?* Manchester, England: Manchester University Press.

Jackson, J.L. Jr. (2004). An ethnographic *film*flam: Giving gifts, doing research, and videotaping the native subject/object. *American Anthropologist 106*(1), 32-42.

Jensen, A. P. (2008). Multimodal literacy and theater education. *Arts Education Policy Review, 109*(5), 19-28.

Jensen, E. (2001). *Arts with the brain in mind*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Johnson, L. & O'Neill, C. (Eds.). (1985). *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected writings on education and drama.* London, England: Hutchinson & Co.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Lapthorne, M. & Lomheim Barret, D. (2009, May). *Uncommon composure: Becoming a teacher*. Paper presented at Provoking Curriculum Conference. University of Ottawa, Canada.

Lazarus, J. (2004). *Signs of change: New directions in secondary theatre education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Leavy, P. (2009). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Leggo, C. (2008). Astonishing silence: Knowing in Poetry. In J.G. Knowles & A.L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp.165-174). Los Angeles, California: Sage Publications.

Mervyn, J. (with Ferholt, B. and Honor von Emmel, T.). (2008). Metamorphosis. In Four Arrows (Don Trent Jacobs) (Ed.), *The Authentic dissertation: Alternative ways of knowing, research, and representation* (pp. 123-128). New York, NY: Routledge.

Murrell, J. (2003). National symposium on arts education: Opening address. In K. Gallagher, & D. Booth (Eds.), *How theatre educates: Convergencies and counterpoints* (pp. 67-86). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Neelands, J. (2004). Miracles are happening: Beyond the rhetoric of transformation in the western traditions of drama education. *Research in Drama Education, 9*(1), 47-56.

Neelands, J. (2009). Acting together: Ensemble as a democratic process in arts and life. *RiDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 14*(2), 173-189.

Neilsen Glenn, L. (with Cox, R.). (2008) The creative potential of not knowing. In Four Arrows (Don Trent Jacobs) (Ed.), *The Authentic dissertation: Alternative ways of knowing, research, and representation* (pp. 99-110). New York, NY: Routledge.

Nicholson, H. (2010). The promises of history: pedagogic principles and processes of change. *RiDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, *15*(2), 147-154.

Nicholson, H. (2012). *Theatre, education and performance: The map and the story*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Noblit, G.W., Corbett, H.D., Wilson, B.L. & McKinney, M.B. (2009). *Creating and sustaining arts-based school reform: The A+ schools program*. New York, NY: Routledge.

O'Farrell, L. (1998). Theatre as education: A distinctively Canadian approach to secondary school drama. *Theatre Research in Canada, 19*(2), 116-122.

O'Toole, J. (2006). *Doing drama research*: *Stepping into enquiry in drama, theatre and education*. Queensland, Australia: Drama Australia.

Pandey, N. (2012, May 18). Colours all around. *The Kathmandu Post*, p. 7.

Pink, S. (2001). *Doing visual ethnography: Images, media, and representation in research*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Prendergast, M. (2006). Found poetry as literature review: Research poems on audience and performance. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *12*(2), 369-388.

Prendergast, M. (2009). Introduction: The phenomena of poetry in research. In M. Prendergast, C. Leggo, & P. Sameshima (Eds.), *Poetic inquiry: Vibrant voices in the social sciences*. Rotterdam, NL: Sense Publishers.

Ri, C. (2008). For spiritual reasons. In Four Arrows (Don Trent Jacobs) (Ed.), *The Authentic dissertation: Alternative ways of knowing, research, and representation* (pp. 137-140). New York, NY: Routledge.

Robinson, K. & Aronica, L. (2009). *The element: How finding your passion changes everything*. New York, NY: Viking.

Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from: http://ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/login?url=http://www.UVIC.eblib.com/EBLWeb/patron/?target=patron&extendedid=P_665394_0

Saxton, J. & Miller, C. (1998). Lurching out of the familiar. In J. Saxton & C. Miller (Eds.), *The research of practice the practice of research* (pp. 165-177). Victoria, British Columbia: IDEA Publications.

Seidel, S. (1999). Stand and unfold yourself: A monograph on the Shakespeare & Company research study. In E.B. Fiske (Ed.), *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning* (pp. 79-90). Washington, DC: President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, General Electric Foundation.

Shosh, J.M. & Wescoe, J.A. (2007). Making meaningful theatre in the empty space. *English Journal*, *96*(5), 42-47.

Shrum, W., Duque, R., & Brown, T. (2005). Digital video as research practice: Methodology for the millennium. *Journal of Research Practice*, *1*(1), 1-19. Retrieved from: http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/6/11

Steffler, J. (1994). Language as matter. In T. Lilburn (Ed.), *Poetry and knowing: Speculative essays and interviews*. Kingston, Canada: Quarry Press.

