The Curriculum is ME
Reflections on Living and Teaching Dramatically
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Department of LANGUAGE EDUCATION

The University of British Columbia
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Abstract

This thesis advances the proposition that Drama education cultivates and provides students with opportunities to analyze, reflect upon, and reconcile daily human life experiences; that Drama education opens up an effective and powerful medium for young people to create a narrative and exposition, to voice their concerns; and that Drama instruction helps students to acquire the much needed capacity to take on different roles, to explore unknown situations, to expand their intellectual capacity for creative and critical thought, insight, and empathy. I explore the role of the reflective practitioner, of teacher as researcher, and Teacher Action Research through the use of interwoven taped and transcribed personal reflections on my own Drama praxis over the course of the 1997-1998 school year; as well as opening up a diverse discourse in the field by questioning past and present assumptions about the necessity of Drama's place as an integral part of the school curriculum. I explicate the imperative for teachers to not only be sufficiently trained and well versed in Drama methodology, but to be willing participants in the cognitive apprenticeship of their students by being good teachers, pedagogues, mentors, and even role models. I advance this argument by proposing that Drama curriculum is a product of each individual teacher's abilities to credibly deliver basic elements of their own humanity to their students, and through this unique sharing, the actual language of Drama is formed.
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Drama with a Capital "D"

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Acknowledgments

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The making of ANY Drama is an act of great collaboration — similarly, my life, my loves, my dreams, my writing, my teaching, my education, my relationships, my entire evolution as a person, teacher, scholar, and educator have been an amazing collaboration with a great many wonderful people. Thank you...

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... the fact is that the art, activity, human craving or instinct which embodies itself in drama is so deeply enmeshed in human nature itself, and in a multitude of human pursuits, that it is wellnigh impossible to draw the exact dividing line between where one kind of more general activity stops and drama proper starts.


I would like to reflect on living and teaching dramatically, and on how much of who I am as a person influences my work as a Drama teacher. I have come to the realization that the delineating factors that separate my life from my work are less and less apparent. I am not quite sure when it happened, but I have somehow, at some point in my life evolved, experienced a metamorphosis, a complete transmutation; quite simply I became the person that I am now — academic, scholar, producer, director, writer, teacher, instructor, mentor, administrator. I am a Drama educator, who is educated in Drama, while further educating myself in Drama and Drama education.

Everyday that I teach Drama, I am doing Drama research.

When I present my students with an assignment, and they work through the ideas of the lesson, formulating new meanings, new ways to create, communicate, and animate our lives, our lived experiences, and our fantasies, foolish, fun-filled moments of imagination, dreams, nightmares, enveloped in tears, laughter, smiles, closed fists, screams of anger, internal rage, reconciled voices, questions asked, answers sought, the world around us becomes less closed off, more tangible, real, accessible, intimate, while we improvisationally physicalize and vocalize, the mimetic nature of being people, children, adolescents, young adults, human beings — dramatic beings.

This is my work. This is my research. This is my life.
One Teacher's Reflections - Part II

Drama, therefore, can be seen as a form of thought, a cognitive process, a method by which we can translate abstract concepts into concrete human terms or by which we can set up a situation and work out its consequences. [Martin Esslin, An Anatomy of Drama, 1976, p. 23]

My thesis is a written account of my world, the world of the Drama teacher. It is my hope that the manner in which I live and teach dramatically is a potential model for other practitioners in the field, whether just starting their careers, or continuing their practice. Not for a single moment do I believe that my way of living and teaching dramatically is the only way to espouse the work, or the life, or the job of teaching Drama; if anything I hope that my personal and academic reflections herein, enable and empower others to mark their own trails, to push the discourse of this field wider, further, and more innovatively to new-found levels and boundaries of personal satisfaction and self discovery for both themselves as teachers, and for the young people who dedicate themselves so fully to each and every moment in the Drama classroom — the students.

Reflective Research, Reflection in Action, and Teacher Action Research have all been widely written about in academic circles; and whether it is accepted or attacked, supported or denied, challenged or vindicated, it continues to be a purposeful and expressive medium for teacher researchers to explore the realms of their own practice. Noted Drama educator Philip Taylor's book, Researching Drama and Arts Education: Paradigms & Possibilities (1996), is an entire volume of edited submissions from a number of highly recognized world leaders in the field of Drama education, who continually advocate the methodology of the "Reflective Practitioner" as a valuable and meaningful tool for academic research and discovery (p. 40). Edward Peter Errington (1993) writes extensively in support of the role of "teachers as researchers, advocating their values as reflective practitioners, charged
with investigating and reporting on their own drama praxis:" (p. 31) similarly, Brian Edmiston's award winning work, "Structuring Drama for Reflection and Learning: A Teacher-Researcher Study" (1992) also highly endorses a structured environment where both teacher and student greatly benefit from reflection and learning in the Drama classroom (p. 3).

I think it is of great value to consider the academic writing and discourse in the field of Drama education that supports the subjective nature of Drama and the dramatic process involved in both teaching and learning of this subject matter. Is teaching an art, or is it a science? If it is an art, then as in all art, it is purely subjective and open for philosophical debate, speculation and interpretation. If it is a science, then as in all science, it must be able to be replicated, experimented, quantified, and formulated in accordance with scientific methods.

Quite simply ART IS SUBJECTIVE. Drama as an art form is subjective. It does not do the field of Drama education justice to attempt (futilely I might add) to quantify or qualify what is basically rooted in our very nature as human beings — our ability to communicate and share our humanity with one another. I am amused when I read scholarly articles that have in-depth appendices with graphs and scientific modes of inquiry, or for that matter have actually created a 'Drama taxonomy'. How can someone witness Drama at any level and come away with scientific conclusions? Philosophical conclusions, reflective or ruminative conclusions, but certainly not numerical and statistical data. Sharon Bailin (1996) supports research that is philosophical in nature, and in particular embraces philosophical inquiry and examination as a research method for Drama education (p. 79).

Drama education tries so damn hard to validate itself. Is that really necessary? Why do we as Drama educators continue to fight for recognition? Are we so completely marginalised? I think sometimes yes, actually, but as an artist, the best
work representing and mirroring society comes from the work created on the periphery!
One Teacher's Reflections - Part III

... I had realized how to live another person's life, what it meant to immerse myself in a characterization.... I recalled the fact that while I was playing the part.... I still did not lose the sense of being myself.... I was my own observer at the same time that another part of me was being a fault-finding, critical creature.... Strangely enough this duality not only did not impede, it actually promoted my creative work. It encouraged and lent impetus to it.

{Constantin Stanislavski, Building a Character, 1949, p. 19}

I have been the Drama teacher at Aldergrove Community Secondary School (Langley School District #35) since 1991. ACSS is a school of approximately 1,100 lower-middle class students, located in the upper Fraser Valley. Our school is designated as an "inner-city" school by the British Columbia Ministry of Social Services, because of the high number of families who live below the poverty line. This is the school that I teach at, and the community that I work in — this is my clientele.

My Drama room is an exceptional space, that is a large dedicated area for my students to work and explore Drama in. Yearly, my students and I change the room into a magical environment where we produce our annual Shakespearean production, as well as close to fifteen other major public performances. The Drama room can seat comfortably an audience of up to seventy people. Our theatrical productions have an average attendance of more than 100%. The seating consists of a number of eighty year old theatre seats that continually break down, but have a rich history of production, and are invaluable to my students and me. I teach a full course load, which includes two Drama Eight classes; two Drama Nine classes; two Drama Ten classes; a split Acting Eleven and Acting Twelve class; a specialized program called Theatre Company Eleven and Twelve, which is also coupled with Stage Craft Eleven and Twelve and Career and Personal Planning Eleven and Twelve; and I also have a small number of Directing and Scriptwriting students
who are mixed in with some of my junior Drama classes. In addition, I am also the Visual and Performing Arts Department Head. This responsibility means that I interact above and beyond the school day with my seven departmental colleagues, as well as attend meetings with the school administration. I am also involved in fundraising for the department, through a variety of entrepreneurial endeavors. This is the structure of my work, and the nature of my job — this is what I do.

I live in Vancouver, and I commute close to two hours daily in traffic on Highway #1, more than 120 kilometers round-trip, to get to and from work. Over the course of the 1997-1998 school year, while I was doing my research for this thesis, I decided to utilize my commute time as a valuable opportunity to aid my writing; using a micro cassette recorder, I taped my thoughts as a stream of consciousness while I drove. I recorded more than twelve hours of words. Words which my mother-in-law, Ann Stahldorf, transcribed so that I could edit and merge these reflections into the body of this work bringing greater practical relevance to my otherwise theoretical academic musings.

Throughout my entire Master's program at the University of British Columbia, I am proud to say that I have continued to practice daily as a Drama teacher, with the exception of a two and a half month educational leave of absence from my school district to allow me to complete my thesis. I have taken a great many courses, many of which have made me reconsider my own teaching. My most important discovery was the different feeling of being the student, rather than being the teacher. The feeling of being the receptor rather than the provider of the information, gave me a sense of humility that I haven't felt for some time. Humility that I shared with my own students daily, as my own sense of status and self-importance as the teacher was reconsidered.

When I became a student again, I started to empathize with what my own students were going through. In fact we could commiserate together, as I would
lament the deadlines of an upcoming essay with them, or as we discussed that we all had to study for our own different exams. It was through this unique brotherhood of continuing my daily practice while working on my Master's degree, that I became more attuned to the partnership that I had with my students, more consciously aware that what we did together in class or in production had a greater depth of meaning than just a class, or a project, or a theatrical production. We were making the basis for my research and my writing.

Without my Drama students, I would never have been able to share myself in this unique human exchange, I would never have been able to reflect on living and teaching dramatically.
I want to reflect on what it is I do in the classroom.

I was talking to Cindy (my wife) at dinner tonight and I was describing what I do in reflection. She said that I, as a teacher, have a certain celebrity standing in the classroom, in the school, and in the community. I don’t know if I feel that I have celebrity status. I think that it is more that I am a personality. After six or seven years in the same school, you become a known quantity; your colleagues and peers and the people you work with every day know what to expect of you, as there are few surprises within the structure of the way you operate and conduct yourself. Similarly, the students feel the same way, they feel safe with you because there is a reputation that precedes you in the classroom.

As the students walk in they know that this teacher or that teacher is a certain way. The school community of 1100 students in our school pass that information on from generation to generation, kids graduating, kids in different grade levels, kids coming up from elementary school all learn about this teacher or that teacher from each other. Very few students come into a classroom without some predisposition towards the teacher from word of mouth, whether truthful or otherwise, but certainly through hearing certain bits of gossip and little bits of information about how that teacher is from other students.

I see it every day, especially on the first day of school when you hand out the course schedules. Students, for the first time are now seeing who their teachers are. They will say: "Oh Mr. So-and-So is your Math teacher, or Mrs. So-and-So is your English teacher. Oh, you are going to like them, and Ms. So-and-So is your French teacher. Oh, she is awful." Many of them haven’t had these teachers. They base their judgments on what they have heard around the school from others.

On some levels, I wonder what is said about me when students get their course schedule and find out that Mr. Young is their Drama teacher. On other
levels, I realize that because of the nature of Drama as a non-academic course, that many students have actually chosen to take it as a personal choice, or as a Fine Arts credit or elective.

Many students who are in my program take Drama from Grade Eight to Grade Twelve and are with me as students for five straight years. A relationship is formed that is unlike any other relationship that a student or a teacher would have, where a teacher may teach a student for only one year of their five years of secondary school. They might create a strong relationship, but they would not see that student every other day for five straight years like I would. I might start my Grade Eight program and teach upwards of 140 kids, and by the time five years roll around, those 140 kids will filter into a group of ten to twelve core students. The relationship that forms in that time is very unique and very personal because you really see each other grow.

Today, on September 2nd, the first day of the school year, the only real demanded interaction with students comes from a one hour home room period with a group of students who are not necessarily Drama students. Instead of just walking in and doing the administrative paper work as efficiently and expeditiously as I am supposed to, I spend the majority of my time trying to create a pleasant kind of jovial rapport with the students. I am constantly making jokes. The jokes that I make range from absurd and silly to self-deprecating humor, where I cast myself as a loser or a goof and allow the students to laugh at me and with me. At the same time that I do that, I command all the discipline and respect that any teacher would desire in any classroom or in any subject matter.

For instance, students hand in their course and student activity fees and with that they also hand in an invoice that they bring with them from home that has been filled out by their parents. As they pay their fees, I am supposed to sign these invoices. For the seven years I have been a teacher, I have been signing these
invoices, not with my signature, but by scribbling all over them — it is the sheer absurdity of this that has a certain humor to it. Imagine this thirteen or fourteen year old coming to the front of the class, handing their course fee and invoice over to the teacher, and the teacher then scribbles all over the invoice with a smile on his face and hands it back to them. Yes, I have gotten into trouble with the head secretary of the school when she has questioned me on numerous occasions why I scribble all over the invoice, but it is just my way, that the unexpected and the silly allow me to create a valuable rapport with the students that I would never be able to do standing there in a stoic, stuffy fashion, initialing the form and handing it back like a machine. It is a personality thing, and I tell jokes throughout the hour of class, stupid jokes, and a lot of the time, the jokes and stuff that I tell are just things that happen to me, little silly moments of my life.

Today, the men’s washroom in the staff room had been flooded by accident, and so I walked down the hallway and used the student washroom, and I walked in without looking at the little male/female icon on the door. (It was at the end of the day, I was tired.) I realized very quickly as I walked in and there were no urinals that I was in the girls washroom. Now there is no one in there and as I walk out about a half a dozen Drama students of mine from the past school year, see me walk out of the girls bathroom. I can play this up — I can walk out of there in embarrassment and not acknowledge it, or I can walk out of there and see the students and acknowledge it, and have fun with it, and joke — and in that moment of self-deprecating humor of being able to say what a fool I am, what I am really doing in a sense is saying that I am a human being, and human beings make mistakes, and that human beings are strange, and that human beings are weird and funny and that we deserve to be laughed at and that we can’t take ourselves too seriously all the time. It is that kind of attitude that allows me to be a personality, allows me to have fun and has provided me with a reputation as a “fun teacher,” a “strange teacher,” a “weird
teacher," and I love that reputation because I am not interested in being in that school as an authority figure, I am not used to walking up and down the hallways being a pseudo police officer, commanding kids to be disciplined in a mock sort of way. I think the best way to socialize young people is to allow them to be human, and allow them to interact as human beings, and it's through this interaction that they will find their similarities and their differences and they will find that for the most part we are way more similar than we are different.

Throughout the morning, before school starts, throughout the afternoon, and after the home room period when the kids have been dismissed, numerous students in the Drama program come and visit the Drama room. These are students who know that they have Drama with me this year, these are students in my senior theatre program. They come into my office and they sit down and they relax and they talk about their summer openly. They joke and they ask what we are going to do this year, and they are excited and they are glad to be there and it is a place, when they walk into the room, they feel they are at home, they are comfortable.

When I think of the difficult job of a new teacher in any classroom setting, which is to create a conducive atmosphere for learning and trust especially when it comes to the arts and Drama, I am very fortunate that I have been able to create a space where the young people that I work with feel completely at ease. When they do walk through that door, they know what to expect, they know who they are dealing with, and they are allowed to be excited. It is a reason to come to school.

When you think of taking eight or nine different subjects throughout the school year, mostly academic, realistically not every student will like all these courses; while the students that come into the Drama class really do enjoy what they are doing, and they come in on the very first day and are ready to go. They are ready to put on whatever play we have to put on. They are ready to have fun. They are ready to learn. When you look at it in that way, that the Drama students I teach are
ready to learn, there is the potential for success all the way across the curriculum, because those students are going to be more relaxed to be in that facility learning other courses as well.
For the most part today there is not much that goes on in the way of Drama or dramatic learning. Students are processed in and out of classes and run the full rotation of our block order, which means you only get eight thirty-minute classes. I did do a little bit of Drama with both of my Grade Nine classes, and a few notable things took place.

I got the students to go into four or five different groups of about five to seven per group. I asked each group of kids to talk as quickly as they possibly could to each other for thirty seconds describing their summer holiday to one other, and to try their hardest to listen to each other. After that I also got them to talk as quickly as they possibly could for thirty seconds and describe how they felt about being back at school. Then I got each group individually to stand in front of the other students and do specific types of presentations, like describe what your group has just said but make vocalizations or screaming noises or stomp your feet or use facial expressions. When the students, most of whom have had half a year of Drama Eight, had the opportunity to stand before a class of about twenty-five other kids, many of them stood with their backs against the wall in a straight line. Many of them didn't take advantage of the opportunity to do what they were asked to do, which was to make this little presentation. Many of them stood there with strange looks on their faces, made half-hearted gestures or sounds, and could not sustain even twenty seconds.

What was notable was the fact that the majority were standing with their backs up against the wall as if they were about to be executed by a firing squad, and it is interesting because the Grade Nine's, some of whom have never had Drama, some of whom have had Drama Eight from another teacher, and some who have had Drama Eight from me, are all really desperately needing a renewed sense of trust in order to be strange, silly and human. It will be interesting to see over the next couple of days and weeks how these two classes start coming out of their shells.
One of the basic functions that Drama teaches is communication. We, as human beings, learn many forms of communication both as learned and inherent responses. We are able to communicate to one another through our body language, our facial expressions, the sounds we make, and the intonation of our sounds. I find it interesting to teach beginning Drama students the basic forms of communication through mime, expression, movement and sound. We tend to take for granted all these forms, because we have graduated to such advance stages of communication that we lose sight of some very basic elements. When students get a chance to communicate using these primitive forms, they usually have a lot of fun, because they get a chance to explore something that they thought they were too mature and developed to ever go back and re-explore.
Tape #1 - September 4, 1997 — (Truth and Disclosure)

I am doing an assignment with the Grade Eleven and Twelve Acting class. The first assignment of the year for them. I get them to do an improvisational warm up where they stand in a line and come up in groups and do a sequential story, where for thirty or forty seconds at a time, they will keep a story going to a conclusion, and every now and then I might throw in a noun or an adjective that they have to incorporate into the story. This warm-up activity is practice for "The Job Interview Monologue."

"The Job Interview Monologue" is as follows: A student comes up, makes eye contact with the teacher. The teacher is sitting in the audience. The student is called up by number. The student comes up as if they are asking for a job. They come up in character and they apply for a job that they think is relative to the type of character which they have created, depending on that character's age, intelligence, and experience; that is the type of job that they will be applying for, so a really smart character might apply to be a lawyer, or a really dumb character might be applying to be a 'pooper scooper' — who knows. I ask them up on stage by number, it doesn't have to be sequential, and they wait until the next person comes on stage and actually starts to speak before they stop speaking and sit down on stage. The next time they are called back, they think that they have got the job, and the teacher will nod or shake their head at them, and they will react accordingly as if they have got or not got the job.

In the warm up exercise and the improvisational sequential story, there were students who had difficulties thinking on their feet. Some stood on stage impassively, trying their best, nervous; and others in order to curry the favour of the audience, did certain things or said certain things that would get them out of trouble. For example, one student, when he ceased to have any ideas, decided to swear in the character or the voice of the story. Of course, he got immediate positive
reaction and reinforcement from the student audience. When this happened he was able to come up with more ideas. He was completely aware of his audience. The student is on stage and is struggling with his ability to improvise a free-flow of dialogue. The well starts to run dry (so to speak) and in order to drill for new ideas, because he needs the reinforcement of his peers, of his audience, he begins to swear in character. It was the reinforcement and reaction that allowed him to continue for another twenty or thirty seconds. This is interesting because it proves the point of how keenly aware the students are, not just as actors on stage, but as individuals in front of their peers. They always have a sense of trying to please the audience and it goes back to Augusto Boal’s (1981) concept of "metaxis," this duality of actors, especially young actors being aware of numerous things both on and off the stage above and beyond creating character.

Similarly "metaxis" was displayed by a female student who recently had a very public disagreement with her father. Many of her peers were aware of the fact that in "The Job Interview Monologue" she was creating a very low intelligence, self-deprecating character essentially based on her father. Her father is a truck driver and has not fostered a very pleasant relationship with his daughter. She was a student in previous classes and exposed this fact to people in the past. She created this ‘dumb trucker’, and mentioned little things that were potential moments of disclosure, and you have to wonder if she is creating the character of the ‘dumb trucker’ from a sense of getting even somehow with her father. The things she said must have some potential validity. For instance, she talked about this ‘dumb trucker’ using cocaine. Now was this a spontaneously improvised moment of fiction, or was this a little taste of reality, a little moment of truth coming out in the creation of a character? How did it feel for this student to be able to portray her Dad in a deprecating manner in front of others? How did it feel to portray an adult figure who, in many ways, has made her feel very small, very worthless, very
insignificant, and then to get up on stage in front of thirty others and basically make this adult authority figure a nothing, a stupid person, a person with no power?

The Grade Ten's are working on an assignment where they have to practice exiting and entering the stage with energy and enthusiasm. It was worth noting the number of scenes that involved some form of illegal substance usage. They were in groups of three or four, and had to have three separate exits and entrances, in a scene where they had the freedom to choose their own story line. One particular scene dealt with a girl sneaking out of her house, stealing her parent's car, getting drunk with a bunch of friends, then having a major car crash, and the eventual trouble and punishments that followed (which I know was a true story). Again, a mixture of fiction and truth within a basic dramatic exercise, where students voluntarily choose to disclose elements of what is really going on in their lives.

In the Grade Nine Drama classes today, we began an assignment where the class is split up into four or five groups of five to seven kids, and in those groups they were to share quick little stories, reminiscences of the best time that had happened to them over the summer. Then they were to choose one of the stories and they were to take that story and turn it upside down and basically make it instead of 'the best', make everything turn out the opposite. Again we are looking at what students choose to disclose, and why, and how they portray certain things. We end up with a number of Grade Nine's showing the extreme opposite of their 'best day' as being violent and being riddled with verbal abuse, and in some cases physical and substance abuse with drugs and alcohol. How many of these little moments possess truth? How many of these little moments are meant to go beyond just the presentational and contain, in some respects, the therapeutic?

When you have been teaching Drama for quite a while, you start to ask yourself: Is this true? When students hand in their biweekly journals that contain poetry or short stories that are suicidal, depressing, or litanies of family difficulties, it
is often difficult to gauge how much is truth, and how much is fiction. It is a constant struggle, especially in today's school system where teachers, by law, are legally responsible for reporting any indications of child abuse. The education system is on the side of the child, so any indication that a staff member has that a student is at risk of being physically, emotionally or sexually abused at home is supposed to be brought to the immediate attention of the counselors, or the administration, or the Ministry of Social Services social workers. You start to wonder how many people have 'normal' family lives. What is normal? What is a dysfunctional family? If we think to ourselves, the reality is that most people have families that are real life soap operas.

There is always going to be friction and difficulty between people who live so close to one another and have disparate and different personalities, especially where young people are involved. They go through a process of storm and stress through their puberty and adolescence, where they try desperately to find out who they are by creating a reality for themselves in some ways separate from their parents. In that desire to be separate from their parents, they rebel. Maybe that rebellion is getting a tattoo, maybe that rebellion is body piercing. In the last two years, I am amazed by the number of young people coming to school who have pierced belly buttons, and pierced eye brows, and pierced tongues, and pierced noses, and pierced lips. They go beyond the simple piercing of one's ears, and in some cases have even bragged about piercing their nipples. It is quite extreme. What is it about being a teenager where that kind of self-mutilation, adornment, and rebellion becomes so important? It goes beyond dying your hair purple or green which many kids do. It goes beyond listening to loud, strange, raucous music. It goes beyond wearing the fashion of the day. When you see students who have plunked down two to three hundred dollars to have a tattoo, there is a definite statement being made. A statement that cries out
for individuality, and of course they are trying to evoke as much reaction as possible. They are trying to stand out in a world where they feel anonymous.

What is it about many young people in the time of their lives when they are trying desperately to find out who they are, and in the time of their lives when they are so painfully aware of all of their mistakes, problems, idiosyncrasies and shortcomings, that deep down inside they have a desire to stand out?

Students, for the most part are predisposed to play. There is a 'buy-in period', when kids need to understand what is at stake, what are the parameters, and where they can and cannot go, what risks they can comfortably take. A student, or an actor, or a teacher, is always consciously aware of so much more than just a simple role being played out, whether it be on the stage in the Drama room, or on the stage of life.
Why Drama? (Act I)

A World of Possibilities

• • •

The stage but echoes back the public voice.
The drama's laws the drama's patron give.
For what we live to please, must please to live.
[Dr. Samuel Johnson "The Vanity of Human Wishes," I.1, 1749]

As a Drama teacher, I view life as an interesting haphazard collage of never ending scenes — units of intended action, psychologically motivated impulses, and cross-hidden objectives — constantly being played out both consciously and unconsciously for public consumption. The richness and texture of this communal human interaction teems with the very basic desire to speak and be heard, to love and be loved, to feel and be touched, to need and be needed, to understand and be understood, to teach and be taught. As a Drama teacher it is my job to cultivate my students' potential to experience and explore a virtual catalogue of qualities which are central to our humanity. I facilitate and nurture the inherent capacity that all my students have to live, think, question, and play dramatically.