Swanson, D. (with Moran, J & Honan E.). (2008). Voices in the silence. In Four Arrows (D. T. Jacobs) (Ed.), *The Authentic dissertation: Alternative ways to knowing, research, and representation* (pp. 83-94). London, UK: Routledge.

Tarlington, C. & Michaels, W. (1995). *Building plays: Simple playbuilding techniques at work*. Portsmouth, NH: Pembroke Publishers.

Tomlinson, C.A. (2003). *Fulfilling the promise of the differentiated curriculum: Strategies and tools for responsive teaching.* Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

UNESCO (2006). Instructional time and the place of aesthetic education in school curricula at the beginning of the twenty-first century. *IBE Working Papers on Curriculum Issues #1*. Retrieved from: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001462/146280e.pdf

Vanover, C. & Saldaña, J. (2005). Chalkboard concerto: Growing up as a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. In J. Saldaña (Ed.), *Ethnodrama: An anthology of reality theatre* (pp. 62-77). Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press.

Van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy* (2nd Ed.). London, Canada: The Althouse Press.

Weltsek-Medina, G.J. (2008). Process drama in education: General considerations. In A. Blatner (Ed.), *Interactive and improvisational: Varieties of applied theatre and performance* (Webpage supplement to chapter 9). Retrieved from: http://interactiveimprov.com/procdrmwb.html

Zatzman, B. (2003). The monologue project: Drama as a form of witnessing. In K. Gallagher & D. Booth (Eds.), *How theatre educates: Convergencies and counterpoints* (pp. 35-55). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORMS

University of Victoria

Dear Students,

My name is Laura Angrove. I am conducting a Masters research study in the Curriculum and Instruction Faculty, University of Victoria, under the supervision of Dr. Wanda Hurren entitled *As You See It: Theatre Students' Perceptions on a Performance Based Class*. The study investigates the perceptions of drama students as they participate in a performance based class. My field-work will entail observing senior high school theatre students throughout the rehearsal process and into the final stages of performance for an audience. As a participant, I request your permission to:

- Conduct observations during regularly scheduled class times, as well as extraneous rehearsals during the evenings and weekends as required by the classroom teacher.
- Video tape three interviews with you, one prior to the start of rehearsals, one prior to the start of the performances, and one following the final performance. These video tapes will be used for the research as well as for the final presentation in the format of a documentary. The interviews will be conducted during scheduled class time.
- Video tape the rehearsal process and parts of the final performances. These video tapes will also be used for the research as well as for the final presentation in the format of a documentary.
- Allow me to access a journal that I will ask you to keep as a method to record your thoughts and feelings about the learning process of a performance based theatre class. These journals will only be used for the research and will be returned to you when the research has concluded, by the end of the school year.
- Use the video taped portions of the research to create a documentary to be used by the research team for use in the research project, for use in scientific publications, for use at scientific conferences or meetings, for use in classrooms with students, for use in public presentations to non scientific commercial groups such as film festivals.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty and it will not affect your participation or assessment in the subject. If you choose to withdraw from this study, I would like your permission to use the data collected to that point in my research study. The results of the research may be published but your name will not be used. I will seek to obtain your signed consent following notification of intent to withdraw to give me permission to use your data if you choose to withdraw from this study.

Your participation will help to further promote the arts in education and to allow educators to gain a better understanding of students' perceptions in theatre performance classes. Because of the nature of drama and the group work involved on stage, you will be visually identifiable in the video segment of this study, which will limit your confidentiality. You will be invited to screen the finished documentary, and if

desired will receive a copy of it. I am confident that there will be no adverse effects. Students who do not consent to take part in the study and have not returned a video release form will not be filmed. Every attempt will be made to avoid filming any students who have not signed consent forms. Due to the nature of drama, groups of students are often on stage, and so, in the event that students are filmed who did not return consent forms, the editing process will blur their faces out so that they are not recognizable.

The interview and video data will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home office. Once my research has been completed, anticipated date is the end of August, the participants' journals will be returned. Once my thesis is approved and completed, the raw video footage and the written filed notes will be destroyed. The written portion of my thesis and the documentary will be retained as part of my thesis. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact me at xxxxx, or telephone me at xxxxx. You may also contact my supervisor at xxxxx or the "UVic Human Research Ethics Office" ethics@uvic.ca<mailto:ethics@uvic.ca

A copy of this consent form will be left with you and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Yours sincerely,
Laura Angrove BFA, BEd

I, _____, agree to participate in the above study.
(name, please print)

_____ _____
Signature Date

Please return these forms to your drama teacher as soon as possible.