We can live our lives without ever having taken a formal Drama course, and without a single lesson, nor one word of instruction, we can find our way through the world having taken on an entire array of roles, playing out scenarios that entice and enrich, enliven and invigorate, emancipate and extricate, elevate and elucidate our living.

Why Drama? If all of these human frailties, fascinations and foibles can be experienced without the necessity of formalized Drama education, then why is Drama even a part of the school curriculum? Maybe one could postulate that the inclusion of Drama as an integral part of the British Columbia school curriculum has its roots in the curricular ideology of 'progressivism' espoused by John Dewey
Dewey's work delved into the concept that human intelligence evolved through one's experiences, and one's experiences facilitated the thinking process which would enable people to adapt and grow within their environment. Maybe Drama is validated by the educational theorists who have written extensively on 'rational humanism', and the capacity of insightful human reflective reasoning (Hutchins, 1953). Then again, when we realize that Drama can be cousined to basic human development, evolution and thought, it is just as reasonable to go all the way back to Greek philosophers, or to Darwin, or the theories of Locke and Rousseau, or Marx, or Freud. Each has written extensively on the 'dramatic tendencies' of the human condition, and of the very nature of the human condition that is intrinsic to Drama as a course of study.

Drama education cultivates and provides students with opportunities to analyze, reflect upon, and reconcile daily human life experiences. Drama education opens up an effective and powerful medium for young people to create a narrative and exposition, to voice their concerns within an adult world where they feel disenfranchised and powerless. Drama is an interactive, communal, creative process that forces young people to intermesh, intermingle, intertwine their perceptions of the individual within the environment and its inhabitants. Drama mirrors the social, cultural, historical, political, and economic contexts from which it is derived. Drama instruction helps students to acquire the much needed capacity to take on different roles, to explore unknown situations, to expand their intellectual capacity for creative and critical thought, insight, empathy, and rumination. The essence of Drama is the whole person, the personal, the inner-moment, confusion, chaos, a world of possibilities, of possibilities requiring a dramatic journey. Drama education is something you can't put your finger on, it's tangible and intangible simultaneously, it's an art form, and art is completely subjective — but its
importance can not be disregarded — because young people need to learn to communicate, and Drama provides a safe medium for their communicative needs.

It amuses me somewhat to look back on my definition of Drama, a definition that seem to preface and summarize almost every article, book, journal, or curriculum guide on the subject of Drama education, which rather lamely in all-encompassing terms attempt to define the indefinable. Therefore, I turn to David Hornbrook (1995), who offers an extremely provocative personal recollection, questioning the validity of Drama education in his article "Mr. Gargery's Challenge", Hornbrook recounts:

...many years ago, as a young head of department in a city comprehensive school, I was invited to talk about drama to the school's Board of Governors....

'Basically, the aims of drama in school', I ventured nervously (quoting Gavin Bolton — that should be safe), 'are to help children learn about feelings, attitudes, and preconceptions that, before drama was experienced, were too implicit for them to be aware of.'

...Drama you see expands realization, both of the child's own personality and others. Firstly, internal realization... through inward observation leads to increased ability to cope with adolescent problems and thus to more well-balanced adults better equipped for the emotional stresses of maturity. At the same time, external realization — through outward observation... leads to fitting the adolescent for a responsible role in society, as an adult with a sympathetic social conscience and sense of real moral values.'

...'So, how do we set about achieving realization in drama?... Well, self-confidence is very important and drama helps develop that. And trust — it's important that children learn to trust one another. Also, compassion. Role-playing can bring an emotional realization of what it feels like to be — well — under-privileged or badly housed — or old.'...Drama can help children really feel — er — what it feels like,' I concluded rather lamely.

At that moment, a red-faced man I had not noticed before, cleared his throat loudly. 'That's all very well,' he said abruptly, 'but how do you know?'... 'How do you know drama does all those things?'
'Well,' I blustered, 'I think you have to experience it to really understand.'
... But of course it was a fair question. And I had not the slightest idea how to answer it... (pp. 7-8).
Tape #1 - September 5, 1997 — (Taking Advantage of the Moment)

Today my two Drama Ten classes worked on sharing stage focus using an exercise called "Converge and Divide" (Spolin, 1985. p. 32), where the students create a cocktail party scenario, and communicate with one another in different modes of discourse. Sometimes during this activity students use what I call 'the pulley system of popularity' by putting someone else down they pull themselves up. Not unlike, the student in a class a couple of days ago who swore during the activity in order to gain the approval of his peers in the audience.

There were a couple of occasions in the "Converge and Divide" cocktail party where some students insulted another student on stage, but they did it in a way that was completely in role. For instance, there is a fellow who is a bit disheveled looking in one class: he doesn't look really all that well kept. He is a new student in the school and in the class, and in one of the little triads that were created in "Converge and Divide," three of the characters pointed at this fellow's character on stage, and asked the question if he ever bathed because he smelled. Then later on in the scene, the same students formed another group with this kid, and consciously embarrassed him to his face so that he was at a loss for words. When students have the opportunity to do this kind of put-down, they go at it in a very clever way — where they realize on one hand they are being viewed in role, and on the other hand they are being viewed as themselves by both the audience and the other actors on stage. So they take advantage of these moments and get away with an opportunity to hurt someone.

Another example was where one of the more 'popular' girls was in a "Converge and Divide" scenario similar to the last, and she was insulting the clothing of a girl who was not as popular in front of the entire class. Again this was a very contrived moment, an opportunity that arose which allowed the popular girl who was dressed in the fashion of the day, to take advantage of the situation of
being in front of an audience and of being under the guise of a character on stage. So she allowed herself to have the duality of both her own personal desire to take a shot at this girl, but also stayed in the role of the moment of the scene.

I also had some experiences today with my Grade Eight Drama class that I thought were notable. For the past six years, I have given the Drama Eight's the opportunity at the very beginning of the course to just simply create a scene in groups of six to eight students, any kind of scene they want. Usually, the majority of the scenes created are scenes involving gratuitous violence. It was interesting today because of the recent tragic death of the Princess of Wales, and the media coverage of the event, that one of the groups did a re-enactment of the Princess of Wales' car accident with a great deal of compassion and empathy; whereas two of the other groups created scenes of wholesale violence.

We then moved on to a project called "Add a Part to a Machine" (Spolin, 1985 p. 72) where students create a sound or a vocalization and a movement or physicalization, and one at a time, add a part until finally they have created some semblance of a machine. The machine could be a surreal fantasy type thing, or even a real functional machine like a microwave oven or a popcorn popper. Even in this relatively simple and harmless exercise, it is interesting to note how many Grade Eight's, and in particular the boys, present their sound and their motion on stage to their peers in an extremely violent mode. It is presented as a punch or a kick and a vicious sound that accompanies it, even though it might be part of a popcorn popper. What kind of logical junk inside their heads tells them that if they were to create as an actor, performer, or presenter, a part for a popcorn popper, that part would make a vicious sound and a violent motion, and that brutality would be directed at another student on stage? It seems that students at this age, use violence as an opportunity to enfranchise themselves, and give themselves power.
What is violence for a twelve or thirteen year old in Grade Eight Drama? It must be a very liberating feeling for an adolescent who has absolutely no control over their life. They are being dominated by adults, by parents, by the school system, and the only kind of rebellion that they can attempt is to try and push the buttons of adult authority figures, and maybe that is what they are doing by creating scenes of violence.
I want to analyze and reflect upon the way that I teach students. More to the point, how my reaction or the way that I engage in discourse with students alters their behavior or their reactions or actions as students in the classroom.

One of my students in the Theatre Company Eleven program started to show outward signs of not being as keen on the upcoming production that we are putting on (which was frustrating for me considering how early in the year this was), and was unwilling and unable to miss another activity to come on a field trip to see a performance of Shakespeare at Bard on the Beach. I reacted in such a way where this student and I began a dialogue to try to find out where her commitment was and what was holding her back from not attending this field trip. I started the conversation from the position of it is kind of 'my way or the highway'; and then when I saw that this student had a deep seated desire to try to prove her point, I allowed her to successfully argue her point and ultimately win it. I think this is something that I like to let students try to do. Instead of them coming up with a lame excuse, I force them to explain themselves and justify their actions as any adult would have to.

The whole world is full of explanations. The whole world is full of people having to make decisions and defend those decisions. You don't just make a haphazard choice without consequence or some sort of justification. I believe students very often get away with making decisions that are not permissible. Further, students do not have to deal with the consequences of their decisions because parents (on many occasions), teachers, and people who work with young people, shield them and deflect the consequences on to themselves or on to others. The young person makes a decision, but regardless of the outcome he or she are not affected by the consequences at all.
The Grade Nine's are learning the basic concepts of comedy, and one of these concepts is incongruity. What I asked them to do was to get in to groups of three and have a few of the kids in the group be hard of hearing (that was the term I used), and they would have to yell at one another to communicate. One person in the group would be a person who was in a location where being loud would be unacceptable, like at a funeral parlor, or a library, or a hospital, or a museum, and would have to ask the person who was the proprietor of this location to attempt to silence the loud people. A senior study block student pointed out to me that one of the girls in the class has parents who are deaf. Occasionally as a teacher you ask your class to engage in an activity that is intended to be fun, to be irreverent, to get them up and running, and doing stuff to get them thinking. Some times you say something where you neglect to think of how it might affect certain individuals. If one kid out of the thirty has relatives who are hard of hearing, how will the portrayal of the hard of hearing people by other students in the class make that student feel? At no time is the intent of the activity meant to have any student feel diminished self-esteem. So I stopped the class a couple of minutes into their preparation, and tried to explain to them that we were not necessarily talking about hard of hearing people as being dysfunctional, that they had to try to create real people who simply yell at one another in order to communicate. It was one of those moments that I encounter every once in a while, where I have to backtrack or re-teach a lesson to clarify and make sure that I am not offending any one’s sensibilities.

I try very hard to model what I teach, and that goes beyond just giving examples to students when I get them to do a particular lesson. It is one thing to get up and show an example of what it is you want them to do. It is another thing entirely to model an openness and a spirit of fun so that your students feel comfortable, and feel that they too can easily be a part of this classroom. Students from Grade Eight to Grade Twelve (from twelve and thirteen years old to eighteen
and nineteen years old) are so caught up in how they are perceived by their peers and how they are perceived by their teachers and the world around them. It is difficult to get them to 'Buy In', to break loose, have fun, show emotion, and open up.

I want to talk about two concepts — 'The Sales Pitch' and 'The Buy In'.

'The Sales Pitch' is the teacher, especially in Drama, selling an idea to the students that allows them to want to do the project, want to take the risks, want to explore the different realms where the students feel validated, where the students feel safe, where the students feel accomplished, that they can do it, that they are good, that they are worthy. 'The Sales Pitch' on any project must also have some sort of academic rationale. Students tend to be taken for granted by adult educators. Rarely do teachers tell students the reason why they are being taught something. Why are we learning this? Why are we studying this? What is the necessity of this? What basis does this have for the continuation of any inquiry or study?

We tend to teach students things because it is good for them, because they have to, because we as teachers once had to learn it. We teach them something that is part of a process that already exists, and we never explain why. Why is the student learning mime at the start of their Drama career? Why does a student learn specific functions of the stage? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why are all these things brought into the curriculum? I think it is important that students understand — "WHY?"

It is important that students understand the importance of different projects, and it is also important for the teacher to explain the rationale of any class activity. As a teacher, you have to 'sell' students on creating something that is serious, as opposed to humorous. Students need an understanding of the importance of learning numerous skills, and a work ethic to present those skills in presentational form. Part of 'The Sales Pitch' is putting together a lesson plan that motivates and
makes students feel that they find success, and that the work is worthy of them, and that you are expecting a solid and reasonable effort.

Students who make this effort, have accepted what I like to call 'The Buy In'. How much you 'sell' the assignment, will determine the 'Buy In' to the lesson, the activity, the structure and the learning outcomes.

There has got to be an endless variety of motivational factors that lead students to do things in any classroom situation. It has to go beyond just the desire to get good grades. There has to be a desire to want to please the teacher, to want to please oneself. Many young people that I teach do well, and are looking not only for self-satisfaction, but also for respect and positive feedback from the teacher. A lot of young people do not receive positive feedback from adult authority figures often enough. Whenever young people receive positive feedback in a classroom situation for work that is valid and interesting, they gain a great deal of personal satisfaction. 'The Sales Pitch' and 'The Buy In' are more about student affirmation, than about solid teaching strategies and in depth lesson plans.

A good 'Sales Pitch', will produce a successful 'Buy In', and the learning outcomes and success of your projects will be incredibly high. When 'The Sales Pitch' lacks energy, the results suffer. A great deal of educational research has been conducted to suggest that high energy teaching leads to higher student achievement.

I wonder how many teachers in different areas of the school curriculum would want to acknowledge that what they do up in front of the class, day in and day out, is a 'Sales Pitch', plain and simple. A successful teacher is a good sales person, and must be able to sell students on doing specific tasks which lead to specific learning outcomes.

In order to get students to do the things that a Drama teacher wants them to do there has to be a 'Buy In'. The 'Buy In' period or process really is the trust that is placed by the students in the teacher. That trust is paramount in creating a unified
and cohesive class. As a teacher, I can pretty much ask my students to do just about anything I want them to do as long as I can justify its validity in the context of the Drama program. Part of the 'Buy In' is the context of being a school, and having a setup where students are being evaluated, and that evaluation translates into a grade on a report card.

The other 'Buy In' that exists is where the students have respect for the teacher, trust the teacher, believe in the teacher and understand the teacher's motives for trying to do specific activities.
Tape #1 - September 9, 1997 — (Embarrassment Is Temporary)

I have a number of mottoes that I always use in the classroom. They are "EMBARRASSMENT IS TEMPORARY," and "THE TIME IS NOW." By pointing these mottoes out, I am telling students that there is no other time, do it now. I even have a T-shirt that has "EMBARRASSMENT IS TEMPORARY" on the front of the shirt, and everyone in the Drama program actually signs the back of the T-shirt. I sell about 100 of these shirts every couple of years. And they act as a kind of tacit contract, between my students and me, that we will live up to the motto emblazoned on the front of our shirts, our clothing, our costume, our selves.

I once had a university acting professor who analogized going on stage with being on a trapeze. The teacher is throwing the students the trapeze bar, giving them the opportunity to go out into the middle of the big top and swing about, and the net beneath them is their peers and colleagues in the class. Students should feel safe in the environment of the Drama classroom, that anything can be said or done with impunity. When we laugh at each other during a Drama class we won't admonish each other after the class when we walk out the door. It is really important that people leave it in the room. That people act as the safety net for each other, as we swing out into our roles in life, whether in Drama or not, we need to know that the safety net is there waiting to catch us — IF we need it.

Embarrassment is a tough and frustrating emotion. We usually play it up bigger in our own minds than it actually is. Similarly, I think it is a large part of what embarrassment is for young people. A young person feels embarrassed because of something that has happened to them, and it is accentuated so much in their own mind, that the reality doesn't even come close to being as bad.

So I attempt to make the Drama classroom safe, and a room full of trust and fun. I also achieve this through a lot of self-deprecating humor. I will tell strange little stories about myself, and most of the stories that I tell are actually based in
truth about my real life. Whether I am telling stories about my dogs, or having dinner with my wife, or going to a movie, or spending time with my friends; I want students to realize that theatre and Drama is really about people telling THEIR stories.

We as people and human beings, are really quite absurd in the grand scheme of things, and we take ourselves much too seriously most of the time. So I want students to feel comfortable laughing at themselves, laughing at others, feeling empathy or sympathy when there are problems; and we do share difficulties with one another, when moments of personal truth come out. I think it is important for students to understand the reality of these emotions.

For each grade level, I have a number of different approaches. Historically, over the last six or seven years I have dealt with my junior students in a very humorous, comical and juvenile manner. I try to think to myself, here I am standing up as a teacher, a learned adult authority figure, and instead of demanding respect by virtue of my age or experience, I like to earn the respect of my students. I like to allow them to laugh at me, laugh with me. I like to act foolish, so that they feel comfortable acting foolish, because if their teacher can be silly and strange, then they can be silly or strange.

The Grade Eight’s in particular — I get them all standing up in a circle, and I start screaming and yelling and making weird sounds and facial expressions and movements — and I say to them, that I don’t care what they think of me at the end of the day, because I like myself and that is all that matters. Even if only one or two kids get the point: that it is how YOU feel about YOURSELF first and foremost, that in order to love others and to like others even, you have to love and to like yourself and respect yourself; then I have been successful.

I use a lot of bathroom humor in the Grade Eight and Grade Nine classes. I use the humor in a very odd way, and I hearken back to a memory of my childhood.
When my brother and I were young boys (six or seven years old), our mother had a big jar in the living room filled with Smarties. When she first put that jar out, of course, my brother and I ate Smarties until we were ill. Because the Smarties were always accessible to us and we had the opportunity to have those Smarties whenever we desired, they ceased to be something we wanted. In fact, they would sit there more often than not and be eaten by our friends. In fact, to this day, I don't like Smarties (a sad truth).

Using a similar strategy, I believe that I can wean my students away from certain things or attributes that I particularly don't want to see in Drama productions at each grade level; thus my program will grow and their ability as Drama students will grow. Essentially what I try to do is wean them off the bathroom humor by being the perpetrator of bathroom humor. So I initiate the bathroom humor, but I use my dogs as an example, and I will make jokes about how much fun it is going out walking my dogs and cleaning up after them and picking up their poos in these little plastic bags and having to throw them in the garbage. I will make jokes about personal hygiene, and I will make jokes about certain bodily functions, and I will not do it in a totally tasteless or disgusting way, but in a way that will make them laugh and think simultaneously. By doing this I open up the classroom for a lot of fun, but I get the kind of fun that I want, because I am the perpetrator of it. I allow the students to utilize and laugh at vulgar content, and by having it out in the open it allows the students to get it out of their system.

In the same vein, I have always allowed students to speak their mind on stage. If a student desires to swear on stage and it is in context, I will let them do it; because, in a sense, what is a swear word? It is just a word, and I think we put too much credibility and too much credence and weight in words as a society. We use words to shock, and when a young person gets on stage and swears, in a lot of cases what students are really trying to do is shock the teacher or shock their peers. If you
take the shock value out of the word, and the word simply is just a word, then the student will realize that there are many, many other ways to articulate themselves that are much more meaningful, interesting and evocative for presentational purposes. It is always interesting to see students come to that realization on stage. In many cases, when a student swears on stage, there is usually a hush that falls over the audience and they all kind of look towards me for reaction. When I don't react in a typical, adult, authoritarian teacher way, they are surprised, shocked even; because I don't react in a manner that they expect; because I let it slide by; because I let the students realize that words are just words, they (not unlike the Smartie analogy) get weaned off of it. The swear words cease to be an important part of their language in the Drama room, just like the bathroom humor ceases to be a part of their performance repertoire.

Other negative attributes like violence should be extricated from their system as early as possible, and this is accomplished by reacting to it in a normal and relaxed manner and facilitating an objective analysis and discussion. Students will soon realize that violence really goes nowhere on stage. A Sylvester Stallone movie can not be recreated on stage because we do not have the ability to present the sort of magical special effects in theatre that are common in a multi-million dollar budget movie or television show. When your audience is five feet away from the stage they are too close to be easily fooled by special effects. It has got to be real, and because it has got to be real, actual theatrical violence is usually left to a minimum.
Tape #1 - September 11, 1997 — (Teacher Reactions and Student Choices)

Something happened with the warm up with the Grade Eight’s today. The warm up was a relaxation and imagination exercise where the students lie down on their backs with their eyes closed and try to imagine different things that the teacher, in role as narrator, gets them to go through and think about. Beginning with relaxation and breathing, and then progressing into an active mime experience of the students reenacting getting up in the morning, getting dressed and going to school. The fact of the matter is that when you have got thirty students all doing this no one really is performing for anyone else. It is all being done as a group with each individual focusing in on their own imagination and their own activity and attempting not to acknowledge anyone else.

One student, during this relaxation exercise, decided to become aggressive in his desire not to participate, and when confronted about this, I froze the whole class, and stopped to ask this fellow, why he wasn’t participating and he said: “I don’t want to do this crazy shit.”

Once a student swears or reacts in that kind of mode, it really gives me as a teacher a certain amount of liberty in my response. Again, my reaction is being viewed, not only by the young person who has pushed the button, but also by the other young people in the class. If I respond in shock and in anger, I believe that I lose.

I view my reaction as a teacher in the classroom as part of a game, and every time I react negatively to students in front of the group and am forced to deal with an individual instead of the class as a whole, I believe that I lose my effectiveness as a teacher, lose the game — and being a competitive person, I hate to lose. I would rather figure out different strategies to react to students in these situations, than to get all flustered, and attempt to make this student look important in front of the class by responding to an individual management problem publicly.
I am not a big proponent of singling kids out, but some kids single themselves out. Here is one kid in a group of thirty students who has decided not to participate, who has decided to push the button of the teacher in front of everyone; so he has singled himself out, he has made himself an individual amongst many, and is open for whatever response I give him. So I responded to him in kind, I said: "Oh, so you don’t like doing this shit?" Although I swore in class in front of the students, I feel that I am given that liberty because this student has used the word first. This received a great deal of laughs from the other students. So, in essence, I had taken the power away from this non-participant and put the power back on me as the teacher in my response. I then asked this student (again in front of everyone) what the problem was, and he said that he thought that everyone was acting like "a bunch of retards." Again, I pointed out by saying: "So there are thirty students and myself all acting like retards, I guess that you are the cool guy. You are the one who has all the power." Again, this made the class laugh. Before I was going to restart the activity, I sat this student down and I asked him, in front of everyone, "So considering that you are the cool guy in the room, the coolest one in the room, I was wondering if it is OK if we continue acting like retards for your benefit and entertain you?" Then he responded rather coyly this time, "Oh, I don’t care." So he had basically been put in his place, and instead of letting his outburst become a distraction for the students, and an opportunity for him to steal the focus and the power from the teacher, his outburst served as an opportunity for me as the teacher to prove my authority in the class, and to prove that I have a wit and a sense of humor and am able to roll with the punches, that I am not easily swayed, and so any other student who might likely consider similar actions or attitudes in their participation will get a similar response.
Not unlike my students — the teacher, ME, is subject to the constant awareness of playing to an audience, of my duality of purpose. Performance? Acting? Instruction? Teaching? Or basic survival?

I think occasionally it is important to have these examples brought before the group, so that the group gets an idea of what to expect. You cannot always stand in front of the class during the course outline, and explain both the course content and absolutely every response that you will have to every situation. Sometimes there are positive results in having students behave poorly.

Students have the right to make bad choices. Students have the right to fail. Students have the right to do poorly in classes and so often we, as teachers, consider it our fault. It is not our fault when a child fails. It is not our fault when a child does poorly. Most times it is the student making these decisions and we can’t make decisions for our students. School is supposed to be a learning environment, and in order to become strong, productive and effective young people or adults in every day civilized society, we have to learn how to make both good and bad choices, and the only way we can distinguish between what is a good choice and what is a bad choice, is to actually make them. We need to make bad choices. We need to make these bad choices in environments that are conducive to learn from them, and what place is safer than a school where the student is being nurtured by the staff to hopefully find success? I view these situations in most cases as positive, and look forward to them because of the nature of what the benefits are to both the individual student and the students in the entire class.

What is the role of the teacher? The role of the teacher, whether it be a Drama teacher or a Math teacher or a French teacher is to allow students to make decisions, to allow students the opportunity to move forward or backward whichever the case may be.
Many times my students will make awful decisions, and of course it is very frustrating as a teacher because you see the potential that so many of these young people have, and you wish that they could all fulfill that potential. There are so many positive strokes that young people get from doing well in school, whether it be from their peers, or from their family, or from their teachers. It is nice to be able to provide that positive reinforcement for students to do well. I sincerely hope that most students have the opportunity to get told once in a while by a teacher that they have done well, that they have done a good job, that they were exemplary today in class.

When students feel successful, it builds up their self-esteem and confidence not only in your class, but in every class. They should feel confident when they come to the class. They should feel secure in the class, because they know that they can do it. When students know that they can do what is expected of them in a class, they will attend.

I wonder how many attendance problems there are for students who actually feel comfortable and successful? Do they miss a specific class because they feel uncomfortable in that class, or because they are not successful? How can we help make students feel successful in each and every class, so that they will want to attend classes regularly?

Today the Grade Ten’s portrayed a great deal of overt sexuality in many of their choices on stage. Not unlike my finding with the Grade Eight’s, I tend to find that there is a certain distinguishing reality of what on stage choices students seem to make in their personal and presentational disclosures.

In Drama Eight they seem to be obsessed with violence.

In Drama Nine they seem to be obsessed with substance abuse.

In Drama Ten they seem to be obsessed with sexuality.
In Acting Eleven and Twelve the students seem to be obsessed with death, suicide, and an introspective look at the world around them and how they fit into that world.

Particularly today, the Grade Ten’s made choices on stage that were extremely sexually charged. Of course they do it all in jest within the context of the scene, but again in watching these students perform they are always very consciously aware of the reactions of their peers, and the teacher, sitting in the audience. The reactions of their peers is of particular importance to them when they are dealing with these issues because that is their support network. I really wonder how much of what is being said and done on stage has little grains of truthfulness in it and little grains of reality, and how much of what is being said and portrayed on stage is simply fictitious play.

When toddlers and infants have been analyzed and studied in their play habits, sociologists and psychologists have found that young people’s play has a lot of social developmental aspects to it. Many of these components are simply enabling young people to define the world around them, to define the world that they live in. It is not unlike when children play dress-up or make-believe. When a student pretends to be a doctor, or a storekeeper, or a police officer, or a criminal, they are re-enacting their personal experience or knowledge of these elements. Whether the personal experience or knowledge of these elements come from television, the mass media or cinema or not it still enables the students and the young people with the opportunity to explore these things.

Why is it that so many children’s toys are career oriented? What are we allowing young people to explore when we give them a Fisher Price plastic doctor’s set, or give them Barbie dolls, or give them little dolls that wet their diapers, or give them little science sets, or give them little Lego blocks? What is it that we are really asking young people to explore when we give them these toys?
Going back to my analysis or catalogue of young people, what does this tell us about the different stages of adolescent development in a secondary school? What insight does this provide us with? When a young person between fifteen and seventeen in Grade Ten, begins to re-enact or explore their sexuality on stage, what are they really doing? Is this an opportunity to reconcile the fumbled attempts at a date that weekend? Or, is this the opportunity to reconcile or explore the realities of sexual and physical abuse, or even the taboos surrounding the issue of sexual orientation? All of these things potentially exist.

Why is it that the students that are between the ages of sixteen and nineteen, in Grade Eleven and Twelve, are dealing with death, suicide, existentialism and introspection, and desperately attempting to analyze their places in the world? What is it about Grade Eleven and Grade Twelve that forces a young person to want to think about these things? Is it because they are being told that they are now ready for the adult world, and that frightens them? A world where they have to earn a living, and have a career, and have expectations and consequences laid upon them that they in essence are unwilling to accept, because at the same time that we are putting adult expectations on a Grade Eleven or Grade Twelve student, we are also treating them like children. We tell a seventeen or eighteen year old that they have adult expectations placed on them, yet we still baby-sit them with attendance records in class, and we still admonish them for making their bad choices.
Why Drama? (Act II)

How Do You Know Drama Does All Those Things?

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My Life has been tough, I better explain before I go on, so you won't be confused.

My mother had four children from her first marriage. I was the youngest. My mom and father had been married for thirteen years before they got divorced. My father used to beat my mom, and my two sisters, and my oldest brother. My mom was going to BCIT and feeding four children on child support, and worked at a restaurant.

On weekends my mom would go to the bar and meet a lot of men. One night, she brought home one bisexual man named Colin. They were on and off for a couple of years, but then my mom met my step-dad, James... they got married a year later, and moved into a nice house.

A year after the wedding, my mom found out that Colin had died... he had died of AIDS.

Two years later, my mom was diagnosed as being HIV positive. Two years after that... she got really sick. She was always in and out of the hospital, but this time she didn't come out.

She died at 5:35 A.M. Fuck, I was tired! When Angie told me, I was too tired to cry!

A couple of weeks later my brother accidentally broke a light bulb in my room. After I was done picking up the shards of glass that my brother had missed with the vacuum. I sat on my bed and cried. I took a piece of broken glass in one hand and slowly cut my arm in little slits. It didn't hurt. I dug harder with it, and it began to bleed.

I think that I was trying to hide the pain inside... but I don't think it worked!

[Written and performed in class by a fifteen year old, Grade Eleven Acting student. Fall, 1995]

A student stands alone on stage, crying in front of the class, he has just finished 'acting' out a monologue where he has disclosed some of the most intimate details of the recent death of his mother from the AIDS virus. Many of the twenty-three Acting Eleven and Twelve students are crying too, some of them go on to the stage to console their friend with hugs and words of encouragement. As the teacher, I am
supposed to be evaluating this performance out of 100 marks; however it seems to me that any attempt to 'grade' this work would depreciate or diminish the reality of this presentation. Like so many of the personal, revealing, cathartic and truthful experiences that my students share in class there is no grade or mark in the world that could accurately define or do justice to these moments of intense reality.

Recent trends in secondary school Drama in Canada have leaned towards the adoption of competitive comedy oriented dramatic improvisation (like Theatre Sports or the Canadian Improv Games); or the ever popular competitive one-act play or Drama festival. These activities, although worthy, can very well dominate the entire landscape of the Drama curriculum from beginning to end. An entire year or semester could be spent with students creating clever improvised comic moments, or learning lines for a one-act play, preparing months in advance for a regional competition. Granted, 'improv' comedy is a fantastic release mechanism for students, because of the one to four minute time limits, it is not dissimilar to the kind of 'cut-flash' editing of the television or cinema. And not unlike television, students have a tendency to use the imaginary remote control (or 'clicker') in their hands to quickly flip channels, or in this case 'improv' content or theme, when something bores them. But at what point does one enable the student to explore some of the poignant and evocative moments of reality that many young people are desperately attempting to disclose? Shouldn't the Drama classroom also be a place of limitless potential and opportunity? A place where by dealing with significant and meaningful situations students can cultivate a more "common understanding of life" (Bolton, 1984, p. 163).

The secondary school Drama classroom plays a vital role in the development of an empathetic and reflective young person. It is within the confines of this unique environment that students get a rare chance to utilize each of their senses, their emotions, and their human capacity for basic inquiry. As I watch my students
enter the Drama room, I feel fortunate that unlike any other teacher in the school, I am about to embark on a journey of reality and dramatic play and personal growth with them. It is the time that we can create a limitless communal experience while exploring anything from ancient mythology, theatre history, dramatic literature, to the improvisation of the political and social issues of the day. Drama is meant to be a collective experience, concerned largely with the examination of "human issues and behavior in specific social contexts" (Verriour, 1984, p. 125), that is why it is such a powerful and vibrant art form. Because there are so many levels of filtration needed to create the dramatic communal vision, the participants must eventually look within themselves to succeed in the actual creation of something substantive, which in turn is shaped and recreated by the very vision that it was searching to build in the first place (Saxton and Miller, 1995). Thus, realistic dramatic pursuits can facilitate the genuine moment of truthful self exploration and personal reflection needed to enable a young person to reconcile "the reality of the world outside with their own private worlds" (Kemp, 1990, p. 11).
I try to deal with violence in Grade Eight Drama in a very pragmatic and realistic manner. I try to wean them off violence in a way that allows them to get it out of their system. Essentially, what I try to do is to have the kids at this level explore other options when they are making creative scenes, and to realize that violence takes them nowhere in a scene. However, I will admit, that at the end of my Grade Eight program, I do teach them stage fighting. So we start with their violence, which is uncontrolled rage and has so many other undercurrents to it, and then at the end of Drama Eight, I go back and allow them to be violent by creating stage fighting where I teach them controlled, limited violence with a purpose, with an objective, where no one gets hurt, and it’s not flaying arms. It is controlled choreographed stage violence. They are able to see what the illusion of stage fighting really is.

I like to cut out photographs from the newspaper that display raw physical emotions, and a lot of times these news photographs are of a violent and horrific nature. You don’t see photographs in the newspaper of war zones where people are happy. Most times you see pictures of war zones where people are carrying guns and are doing horrific things. I give the students these photographs, and I get them into small groups, and I have them create a beginning, a middle, and an end. The middle has to be the frozen photograph, where they have to recreate the photograph for five seconds in a ‘freeze’ or tableau. The beginning and ending are thirty seconds each, and they have to be very creative in order to justify why the photograph was taken, and their justification and creativity must show what happens after the photograph was taken. It is a very stimulating and insightful assignment. What happens is you end up with a situation where these kids do a lot of dramatic role playing that starts to really pull away from the violence, because a lot of times the photograph has the violence captured in it, and they have to freeze the violence for five seconds, and
when they have to find a justification leading up to the violence, and a justification leading away from the violence, it becomes very analytical — which for thirteen year old Drama students begins an important cognitive process which disarms and demobilizes the violent behavior, and allows you to take them away from it entirely.

A project that I have done regularly with my Grade Nine students is a self-esteem and self-awareness project which I borrowed from a colleague (Mike Denos, my former Drama teacher). It is called the "Best Friend in Role." Students in Grade Nine are really struggling with this idea of being other people on stage, so this project gives them the opportunity to be people, or be a person that they are able to mimic on stage as best as they can. People that they see and experience every day. So you get them to think about their best friend, and to create the character of their best friend with all of the characteristics and idiosyncrasies. By doing this, they get to create an actual character (a real person) other than themselves, and it is someone that they know intimately. They then have to talk about themselves as they perceive their best friend would talk about or describe them. The scene can be developed like writing a diary, or journal entry, or talking on a telephone, or speaking to an invisible person on stage.

One of the many issues that arise in this project is the self-deprecating manner with which the kids, when they are in the role of their best friends, describe themselves. They describe themselves as being selfish, bossy, idiotic, boring, annoying. They speak a lot in the past tense, and talk about themselves as being egotistical, weird, mental, acting stupid, being snobs; they say that they don't talk to others or listen to others; they make fun of their own appearance or clothing. Sometimes they talk about themselves in more positive terms, but that is rare. A lot of the times it is very self-deprecating, and there seems to be an embarrassment and even a certain modesty when they are describing themselves as perceived through
their best friend as if they would be egotistical by saying something nice about themselves. They would prefer to put themselves down than to talk about any positive qualities that they might have or display.

I find this an interesting assignment because the student, in a sense, puts a mirror up in front of themselves, and takes a good look at their own reflection, and then describes themselves to an audience.

The basic idea of role playing is to take on roles that we have an understanding of, an appreciation of, and desire to learn more about. I spend a lot of time in Grade Nine developing their ability to take on character, to take on role, as it is a primary focus in the Grade Nine curriculum. There are always a few kids who will really find themselves totally immersed in taking on a role, and then there will be some young people who look at it as an easy way to create something simple or foolish.

A basic project I get them to do to explore getting into role is where they have to pretend that they are five years old, and then at a moment’s notice, they have to be able to pretend that they are eighty years old. It is exciting to see what kind of little bits come out, how many students really find themselves in role play pretending to be a five year old, and what kind of things they draw on to create that character. They play with toys, they have little childish fights, they create puerile male/female relationships, but the authenticity is striking. The reality is that every single one of these kids has actually lived through and experienced the reality of being five, so they have an unbelievable ability to pull this type of character together.

When they are asked to play eighty year olds, you end up with a very interesting interpretation. You go from the authenticity of being five, to the fantasy world of being eighty, because eighty is so far beyond their realm of experience and expertise. They have to make up and use their imagination concerning what it is like to be eighty. Essentially the students have to go from the physicality of being
five (which they all have experienced first hand) to the physicality of being an old person. How do old people move? How does an old person breathe? How slow does an eighty year old person walk or talk? It was notable how many of the kids reverted back to stereotype mimicry, creating images and ideas from what they have sponged from the media. When asked about the older people that they experienced in their own lives, none of them had grandparents or people that they knew who were that old. This experience provides an excellent example of the dichotomy between mimicry and authenticity in a junior Drama students use of role play.

The Grade Ten’s have been working on something called "Cross Hidden Objectives," where I provide the students with a relationship, a scenario, and give each character in the scenario a contrary objective. An example might be a mother and a daughter relationship, where the mother wants the daughter to go to college because she has some money put aside for her, but the daughter wants to drop out of high school to join a rock band. Each one approaches the other with their primary objectives and attempts to get the other one to validate or agree with it.

Many times, I give the characters a stock relationship, like mother/daughter, sister/brother, best friends. Many times the reactions to these scenarios are quite exciting, and you get a lot of the reactions that they themselves would possibly give in these situations, or that they might have heard from siblings or their own parents. The students really let loose during this project, and you can see some real opening up when the students get involved within the role of the objective. In many cases, like in real life, the objectives are never fulfilled to their fullest because in many cases, like in real life, people have to find compromises, and sometimes you actually see that occur in the scene, and those are quite unique moments.

The Grade Eleven and Twelve’s are creating an assignment where they create the opposite of their own character. So they create a character that has all the attributes that they feel is their distinct opposite.
A lot of young people at this age are so overwhelmed with the future, and what they are going to do with their lives, and why they have to do this, and that, and why they are here — that you get these students creating their opposites in role, and they just sit around and have existential discussions.

You do end up with some revealing moments though, where through exposing their opposites, they say so much about themselves. So instead of saying be yourself in this particular scene, being your opposite provides the perfect opportunity to camouflage being yourself. Then the students expose awful relationships with their parents because their opposite character in the scene talks about how much they 'love and respect their parents'. Characters who are positive creative people become very unconfident, very scared, shy people. It is quite an insightful project for the student's to create and reflect on.
Tape #2 - September 19, 1997 — (Beyond the Drama Classroom)

The process of making plays, and the rehearsal process that you go through with a group of students in making a production goes way beyond the daily routine of the Drama classroom. I think one of the things that I am finding over the years with young people in the rehearsal process is that you can only get certain levels of commitment to any after school activities. If a kid 'buys in' to you as a teacher, to you as an individual, to the program of study, and to the program of extra curricular activities, and to all the different things that you provide for them, it becomes relatively easy to get them committed to a large scale production. It really is a 'sales job'. It really is contingent on the teacher, on the individual teacher to be able to 'sell' ideas and concepts and to 'sell' commitment to the kids. Kids will mirror or take after their models. If the teacher shows commitment and sincerity and human qualities in his or her practice, both throughout the courses of study as well as in the extra curricular or co-curricular activities, the students will be there as well with that teacher.

Drama teachers are notorious for burn out because they work so hard not only producing plays and working within their classroom but also by being a part of their students' lives, kids that we consider to be 'our projects'. I am sure that most teachers throughout the school system will have a few students who they consider to be 'their projects'. You get kids who are lonely, or suicidal, or depressed, or have physical and emotional disabilities, or have family problems, and they turn to you as an adult authority figure in the school for their support system. We become so much more than just classroom teachers of a specific subject matter. I have had numerous occurrences where my relationships with my students have transcended the classroom a hundred times over, which requires being a friend, being a mentor, and taking time out to listen and to be with students to explore a world beyond the boundaries of the school walls. Not only is it very satisfying for the students, but it
can be very satisfying for the teacher as well. Obviously not all teachers can spend this time, but the ones that do, will find so much more joy to their job. The students that I work with on these levels provide me with a great deal of joy, satisfaction and frustration (not unlike being a parent), it is a very special feeling.
Tape #2 - September 23, 1997 — (Student Ownership)

I get my students at all levels to write journals. The younger ones write biweekly journals and over the course of the school year end up writing about eighteen or nineteen of them, whereas the senior students will end up writing about one journal a month. The journals, for the most part, are a completely creative and subjective assignment. The students are allowed to write on any kind of topics they wish. Some make all kinds of little creative things like models, toys, collages, or other various artistic work, which requires a great deal of creative thought and effort on the part of the student. On many occasions I honor their effort and their work by placing the most exemplary pieces in the 'Journal Hall of Fame' in my office.

Most importantly, when they do write, it's the little moments of disclosure that come out in the journals, little clues about things that they desire resolution about and desire to let someone else know about. You will end up with a great deal of esoteric nothingness in some of the journals, and then all of a sudden you will get a little taste of something, like "I ran away from home last night." You get students who really want to see where they stand with you when they disclose things. They tell you things that they have done which are bad like: They stole a car, or they did drugs, or they got drunk and so on. There is an expectation that they are going to get a parental or typical adult response from you. I think in a sense that is the kind of response that they are expecting from you as an adult.

I try really hard to provide responses to journals where I ask questions, as opposed to passing judgment. I like to talk about how I feel that life in general is a series of choices, and these are just some of the choices that they will be making throughout their lives, and I question whether they feel this is a positive or negative choice. I believe that this form of questioning enables students to become more reflective and responsible for their actions.
I think when adults react to young people out of fear, aggression, and anger, young people retreat back into their cocoons of rebellious stances. If you set a goal line for them, they will try to change that goal line in many different ways. Is it really worth losing a kid to that kind of rebellion because of your response? Would it not be better to help the student or young person find their own way into making positive and correct choices for themselves and their future? That is really where the learning takes place, and where the personal growth takes place, when people are making choices for themselves that positively affect them.

Essentially adults cannot live young peoples’ lives for them. There is a point where, as a parent (or a teacher), you have to trust your kids, the kids that you raised (you taught). You have to be able to sit back at a certain period in time throughout the growth and maturation of your children, whether you are a parent or a teacher, and look at the young people you work with or your children and say: “Yes, I have done a sufficient job, I trust this young person to make positive and successful choices.” Then you let them go.

That is really, in a sense, what the school system is. We give young people the choice whether to pass or fail. We give young people the choice whether to succeed or not succeed. When a young person doesn’t do homework for a particular class, why is that? Is it because they consciously didn’t want to, or did they make a choice not to, and that is the reality? Sometimes we, as teachers, get very tied up emotionally in young people, and get very upset when they fail. We act as if they have failed us — where, in a sense, they have really failed themselves. Young people make these choices on their own. You can’t do the classes for them. You can’t make the decisions for them. They must be able to do these things for themselves.

In Drama I have tried more and more to dissociate myself from the decision making process of young people when they are creating scenes and working on projects. I found early in my career, that I wanted to be the provider of all the
answers. My students would ask questions, and I found myself providing all of the answers. In their scene work, they were not really creating anything unique or special to themselves; instead they were taking my ideas and creating what I wanted to see. In a way, with regard to evaluation early in my career, I was looking for this because I wanted them to succeed at specific skills, and so I provided them with specific functions of those skills that they had to acquire and then regurgitate on stage. There was very little creativity in the early going because I had put so much emphasis on the product of my choosing.

Part of my craft is that I provide blueprints, guidelines for specific assignments, specific activities and specific elements that I want to see, and then I let the students at it, and I try not to be so involved in their creative, artistic process. I like to let them self-direct themselves, let them visualize what it should look like on stage, let them imagine what kinds of props and costumes and lighting they would use. Certainly I provide the support and direction where needed, but it is nowhere near as much support and direction as I used to provide, where I found myself so physically and emotionally drained at the end of the day.

It is a very powerful tool that young people have — to make adults, parents, and teachers feel responsible for their actions, and their outcomes. The students have to be responsible for their own actions and their own outcomes, and must be willing to accept the consequences one way or the other.

An example might be the "Cross-Hidden Objectives" assignment with my Grade Ten students. It is a serious assignment, but one fellow decided that his goal was to be foolish and clever, and to entertain the audience, and he took a serious relationship between two brothers, and started talking about how the mother was eaten by a dog, and that the Dad had run away to Ethiopia. He got the laughter and response that he desired from the audience, and got to act ridiculous for a couple of minutes, and basically in my estimation, ruined the scene for his partner, who was
trying very hard to be serious and take a realistic approach to the project. His grade diminished because he specifically needed the comic actions to get the required response from the audience (regardless of the consequences for both his and his partner's grade).

This goes back to a lot of earlier statements that I made about students being hyper-conscious and aware of the audience, their peers', response. If, when students go on stage they already have a reputation for being comic in front of their peers, then in some cases it is very hard for them to go up and be serious, dramatic, or sad because they have received so much positive re-enforcement from their peers over the course of a Drama class for being strange and off-the-wall. What mark in the world is going to be sufficient to give them the same feedback and the same recognition that their peers would give them in that split second that they laugh and think that he is a funny guy? There is not a grade in the world that I can give that student that will make him satisfied because the only satisfaction that he wants is the laughter and the back slapping that he receives from his peers when he is up on stage.
Tape #2 - September 23, 1997 — (Pushing Buttons)

Back to the idea of students testing teachers. I liken it to a young person at a science exhibit, where they have the opportunity to push a lot of different buttons. Really that is part of adolescence, puberty, growing up, becoming mature, and living in a civilized society. Part of all of these things is to know what buttons they are allowed to push, and what buttons they are not allowed to push. When watched, a young person at a science fair or in a science exhibit, will push as many buttons as they possibly can in the display to see what outcomes are achieved. They do the same things with the adults around them, and they do it very consciously, and as the Drama teacher I find that this is more so than being a teacher of any of the other subject matter.

Drama class is a very free and open environment. Students are allowed to move and wander and talk to each other and to listen and create and they are up and doing things through the vast majority of the class. Because of this kind of 'unstructured structure', students have a greater opportunity to try to 'push the buttons'. They like to see in the context of a school what they can say, what they can do, and what they can portray on stage. When they talk about things that upset them on stage, really what they are doing is reconciling themselves to those things. They are helping themselves to understand those things. When they try to be rebellious, they swear and do activities on stage that give them a sense of power, that also is a sense of trying to find out who they are within the context of the classroom and their social group. The social group being the class of students in Drama at that time. Where do they fit in? When they write things, or say things, and 'push the buttons' of the adult authority figure as the Drama teacher, they are testing me to see, who is this man? Who is our Drama teacher? What can we say about him? Or how can we trust him? What can we say around him? And how will he respond to these things?
You really have to allow students to find their feet, while they reconcile their world through 'button pushing'.

I spoke earlier about the opportunity for young people to swear in the classroom. Really, what is swearing aside from just words, and words that we have deemed to be bad. Let's face it, a good portion of our swear words all deal with bodily functions. Are human bodily functions so disturbing and so obscene that the words that we use to describe them must be considered profane?

We have a society that has deemed certain words abhorrent and they are just words, and each word has an origin from somewhere that makes sense. A word like 'Fuck' comes from an abbreviation that Scotland Yard created in the early 1800's meaning " Forced Unlawful Carnal Knowledge." So when a young person says this word on stage, or says this word in a play regardless of the context, it is just a word. When young people get the response from these words that they seek, they will continue to use these words. If these words continue to shock and titillate then these words have a certain cachet, and because they have a certain cachet, young people will continue to use them because they have a sense of forbiddeness. But if you take away that cachet, if you take away the forbiddeness of these words, and you get them to explore how to use language to their advantage, and the power of language, and the power of words, and the power of being articulate, and being able to speak in an articulate and intelligent and learned manner, they will actually choose the latter. Everyone seeks a means of communication beyond them. Even the most learned lawyer or scholar seeks to redefine their ability to communicate in whatever language or discourse that they are using.

An example that came up during my teaching career, was when a student in Drama Ten was doing a scene from a play called "Criminals in Love" written by Canadian playwright, George F. Walker. Now Walker's play was the recipient of half a dozen of the highest Canadian awards for play writing, so this is a top notch play.
George F. Walker is one of Canada’s most important modern playwrights. Well when this young lady brought this scene home, a scene I might add that she chose to work on, over and above numerous others, her parents were very upset (button pushing maybe?).

I have a policy that when modern plays are used in the classroom, if they have any ‘off colour’ language, part of the assignment of producing the play is for the students, under my direction, to come up with alternatives for these words. On many occasions we find that when we find alternative words, or phrases, that the play or the scene is just as powerful without words like shit, fuck, and all the other expletives that go into being a part of today’s modern speech patterns. So it is a revelation for a lot of young people to work on scenes that might have four or five incidents where they have profane words changed, and they have the same power and intensity without them.

Well the parents of this young lady saw it differently, and in a conference with them and the Vice-Principal, I pointed out to them that during the same school year they had signed permission slips allowing their daughter to attend, on two separate occasions, two Shakespeare plays, “All’s Well That Ends Well,” and “Romeo and Juliet.” I pointed out to these parents that there was more profanity and sexuality and homosexuality and expletives in these two Shakespeare plays than in all of Walker’s writing put together. Their response to me was that was fine because it was written in Elizabethan English, and their daughter didn’t understand it!