University of Victoria

Dear Parents,

My name is Laura Angrove. I am conducting a Masters research study in the Curriculum and Instruction Faculty, University of Victoria, under the supervision of Dr. Wanda Hurren entitled *As You See It: Theatre Students' Perceptions on a Performance Based Class*. The study investigates the perceptions of drama students as they participate in a performance based class. My field-work will entail observing the students throughout the rehearsal process and into the final stages of performance for an audience. I request your permission to:

- ☐ Conduct observations during regularly scheduled class times, as well as extraneous rehearsals during the evenings and weekends as required by the classroom teacher.
- ☐ Video tape three interviews with your child, one prior to the start of rehearsals, one prior to the start of the performances, and one following the final performance. These video tapes will be used for the research as well as for the final presentation in the format of a documentary. The interviews will be conducted during scheduled class time.
- ☐ Video tape the rehearsal process and parts of the final performances. These video tapes will also be used for the research as well as for the final presentation in the format of a documentary.
- ☐ Allow me to access a journal that I will ask your child to keep as a method to record his/her thoughts and feelings about the learning process of a performance based theatre class. These journals will only be used for the research and will be returned to your child when the research has concluded, by the end of the school year.
- ☐ Use the video-taped portions of the research to create a documentary to be used by the research team for use in the research project, for use in scientific publications, for use at scientific conferences or meetings, for use in classrooms with students, for use in public presentations to non scientific commercial groups such as film festivals.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. If you or your child chooses not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty and it will not affect your child's participation or assessment in the subject. If he/she chooses to withdraw from this study, I would like your permission to use the data collected to that point in my research study. The results of the research may be published but your child's name will not be used. I will seek to obtain signed consent following notification of intent to withdraw to give me permission to use your child's data if he/she chooses to withdraw from this study.

Your child's participation will help to further promote the arts in education and to allow educators to gain a better understanding of students' perceptions in theatre performance classes. Because of the nature of drama and the group work involved on stage, your child will be visually identifiable in the video segment of this study, which will limit your child's confidentiality. Parents and students will be invited to screen the finished documentary, and if desired will receive a copy of it. I am confident that there will be no adverse effects.

Students who do not consent to take part in the study and have not returned any video release forms will not be interviewed. Every attempt will be made to avoid filming any students who have not signed consent forms. due to the nature of drama, groups of students are often onstage, and so, in the event that students are filmed who did not return consent forms, the editing process will blur their faces out so that they are not recognizable.

The interview and video data will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home office. Once my research has been completed, anticipated date is the end of August, the participants' journals will be returned. Once my thesis is approved and completed, the raw video footage and the written filed notes will be destroyed. The written portion of my thesis and the documentary will be retained as part of my thesis. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact me at xxxxx or telephone me at xxxxx. You may also contact my supervisor at xxxxx or the "UVic Human Research Ethics Office" ethics@uvic.ca<mailto:ethics@uvic.ca>

A copy of this consent form will be left with you and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Angrove BFA, BEd

I give my consent for _____ to participate in the above study.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Please return these forms to the drama teacher as soon as possible.

As You See It: Theatre Students' Perceptions on a Performance Based Class
Laura Angrove

Video Release Form for Students and Teacher

As part of this project, I will be making videotape recordings of you as you rehearse and perform throughout this class. Please indicate what uses of these videotapes you are willing to permit, by putting your initials next to the uses you agree to, and signing the form at the end. This choice is completely up to you. I will only use the videotapes in ways that you agree to. In any use of the tapes, you will not be identified by name.

1. _____ The videotapes can be studied by the researcher for use in the research project.
2. _____ The videotapes can be used for scientific publications.
3. _____ The videotapes can be shown at scientific conferences or meetings.
4. _____ The videotapes can be shown in classrooms to students.
5. _____ The videotapes can be shown in public presentations to non-scientific groups, including commercial venues such as film festivals.

I have read the above descriptions and hereby give my consent for images of myself through the use of videotapes to be used as indicated by my initials above, and waive any rights of compensation or ownership thereto. A copy of this consent form will be left with you and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Name (please print):_____

Age: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return these forms to your drama teacher as soon as possible.

As You I See It: Theatre Students' Perceptions on a Performance Based Class
Laura Angrove

Video Release Form: Parental Release

As part of this project, I will be making videotape recordings of your child during his/her participation in the research. Please indicate what uses of these videotapes you are willing to permit, by putting your initials next to the uses you agree to, and signing the form at the end. This choice is completely up to you. I will only use the videotapes in ways that you agree to. In any use of the tapes, your child will not be identified by name.