I like to use an example with my students, when I am teaching Shakespeare to the Grade Eleven and Twelve’s. I use a beautiful line from one of Shakespeare’s plays, “wisps of wind and bags of stone.” Well “wisps of wind” means gas, and “bags of stone” means shit. If you read the line, it is a beautiful poetic line, and even the parents who were complaining would have thought — “Oh that’s Shakespeare, it’s
beautiful, it's poetry." Yet if Shakespeare had said "farts and shit," they would have been deeply offended — but that is what he has said in a very poetic and beautiful form. It is an interesting dichotomy to look at how we take something that we consider to be worthy and literary and important and how we turn our backs on the fact that it has all of the problems that we consider to be the evils of modern day Drama and the modern day language. Things have not changed. People are the same today as they were hundreds of years ago. We still are titillated and obsessed with sexuality and bodily functions, and we still want to laugh at these things.

I find this contradiction throughout the education system. We are putting kids in positions where we say one thing and do the other. Read all of this, it is beneficial for you, it is literature, when in fact Shakespeare didn't write literature four or five hundred years ago. Shakespeare wrote commercial theatre, and commercial theatre four or five hundred years ago was as exciting, as vibrant, as dirty, as profane, and as violent as modern cinema is today.
Reality Drama and Dramatic Disclosure

Of significance to us is: the reality of the inner life of a human spirit in a part and a belief in that reality. {Constantin Stanislavski, An Actor Prepares, 1936}

The creative development and reflective exploration of the "human spirit" is one of the most significant tasks placed on dramatic and theatre arts educators in our public school system today. Provincial curriculum is explicit in its desire to have Drama and theatre students gain a keen and critical perspective or awareness of the world around them. Students at all course levels are gaining experiential and practical exposure to concepts ranging from self-esteem and empathy building to personal catharsis. Drama and theatre teachers constantly find themselves in the overwhelming (yet exhilarating) position of being witness to students having numerous emotional and psychological breakthroughs when they begin to explore poignant moments of the human experience, either through the simple use of role playing and improvisation or through the examination of scripted characters. For Stanislavski this is what it was all about: the respect and appreciation for human truth, to be cognizant of one's own personal 'emotional baggage'; and to be willing to recall and relate one's individual sensations into a more universal experience (1949). The organic nature of the classroom experience is quite simply an opportunity to bring meaning into an otherwise confusing adolescent existence through the reality of the Drama that the students themselves are empowered to create.

Young people experience life as disenfranchised participants. Distanced by age and interest from the adult world of policy, politics, economics, and the judiciary, many adolescents struggle to govern the only elements in their lives that they can control — namely their bodies and their minds (and unfortunately in many cases these, too, have been intruded upon). Adolescents live their lives in such a manner that they are constantly testing themselves and the people around them. Daily they
take on and try many different roles to see which ones feel the most comfortable, which ones get the best reactions, or which ones serve the greater purpose. The constant awkward self-consciousness and self-reproach that young people feel are addressed constantly in the Drama classroom, where the "hyper-awareness of the me" is reconciled through the exploration of presenting and communicating themselves 'in role' to their peers (Burgess and Gaudry, 1985, p. 18). It is through this form of communication that students are empowered to test the boundaries of the real world, to somewhat control their destiny (for that brief moment on stage in Drama class) with the opportunity to "act out imaginary situations based on life" (Burgess and Gaudry, 1985, p. 17).

Certain moments of truth and embellishment form the make-up of any personal experience. As people we recount our stories differently each time we tell them, and each time we tell them, we have different motivations for the changes we make. Reality Drama is based on the premise that many students have a conscious and subconscious desire or need for disclosure — to tell their 'real life' story. For instance, in a dramatic role play depicting two Grade Nine girls talking about dating, one of the girls on stage asked the other:

How do you know if you have had a miscarriage? Because I just started using the pill, but you are supposed to wait a month before it can work properly. But we didn't....but I did get something close to a period. What am I supposed to do? {Performed in class by a female Grade Nine Drama student. February, 1995}

Is this just simple role playing lived at life-rate (Heathcote, 1971); or is it more effectively a coping mechanism that the student has employed to explore the reactions of the other students and the teacher in order to garner a better understanding (and possibly some empathy) for her problem? (Blatner, 1995)

The self-conscious, confused, and vulnerable adolescent — is there a period in human development that is fraught with more worries, problems or self-doubts?
What is it about Drama that empowers young people who are in a constant state of "storm and stress" to be willing participants in risk taking activities in and amongst friends, strangers, and an adult authority figure (the Drama teacher)? Students use the Drama classroom as an arena to actively "test out their ideas and opinions through communication of their roles in the group" (Burgess & Gaudry, 1985, p. 18). Students are keenly aware of who is watching them at any given moment while on stage, yet as performers they can create extremely truthful and evocative theatrical moments in role. Bolton cites Augusto Boal (1981) who actually describes the process of a student being hyper-aware of both their audience's reaction and of the theatrical 'in-role' truth of their character as "metaxis" or dual consciousness (Bolton, 1984, p. 141). I observed an excellent example of these theories during an Acting Eleven and Twelve assignment, where the students were required to create and present a short two minute personal monologue for the class.

I was walking along the street one afternoon and I had a happy little tune in my head. My mind went back to my drama class that I had been to just recently. Then it struck me. A horrifying and sickening thought. Two words ran out loudly in my head like a car smashing into a brick wall.

"WHAT IF!"
That's right. What if!
What if no one really liked me? What if they sort of smiled on the outside but on the inside they thought I was a pest. I knew it was possible 'cause I knew someone who I thought everyone really liked, but when he wasn't around they'd all say: "What a goof, he's so ignorant."
What if they said the same things about me?
What if they knew why I act crazy?
What if they knew that I had imaginary friends?
What if they knew that I act crazy to get friends?
What if they knew that I attempted suicide?
WHAT IF?
{Written and performed in class by a sixteen year old Acting Eleven student, March, 1993}
The student who presented "What If?" created an amazing physical and internalized 'character', who was as much a caricature of himself as it was completely creative and fictitious. Stanislavski points out that it is this attempt to create characterization that allows an actor to mask their individuality, thus enabling them to "bare [their] soul down to the last intimate detail" (Stanislavski, 1949, p. 28). Throughout his presentation, he spent as much time creating brilliant on stage moments, as he did waiting and watching for audience reaction. When the monologue presentation ended, he stood on stage silently staring out, exposed, and virtually naked for all the class to see — and at the ultimate moment of vulnerability, he undercut his work by cracking an immature joke to break the silence with juvenile laughter. He had taken what I like to term 'the invisible scalpel, and dissected himself' for all to see, and in order for him to maintain some semblance of control 'closed his wound' with self-denigration. Throughout the entire time that this student was on stage, he had split his focus between presenting the emotional truth of his character, and watching the audience react to his performance.

A year earlier, I had asked a class of Drama Ten students to consider what I meant by 'risk taking' on stage in front of an audience. The same student who wrote and presented "What If?" stood up in front of the class and told me that he knew exactly what I meant by 'risk taking'. He proceeded to cross to centre stage, where he pulled down his pants and much to everyone's astonishment... 'mooned' the entire class! I believe that David Kemp's (1990) ideal of student self-discovery as perceived by an understanding audience is a nice summary:

For students, the process of self-discovery - discovering the uses of the imagination and of their other personal resources - can be slow and painful. It requires great commitment and concentration; the help and understanding of a sensitive teacher; and above all, sympathy from fellow students. (p. 10)
In Ken Dryden's (1995) acclaimed critical observation of the school system, *In School: Our Kids, Our Teachers, Our Classrooms*, Dryden notes that it is only in the Drama classroom that he witnessed the students that seem to be falling through the cracks in other areas of the school curriculum really come alive. He writes:

In drama they are asked to break down their inhibitions, to express what they truly feel and think, what matters to them. To do well in drama, you have to trust,... To take chances, push wider and farther at what you can do, look foolish to others and to yourself, fail, try again, and still feel that it's okay....

Here Sophia is different. She doesn't push so hard.... She laughs more. Julie, so sullen in math, is so expressive here... Even Rob sometimes forgets his awkward adolescent shyness. Leeza, blank and dead in math when she is there at all... is engrossed here.

... Informal, unself-conscious, verbal, familiar, active, profane, authentic: drama class is made for today's kid. (pp. 193-197)

Sometimes, it isn't a performance, presentation, or dramatic exercise or improvisation that brings the student into the world of the Drama class, sometimes it's the relationship that is fostered between them and the teacher. Biweekly and monthly student journals are handed in to me, in most cases, like the notes you see kids throwing and passing to each other in any classroom in any school. Elaborately folded personal offerings. They ask probing questions about me and my life. Some I answer in the flippant manner that teachers usually respond to questions that hit too close to home, some I answer with the sincerity and honesty of a intimate friend. These journals come in all shapes and sizes. Pictures drawn while in science class, or notes written while sitting through a lesson of French verb conjugation; all serve to open a window and present a human connection between teacher and student, adult and adolescent, youth and mentor, friends.

As I sit working in my office, one of my Grade Twelve students walks in, she is visibly upset. She sits down, and through a rush of tears and emotions, she tells
me an extremely popular graduate from last year is in the local hospital, due to a rather messy suicide attempt. I am shocked. I attempt to calm this student. I barely am able to teach my first class, and as soon as the bell ends the period, I head down to the Vice Principal's office, and TELL him that I won't be able to teach for the rest of the day. I leave the school, and spend the day with one of 'MY KIDS' (a student of mine for five straight years). I watched this person grow up. And now, not unlike a parent, a social worker, a doctor, or a friend, I am sitting by her bedside holding her hand, crying, listening, and attempting to understand why this beautiful individual with unlimited potential would want to end her life!

I don't recall while being certified in the Faculty of Education program being taught how to sit through the funeral of one of your student's parents who die of AIDS. I don't recall being told that I would be attending the funerals of my students who die senselessly from drinking and driving, or from overdosing on pills. No one sat me down and told me that dozens of young people would confide in me about their most intimate personal problems, or that a weeping fourteen year old Drama Nine student would tell me that she is pregnant and doesn't know what to do.

A Grade Eleven girl creates an improvisational scene on stage portraying the violent assault that she experienced at a weekend house party. All that she and the other students were asked to do was to satirically recreate their weekend on stage in front of the class. She 'jokingly' shows how two drunken guys crashed the party and proceeded to beat her up, and as we watch her portray something real, violent and terrible, she continues to satirize the event and the ensuing visit to the hospital for stitches. The class is 'cool'. There is a lot at stake in their collective reaction. Some people say things to the girl on stage. They joke with her, and down play the event as common place and normal, while a few of the less 'cool' students question the girl with intense concern and make demands of legal recourse for the two thugs who did this. What began with every intention of being a fifteen minute 'fun'
improvisational warm-up becomes an entire class discussion; as well as a dramatic exploration of the many issues of violence, partying, and the strange code of silence that young people maintain when it comes to disclosing important information to the authorities.
I used an analogy at a parent teacher conference tonight which I liked. I explained to some parents the distinction between different levels of Drama.

The Drama Eight and Nine student is like a little kid who goes trick or treating. When they go to a neighbour’s house to trick or treat at Halloween they pull up their mask and say, “Hi, it’s me.” In a sense that really seems to be what Grade Eight and Nine Drama students do on most occasions. They try on the costume or the mask of a character, but are constantly flipping it up to make sure that they are still themselves, and to make sure that the audience recognizes them.
In analysis of what I do on a daily basis, I take on so many tasks over the course of a day that transcend simply teaching a course to students. I am active in fund raising. I am active in pedagogical discourse with students and colleagues. I am doing paper work, work order requisitions, and talking to maintenance personnel about jobs that require my input in and around my area of the facility. I deal with parents. I deal with students on both a social and educational level. I teach my classes. I evaluate my classes. I monitor and keep my room in a maintained and orderly manner. I rehearse, produce, direct, build, and design two mainstage productions yearly. Every day that I go into school I am filling, in part, little pieces of all those tasks, not unlike any other teacher in that school. It is a real juggling act some days, most days. As you get good with the juggling you cease to really notice how much of a juggling act it really is because you get used to it, and it becomes common place.

When I reflect on the amount of time and the different ways that I interact with my students, I find it funny how many unique ways you can gain their respect. Today, for instance, I did a music warm up with my Grade Eight's where I took a Van Halen song called "You Really Got Me," and I got them warmed up by making them do a mimed air band to the music. Imagine this: I am dressed in nice slacks, a dress shirt and a tie. I go into my office, and I have the stereo set up, and I get them all built up for my entrance. They are all wondering what I am going to do next, and I grab a microphone, and some sunglasses, and a funny wig, and still dressed the way I am, I begin to air band. I start acting like I am a rock star. The incongruity, of course, is me dressed like a 'respectable adult teacher' bounding around the floor pretending to play a guitar and sing hard core rock and roll. It not only makes them laugh, it brings them in, and it really comes down to a sense of my modeling a way of being, an attitude, and a sense of ease where anything goes.
I want to be a role model for my students. I want my students to realize that they can laugh at themselves, they can laugh at me, we can laugh at each other, and our laughter is good. It is good for the students to look at themselves in the mirror, and see themselves, and realize that we are all pretty funny. People are funny. It is healthy to laugh at oneself, and to laugh at others. By being able to laugh at ourselves we gain not only a sense of humility and a sense of irony, but a sense of self-respect and self-esteem. Especially when we are teenagers, and are constantly comparing ourselves to other people. We get to see just how similar we all are. No matter how good looking someone is, or how popular they are, or how athletic they are, or whether they wear glasses or contact lenses, or dress in the latest fashions — they are just as strange, and funny, and weird, as we all are.

People are so egotistical. We are so egotistical as a species. We pretend we are so perfect, that we are so in control of our environment, so in control of other animals and so in control of our own destinies, yet we are so very afraid of so many things. It is the self-exploration of our humanity that really is the major theme of junior Drama.

As children we grow up, and we play all kinds of games as we develop, and the play structure has been widely documented by developmental child psychologists and adolescent psychologists. It has been documented and researched widely by Dewey and Piaget and by all kinds of educational theorists. How people learn. How people develop and mature. If we go back and explore some of the basic tenets of our play as children, we play make believe, we use our imaginations, we create other worlds, we create imaginary friends, we make things that are unreal — real, we do all kinds of interesting and unusual things. Our brains are just bursting with exploration, as we attempt to understand and reconcile the world around us. We wear costumes and play games that allow us to explore the different realms of
the adult world. We play at being Mommies and Daddies, at being firemen and hockey stars and TV personalities. We fantasize about all these things.

Why is it that as we get older, we cease to be interested in playing? Is it because we lack the time or the inclination? Or have our REAL lives become so predominant that our sense of play becomes extraneous? We have already taken on a role, and that is OUR role — and tough luck, there you go — so we don’t play anymore. It is a sad reality that we cease to want to play anymore as adults or even as teenagers. This is when we become audience members.

As adults we cease to be active participants in play and make believe, and our imaginations become idle because we are just too darn busy; however, we still desperately need these outlets, and because we need and desire these outlets, we seek out popular entertainment. This is when the prevalence of television, cinema, popular fiction, and theatre become important. We still have the predisposition and desire to explore different realms of our existence, and to reconcile many different issues, but instead of US personally going through our own personal catharsis or experiences, we watch a television show where we relate to the characters. And when those characters cry, we cry because we relate to them, and they make us feel something about ourselves. Or maybe we go to a movie that makes us angry, angry about ourselves or our society; maybe it says all the things we cannot say ourselves. It makes us feel the things that we are afraid to feel. That is where the role of the actor comes in, or the role of the artist, or poet, or writer. They see for us, they feel for us, because we are determined that in whatever career we have chosen, we have ceased to have the desire to personally experience these feelings on our own, and we need the help of others. We have become THE AUDIENCE.
Tape #2 - September 29, 1997 — (The Mentor, The Pedagogue, and Me)

When I look at my own practice, I see myself having got to a place with the students I work with where the majority of them have an understanding of who I am, what I am, what I do, and have already 'bought in' to the program by virtue of their course selection, and their choosing to be in Drama or Acting with me.

When a student signs up for Drama Nine at Aldergrove Community Secondary, it is not just Drama Nine as prescribed by the British Columbia Ministry of Education's curriculum guide for Drama. It is Drama Nine as per David Young. The course of study is determined for the most part by the individual teacher, and by the individual teacher's life experience, and their desire to share that life experience with the students that they teach. The curriculum guide, in actual fact, is really just a document that is a blueprint. It stands in the background, on its own, as a solidifier, that enables the school system to justify each specific course and its content.

I find myself on many occasions having an innate sense of what needs to be done daily — and I do it. On many occasions, I have not written down what I need to do for a day. I usually write things down after I do them, after I reflect on them. I have a general sense of the direction I am going, and I have a number of activities that over the course of seven years of teaching Drama in this particular school that I know are sure fire. There are certain activities that I plan and want to do with students at different age levels, and I shoot towards these activities and do warm ups, and do different streams of consciousness within a given project, that allow me to have a great deal of freedom. I can literally walk into the classroom, and over the course of a couple of moments, find what it is that I want a class to do at that particular moment. The same is said for rehearsal and warm ups. It is a different type of preparation that is required for the classroom teacher who is teaching core curriculum subjects, regardless of how long a teacher has been teaching.
I have taught English and Social Studies as well as History while being a full time Drama teacher. I work hard in what I do as a Drama teacher, but I have never worked as hard as when I was teaching History, Social Studies and English by sheer fact of the volume of the marking that had to be done, and the amount of preparation that was needed for each lesson. The linear direction of a core curriculum course, as opposed to the non-linear direction of a Drama course is tough to compare, and certainly tough to combine.

In Drama I try very hard to have a linear sequence of activities that act as building blocks, underpinning one for the other, that will help a student grow towards certain evaluated projects. There are many times where the direction of learning and learning outcomes fluctuate drastically, where as a teacher you have to allow your students to glory in the subjectivity of Drama as a communicative art form. Luckily, you have the luxury in the Drama classroom to discuss, and to play, and to communicate, all kinds of things that go way beyond just trying to find linear project or assignment objectives.

On the commute home yesterday, I was talking with a colleague (Lisa Galloway, an Art teacher at my school) about mentoring. I was trying to consider where the teaching stops and the mentoring begins. Where or when is it that a teacher decides to be a mentor? How often do our students, and our young people, find or seek out an adult and make that adult their mentor by virtue of spending time with that person. Mentoring is inherent and is a natural part of teaching.

I find that some of the more meaningful moments that I encounter with my students are when I learn about them as human beings, and this usually comes from spending time with them outside of the scheduled classroom environment. Because I work out in Aldergrove in the upper Fraser Valley, many of the students that I teach are bused to school. When they partake in extra or co-curricular activities like theatrical productions at the school, the buses have already left and
have finished their routes. Students who have been left at school to work on a production will stay at the school for hours, and on many occasions will require a drive home, or require to be picked up at the school by their parents. Since I have to commute back to Vancouver anyhow, on many occasions, I will volunteer to drive a number of these students home. To me it is a natural part of what I do because I spent ten years as a soccer coach having to drive young people to and from soccer games and practices throughout the Lower Mainland, depending on the needs of my team and the parents. So this is not a new thing for me.

When I drive students home, I find that I learn a little bit more about them. You get to see where they live, and by virtue of that, it is a little window into their world that they otherwise might not normally let you look into. You get to talk, and obviously on a drive home talk becomes a whole different dynamic than talking in a classroom with other students present. Students talk a lot about their worlds, their personal goals and things of that nature, and ask questions of you as the teacher/driver/mentor. The relationship becomes more personal, more human. This is something that is really very important. Education is human communication. I am a human being who happens to be in his thirties, communicating to another human being who happens to be in their early or late teens, and none of us at any time ceases to be human. It is that human communication that is so valuable and so needed.

So often in today's world families eat their meals in front of the television and never communicate. Kids find themselves alienated from their parents. Their parents live busy lives, trying to pay bills and provide for their family. Many parents work shifts and are unable to spend quality time with their children. People work so hard these days that when they come home from work, they are extremely tired. Many families these days are double income earners, with both Mom and Dad out in the work force. So both Mom and Dad are tired at the end of the day. These days
you don't necessarily have an adult at home consistently being a homemaker, waiting at home doing housework, waiting at home to ask the children how their day was, and to take care of their needs. Much of family life these days is an alienated and lonely experience. Young people obviously require adult leadership, modeling, and support, and often turn to many other adults in their lives for that leadership, for that support, and for that modeling.

I think about the roots of the word pedagogy:

ped*a*gogue n. 1. A school master; educator.
[<Gk. pais, paidos child + agogos leader.]

Going back to its origin, a pedagogue was a kind of court tutor, a person in the Greek court who used to walk or "lead" the court children to and from their lessons and back home again. It was during the walk, that journey, that young people would confide and communicate with the pedagogue, this child keeper, this child leader who had walked them to and from their school and home. This is where the modern word comes from, this journey to be educated, this mentoring towards understanding, to an educated conclusion. So when you think of the root of the word, here I am as teacher, mentor, pedagogue, driving students home from school, taking them back from the journey. Journeying with them and communicating with them about their lives.

Drama teaching as a profession is very insular. It is a very lonely job. Drama teachers for the most part are very insular people in the context of their school community. The pressure placed on a Drama teacher is such that they have many expectations placed upon them to produce activities above and beyond their normal classroom duties, not unlike a Music teacher or a P.E. teacher. The Drama teacher lives and works in a class whose process requires a product. The expectation that is placed on Drama teachers by the administration of a school, or the community, or even the kids, is that indeed there will be productions for public viewing at some
point in time during the school year. The reality of this is that any public product requires rehearsal, practice, design, set up, producing, and production elements that cannot be done within the structure of a normal class. They are required to be done above and beyond normal classroom duties, and ultimately are unpaid hours. On average, I put in close to 300 unpaid hours a year to produce theatrical productions for our school.

Now the thousands of hours that teachers put in to being a part of the extra or co-curricular life of the school and the community are volunteered, and are provided graciously by the teacher. Teachers do not sit around thinking what kind of benefit will come to them if they spend hundreds of hours working on a play for public production. The benefit to them is to see the learning and the job of completion and the thrill of satisfaction that is gained from the product that they have worked so hard and long on. However, there is a high frequency of burn out that comes from this extreme amount of work, that goes beyond the paid working day. Teachers tend to isolate themselves in this world, where they feel obligated to work with the kids no matter what is going on in their own lives. That obligation is a standing one that they will rarely turn their back on because the pull from the students is extremely powerful.
Tape #2 - September 30, 1997 — (Evaluation)

What is evaluation? I watch students prepare and create short and moderate range scenes throughout the year, and obviously as a teacher, I am expected to evaluate them. To provide some sense of evaluation for the curricular objectives which they reach. As I have grown in my position, I question more and more my role as an evaluator. I am starting to see the role of teacher/evaluator more as someone who is looking for mistakes. Every time a mistake is made, marks are taken off. An evaluation, at least for me in the arts, has less to do with the actual art, and more to do with just fulfilling an objective or goal that the school system places on me which is to provide my students with A's, B's, C+'s, C's, and D's, for their report card.

In reality all graded objectives are supposed to be tangible learning outcomes. I have, for the most part, no problem with that. I can see my students doing certain things, achieving certain goals, depending on the different activities that we do, but I always sit there and wonder what it is that I am actually marking, even though I know. What is it about Drama where the tangible and the intangible are so completely intertwined? So much of the work of the Drama student is process, and this process is about how you get there, through rehearsal, or working with others in the Drama classroom. It's about choices: choices in character development, character relationships, aesthetic choices for staging, lighting, setting, and costuming, as well as the students willingness to revise and revisit their ideas and to polish their work for presentation. All these incredibly subjective choices dealing with human communication and creativity can not easily or summarily be assessed by simple quantifiable grades.

Currently in the school system in British Columbia, we have a reporting process where students who receive less than 50% on a report card do not receive a failing grade anymore. They receive something called an "I" which stands for "In
Progress." These students are supposed to be provided with a learning program, where hopefully they will become successful enough in the course to pass.

It is interesting when you look at evaluation and what evaluation is all about, and the self-esteem factor of a student who is failing a course, and the fact that they are getting an "I" instead of a "D," "E," or an "F." One has to wonder how cognizant a student is when they are failing a course. Why do kids fail courses? What is the primary reason for a young person to fail a course? When I talk to my colleagues in my school, the majority of them talk about young people failing courses in all aspects of the curriculum because of poor attendance, skipping, truancy, and incomplete work.

Our system is based on the evaluation of tangibles. In order to find a learning outcome and to see if a learning outcome has been achieved, we need to have some sort of test or gauge that allows a teacher to look at a student in a summary manner, not an holistic manner, but a summary manner, to draw some kind of conclusions about how much the student has soaked up of a certain subject matter. If the student has not attended, that is a problem. If the student has not handed in the work, that is a problem. What is the root of non-attendance and a failure to complete assignments? Is it because the student feels inferior, and stupid, and has a low self-esteem to begin with? Or is it that they feel these things particularly when they enter the classroom?

More and more society is placing the onus of a student's learning outcomes on the teacher, and not on the student. The question really must be, who is the learner, who must have the learning take place in order for the learning to happen? Obviously it has got to be the student.

On numerous occasions, I have called parents and told them that their son or daughter is doing poorly in Drama, or that their son or daughter is failing because they have skipped, or that they have bad attendance, or that they don't participate
positively. On more than one occasion, I have had parents respond to me by saying: "Well, what the hell do you want me to do about it?" Is this just their response because it's the Drama teacher calling, and it's ONLY Drama, or is this just the basic response to any complaint from a teacher at school? What kind of parents are these people? What kind of commitment are they putting into their son's or daughter's education? How important is it? How valid is an education to that parent?

I watched my Grade Eleven's and Twelve's the other day complete "Short Stake Scenes," which are three minute scenes where something important is at stake between a male and female character. The variety of offerings was quite amazing, considering the fact that only three scripts were used; in a class of about thirty, there were fifteen groups, and about five groups each were doing the exact same scene. But, each time you saw a scene, you saw it done a little differently. You saw different interpretations of the scene, different skill levels of listening and reacting to their fellow actors on stage, different realities of how they move on stage, or what they brought with them for props, costumes, or makeup. There were different ways of creating the characters, different ways of looking at one another or interacting. All of them were just as valid as the next.

Certainly one could view this assignment (strictly as an acting coach or acting teacher) and start pulling apart the technical elements of acting as an art form, but then you really have to ask yourself, what is high school Acting or Drama for? Am I here as a teacher to teach students to become professional actors? Is that really my job? Or is my job to view and to analyze secondary school students, and to watch them explore different roles?

Regardless, it all comes down to some sort of evaluation of their work, and on many occasions what I try to do is to get the students to provide their own criteria based self-analysis and evaluation. I then use the students' own self-reflection as a basis for my evaluation. What I usually do is, if a student can justify
why they deserve a specific mark, and on many occasions I agree with their personal
evaluation, I will give them that mark. Sometimes students in self-evaluation
become very hard on themselves, way more so than they should. I like to ask them
what it is they got out of the assignment, and that is the meaningful thing that they
should take away from the project, not the A, B, or C+ that they receive, but what it
is that they have learned. How did they grow? How did they get better? How did
they develop as an actor, or as a person, or a Drama student?

I like to say to my students, and to their parents, that it is easier to get an "A"
in my class than it is to fail — and it really is, because failure requires a lot of effort.
For the most part, I feel my classes are fun, and enjoyable, and relaxing, and that I
present myself and my classes in such a way that students can feel a wide range of
freedom. However, you always get the odd student who makes the choice to fail.
Failure is non-compliance; failure is non-attendance; failure is a lack of positive
participation and positive inter-action in the classroom. Every year I fail
approximately half a dozen students. In a lot of ways those young people chose to
fail. They didn’t show up, they didn’t do assignments, they didn’t participate, they
were negative throughout.

So much of what I see in school (even when I was a student), and certainly
now as a professional educator, is a lot of ‘hoop jumping’. I often look at myself: I
have journals due every two weeks, I require these assignments to be handed in on
a Thursday or a Friday at the end of the week because of my own personal desire to
mark them over the weekend. So much of what a teacher does is, in a lot of ways,
for their own expediency. Their own ability to do the job. It is a ‘hoop’ for a student
to jump through when they have to provide me with certain assignments on a
specific date for this reason. I guess that this is part of the socialization process that
students in our public school system must go through. Deadlines are meant to teach
us that we have to pay our telephone bill on time, as well as a certain responsibility
that realistically there are deadlines for things that we have to meet. There are many deadlines in our lives for many different reasons.

What ultimately delineates a "ten out of ten" from a "seven out of ten" grade? There is so much subjectivity for both me and the student. It is weird because as I watch students enter the classroom in September and see them over the first week or two, I wonder about how many of them I peg early on to hit a certain level, and that is the level they pretty much stay at for the entire year with minor fluctuations. Plus nowadays it is very competitive to get into college and university, and I am even more lenient and more willing to provide top marks for my Grade Eleven's and Twelve’s for use on their transcripts, if they put forth the effort and have positive participation in the class. It is funny how that works, just what the mark means. I have used the analogy many times with students that when I work at a job, I get paid at the end of the week, but when they work at school they get a grade, and that grade will allow them to go to a post secondary institution and hopefully will enable them to get a good job later on in life — which ultimately means I am paying them, rewarding them with their A’s or B’s.
Dramatic Liberation

Adam Blatner extols the virtues and potency inherent in the realistic dramatic experience in his article "Drama in Education as Mental Hygiene: A Child Psychiatrist's Perspective." During a period when society seems to be hiding voyeuristically behind the one dimensional experiences of the mass media and has relegated the disciplines of the fine arts to the status of underfunded cultural icon, it is gratifying to read a scholarly article written by an M.D. who actually prescribes dramatic role playing as a preventative self-care remedy (1995). Blatner writes his article from the perspective of a psycho dramatist who has studied the works of psychodrama inventor J.L. Moreno, M.D. (1889-1974) and believes that dramatic role playing and spontaneous improvisation increase the development of metacognition. To him, the opportunity to be a part of the creative process within the realm of Drama is to become increasingly close to the bare essence of self-awareness:

Role playing offers a positive vehicle for dealing with the disorientation of modern life, because it teaches people skills for participating in the creation of their own unfolding identities. (Blatner, 1995, p. 94)

Acclaimed British theatre scholar and director, Peter Brook, once pointed out that all that is needed for an act of theatre to take place is for "a man to walk across an empty space whilst someone else is watching him" (1968, p. 11); thus begging the existential question: is all life not simply a theatrical event being continuously played out? If so, wouldn't our identities "unfold" regardless of how creative or uncreative we were? What is the delineating definition of "creativity"? Blatner analyzes the many different avenues of awareness that can open up to a person as they are involved in the experience of "role playing, and sociodramatic explorations" (Blatner, 1995, p. 95). People must become aware of the randomness
and complexities of situational improvisation. They must be able to develop open-ended creative and critical thinking processes in order to function with any semblance of human truth and reality. Sociodramatic exploration can empower people with the therapeutic opportunity to explore issues and events in or out of character, or for that matter as a passive third party observer or overseer.

The history of theatre (and of humankind itself) has provided all of civilization with the chance to cleanse themselves through taking on different and diverse roles. Whether it is the reenactment of a hunt, the chorus from Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, or a recreation of a criminal act on a television 'cop show', people need the chance to reconcile their daily existence. Blatner seems to postulate that dramatic activity is something that needs to be actively and consciously applied, that it doesn't necessarily already exist inherently within people. If Drama is defined as:

something that happens when all the participants in and witnesses to a make-believe situation find themselves believing in that situation, because the situation has come to represent things that are important to everyone. (Booth and Lundy, 1985, p. ix)

How then can the dramatic role playing of a young woman reenacting the sexual abuse that was perpetrated on her during adolescence be considered to be "make-believe?" Yes, the dramatic experience can facilitate a great deal of personal and psychological liberation, but it must be duly noted that not all dramatic activity is intended to be therapeutic.

Brian Edmiston states in his article "Structuring Drama for Reflection and Learning: A Teacher-Researcher Study" that the most essential and tangible component of educational dramatic structure for young people is the "development of the power of reflection" (1993, p. 3). Reflection is indeed an integral part of acting: the actor must be able to delineate or distinguish between self and character, as well as between two distinctive realms of human truth. As Brook proposes:
Acting is in many ways unique in its difficulties because the artist has to use the treacherous, changeable and mysterious material of himself as his medium, detached without detachment. He must be sincere, he must be insincere: he must practice how to be insincere with sincerity and how to lie truthfully. (Brook, 1968, p. 131)

Brook's paradoxical description of the techniques used on the stage, bear a strange resemblance to the manner in which human nature asserts itself in a person's normal development and maturation. The act of reflection is not just simply the act of understanding the standards of personal conduct, but also the *modus vivendi* of a person's daily existence. Piaget, Vygotsky and Dewey have all extensively supported the need for reflection in order to develop an understanding of our experiences and to critically consider the universal repercussions of the decision making process (Edmiston, 1993).
Tape #2 - October 3, 1997 — (Control - Part I)

Why is it that teachers of Drama, English, or Art get the greatest number of complaints from parents about curriculum, and what their children are learning? The Math teacher, or the Science teacher, don't have nearly the same kind of problem. Is it because the Math and Science teachers are teaching cold, hard, reality based elements; while the teachers of Art, Drama, and English are dealing with human interaction, human self-exploration, uncontrollable ideas, and personal freedom, and a lot of that scares parents. Parents are desperately afraid of their children gaining control over themselves and their future. Parents desire to hold on to a certain modicum of control throughout their children's lives, and they see that control slipping away as the young person explores new realms. It frightens them. I want my Drama students and my Acting students to explore 'the self', and explore human nature, and explore human imperfection, and what it means to be human, and what their role as a person in society is.
I want to comment on the difference between students who I teach Drama to every day in the public school system, and the young people who I work with privately at Carousel Theatre\(^1\). There is a distinct difference between what a student wants to achieve on a Saturday afternoon on their own time, and what a student wants to achieve in a school system where there are grades and report cards attached. The vested interest in a paid course is interestingly enough not as great as the students who are in the school system. Maybe that is because the parents are paying the money, and the kids take it for granted. I find interesting the different types of students and age ranges that you get in a specific class. Some motivations for parents who enroll their child in Carousel Theatre include: it is an expensive and glorified baby-sitting service to give kids something interesting to do on a Saturday; some have stars in their eyes expecting a course at Carousel Theatre to provide them with some sort of basis or stepping stone towards a film or television career; for others they feel it is a good thing to place on their resume; and there are a few who come for the pure love of wanting to learn Drama because the Drama program that they have at their own schools leaves a lot to be desired.

This brings me to the point that there are too many Drama teachers who teach Drama in our system who are NOT Drama teachers. They are not accredited Drama teachers, they are not people who have even taken acting courses for the most part. They are people who, through the capricious nature of the school system are thrown into teaching this Drama course or that Drama course. By virtue of the fact that they have a valid teaching certificate, they are expected to be able to teach anything, whether they like it or not. There are so many examples of this that I tend

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\(^1\) Carousel Theatre School, founded in 1974 by Elizabeth Ball, is a non-profit society, and is Vancouver's oldest theatre school. Located on Granville Island, Carousel offers young people from seven years old to their late teens opportunities to learn drama and acting skills for fun, for performance, or for future career objectives. Classes are usually during the weekend, after normal school hours, or during the summer, and usually consist of approximately sixteen to thirty hours of course work. Tuition for these courses can range from $100 to $400. I have been teaching and directing young people at Carousel Theatre since 1994.
to wonder how Drama actually survives as a curriculum within the school system. Very few courses of any substance can be taught by people who do not know the curriculum, or who have trouble or are vague with the course content. Why is Drama treated differently? Is it because Drama is viewed as a marginalised subject which is just 'simple play', and that anyone can facilitate this as a classroom activity? It is this kind of attitude that allows for incompetent and unqualified teachers to be hired to teach Drama in our school system, and forces young people who actually want to learn Drama to search out opportunities like Carousel Theatre on their own time, and to pay a premium price for proper instruction.

I find that it is a real juggling act at Carousel Theatre because you have an eight week schedule where you meet once a week for two hours, and it is very much based on an overview, and that overview is not really production-oriented. You get a variety of students at different age categories ranging from twelve to seventeen years old, with a varying degree of motivation, desire, and Drama background. You are always juggling what you can teach, and what is relevant and accessible to the majority of the kids, and in some ways you are playing to the lowest common denominator.

A number of students in the Carousel program really struggle with a two hour class. Sometimes you get a very limited level of commitment, because there is very little continuity from one Saturday session to another. This is due to the fact that you have a week that is passing in between each class, and there is also a limited element of recourse for students who don’t put forth the best possible effort. I don’t have any marks, or report cards like at school to give them or their parents, so it takes a great deal of coaxing to motivate some of these kids to put forth even a modicum of positive commitment.

When I start with a new group of students at Carousel, I can’t help noticing the obvious physical traits that are seen through closed body language, nervous
laughter, nervous facial expressions, a lack of desire to go first, or to speak out early, because everyone is afraid of the way that they each perceive one another. Young people at this point try desperately to establish a status amongst themselves, a reputation, even for the very brief moment of meeting each other for the first time. There is a certain aloofness that comes with the first class, whether you are working at Carousel Theatre, or in the public school system.

The attitude of the students is based on that limbo world of not quite knowing what they are supposed to do, and not quite knowing who everyone is, and how everyone will get along. The place of 'not knowing' is an exhilarating place to be. That place of knowing and not knowing. I think a lot of interesting risks and choices are made by students in that place.

The Carousel students were asked to create a scene with one another, portraying bits about themselves as a kind of introduction. Typically, they will attempt to mask themselves, through the portrayal of different character traits or attitudes. A character choice that one female student made was to become a kind of psychotic introvert in a scene that took place at a McDonald's restaurant. I have had this student for four sessions at Carousel, and this seems to be her stock first scene, where through the intensity of her character she pushes away the other students by sending out the message that she might be hard to handle, crazy, or even dangerous. A couple of students created a scene at a rock concert, and began smoking a joint. Again, here is their first scene, amongst a new group of people, who do not know them, and they are portraying drug use for their peers. Whether it be fictitious drug use, or whether they are masking the fact that they truly do use drugs, ultimately they are trying to portray a certain image, a personae for the rest of the class — because the first impressions that we get about people, initially, tend to be the most important.
This goes further still with regard to the basic reality of how people feel about themselves, their self-esteem, and their self-image. How do people come to class? What clothes do they wear? How do they portray themselves when they go on stage? The young men usually wear baseball hats, with the brim down low protecting their eyes. The girls wear their jackets, and cover themselves up, physically protecting themselves throughout the class. These acts of personal choice, all send a multitude of messages about who they are, what they are, and how they want to be treated. Some of it is subtle, some of it overt. Regardless, it is all a matter of telegraphing these clues to each other, and saying — this is who I am.

At Carousel Theatre where students' parents are paying for the eight weeks worth of courses, and in some cases the students are being forced to attend, and sometimes the students don't want to be there, you have no authority to fail a student in a private course. There is very little recourse for the instructor, and it becomes very difficult to motivate the students when the school status of teacher and report card are lost. The standards become a lot more watered down, especially when students neglect to do what they are responsible for. You become a lot more tolerant and blasé as a teacher. You don't invest as much into it. When something comes up that students are ill prepared for, you just move onto something else, without missing a beat, with no care or hope for any real closure.

I find that on many occasions the Carousel class operates more as a safe environment for the young people in the class to be social for a couple of hours. To make it anything more is really not desired by most of the students. It is funny because the expectation from the employer is that at the end of eight weeks of two hour classes, there will (hopefully) be some sort of finished product to present to the parents that is tangible. Many of these kids are not signing up for a course to attain a finished product. They are there to be social, to learn a little bit, and to augment their Drama experience. To expect anything more is to be overly optimistic.
I was speaking with one of my M.A. thesis advisors, Dr. Carl Leggo, about the many issues that I will deal with in my research and writing. Carl pointed out that he felt that there is the desire of teachers in creative subject matter to attempt to keep everything "neat and tidy," and that essentially human communication, and human emotions, are actually "extremely messy." They are messy things at the best of times, and we as teachers are unable to keep them in a clean, tidy format, which unfortunately is the expectation in educational evaluation.

The idea of control — so much of what is espoused by proponents of role Drama, is all about control. What is role Drama after all, but the constant manipulation of the students by the 'teacher in role'? How often do the teachers take on a subordinate position in the role Drama work studied by Bolton, Heathcote, or O'Neill? Ultimately the teacher takes on yet another level of control over the class, transcending teacher to become the captain of the pirate ship, or the head priest, or the politician, or the parent, choosing high status roles for themselves in the role Drama's to continue to control and manipulate the students, so they can keep it "clean and tidy."
Tape #3 - October 8, 1997 — (Modeling Humanity)

Part of what we do as teachers is modeling. What I want to model the most for my students is my humanity. To model all the elements of myself as a human being with problems, weaknesses, and imperfection. For instance, my Grade Eleven’s and Twelve’s are going into "The Personal Monologue" assignment. They are learning about catharsis and internalization as part of their acting curriculum, to learn a kind of "method acting," to draw on emotional recall from their past experience. One of the things that I like to say to my students is that I am not prepared to get them to do something that I am not prepared to do myself. If they are going to share the innermost secret dimensions of themselves through their writing, their poetry, and their Drama — then I too should be willing to share similar elements of myself as well. So I read some of the personal writing and poetry that I wrote when I was fifteen, sixteen, seventeen and eighteen years old, and I let them sit down and listen and see where I was at their age, both emotionally and psychologically in my writing. I want them to realize that no matter what I wrote about, I made it through all of my teenage turmoil in one piece, and they can make it through as well. Even the most happy and well adjusted sixteen, seventeen or eighteen year old is going through a process that Kaufmann in the eighteenth century termed "sturm und drang" (storm and stress). What was Kaufmann looking at in the eighteenth century? Have adolescents changed or have we as human beings stayed the same? If we look at this, we realize that people have been the same for generations, for centuries. Regardless of technology, young people have been the same, and will remain the same eternally.

We might look at a young person now and consider them partial products of today’s technology or media, and I would agree to some extent, but I think the basic inherent nature of a teen or adolescent has been the same for ever: the sense of rebellion, the sense of trying to make it on their own, trying to find themselves,
trying to gauge who and what they are by virtue of looking at others, and by virtue of looking deep within themselves.

"The Personal Monologue" project really allows students to explore the power that is acting, and how much of one's own person gets tied up in any character. In some respect they need to explore their own self before they can explore others. I will use a kind of strange analogy. Drugs are defined as anything that alters your body chemistry. Really if you think about it in such a broad scope, a drug can be something as innocent as a cookie with a lot of sugar in it. When we eat the cookie, the sugar is being digested and processed in our blood system and is changing our physical make up. Similarly, when we feel emotions, our endorphins and our blood chemistry and all of the different elements of how we act and react change depending on our emotional state. There is a real sense of getting 'high'. When you are on stage, and you create intense comic, serious, sad, emotional moments on stage, you can feel a physical rush that is not unlike drugs, or even more simply a real sense of accomplishment, a real sense of connection with the audience focusing on what you are giving them.

I look forward to all my students at different junctures of the school year exploring that reality — the power that is theatre, the power that is standing on stage communicating their story, or the story of others, as written by a playwright and interpreted by an actor.

I had an interesting discussion the other day with a good friend of mine, Matthew Bissett (a recent theatre B.F.A. graduate from the University of Victoria and former Impulse Theatre colleague), who pointed out that a great deal of theatre art these days has evolved through self-exploration and process, and how little of this art is being created for presentational purposes. Similarly, Hornbrook (1992)

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2 The Impulse Theatre Company Society was a non-profit theatre company dedicated to promote and produce youth theatre. I was the Founder and Artistic Director of Impulse from 1986 to its dissolution in 1993. Matthew began as a youth actor with Impulse, and rose in the ranks to work with me as my Assistant Artistic Director.
argues that in Great Britain, process oriented Drama curriculum has overtaken the product oriented Drama curriculum, and that too often we are caught up allowing young people to explore the process and the therapeutic nature of Drama, and that we are not creating presentational performers anymore.
I think the thing that must be recognized is that the average student entering a Drama program is not entering that Drama program to become a professional actor or actress. Case in point: If I start in Grade Eight with about 120 to 140 kids in Drama, five years later I am lucky to have about twelve to fifteen in Acting Twelve. Of those twelve to fifteen students, maybe three or four of them want to pursue theatre as a career. That means that throughout the five years of secondary school, close to 97% of my students want something other than a career in acting or theatre.

You have to cater to your public, and the public is not a bunch of young people who want to become actors. The public is a bunch of young people who want to be able to explore all kinds of issues and themes and want to enjoy themselves in between their Math and Science class during the course of a busy day. It is up to the Drama teacher to make this as meaningful as possible, or as irrelevant as possible, depending upon the training, commitment, and skill level of the Drama teacher. If the Drama teacher can make the Drama class a meaningful experience, so be it. If the Drama teacher is basically unqualified, and is going to sit around and play TheatreSports and improv games every day of every class, then I guess there will not be much meaning.
The rationale for "The Personal Monologue" project is to analyze the concept of internalization, and explore the idea of emotional recall, the kind of emotional recall that 'method actors' use as based on Stanislavski's teachings (1948). One of the things that the students are asked to do is to create a personal monologue or scene with another student, that mirrors a memory, or an experience, or a feeling of emotion in their own lives.

Historically this has been a project that has brought forth a great deal of emotion and a great deal of catharsis, emotional release and the students have bonded in very positive ways, where they have gained a universal respect for one another through the disclosure of life experiences and emotions. Let's face it, both the 'cool' student and the 'uncool' student both know what it feels like to cry, and what it feels like to feel emotion, and it is amazing to witness the mutual respect that gets built between these people when they share these moments.

We set up a couple of spotlights, and students sit in the light in such a way that they can't really see the other students in the audience. It is an interesting setup, when I think about how my classes usually run with this idea of the duality of playing to your peers and watching for their reactions in the audience. When you take that opportunity away from them, you give them an opportunity to really explore meaningful moments without worrying how other people are perceiving or reacting to them. Being in the spotlight is a very liberating feeling. It is a very surreal experience to be able to have those lights in your eyes, to stare out, to speak, to say things that you really feel passionate about in your own life, and to be viewed by the people behind that light who support your emotional journey.

In past years, many students used this project to explore a multitude of issues that would get them quite emotional in the class, to the point where it became common place to leave a box of Kleenex at the front of the stage. Students would get
up, and explore these memories, and they would begin to cry, tears would be shed, and there would be a building of respect with everyone in the audience. The kids in the audience would begin to cry as well, both friends and non-friends, for they had all had an intimate knowledge of these emotions. It is quite an amazing bond of trust and mutual respect when these students explore this with one another.

This year, however, there were really only a couple of students who let loose to that extent, and an interesting thing happened where there was a real mood where some of the kids made this incredible effort where they would be on the brink of an emotional breakthrough to start crying, and they would just choke it back, at the very moment where they were about to lose control. In so many cases, you could see the tears welling up in their eyes, and emotion becoming very prevalent in their face, and even that was enough to evoke a great deal of emotional reaction from the audience.

Some students use the monologues as a medium to speak to someone who they feel they are unable to speak to. So they will talk to their fathers, mothers, or even deceased relatives and ask questions of these people to reconcile a memory or memories that they have. Other students will tell a story, or a moment that they experienced in life that particularly stands out. Some talk directly to the audience, breaking the 'fourth wall'. Some recite poetry, and others create an invisible dialogue with non-existent characters on stage. It really depends on what they have to say, and how they want to format the saying of it.

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3 The 'fourth wall' is defined as the audience. Conceptually, theatrical realism uses a box set to represent a living environment. In real life, dialogue is directed to people without worrying about being viewed by an audience. Similarly, in real life, we have rooms with four walls. On stage, only three walls can be actualized by a real set, while the 'fourth wall' is the invisible wall between the audience and the actor on stage.
Why Drama? (Act III)

The Collective Dramatic Experience

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We must believe in a sense of life renewed by the theatre, a sense of life in which man fearlessly makes himself master of what does not yet exist, and brings it into being. And everything that has not been born can still be brought to life if we are not satisfied to remain mere recording organisms. [Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, 1958, p. 13]

Artaud characterized the theatre as being an integral part of civilization and culture. His vision was to explore a form of artistic expression that would break down the conscious societal conditioning that worked against the pure sublimation of many human impulses: to free people from the ferocity of the individual experience in favor of the sheer pleasure of being a part of a greater, richer and more idyllic civilization (1958). One must consider that the genesis of civilization began in a cave somewhere; and in that cave, the only manner of recounting and reconciling the harsh realities of nature was through the simplicity of artistic dramatic expression. The dramatization of the hunt through the use of imitation (characterization), simple representation (masks, costuming, and make-up), and even through metaphors (spiritualization), enabled the tribe to share in a common understanding: the ritual of a collective experience.