1. _____ The videotapes can be studied by the research team for use in the research project.
2. _____ The videotapes can be used for scientific publications.
3. _____ The videotapes can be shown at scientific conferences or meetings.
4. _____ The videotapes can be shown in classrooms to students.
5. _____ The videotapes can be shown in public presentations to non-scientific commercial groups, such as film festivals.

I have read the above descriptions and hereby give my consent for images of my child through the use of videotapes to be used as indicated by my initials above, and waive any rights of compensation or ownership thereto. A copy of this consent form will be left with you and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Name of Participant (please print):_____

Age: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Please return these forms to your drama teacher as soon as possible.

Video Release Form for Non-participant Students

My name is Laura Angrove. I am conducting a Masters research study in the Curriculum and Instruction Faculty, University of Victoria, under the supervision of Dr. Wanda Hurren entitled *As You See It: Theatre Students' Perceptions on a Performance Based Class*. The study investigates the perceptions of drama students as they participate in a performance based class. My field-work will entail observing senior high school theatre students throughout the rehearsal process and into the final stages of performance for an audience.

As part of this project, I will be making videotape recordings of you as you rehearse and perform throughout this class. Please indicate what uses of these videotapes you are willing to permit, by putting your initials next to the uses you agree to, and signing the form at the end. This choice is completely up to you. I will only use the videotapes in ways that you agree to. In any use of the tapes, you will not be identified by name.

1. _____ The videotapes can be studied by the researcher for use in the research project.
2. _____ The videotapes can be used for scientific publications.
3. _____ The videotapes can be shown at scientific conferences or meetings.
4. _____ The videotapes can be shown in classrooms to students.
5. _____ The videotapes can be shown in public presentations to non-scientific groups, including commercial venues such as film festivals.

I have read the above descriptions and hereby give my consent for images of my child/myself through the use of videotapes to be used as indicated by my initials above, and waive any rights of compensation or ownership thereto. A copy of this consent form will be left with you and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Name of Student (please print):_____

Age: _____

Signature of Student: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Please return these forms to your drama teacher as soon as possible.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The way I see it: Theatre students' perceptions on a performance-based class
Laura Angrove

Interview Questions: Student

Before rehearsals:

What is your name? **(This will be for my information only so I can learn students' names and will not be used as data and will never be published.)**

What grade are you in?

Can you tell me about any previous experience have you had in drama (inside and outside of school)?

Can you tell me why did you decide to take this course?

Could you describe what the audition process was like for you? Like? Dislike?

What is your role in this production? How do you feel about this?

What skills do you hope to achieve from taking this course?

What other things might come from taking this course?

What value do you see in working as an ensemble?

What value do you see in drama as a subject in high school?

Explain any fears or concerns you may have about this upcoming production.

How do you see yourself as a student?

Do you have any other information you would like to add?

Before Performance:

Explain any frustrations you have had throughout the rehearsal process, including the play, the ensemble, or any other aspect of it.

Every project encounters challenges and/or setbacks. Describe some of the challenges that you encountered and/or observed others encountering.(individual differences, team communication, territoriality, foresight, strengths and weaknesses of team members, trial and error, and constraints of your work environment. Why do you think these challenges/setbacks occurred?)

Has anything surprised you during the rehearsal process? Have you had any 'aha' moments? If so, please elaborate.

What skills have you gained through the rehearsal process?

What skills do you hope to gain through the performance process?

Are there any skills you don't feel developed enough prior to performance?

Has this course affected who you are as a student/person?

How would you describe a successful performance?

Do you have any other information you would like to add?

After Final Performance:

Do you feel this was a successful performance? Explain why or why not?

What insight have you gained about your peers?

From which student did you learn the most? Why?

Explain how you feel the ensemble process has helped you as a person/student.

Did you have any 'bad' nights? Explain.

Do you have any special memories of this experience, either through rehearsals or performances?

Did you have any 'surprises? Pleasant or not. Explain.

What would you say to another student contemplating taking this course?

What skills did you gain through public performance?

How would you describe your experience in this course?

In what ways do you think differently about theatre, about yourself, about education, and/or about your school and/or your community as a result of taking this class?

Do you have any other information you would like to add?

Interview Questions: Teacher

What is the name of the play?

How did you decide upon this particular play?

How do you assign roles? How do you feel about casting?

How do you prepare for this play prior to its commencement?

What skills do you believe the students gain from this class?

What assessment methods do you use?

How do students generally react to performance based classes?

Why do you teach this class?

What do you believe students gain from ensemble, performance drama?

What do you see as the demands placed upon students in play production?

How do you explain the educational value/benefit to a student with one line?

Have you ever considered a student driven/led /written/directed production? Why or why not?