The shared collective experience is the essence of civilization, and the history of the theatre is crystalline with the richness of the evolution of culture and humankind. From the cathartic events of the Greek Festival of Dionysis, where people vigorously celebrated with wine, sex, and theatre; to the didactic divinity of the Passion Plays of the Medieval Era, where people witnessed material *ad maiorem dei gloriam* (for the greater glory of God); from Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, which produced the Bard's masterpieces one day and bear baiting displays
the next; to the bawdy improvisational repertoire of the Commedia Dell'Arte; from the formal ritualization of Japanese Kabuki; to the symbolic nature of the Malay shadow puppets and Balinese Gamelan dances; from the stoic Restoration comedies of social graces and manners; to the internal brooding psycho-analytical dramas of Strindberg, Chekhov, and Ibsen; and finally, from Samuel Beckett's bleak, absurdist, and existential play Waiting for Godot; to the gritty and angry realism of social commentary in John Osborne, Eugene O'Neil or Sam Shepard's acclaimed works. Art is not a mere imitation of life, but is the most basic conscious reflections of culture, of society and of all civilization.

How then can the Drama classroom become a forum for the development of a student's initiation into the grand tradition of the collective experience? Patrick Verriour notes in his article, "A Sense of Other, A Sense of Self," that "making Drama" emphasizes the collaborative, cognitive processes that the students and teacher are actively involved with in order to creatively enact or re-enact the expressions of the group (1995, p. 14). Dramatic exploration with young people is meant to develop the skills of empathy, critical thinking and reflection to allow a student to go beyond the confines of "the self" so as to explore the role of "the other" (1995, p. 14). To further elaborate this point, Verriour cites Gavin Bolton who affirms that "Drama is a celebration of what human beings have in common with other human beings" (1984, p. 16); thus empowering young people in the Drama classroom with the potential to investigate and do honor to the limitless cultural bounty of the aesthetic qualities in the human condition. Bolton believes that students must "submit themselves... giving oneself" completely over to the social event of the environmental experiences of the Drama (1992, p. 4).

When I began my career as a secondary school Drama teacher in 1991, I noticed that the students that I had inherited from a non-existent Drama program (I was the fourth teacher in four years), couldn't reproduce even the most simple
conversation on stage. The Grade Eleven and Twelve students, had spent three to four years with a different Drama teacher each year, and had no continuity, context, or directed approach in the required course curriculum. Many of these students took Drama because through past experience it was an 'easy course'; it was something that they could 'goof off' in, and it didn't require any writing or homework. The other teachers and counselors had a similar view of the Drama program, as they would place a disproportionate number of special needs students, behavioral disorder students, or students who just simply got kicked out of other classes into a block of Drama with no specific educational objective in mind. The Drama program lacked structure, direction and respect, and the students didn't trust each other or the learning environment. How was I to invite these young people in a conducive spirit and atmosphere to produce empathetic and reflective dramatic experiences? My strategy was to expose these students to something that they had never before experienced: the power of creating a collective sociodrama.

The students most open and willing to 'play' with no predisposition or knowledge towards the previous Drama program were the Grade Eight's. After a number of months of improvisational character building and dramatic exploration, the class had developed an extremely strong bond of friendship, respect and trust with one another, or what Verriour refers to as a "contract" (1984, p. 127). To them the Drama classroom was the most exciting and evocative space in the school. Drama was no longer just 'another elective course'; it was a class that was eagerly anticipated. The students would enter the room with anticipation, anxious to find out what that 'crazy Drama teacher' had planned for them that day. It was when this level of "community" existed in the class, that I was able to initiate our school's first collective dramatic production.

I was teaching the students a unit of study involving masks and mime movement, which eventually evolved into an exploration and recreation of a
native hunt. The students and I gathered the resources of the Drama room (masks, bear skin, and candles), and over the course of four one hour classes recreated as accurately as we could the ritual and spirituality of the hunt. Each student as a part of our community, our tribe, made guttural vocalizations or banged the floor with their fists. The whole class sat in a tight circle on the Drama room floor. A dozen candles melted on to an old plastic ice cream bucket flickered. Four students in a group danced around our tribal fire, drawing our shadows eerily on the ceiling (like hieroglyphics), re-enacting their own interpretation of the hunt for bear the desperate search for sustenance to keep the entire community alive. Finally, one by one each group displayed the kill in slow motion mime, and then paid homage to the spirit of the slain bear. The emotional truth displayed by this group of thirty Grade Eight students was phenomenal!

Their ability to create a truthful dramatic role-taking process of that magnitude is described by Dorothy Heathcote as the ability to "live through the situation" (1984, p. 48). This journey into the unknown allowed them reflectively as actors to create an unfamiliar ritual collective experience. According to Bolton, "the most powerful form of (reflection) is the reflection that goes on at the same time as the Drama" (1979, p. 172). It is within this realm that the students had their most powerful emotional response to the role-playing.

Sociodrama is a form of Drama which allows young people to explore some of the toughest and most important social issues that directly affect society. Young people not only creatively research and explore these issues, but create theatrical productions for the sole purpose of presenting their audience with arguments and questions designed to facilitate societal change. This type of didactic production empowers the students not only with new insight into the issues and topics being dealt with, but also with the feeling of being enfranchised with making a difference,
of getting angry at an adult world that doesn't listen to them or take them seriously enough — of actually having a say. Colin King writes:

One of the main functions of drama for children of all ages is the release of aggression. Children need and use free play as an unconscious way of getting to know themselves and of coming to grips with the harsh realities of the adult world. Through drama they can explore their feelings, lessen their fears, and come to understand the problems of others. (1972, pp. 11-12)

In October 1992, I began work on two Grade Eight sociodramatic productions on the topic of substance abuse, which would be toured and performed for elementary school students in our school district. Over a three month period, my two Grade Eight classes and I explored every possible element of the issues of substance abuse. We sat in a circle and shared our own personal feelings, experiences, and exposure to the use of drugs and alcohol, while a tape recorder documented these very frank discussions. We listened to our tape recording, making improvisations, mime, and mask scenes with what we heard. As a collective we discussed potential production concepts, staging, costuming, characters, and special effects that could be used in our plays. Throughout this entire process we were ultimately attempting to "stumble upon authenticity" (Heathcote, 1984, p. 106); to find the dramatic motivation from which to finalize and script our work.

The turning point in the development of the two pieces came when a couple of students in each of the classes had what Constantin Stanislavski termed an "emotional breakthrough" (1949, p. 280). In one of the classes, a female student had just gone through the recent death of a close friend. The emotional recounting of her feelings, and of her personal loss, moved the students in the class to create the sociodrama Inside The Box, a play in which a drug overdose victim sees the damage that she has done from her own coffin. "By playing out psychological significant
situations," this student was able to reconcile her own personal problems (Kemp, 1990, p. 11), while in the context of creating an entirely different dramatic moment. In the other class, a male student went through a similar process of revelation about being neglected by substance abusing parents. When he shared his story with the whole class through the form of a dramatic improvisation, it affected everyone so greatly that we created Fairy Tales and Nightmares, a play in which two neglected children relate the world of fairy tales to the very real world of substance abuse. During the spring of 1993, both of these sociodramatic plays toured seven elementary schools in our school district, performing for more than 1000 people.

The collective dramatic experience is the catalyst from which students can develop themselves into empathetic, knowledgeable, and positive contributing members of society. The Drama classroom provides a safe, conducive medium for personal reflection, from which young people at all levels of social development can become empowered and "encouraged to take risks in formulating and expressing their ideas" (Verriour, 1984, p. 129). The shared collective experience is not necessarily exclusive to the dramatic arts, nor is it only experienced through performance. However, in a world increasingly more inhibited by social mores, right-wing politics, and the increasingly sad inability of people to express the most basic of human needs and desires for simple fulfillment, the process of dramatic personal self-exploration is a valuable resource skill.
Tape #3 - October 21, 1997 — (Teaching for Student Independence)

What is the difference in effectiveness between the Drama teacher who is constantly involved in the creative process of their student's work, and the Drama teacher who stands back, and lets their students go through the creative process on their own? It is interesting to try to analyze this because there are two distinct schools of thought on the issue.

One school of thought is that the teacher's job is to spend the entire class with the students while they are working on a project: coaching, prodding, monitoring, and involving themselves with the student's process. Although the teacher is taking a very active role in the student's work, my concern is that very often the students put the onus to learn on the teacher. The teacher becomes, for all intents and purposes, a provider of information, production values, character description, character idiosyncrasies, relationships, technical constraints, what props or costumes to use, etc. I am not saying that this is not necessarily the place for the teacher; I just don't believe that it is the place for the teacher all the time.

Sometimes, we as teachers become so overwhelmingly involved in our students' learning that our students are not learning at all. What our students end up doing is a parody or imitation of what WE want them to do. Our students end up creating art that pleases us because we have told them what art we want to see, very specifically, in their rehearsals and during their exploration and creative process. The teacher who is involved in their students' process is sending very specific messages, that in order to gain the marks, grades, or positive feedback, the student must follow the teacher's blueprint or outline. When a student asks the teacher a question like, "How do you do this?," if the teacher through sheer desire to help, tells the student exactly what to do, through this desire to ultimately watch the student grow, and a sense of overwhelming responsibility for that student's
learning, the teacher gets sucked in to providing all of the information for the student, and minimal learning takes place.

I would much rather see Drama students become self-sufficient individuals in the creation of their work. The Drama classroom is a safe and conducive environment to be allowed to try and make mistakes; to try again and succeed, with the teacher helping out, overseeing, and directing, but not to be the sole creative provider as so many teachers are. The laziness that the student gets to learn is a game, and that game is called: "I am not responsible for my own learning. What I am responsible for is spending just enough time on an assignment, until the last minute, and then forcing the teacher to provide me with all the answers." That's why, in some ways answering a student's question with a question, is the best way to get a student to think. It is that thinking process that allows a student to learn. When a student comes and asks me, "What kind of character should I be in this scene? What kind of relationship should I have with the other actors in this scene?", usually I will answer that question by saying, "Well, what do you think?" I realize the initial frustration that the student feels by having their question answered by another question, but it enables the student to truly explore all the possibilities that exist, giving them the chance to see which ones work best, which ones fit or feel right. Ultimately, it is through this type of kindness, a kind of gentle manipulation and directing, that teaching and learning take place.

The job of the teacher is not to hold the hand of the learner all the way through the process. The job of the teacher is to teach, and to allow the learner to gain a valuable learning experience. What I attempt to do in the Drama classroom when I provide my students with assignments, is to get out of their way. My monitoring is no longer the most important process of the student's work. Wandering around, asking the students what they are accomplishing, finding out their ideas, helping make sure they are on task, and helping make sure that they are
going in the correct direction, are really the most valuable forms of teaching. At no time am I providing all the information, or all of the answers, or all of the ideas for a specific artistic, creative piece of theatrical work for the Drama students. This type of teaching strategy also allows the Drama teacher an opportunity to reflect and to watch the learning process take place — just standing back, and watching the students actually going about the process of creating and learning is one of the best parts of the job!

When I began teaching, I took on a greater amount of responsibility for my students' learning, and in a lot of ways that was because of my deep seated desire for my students to find success, because in my mind as a beginning teacher, if my students were successful, I was successful. I haven’t necessarily lost that sense of responsibility, but I am now becoming a little bit more realistic. Students at all levels, in elementary, secondary, and university, will pass or fail based on their own effort and ability. Ultimately it is that student’s job to earn the mark, it is not necessarily the teacher’s job to give the mark. Many times I have had students come and approach me and say why did you give me that "B," or that "A," or that "C-," and I will respond that I did not give them that mark, they earned it.

One of the interesting things about being a Drama teacher is it provides you with an opportunity during certain lessons and at certain points, to stand back and actually let your students do the work in a completely self-initiated fashion. For a memorized scripted scene, a student is going to have to rehearse above and beyond the classroom. That’s part of the process for a Drama or Acting student. Student actors need to learn that there is a great deal of work that needs to be done outside of rehearsal, that they are responsible for figuring out their characters, getting an in-depth understanding of the relationships, motivations, and objectives of the scene, and that they also need to memorize lines. This means that students are going to have to come in after school, at lunch, or at break and rehearse a scene. Or they are
going to have to spend time at home, or on the telephone with each other. They are going to have to figure out what kinds of props and costumes to use in a scene. They are going to have to figure out what their resources are with regard to special effects, lighting, sound, or video. There are only so many things that the teacher can provide in these types of projects; therefore, the students have to take the ultimate responsibility.

It is extremely important for students to realize the work that is involved in putting on any kind of meaningful production. Students need to learn that every aspect of a theatrical production, takes a great deal of work, energy, and commitment. And that commitment, energy, and work, should be experienced first hand on their part as a major component in any of their projects.

My teaching has evolved to allow me to present an idea to my students, and then stand back and allow my students to go about the business of creating. I find that this has been a very successful method of teaching and learning. Similarly my students have gained an incredible work ethic, and an appreciation for the art of theatre and what goes into making theatre.

Sometimes, we as teachers get so caught up in wanting a specific result that we neglect or overlook the creativity of our students. I liken it to a colouring book. When a child has taken their crayons and coloured in the colouring book, and created beautiful abstract designs, and colours on a page that has an outlined drawing for them to colour within the lines, one might ask, why has this child coloured outside the lines? What does that say about a young person’s need to grow and develop outside the boundaries, parameters and constraints of expectations and guidelines? Is that child any less valid than the ones that colour within the lines? No. So in order to see some very meaningful and exciting and evocative work we need to let our students use the crayons of their creativity in our Drama class, and colour outside the lines. A lot of times teachers will stifle the opportunity for
students to create by over directing, over teaching, or over emphasizing points. How many times do we as teachers stifle our students' creativity? We say: "No this is not what we are doing today, we are doing this." And by limiting the opportunity to a linear curricular objective or skill, we can potentially deter our students from presenting something that they are feeling at that very moment, to share something that is in their heart, and in their soul, on a creative and artistic level.

The Drama teacher who actually produces theatre in the school community puts in hundreds and hundreds of hours above and beyond the school day. How does that teacher organize and create the art of the 'after school play'? Sometimes the teacher needs to sit back and actually create the 'after school play' during the classroom day. Sometimes the teacher needs to try to build a set during class time, or hang the lights, or do the publicity, or the tickets, or create press releases, publicity, and memos. It is virtually impossible for the teacher to be constantly involved with the students, if they have to create a theatrical event above and beyond the school day. Because of this, I try to plan my program in such a way that the majority of my students can work on projects that allow them to work independently of the teacher, rehearsing and creating and going through a process that the teacher doesn't always have to take responsibility for. This allows me to have a few moments in every block where I can spend some time doing some of the work that I have to do anyhow. If that work was not done during class time, it would never get done, or it would get done in such a fashion that I would be working fourteen to sixteen hour days. When do the tickets get printed and distributed? When does the set get built? When do the lights get hung? When are the costumes made, or bought, or created, and the props found, and bought and created? When is the program written and photocopied? When is the publicity done? When are the posters run off? How do all these things get done? If a teacher is teaching (like myself) seven blocks out of an eight block rotation, how during that period, during one spare block, does that
teacher have the opportunity to get these jobs done? When is there time to do all of the administrative and departmental chores? At what point does the teacher spend time to make report cards, or interim reports, or communicate to parents? At each level the teacher is being pulled, and pulled, and pulled, and is trying to juggle and be a servant to many, many different masters.

Ultimately, the approach of teaching that I advocate not only benefits the student, but benefits the teacher. The students are getting a great deal more creative learning out of a less hands on approach by the teacher, and the teacher is being given an opportunity to juggle numerous other elements of their job. By giving the students power and ownership over their learning, the teacher has an opportunity to be more productive. Students desire, demand, and need ownership over the creative development of their own ideas in Drama and Acting, and the teacher should allow that to take place. That is where meaningful creative exploration takes place. It also creates a more involved evaluation process for the teacher because the teacher is then seeing an artistic product from the 'true' eyes of an audience member, as someone who is watching it and realizing that they were not involved as a hands on participant in the process. This is really the students' dramatic work. I feel as a teacher, I respect the work so much more because the students are the ones who created it, the students are the ones who developed it, and they are the ones who came up with all of the different theatrical elements that made that creative presentation stand on its own.
Should the Drama teacher be prepared to accept mediocrity?

The other day the Drama Ten students created a project where they presented a dialogue that they wrote themselves. They had to present it twice in completely different ways, using innuendo and a variety of delivery techniques. Part of the project was to have the written dialogue by a certain day, and one group in particular didn’t have the dialogue written on the day that it was due; and then the following day when they were to present, they presented an excellent dialogue scene where they received thirty-nine out of forty marks, but they got zero out of ten on the written part of the dialogue. I pulled these two students aside and I told them how disappointed I was in them, that they were unable to get the dialogue into me the day before, and that they had lost the ten marks. Although the lesson is a valuable one for the students, it is none the less punitive.

We create a system of punishment for non-completion or in fact non-compliance with authority. Really it comes down to jumping through the hoops. We create a barrage of hoops for young people to jump through, in order for us to conclude that they have reached a level that is universally acceptable in society, where they can go on and be responsible people. Society uses chronological age to determine this. Whether it is the chronological age in a religion like Judaism, where they believe that the age of thirteen is the age where you become an adult; or the age of sixteen where you get your drivers’ license and have the responsibility of operating a motor vehicle; or the age of eighteen where you can vote; or the age of nineteen where you can legally drink alcohol. Similarly, we have an expectation that when a student has graduated from secondary school they have received a certain amount of intrinsic social responsibility and many school districts and schools actually create something called a “graduate profile” that outlines the kind of person or people that they intend to have as graduates. Many of the objectives or
criteria of that graduate profile have very little to do with the learning outcomes in
the average classroom, but focus on people leaving the school system as positive
contributors within society.

This being the case, the evaluation that teachers provide students with and
the punitive or negative evaluation that is part of the learning curve, must then
provide young people with a series of expectations from which they will understand
and appreciate the society that they live in.

Should teachers be willing to accept mediocrity? I think there are times when
teachers have to say to themselves that mediocrity is a waste of their time. I
sincerely believe that has to be shared with the students too. As a facilitator of young
people and their learning, it is necessary sometimes to be extremely straight forward
with them, and to say to them that it is unacceptable to be mediocre, it is
unacceptable to be average, that everyone in the class is expected to be excellent, to
strive for excellence.

The other day, my Acting Eleven's and Twelve's did an assignment that
involved eye contact, and I felt that the first time they did the assignment for marks
they did a very poor job of it. So the following class, I spoke to them and I said:
"Look, you know what you did last day wasn't good enough. Although I marked
you all, and I could certainly give you the marks that you received, I am not satisfied
with it. And I want you to learn this skill, and learn how to do it well, and I am not
going to be satisfied until everyone in the room gets an "A" on this project." I was
honest with them. I found it insulting, to see people up on stage wasting our time as
an audience, and as a class presenting 'half assed', mediocre work. Then I got them
up to rehearse and said: "Okay, you have twenty minutes. Make it happen!" Sure
enough, they made it happen, and they all got "A's."

I wonder how many teachers let their students go back and revisit something
in order to get a better mark. It is not unlike allowing a revision process in a writing
or English class, and accepting that revision process as an incredibly valuable part of the process. After all, is there really any such thing as a 'finished' product anyhow?
Tape #3 - October 28, 1997 — (Teaching Tired)

In self-reflection — today I had a pretty bad day.

I came in tired today, and feeling like I was behind on many of the projects that I am currently working. The play that I am producing right now is Shakespeare’s “Much Ado About Nothing”, the Remembrance Day play and assembly, the Canadian Improv Games team and league — I have a feeling that I am behind on all of these projects, a feeling of not being in control, of being a little bit lost, and basically that affected the way I taught today. Because in a roundabout way, I resented my teaching today. I resented having to be in the classroom teaching the students, when I felt I could have been more successful clearing up the backlog of things that I felt were weighing on my mind, and dealing with those issues and those things.

It is important to look at this little bit of reality, and reflect on it, because the purpose of what I do is TEACH. That is my job. I am a teacher. My teaching should come first, but because of the productions, and because of the things that I am doing for the students, and for the school, and for the program, and the Visual and Performing Arts Department, that all seem to go above and beyond what I do in the classroom, it seeps into my daily routine, to the point where one basically ends up suffering, and today, I felt that was my teaching.

I was not an effective teacher. I felt that my attitude was snarly and short with my students today, and that I wasn’t going to give them any kind of leeway because I felt under the gun and they should feel under the gun too. If I felt under pressure they should feel that same pressure. It is very hard to accept a student giving you any kind of excuse, when you are feeling like you are barely surviving in getting your own things done, and here they are giving you excuses! Why they can’t produce a quality piece of work, or why something is not handed in on time, or whatever. You become very unsympathetic to their plight and their reality.
So many Drama teachers get stuck on the treadmill of production. Being stuck on this treadmill means going through the same emotional process that I am talking about, which is constantly being stressed out, and feeling like nothing is getting done on schedule.

With my senior students, I can get into a bit of a dialogue with them about when I don’t feel that I am happy with their work, and when I feel that I am under pressure. For the most part, they are pretty good at responding to what I have to say. Today when students were supposed to hand in an assignment that they had a month to complete, and only three or four assignments came in out of a possible twelve, and I just said to them: “Look, I am feeling a lot of stress and pressure right now, and it blows me away that you can’t get this assignment in. I feel that there is disrespect here, that it is disrespectful towards me, that you are unable to provide me with this work, when I put everything I have into what I do for you. How come you can’t put in the same work ethic for me, and get the job done?!”. This opened up quite an interesting dialogue, where some students were actually very emotional, that they took offense with me saying that they were disrespecting me by not handing in their work. They agreed that I put in a ton of work for them, but that I shouldn’t hold it over their heads. They call this “Mr. Young’s Guilt Trip.” I simply call it being honest!

I think that it is important to have a rapport and a relationship with your students, where you can really let them know how you feel, to be able to explore your levels of humanity with them including the frustrations and aggravations of every day life, and to treat them on a certain level as partners in the process, to be honest with them, because realistically IF I am feeling pressure it will certainly filter right on down to them! An open dialogue with your students is a worthy exercise that allows students to voice and air their feelings and opinions on the issues that affect them in your classroom.
Another issue is the grouping of students for assignments, and how that can affect the outcome of their grades. Because Drama is communal in nature, you really have to rely upon the commitment of your partner or group to show up for classes, rehearsals, and performance. There is always a certain percentage of students who are consistently absent for many different reasons. Sometimes these reasons are valid, and a lot of times they are 'skipping out'. It is very difficult to put students with minimal commitment into groups where they will diminish other students' experiences or grades. I usually group students by putting the uncommitted and poor students with other uncommitted and poor students, and let them sink or swim. I also usually put the stronger students with other students of the same caliber. Positive commitment is usually what determines or delineates my definition of 'poor' and 'strong'. In any type of group work, there will always be students who don't put forth any effort, who ride the accomplishments of the others. This is something that I try to stop by imposing this kind of grouping pattern.

In some ways it is a sad contradiction that as a teacher my whole purpose in teaching, is to try to help students find success, and maybe turn them around. But ultimately through my system of grouping students for some projects, I allow students to become self-fulfilling prophecies, and allow the bad students to be bad, and allow the good students to be good.
"Our Own Little World"

Drama has given me lots of confidence. Our drama room is our own little world, where we don't have to impress anybody. And I always cherished that, because as soon as you leave the room, you're back in the 'rat race' of comparing, ridiculing, and status. [Written as a final journal submission by an Acting Twelve student, June, 1994]

It is the job of the Drama educator to make sure that our students learn by doing, that no matter what the issues of the day are, we can be assured that our students gain a depth and breadth of knowledge and experience through the collective experience. The Drama classroom is a special and unique place which should "provide a climate that welcomes exploration and risk-taking" (O'Neill, 1989, p. 154) where the Drama student can creatively solve any problem, where there is no 'right' or 'wrong', just a multitude of choices. Choices which enable that student to journey into a world of learning and exploration. The Drama student can live a thousand different lives and be exposed to an inordinate number of possibilities; simultaneously that same student can be revealing the most precious and personal moments of inner truth. It is through this realization that Artaud's vision can be related to the work of both Drama teacher and Drama student as a total affirmation in the intrinsic belief in the "renewal of life" through Drama (1958). One of my Grade Eight Drama students summed this up nicely by writing:

Drama made me feel comfortable in high-school, and helped me open up, relax, and learn to have fun. Drama taught me to laugh at myself, when I did something wrong. Drama taught me to believe in my own beliefs and not worry about other people. Drama taught me how to smile at my own dumb moves. But most importantly it taught me that by being other people isn't going to help you have friends, being yourself is. [Written as a final journal submission by a Drama Eight student, June, 1993.]
Part of being a strong adult role model for young people is to portray as many human characteristics as you can, including making mistakes and human weakness. These traits need to be modeled too because often young people are put into subordinate situations and subordinate relationships with adults, especially in the school system, and rarely does an adult take responsibility in the same way that a young person must take responsibility for their actions. Rarely do adults take the time to apologize to young people when they have made a mistake, or take the time to point out the capricious nature of adult life. If they do, they do it in a condescending manner, as opposed to dealing with young people as equal partners.

I raise this point as I look back to an episode in my teaching when I took out my frustration on the students. Today I took the time to actually apologize to the students. I took some time today, to both apologize to the class, and to explain to them exactly how I felt and where I was coming from. My students and I form this strange symbiotic relationship where we operate as separate entities, but have a constant partnership in all of the teaching, learning, success, failures, frustrations, and joys of the Drama classroom. I think that this is an unbelievable opportunity to allow the students to become allies within the Drama program and with my teaching. If this alliance works, I feel that the quality of their work, the success at meeting deadlines, and the unity and cohesiveness of their commitment will be constant throughout the year.

I have been thinking about mentoring lately, and the idea that our society has lost our sense of 'tribalism'. I am referring to humanity as a tribe, and if we go back thousands of years, humans were totally immersed in tribalism. What ancient tribalism provided us with was an opportunity for mentoring, for young people to gain wisdom, knowledge, morals, and experience from the elders of the tribe, who had gone through specific rites of passage and experiences and were able to share
those things with the younger people. We don’t really have that any more. We have disjointed families.

Young people, in a sense, lose something, that young people before them had gained for generations. This is the opportunity to interact with this older, more experienced generation of people. You take that out of the picture and then you look at the predominance of single parent families, in most cases with just a mother and no father, step-fathers, step-mothers, and multiple marriages and you can see a desperate need, for young people to find consistent positive adult reinforcing role models. Role models that go beyond simple familiar duty and responsibility, and role models that go beyond the simple status of a family. Because although mothers and fathers can be excellent role models, they are representative of blood relationship that a young person can never quite turn their back on or deny. This is when the sports coach, or the teacher, or the adult who spends time with that young person beyond the household, becomes a very important instrument and influence in that young person’s life. Young people really need these relationships. This is why ultimately when a young person is seeking out a positive adult reinforcer, that person becomes very influential in this young person’s life.

Positive mentoring that takes place in these situations, is a life long gift, and will stick with young people for ever, while providing them with a solid basis from which to grow, mature, and develop, as human beings in our society — our tribe.
Tape #4 - November 4, 1997 — (Contradictions Abound!)

I am always interested in the obvious contradictions that take place in our school with regard to morals, ethics and standards.

I had a project where a number of my students were taking the cardboard cut out advertisements from video stores that advertise professional Hollywood movies (called "Standees"), and they had to transform them into promotional material for our upcoming Shakespeare production of "Much Ado About Nothing". One particular group of students created a finished project that said in large cut out letters: "Come see Much Ado About Nothing, it is more fun than a roll in the hay."

The day after this particular project was put on display in the school display case, I had a couple of distraught students run up to me at break saying that the Vice-Principal had removed it, and had taken it to his office. When I called the office to discuss the matter with the Vice-Principal, he was adamant that this particular project, and the phraseology of this particular project, circumvented the standards of a public school, and was inappropriate for display because the context of "roll in the hay" was blatantly sexual.

What is interesting is that on any given day we have upwards of two hundred students illegally smoking cigarettes around the perimeter of the school, with minimal censor at all from the administration or the community. So the students are allowed to break the law, and to engage in unhealthy activities such as smoking cigarettes, most of them under the age of nineteen. We have over a dozen young girls in our schools who are part of a prenatal program, who have children, and/or are pregnant. Students throughout the day swear up and down the hallway. We have students wearing tee-shirts and baseball hats that include blatant displays, of drug use and glorify drug use — yet this somewhat tame euphemism of sexual innuendo presented in the term of "roll in the hay" was a spring board for immediate censorship.
It stands as an obvious double standard. When we look at what we might call community values at a time when the newspapers have the freedom to print just about anything to a certain extent. They certainly wouldn't be censored by the term "roll in the hay." We have movies that allow young people of all ages to see gratuitous acts of violence and sexuality, and to hear gratuitous profane language. It boggles my mind to think that a somewhat innocuous innuendo and euphemism like "roll in the hay" would become something that would be immediately censored.

Contradictions abound!
Tape #4 - November 4, 1997 — (Dramatic Reconciliation)

In a project that was meant as an opportunity for students to explore characters and character experiences at the Grade Nine level, the students were to create a funeral scene in groups of four or five, where they would say their goodbyes to a character who suddenly becomes alive again. One student who had experienced the loss of her aunt three months earlier began to become visibly upset, and began to cry while on stage. The re-enactment of the funeral scene, at this point in her recovery from the death of her aunt, was in part, too real for her to handle.

Afterwards she spoke candidly with the class about how she felt, and how the scene made her realize that her aunt was really gone. It was through this scene that she disclosed and reconciled the real emotions that was within her.
Tape #4 - November 12, 1997 — (Failing)

I wonder how many students start off the year failing, and actually end the year passing. How many student actually take the time and effort and energy to do the little extras to get back on track to pass a course that they are failing from the first term report card? At the start of the school year everyone starts at zero. Everyone is equal. Everyone has this amazing opportunity for unlimited potential. The school year starts so fresh and optimistic that anything is possible. It doesn't take long until people start to fall into their roles. Certain kids fall into certain roles very quickly because of their youth and inexperience, and in some cases their lack of desire, these roles rarely change. Sometimes these roles include some pretty poor choices with regard to drugs and alcohol, or the willingness and desire to get through a course of study.

One of my Grade Twelve students is currently having some difficulty with substance abuse, and most likely won't graduate. Unfortunately, this individual has made life so difficult for herself that quite frankly she is not passing anything, and she will be lucky to get a few positive marks as she doesn't really show up to any classes or even try. Already her poor choices in the first three months of the school year will probably cost her the ability to graduate because she will not have enough grad credits to graduate from school this spring.

You just kind of look at that and you just kind of shake your head.

What is going through this individual's mind, that is taking away her opportunity to get her graduation and to move on from this institution? Is it a fear of going further, a fear of success, or a fear of actually growing up? Is it a "Peter Pan" kind of thing, where kids just do not want to grow older, and have a real life with adult responsibilities? So they stay in high school as long as they can, because it's safe.
Why Drama? (Act IV)

What Makes Me The Drama Teacher?

• • •

He who can, does. He who cannot teaches.

{George Bernard Shaw, 'On Education', 1897.}

Certainly one of George Bernard Shaw’s most quoted and misquoted lines should
act as a guide for any ‘up and coming’ or ‘would be’ Drama educator. To be able to do
what one teaches should be the rule rather than the exception, and unfortunately in
Drama education today, too many teachers fall into Shaw’s caustic categorization of
the teaching profession. Beginning Drama teachers should have the ability and
background to have a mastery of knowledge and a passion for their chosen subject
field, so that they will be able to communicate effectively and efficiently with the
students. Educational facilities at all levels of the academy are expected to be able to
provide a first rate educational opportunity to their clientele. An implicit trust is
forged between parent and teacher, student and instructor, that the classroom will be
a safe and conducive place of educational growth and exploration. Teachers should
not just "act" like professionals, but "be" professionals. The community expectation
of a classroom Drama teacher is that they should be experts in their fields,
committed to constantly up-grading and revising different levels of their craft so as
to always be current, relevant, and progressive.

As teachers of Drama, one must always be cognizant that you are first and
foremost an instructor of human communication. You are tour guides, guiding and
nurturing your young charges through a never ending journey of learning, enabling
them with the ability to speak, write, and communicate effectively as human beings.
Drama teachers should respect the inherent knowledge and experiences that their
students bring with them into the classroom. Drama teachers are facilitators,
helping their students explore and understand their own creative, sensitive, and
human responses. Finally, Drama teachers should never ask students to do something that they wouldn’t be prepared to do themselves. These sentiments are expounded nicely by Eyers and Richmond, in their article "Becoming Our Own Experts:"

... we, the teachers, must become our own theoreticians, our own experts. Our theory, our 'expertise' is in making sensitive inferences about an actual classroom experience, in noticing what is really going on. If the expert in the more usual sense, who stands back a little from the everyday reality of the classroom in order, ideally, to get a wider view of the scene, he has a role in this process of discovery, it is simply to help the classroom teacher to discover more fully what is already there. Unrelated theory has no value in this context; it will quite rightly be dumped by the teacher as excess baggage... theory and practice must be married in the lives of the people who do the job (1982, p. 1).

Jonathan Neelands' article, "Reflections from an Ivory Tower: Towards an Interactive Research Paradigm" (1996), shares a great deal of insight with any 'would be' Drama educator or researcher. Neelands' primary focus is to point out that classroom research is meaningless unless it is representative and useful to and for its intended audience — the classroom teacher. Neelands delivers a thoughtful exploration and analysis of the many differing challenges encountered by both the classroom practitioner and the academic researcher. It is an article that actually allows educators to find some common ground, enabling us to reflect on our own evaluative and research methods and relate them back to our own personal examples. Neelands points out that further research needs to be conducted in such a manner, so that it empowers the classroom teacher as not only a partner working in conjunction with the academic researcher in the activity, but also as an active participant or member within a unique "community of inquiry" (p. 162).

When reading Neelands' piece I couldn't help but think of the conceptual term coined a number of years ago by Dorothy Heathcote (1984) — 'Mantle of the
Expert'. For me, so much of being an academic or even a Drama teacher, working every day in front of hundreds of young people, parents and colleagues, means taking on specific roles for specific moments. Every mode or encounter I have throughout the day demands a different role to be played out, each role has its basis in the effectiveness of how I wish to be perceived by my audience. The roles I play daily at my school are: teacher, mentor, friend, colleague, professional, department head, administrator, academic, researcher, fund-raiser, director, instructor, disciplinarian, baby-sitter, counselor, etc... etc... Without batting an eyelid, I can bounce from role to role, shifting into each one with ease — only to hope that at any given moment my audience will listen, react, or interact with me as I have intended. I realize that this specific reference to Dorothy Heathcote is more in the context of children "personalizing" objects to present them in the dramatic mode within the construct of a classroom activity (Bolton, 1984, p. 56); however, I believe that the 'mantle of the expert' can and has been used to describe elements of role taking when the role taker becomes endowed with unfamiliar characteristics, and must explore these characteristics through a certain detachment, allowing the role taker to use all of their real and perceived knowledge of the role to function normally as an 'expert'. This begs the question of how do teachers become teachers? How does someone become an 'expert'? How do we know how to conduct ourselves as an 'expert'?
I have begun final term projects for all of my classes. It is interesting to note that one of my objectives for final projects has always been the inclusion of a public performance, where we invite staff and students from different grades and classes within the school to come and watch the Drama and Acting students perform their final scenes. For graduation credit, the Fine Arts Eleven curriculum requires some form of public performance. I believe that the element of performance in front of an audience of peers creates a level of risk which is a lot more valid and invigorating than just simply performing for each other in class. Drama and theatre are public activities, public art forms, which the public has the ability to access and judge. Thus your successes and your failures are public knowledge. The public is able to gauge what you have done in comparison with what others have done. It makes it a lot more risky, and puts a lot more pressure on the students to come up with a solid product.

I think it is important that students get experience in both the "Dramatic Mode" and the "Performance Mode"\(^4\) because it is so easy within the "Dramatic Mode" to just play and to lose oneself in improvisational exploration that you never really have any kind of serious outcome base to evaluate the students with. The experience of preparing for a performance includes the deadline, the tension, the success, the failure, and the feelings of control that an actor has over an audience. Students get a real taste of it all no matter what level they perform at. I usually create a situation for my students where there is a showcase event of the more exemplary projects for parents and friends to come and view in the evening.

I try to get my students to perform publicly a minimum of three times over the course of the year, and the scheduling for this will usually coincide with the

\(^4\) The "Dramatic Mode" is defined as work that is strictly process oriented to be viewed and explored solely by the students for the students in the Drama class. The "Performance Mode" is defined as work that is developed by the students for public presentation and performance.
school calendar. Typically there is a Winter Showcase that takes place before the Christmas break; our annual TheatreSports and Improv Day that will take place before the Spring break; and our Spring Showcase and Awards Night which will take place in June before classes end and the formal exam schedule begins. I find that there is a lot of value in using the scheduled breaks that are already built into the school calendar, so that all of the assignments and activities throughout the year lead up to public performance, and there is a sense of completion and success for the students involved which is highlighted with some well deserved time off. Students need to feel that we are building on one thing from another, and certainly that is an important part of the learning process, but what is also an important part of the learning process is to be able to turn the page to another chapter and to move on. To feel that you have fully completed something is a very satisfying and gratifying feeling.

One of the nice things about doing these projects before a break is that many teachers start winding down their classes, or begin to prepare for exams and so some of the less academic oriented courses might have very little for students to do. It is a great opportunity for the Drama teacher to provide an activity for students in other classes by inviting them to come and view our performances in the Drama room. I find that my colleagues become very appreciative of the fact they can come and leave their students for an hour or so in a safe and supervised environment to watch the Drama productions. It is also a fantastic opportunity for the Drama program to show off. As students who might not currently be taking Drama get an opportunity to see the kind of fun that goes on, they might be less intimidated and sign up for the course the following year.

My Grade Eight's will usually create group satire scenes focusing on winter vacation or Christmas during the first part of the year, and will create group satire scenes focusing on summer vacation during the last half of the year. These are quite
funny plays where they learn how to create something substantive in a large group of eight to twelve students, that has a beginning, a middle, an end, has sustained action of about ten minutes in length, and team work. For the Drama Eight students this project is a real challenge, considering the fact most of their work is usually no longer than thirty seconds to two minutes in length.

The Grade Nine’s work on comedy scenes during the first part of the year; TheatreSports and The Canadian Improv Games during the second part of the year; and Sociodrama and Collectives during the final part of the year. The comedic scenes they choose are from a wide variety of material, ranging from Abbott and Costello’s “Who’s On First,” to old Monty Python sketches. The comedy scenes are typically short in nature, no longer than two or three pages of dialogue, with a lot of visual comedy and sight gags. The TheatreSports and Canadian Improv Games take place from January to early April, and are set up as a semi-competitive league format, where students from both the Drama Nine and Ten classes learn the structure and multifaceted medium of improvisation. The Sociodrama and Collectives are serious group productions, where the Drama Nine students have to research and create plays dealing with important social issues. Students create truly evocative pieces of theatre, with issues and topics ranging from abortion, date rape, substance abuse, peer pressure, teen suicide, to the environment.

The Grade Ten’s work on something which I call “Risk Scenes” before Christmas break, TheatreSports and Canadian Improv Games before Spring break, and monologues and short one-act plays for the end of the year. A “Risk Scene” is where students have to do a scene where they deal with an issue, or deal with a relationship in the scene, that has some kind of ’risky’ content by way of emotional or physical levels. So maybe it is a scene with a kiss between a boy and a girl, or a hug, or some kind of physical or emotional contact, or maybe it’s a scene between two males, or two females, that deals with intense emotional levels. The Drama
Ten's work in conjunction with the Drama Nine's during the middle of the year for the improvisation unit, and then I challenge the Ten's to develop some specific 'acting skills' with monologues and established one-act plays for their final presentation.

The way that I teach my split Acting Eleven and Twelve class is to vacillate between cross-disciplined work between the two grade levels and the prescribed exploration of different genres of theatre history, or to explore more in-depth realms of their acting. It is always an exciting challenge to teach two separate groups of students simultaneously, which requires a great deal of coordination and planning. I try to work the class in such a way that the Grade Twelve students will mentor and work with the Grade Eleven students by helping me teach and provide examples of material that they themselves covered the year earlier. Each year I change the structure of the course, so that the students will continue to grow and be challenged creatively.

Throughout the year, specific groups of students will be working on different types of projects, at different times. Leading up to Christmas break, the Acting Eleven's work on two person Shakespeare scenes, while the Acting Twelve's explore different aspects of the "Theatre of the Absurd" and "Theatre of Cruelty." The nice thing about the Shakespeare scenes is that they all have elements of the Drama Ten "Risk Scenes," but use Elizabethan prose and Shakespearean poetry. The Shakespeare scenes are also an excellent lead in to prepare the students for our yearly Shakespearean production. The "Theatre of the Absurd" and "Theatre of Cruelty" work enables the Twelve's to theatrically create and examine the existential meaning of life types of questions that seem to be endemic at this time in their lives.

My Grade Twelve Directing and Scriptwriting students have only three major projects throughout the year: 1) create a ten to fifteen page one-act play; 2) direct younger students in a short play; and 3) direct their peers in a one-act play. The one-
act play that they have to write goes through an extensive period of workshops and readings, before the third or fourth draft is actually submitted. I schedule the Directing and Scriptwriting students into blocks of junior Drama so that they will get a chance to work with, direct, and ultimately mentor younger students. By assigning the Directing and Scriptwriting students to direct their peers in a one-act play, I am probably providing them with one of the hardest challenges they will ever face in my Drama program. Senior Acting students who have been in my program for a few years seem to have an aversion to being directed by their peers. Because the senior students have been together and have gone through exactly the same course work for a number of years, they all feel like equals — and as perceived equals they have not yet developed enough grace, maturity, and self-confidence to allow one of their own to be the director!

My Theatre Company and Stage Craft Eleven and Twelve classes work throughout the year to produce the main stage shows for the school and our community. For the past six years, the Theatre Company and Stage Craft Eleven and Twelve students have produced more than thirty full length to one-act plays, ranging from Shakespearean comedy to Arthur Miller's "The Crucible." Yearly, students have to audition to get accepted and re-accepted into the Theatre Company program. The students get an opportunity to not only produce the majority of the plays for the school, but they also get an opportunity to get more than 120 hours of work experience for their Career Preparation Program certificate and graduation credit.

I spend a great deal of time throughout the year organizing work experience placements for my students. A lot of the more interesting opportunities and placements that I gain for my students I garner through the contacts that I have made from my own personal involvement in the theatre and performing arts community. Students have been placed at the Vancouver Opera as extras; they have
participated in making commercials for television stations; I bring some of my students to work with me at Carousel Theatre; some students I have placed with advertising agencies; students have been backstage and behind the scenes for a number of professionally filmed movies and television shoots; there are students who have done workshops with professional actors, writers, directors, theatre critics, radio announcers, agents, and technicians; I have also been able to arrange for a small number of my students to audition for professional film and television jobs, as well as acting jobs on stage.

The most exemplary senior and junior projects performed before Christmas break and the end of the year, will be presented in our Winter and Spring Showcases. Usually, I will take two to three scenes from each class and showcase them, in an evening for friends and family to come and view. This is a great opportunity to forge a strong relationship with the parents of the students that I teach. Most of our Showcase evenings have large houses of between 150 and 200 people. It's nice to see parents who are keen on applauding their children, and want to see and hear what their sons or daughters have been doing.

All my festival activities and public productions have a gate or admission charge which serves two important purposes: this becomes an excellent fundraiser for my program, and it also makes people realize that art costs money. Whether they are going to an art gallery, or a theatre, or to hear a symphony, or to see a child's high school play, it all costs money to produce. Production costs for the average Shakespearean play can go as high as $3,000.00, whereas a school musical production can go as high as $30,000.00! People have more respect for something if it costs money. They expect something in return which forces both the teacher and students to produce quality work for public performance. It enables me to say to my students as we lead up to a public performance, "Look, someone has paid money to see you perform, and you now owe them a quality show."
In the spring, I spend a good portion of time working on improvisation, TheatreSports, and The Canadian Improv Games, which culminates in a publicly performed tournament. On the last day before Spring Break, we have the entire day dedicated to improvisation, TheatreSports, and The Canadian Improv Games, and students from all over the school come down to watch twelve to fifteen teams of up to eight Drama students perform against each other in the 'dramnasium'. Throughout the day, we will have up to 600 people viewing our tournament. Again, this is one of the best days of the year to 'sell' the Drama program to basically half of our student population, not to mention the staff members who also come to watch. The performances during the day are free admission (as are all in-school activities), and it all culminates with a special evening performance for the championship trophy called "The Golden Horn." For the evening performance we charge admission, and the evening consists of the student championship round which is judged by professional actors, comedians and improvisers, who also perform later in the evening.

Our Spring Showcase is coupled with our Drama department awards night, which makes for a very special and exciting evening as awards are presented intermittently throughout the viewing of the student's final projects. Awards are presented to students who stand out at all levels of the curriculum, including Drama, Theatre, Stage Craft, Directing, and Scriptwriting.

Students begin to change a great deal as they get closer to public performance. There is a sense of urgency that they go through as they experience the many emotional levels involved in the creation of a dramatic project for public viewing; from the fear inherent in a young person's procrastination, to the excitement of showing off all that they have learned, of being momentarily regarded in the spotlight.
There are so many realistic outcomes relative to everyday life that get explored as a student prepares for public performance. We, as people, are constantly being put in situations where we have deadlines, and have to present our work one way or another for public consumption. At every level of the workplace, we are asked to interact with the public in a very serious manner, where we are representing ourselves, or our businesses, and it is an important lesson for students to learn, that every once in a while you have to 'come up with the goods'.

On a lot of levels, I try to stand back from their presentations. I think that they are really the best directors of their own work. I will assign older students to work with the younger students, to give them some insight or some opportunity to reflect on what they are doing, and the different subtleties that they can bring out in their work. I think this is important for the older students, because they get to explore a leadership and mentoring role. I evaluate the older student’s directing work by relating it directly to the mark of the younger students. If the younger students get 80%, then the older student who directed them gets 80%. If the younger students fail, then the older student fails. That is how it is in real life — if you are directing a project, and the people under you do poorly, it reflects on you as the director.

Giving those students the opportunity to work with the younger kids not only enhances the experience of the younger kids, but I feel it also enhances the self-esteem of the older students, and actually creates an excellent example of Bloom’s (1956) “taxonomy of learning.” Teaching is one of the highest levels of the pyramid. To be able to teach something is to be able to have an intimate knowledge of it. To have the older students have a hand in the teaching and evaluating process of the younger students, is to give the older students the opportunity to express, in a very fundamental way, the knowledge that they have learned in the Drama program.

This type of mentoring and leadership process is, I think, one of the activities that is sorely overlooked in our school system. It is common in human society that
we have always learned to respect those who were older, more experienced, or wiser through lived life, than ourselves. The school system can and should provide opportunities for older students to give back to younger students in a supervised and safe environment.

When you are put in the capacity as leader, mentor, teacher there is a lot of pride that you begin to take in working with people younger than yourself. There is a great deal of self-satisfaction being the role model, and most people rise to the challenge. In my program, I have consistently brought back alumni, my students who have graduated in past years, to work with my younger students as directors for our plays. I also provide a certain amount of money through an honorarium for my alumni directors and leaders, for the incredible amount of time and energy they spend working with the younger students to create public presentations.

It is an amazing experience for both the younger students, as well as the graduates. The older graduates feel connected, once again, not only to their school and their school memories, but feel a part of something where they are respected members of an exclusive club, where they are always welcome. By being brought back as a director or workshop leader, they feel that they are not only respected, but that they have something to offer, and that they are important. It is a great opportunity for a teacher to give this type of experience to their past students.

That was my first experience as a director, to come back the year after I graduated, and get an opportunity to direct students younger than myself in a Drama Festival play. Similarly, in my Grade Twelve year, I was given the opportunity to be a classroom leader with my Drama teacher, helping to tutor and teach Drama Nine and Ten students. Most importantly it made me feel the satisfaction of working with younger people, and realizing that it was something that I could do. I gained confidence when I was given this unique opportunity, this fantastic experience, by my Drama teacher.
I like putting the students through an experience where they are responsible for the ultimate outcome of their work, and where I as the teacher, am someone who will watch, evaluate, and provide support for them. But ultimately, you have to let the students find their way through the work, because there is so much satisfaction, as well as a greater understanding of the work, when they do it themselves.

A great deal has been written and discussed about the way teachers evaluate students, more to the point, how the education system should not place students in a competitive environment. What I have found is that competition in small doses is good. Risk taking, the type that comes from public performance, is good. Putting students in front of their peers, where they have to perform, is good. Putting students in front of their friends and family, is good. Sometimes the stakes need to be raised outside the classroom experience. Most art forms need to be viewed, or listened to, or experienced, by an outside objective audience in order to truly be an art form. You cannot do theatre, for yourself, in your room, in front of a mirror. Theatre requires an audience, and once you invite an audience to participate in the experience, the risk factor increases. I think it really depends on the type of teacher, and the type of program that is implemented. I think that, as a teacher, you sell your students on the benefits and the excitement inherent in competition and performance where they will experience those extra risks, and they will rise to the challenge, and enjoy it. I think when you don't have that kind of program, students will dread the experience of risk on that level.
Reflections on Living Dramatically

Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle on its tissue. [Henry James, "Prefaces," 1909]

I have a certain affinity for this quote by Henry James (novelist, playwright, and critic) because it alludes to the unique nature of ALL human experience as a multitude of infinite experiences from birth to death. I like the image of everyone having these invisible 'spider-webs'. With our consciousness and even our subconscious catching our entire existence, only to be reflected upon and recounted when we choose to journey our internal web of stored life experience to ruminate and analyze the many choices that we have made.

I have had too many special and memorable moments (both positive and negative) within the theatre and in the field of Drama education to define (in the singular) a specific moment which motivated or drove me towards the direction in which I am currently heading. Each experience that I have had has helped to define the person, and for that matter, the teacher that I am today. Both the experiences in my life and my experiences in the theatre have a certain inter-changeability... mirroring each other... exploiting the fact that so many of our experiences as people are universal in nature... exposing relationships and the full spectrum of emotions... our experiential memories are the foundational blue prints and signature codes (the psychological DNA) for who we are as people.

What can I document that would accurately describe my most memorable theatre experience? I could describe 'being' a dancing and singing "Sunny Sun Flower," dressed in a bright yellow outfit in an elementary school production of Tom Sawyer. I could explain the feeling of being thirteen years old, Jewish, and having a Bar Mitzvah. I could recount having a high school Drama teacher who
believed in me, and made Drama and acting the ONE thing that motivated me to stay in school. It could be the fact that I have an older brother who has allowed me to be both a passive and active part of his career as a professional writer and performer. I might look back at all the excellent and awful theatre that I have had the pleasure to view over the last fifteen years: everything from a superlative *King Lear* at the University of Washington performed by the Stratford Touring Company to a hideous off-Broadway New York production of *Vampires and Lesbians of Sodom*. I have viewed Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* at the National Theatre in Prague, Czechoslovakia (before the fall of Communism), and I have seen tribal rituals performed in the Ubud mountains of Bali. I have watched actors (friends of mine) perform in plays that I have written in front of hundreds of people, baring themselves with such magnificence that the entire audience was brought to tears. I ran a professional youth theatre for eight years, and experienced first hand how little our politicians and public institutions regard young people and the arts in our country. I have worked for six straight weeks with a half dozen artists to produce one of the best plays that I have ever been involved with, only to make fifty dollars profit (to be split six ways) at the end of our run. I have experienced first hand the joys and amazing satisfaction of working with young people in the dramatic arts — of watching them feel accomplished, or helping them build their self worth or self-esteem; of learning how to become survivors instead of victims when dealing with their own personal terrors; of working with kids who want to end their lives, and then find life is worth living because they found a niche where they feel welcome, where they can glory in their humanity and their human frailties and foibles. Maybe my most memorable experiences come from directing more than fifty plays in twelve years; trying to explore so many worlds, lives, relationships, and moments. Putting Ten's of thousands of hours into producing, directing, designing, and promoting theatre might provide a variety of examples. Possibly my experiences as a
theatre student at university — where I was made to feel like an outsider and worthless; where I was told flatly that I would NEVER succeed in theatre, and that as a prospective teacher "I was a detriment" to young people. It could be the television or the films that I have watched for more than twenty-five years, being a passive viewer of other people's comedy and Drama. Maybe the most memorable experience was through reading a book, a play, a poem, or a scholarly article; or from hearing a specific lecture or speech. Or maybe my most memorable experience in the theatre could be the life that I am living right now, with everyone that I have ever met or encountered, all adding a little piece to the puzzle.
Tape #4 - December 5, 1997 — (Greetings and Farewells)

As an experiment, I did an assignment right across my grade levels, from Eight to Twelve, called "Greetings and Farewells." The basis of this assignment is that there are two times in human relationships where we display the most outward emotion, as well as physical and facial expressions — usually when we greet or say farewell to one another. If you consider the fact that most people rarely make physical contact on an everyday basis, that possibly the only time we actually touch one another, is going through the ritual 'hellos and good-byes'. The physical nature of shaking hands, of hugging, of kissing, of embracing, become some of the only moments in a human relationship where the average person makes physical contact with one another. You meet a stranger, you shake their hand. You meet someone more intimate you might embrace or kiss. For us to explore this assumption, the students all had to create small vignette scenes based around saying hello or good-bye to people that they knew or who were total strangers.

Participating in this experimental assignment were my Drama Eight class, my two Drama Nine classes, my two Drama Ten classes, and my Acting Eleven and Twelve class. The level of seriousness and commitment for the assignment increased with the level of maturity of the students. The maturity level of the students dictated the desire to accomplish the assignment in a meaningful manner. Each class were given the exact same instruction for the project. The instructions were to create two to three short scenes, no longer than sixty seconds each, in groups of four, that showed people greeting or saying farewell to each other.

It was interesting to observe the processes and preparations that the different classes went through.

The Grade Eight's could barely fill up a sixty second spot with it, as most of their scenes were in the thirty to forty second range, and very few of the students made any commitment to create a scene where they could portray reasonable real
life relationships. The Drama Eight's mostly used a variety of cliché farewells and
greetings, mimicking television and film.

The Grade Nine's were able to find more meaning in the assignment. Their
scenes were in the forty to sixty second range, and possessed a great deal less
mimicking, and explored more realistic outcomes.

The Grade Ten's were able to produce scenes about fifty seconds long, and for
the most part, were the most willing to find the sentimentality inherent in the
delivery and receiving of a greeting or farewell.

The Eleven's and Twelve's created elaborate scenes that had extremely
developed beginnings, middles and ends, and went as long as five minutes a scene.
They would temper their presentations by doing two of the scenes with a great deal
of seriousness, realism, and risk taking, and then would do one in a totally
humorous and comedic manner. They would create serious relationships, serious
risk taking moments, and then create something completely incongruous to ease
the tension, and make everyone laugh.

In reflection on this experiment, it was interesting to note the different
developmental abilities and the different levels of willingness to take risks. The
distinctness of life experience and age really shows itself in the creation and
portrayal of these scenes. I have found that in most situations this type of
developmental and distinguishable reality between grades and ages can be seen by
teachers who teach all five of the prescribed Ministry of Education levels of the
curriculum. This brings me to a number of conclusions, such as: students in Grade
Eleven or Twelve have lived three or four more years, seen three or four more
years of television, experienced three or four more years of everyday existence, and
it definitely comes out in comparative projects; that the British Columbia Ministry
of Education curriculum has been developed specifically for Drama and Acting has a
justifiable rationale for the leveling of students by their age and grade; and that
Drama programs that mix age and experience levels (like the one I teach at Carousel Theatre) will have a greater difficulty in getting a consistently high caliber product.
Tape #4 - December 5, 1997 — (Educational Leave - Part I)

As I get closer to my educational leave of absence, and the knowledge that I am going to be leaving my students, especially my older students who I have been working with for quite some time I am feeling a certain amount of trepidation and anticipatory fear that the students will not find as much success with someone else, and that the program will suffer from my absence. These feelings also make me want to pull back from my students, to work with them more at arm's length, so that they are able to accept the fact that they will be working with someone else soon.
The Human Connection

...knowledge is related to experience; it is not something that is passively received by students but, rather, is acted upon by students as they test out ideas and hypothesis...

{Miller & Seller, 1985, p. 65}

I recently reflected upon my role as a teacher evaluator of student dramatic presentations, and I began considering some very pointed questions about the intrusive nature of teachers to the development and maturation of student initiated Drama. Is the objective of evaluating a student's work meant to be punitive or corrective? What effect does the fact that people (in general) reconcile 'good' or 'positive' comments quicker and more efficiently than we do 'bad' or 'negative' comments? Is there ever such a thing as a 'perfect' or 'one hundred per cent' dramatic presentation, whether it be composed by a professional academic, an Equity actor, or a Grade Eight Drama student? How do we utilize the concept of dramatic process when we have such a concrete desire to distinguish between a 'finished presentational piece of theatre' and a 'work in progress'? How much of the teacher evaluative process is based on successful student learning outcomes, and how much is based on the marking expedience or ease of marking for the teacher?

One of the things that I kept thinking about was how often had I as a student been adversely or positively affected by a teacher's evaluative comments; and similarly how often have I as a teacher perpetuated this? Secondary school students are supposed to be resilient adolescent beings, able to take the heated daily sparring from their friends, their peers, and their family. When they enter the school, they enter a different world, where all of a sudden a multitude of adults begin to evaluate and seemingly show concern for their every action. It is quite a strange feeling to go from one class to the next, and have each one of those 'learned' adults tell them that they are good people who will succeed, or inversely that they are disturbed young
people who will never succeed. What do these comments do to a young person’s sense of self-esteem, their sense of future, or their desire to become educated people?

I ran into my Grade Nine Math teacher at the local Safeway. While pondering which head of Romaine lettuce to buy, I recognized her, and we began to reminisce. Now I was an awful math student. I know this not only because I had consistently done poorly in the subject all throughout school, but because I had been told this, time and again, by a succession of teachers. I spoke to this woman, no longer as a Grade Nine Math student to his teacher, but as adults, professional colleagues, peers. We spoke for about fifteen minutes, then we went our separate ways, I went to buy sourdough bread, and she went to check out a meat special. Before we smiled and moved on, she told me that she was proud of what I had become because there was a while there when she felt that she "didn't think I would amount to very much." Obviously she meant this comment as a compliment, and for the most part I am happy to say that I took it as such; however, when I began to think about what her original perceptions of me as a person (and as a student) were I got pretty angry! I was fourteen years old! How could she determine what type of future I might or might not have during that very tentative and tenuous period in my life?! In Grade Nine, I had always thought that she hated me. Now I know why that was — I was a write-off, because in her mind I wasn't going to succeed.

I once had a professor at university (during my under grad) in the theatre department. He told me during a face to face evaluation that I would never have a future in the theatre, that I would never become an educator, that I was a detriment to young people. I walked away from that meeting completely disillusioned. But the disillusionment only lasted for a few minutes until I got angrier and angrier, and I made it one of my personal goals to prove this man wrong! What would have happened had I taken this particular professor's words at face value and let it diminish my ambition and alter the course of my life? What right does anyone
have at any point in a person's education to make someone feel less than human, less than able to achieve, or less than able to find success at a given task? NONE AT ALL!!!

Teachers need to be cognizant of their power as potential mentors, and to be weary of their ability to judge. We must realize just how important the mentoring process between student and teacher really is. We must see beyond the zealous desire to find errors in our students' work, and find something where they have succeeded in. As teachers, we are too quick to judge, and too slow to nurture. Most likely we all had teachers who made us feel that sense of insignificance, and we have to share a little bit of that every now and then with our own students. Maybe we are a part of an education system which views young people as empty vessels, only to be filled up with the enrichment of their teachers' wisdom and knowledge. Or maybe we are just too good at our jobs: our jobs being that of corrector of errors, imparters of information, and evaluators of students abilities (or lack thereof) — that we forget that we are dealing with children, adolescents, people, human beings — not automatons.
I have a new Drama Eight class today. It is always interesting when I start with my Grade Eight's who have no experience with Drama to put them in situations where they have to express themselves dramatically, and see what kind of medium they use. Not unlike the results of the last six years, the students created gratuitous scenes of violence where they beat the crap out of each other.

The Grade Eight's who start Drama in late January are very different than the Grade Eight's that I get in September. The Grade Eight's that I work with in September are dealing with overcoming their fear and their discomfort of being new students in a foreign environment. While the Grade Eight's who come in late January have been a part of the environment of the school for five months and have created a relatively elaborate social network.

My Grade Nine's and Ten's are currently working on TheatreSports and improvisation, and they have an internal league that is highly competitive. I think this is the only format that I would teach TheatreSports and improvisation in, because it gives a safe public forum for immediate evaluation. When students do projects that are of a more serious nature, they would never receive their grades right after their performance. Evaluation for TheatreSports and improv comes immediately, by the teacher/judge, and is graded out of a possible fifteen points, which goes directly on to a scoreboard, and is added up in relationship to the other teams. The learning curve takes place immediately because they are being rewarded and penalized for specific things, and they are having marks awarded or taken away at the conclusion of each event.

Immediate feedback allows them to alter the types of scenes and the mannerisms that they create. In this particular case, the competitiveness brings out the best in the students. They 'Buy In' fully and wholeheartedly. It is something that they can understand, and is an excellent opportunity to put stronger students with
weaker students, and have them work cooperatively in trying to attain similar goals. I would never go beyond two months for this unit because, quite simply, it becomes boring. The scenes get to a certain point, and then there is no more growth because of the nature of rehearsed improvisation. It becomes 'stock', predictable, cliché, and lacks the risks which I believe enhances a student's dramatic learning.

The Acting Eleven and Twelve students are currently working on period theatre and theatre history. The Acting Eleven students are completing a unit on Greek Theatre. One of the things that I like to make sure that they learn about the theatre of the Greeks, is the Festival of Dionysis. We discuss at length the history and the bawdy nature of the Dionysian Festival, Sophocles' "Oedipus," the Satyr Plays, the mannerisms of the Greek chorus, and overt sexuality of the Greek comedies. The students gain an important perspective when they realize that so much of what went on between people thousands of years ago hasn't changed all that much. The Acting Twelve students are at a different end of the history spectrum, and are working on "Theatre of the Absurd" and "Theatre of Cruelty." Exploring the use of the audience, exploring existentialism, and exploring theatrical material that is cyclical. When you think about it, the Twelve's and Eleven's are really not that far apart in what they are studying, considering that Greek Theatre is really a precursor of the "Theatre of the Absurd" and the "Theatre of Cruelty." They are very closely knit, regardless of the thousand year time difference.
I was asked to create a formal Drama Nine lesson plan for a graded assignment for the instructor of my Principles of Teaching class in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. When I received this assignment back, I had been given a "C+" for work that I believed deserved much higher. When I asked the instructor (whose specialization as a secondary educator was home economics and sewing) why I had received such a low grade, she told me it was because in her opinion, I wouldn't be able to complete the lesson in the allotted 60 minute class period. I explained to her that I had actually taught this lesson as a paid theatre workshop facilitator, and it had worked. "That might be the case," she replied, "I still think that you wouldn't be able to teach this thing properly." I asked her if she had ever taught Drama; she replied that she hadn't. I asked her then how she could qualify her judgment that the lesson that I had submitted wouldn't work. She told me that my lesson was "theoretically unfeasible..." and left it at that.

My lived experiences make me who I am, make me the Drama teacher. Therefore I teach ME. My curriculum is ME. My student evaluation is based on the subjective nature of ME. I have course outlines that are handed out at the beginning of every school year which are documented blueprints of provincially approved curricular objectives, but each objective is ultimately developed, derived from, and delivered by ME. The rapport that I foster with my students is with ME, not a curriculum guide.

My curriculum is ME.
One of the facets of Drama that cannot be overlooked is the opportunity for students to work with one another, under the common goal of trying to create something for presentation. It never ceases to amaze me the dynamic that is created with certain people, the chemistry of how different people become leaders, and how different people draw back and become followers. When you watch group dynamics in action, you start to wonder how much of that group dynamic would be similar in different classes, like French or Social Studies. Why is it that certain people are more predisposed to let others down in a group situation? Why is it that certain people are more likely to lead? Why is it that some people who are leaders in individual activities become ‘wallflowers’ in group activities?

One cannot overlook the social aspect of the Drama class, especially the freedom and liberation of walking into a classroom that is relatively unstructured in comparison to other classes in the school. The social aspect of the Drama class is very important. The autonomy given to the students is such that they can chat socially with one another, and occasionally take a moment or two before, during, or after they rehearse to talk about things that they are doing, or want to do. This is an important aspect of Drama.
Tape #6 - February 27, 1998 — (Thoughts on the Drama Festival)

Last night I had a small group of students involved in the Langley District Drama Festival. I have a great deal of opposition towards these organized festivals. It bothers me that theatre, as an art form, is put into a perspective of competition like a basketball game or any other sport. I mean, competition has its place, there is no question about it, and I am a proponent of competition for certain aspects of the Drama curriculum, but not when it comes to assessing and comparing pieces of presentational theatre.

For the last four years, I have only been sending my junior students to participate in the Drama Festival. Every other school in my district send their Grade Eleven’s and Twelve’s because they view it as major competition. By sending my junior students, and by letting my alumni directors produce the shows, I am attempting to give people who wouldn’t otherwise have a chance to participate gain a valuable experience.
For most young people, their passion and their creativity comes from real life experience. At what point does a young person basically recreate the reality of their world in a role play? So if you ask a young person, a child, to mime something out that they have absolutely no experience with, they will attempt to take the closest common denominator to create the mime. When I see young people, in particular, who are exposing personal ideas and issues, they usually have a certain amount of weight to it. You can pretty well be assured that there is something there that they have some experience in. What is interesting is that special moment when a student, a young person, by way of wanting to reconcile, to deal with, to expose, shares with a class, or with a teacher, a level of themselves and their personal baggage and experience. Through Drama, we begin to see little bits of the personality through the facade, through the veneer, through whatever social status the kid built up. When they go beyond the point of trying to be clever, or to entertain their peers, and they create something real, personal, and cathartic, it is quite unique.

Many of these moments where students reach out and explore their personal experiences have a real mixture of both pain and satisfaction in them. Through the process of writing their own monologues for presentation and memorizing, my Grade Eleven Acting students find it easier to use a personal experience or personal feeling as a basis to create from. When the students perform these memorized monologues, many of the monologues that are handed in on paper, become quite different on stage, because the students begin to explore a realm where they are in a kind of pseudo-character.

One of my Grade Twelve students is fixated upon the issue of social acceptance and homosexuality. In almost every scene, every journal, every activity that he presents or hands in, he brings this up as an issue to be discussed or dealt with. Ultimately, he is gauging the acceptance of his peers, the acceptance of the
teacher, and the people in the classroom, as his way of viewing first hand the amount of tolerance there is in his world for being gay. Obviously he has come to a point, where he needs to be understood as a gay person in a 'straight' society. It is kind of exciting to see him explore, in a safe environment, what his homosexuality means to him, and to juxtapose it against the responses of his peers, both positive, negative, and indifferent. I am proud to be a teacher who has been able to create an environment that is conducive for that kind of exploration.
Tape #6 - March 26, 1998 — (Thesis)

Tell my stories.

That is the theme I am to focus on after my meeting with Carl.

I should be telling my stories as the main function of the thesis. It should not be a thesis of other people's ideas, other people's words, other people's stories, other people's writing but a thesis of my ideas, and my stories, and my thought processes as a daily practitioner of Drama education.

It should be a manifesto of how to be a Drama teacher, of what it is like to be a Drama teacher, of operating off in the perimeter, of being marginalised in academic circles. Question that marginalisation. Question being put off to the perimeter, of being placed as an outsider looking into the academic world, both in the university system and in the public school system.

Question, and ask questions, and be questioning, on all levels, as to — Why Drama? Why is Drama important? Why should students be taking Drama? Why is it part of the school curriculum at all?

Tell stories.

Tell stories about people's reaction to the Drama teacher, the Drama room, the struggle for respectability as the Drama teacher. What are some of the complaints that come my way as the Drama teacher? And why? What are the things that upset people about Drama?

Question everything.
Am I Really Good at This?

I can walk into the Drama room as the second bell rings to sound the start of the first class with not one single idea of what I will do with my Drama students. I walk in, greet my students, chat with them momentarily, take a cursory look around (my way of doing attendance), and begin the scrambled search of my mind for an assignment:

"Uhmm... Okay today we’re going to do a little warm up to start the class."

(Pause)

"I want (quickly counts) to, uhm... Get everyone into groups of three or four... And uhm... In those groups I want you to... Create a short scene no longer than three minutes, and no shorter than ninety seconds... In this scene, in your groups, I want you to work together to make a scene... About... Uhmm... Three people who go through a... Uhmmm... A... Traumatic experience...uhmm... Like an earthquake or a car crash or something like that."

"Make sure that you show your characters going through the entire range of emotions necessary for the scene to be interesting and meaningful. Okay?? You have ten to fifteen minutes to get it together. GO!"

I can make an assignment such as this, and get unbelievable results from my students. Inversely, I can plan the best lesson ever, with all sorts of insightful meaning — and get nothing but blank stares.
Today is my last day of teaching for the 1997-1998 school year, as I embark on my educational leave of absence.

I have come to an exciting turning point in both my teaching and my learning, where I now have to complete my thesis, put my ideas into words, and have my words make sense.

My students had a surprise going away party for me, with a cake, and some sentimental words, which made me feel guilty for leaving.

After all, I am the teacher, and my school year doesn’t end until late June. It feels strange to know that I won’t be teaching, that I won’t have a show to put on, or a rehearsal to run, or a meeting to attend, or a student to talk with to share those exceptional moments of our humanity.

Over the last seven years of teaching, I have found that I become depressed at the end of the school year. I actually go through a sort of depression or withdrawal for the first week or two during the summer break. I think that it has to do with the fact that I am an avowed 'work-a-holic', and the loss of consistent work throws off my system. I also think it is due to the fact that as a teacher, I become 'institutionalized' into the discipline and routine of the daily block order, and my daily commute to and from Vancouver. I also miss the interaction with young people, which validates me and my existence as a mentor, and a teacher.

That is what I am — a teacher.

And I already miss my job!
Today’s observation took place at Earl Marriott Secondary School, in the Surrey School District.

Classes began at 8:00 AM. They are on a semester system, where they have five blocks in a day, with a double block taking place before and after lunch.

I will be observing Mr. Rick Harmon. He is the full time Drama teacher at Earl Marriott, and has been for more than twenty years.

My objective today in observation will be to watch some of the basic interaction between the students and the teacher, and try to acknowledge certain attributes or behaviours that are universal to the Drama classroom. As well, I want to observe the behaviours and attitudes of the students at the different grade levels. I want to see what kinds of attitudes the students bring with them into the Drama class, in a well established, production oriented Drama program.

I enjoyed watching Rick work today. He is a consummate professional, and has an excellent rapport and demeanor with his students. His ability to get students working, and to create a high caliber of material is due to his ability to ‘sell’ the students on the validity of the assignment, as well as their own ability to achieve excellence. It is obvious that Rick’s students are committed, motivated young people who try very hard to please him.

I had the opportunity to observe one Drama Ten class, one Drama Eight class, and a double block of Acting Eleven and Twelve. I was fascinated at the similarities

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My employer, Langley School District #35 (Aldergrove Community Secondary School) provided me with an educational leave of absence so that I might be able to complete my Master’s thesis. My leave began ‘officially’ on Monday April 13, 1998, and would run until the beginning of the 1998-1999 school year when I would return to my full time position at ACSS as both Drama teacher and Visual and Performing Arts Department Head.

I was fortunate enough to structure my M.A. studies in such a way, that I had completed all of my course work, as well as a good portion of my research over the last three years; so that during my leave of absence I would be able to focus solely on the task of compiling, correlating, reflecting, writing, and completing my thesis.

As appealing as all this sounds I couldn’t stay away from being in a school! So I organized and planned to do a number of observational visits with some of my friends and colleagues in the field to help give me some fresh perspective for my writing. From April 15 to June 12, 1998, I completed sixteen different observational visits at schools throughout the Lower Mainland, as well as a school in Seattle, Washington.

Some of these visits are recorded and documented herein to add a unique element of reflective perspective to my work.
in attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes that Rick's students displayed in comparison to my students at ACSS.

The Drama Ten class was working on a mimed mask presentation. The students had to create their own mask, using soft foam, rubber cement, paint, and a variety of other sundry items. Once they created their masks, they had to develop a two person scene with a theme that displayed basic situational ironic outcomes. The students had to spend a certain amount of time rehearsing their characters, their relationships, and figuring out how to utilize the mask to its fullest potential. The presentations were an awesome collection of meaningful moments where through the use of music and choreographed movement, stories of great depth, warmth, charm, humor, and irony were displayed. Evaluation is based on a criterion reference model where the students have an opportunity to meet a number of specific objectives towards the overall product. After each scene, students in the audience are asked by the teacher for a positive critique of the work. The students who performed are also given an opportunity to reflect on their performance. An open dialogue takes place, where both the student and the teacher gain a valuable perspective on the presented material.

The Drama Eight students were working on an exploration of short scripted monologues. I was really excited by this, because I rarely ever give my Grade Eight's scripted work, because I have always seen it as too far beyond their capacity. Although Rick's students put forth a credible effort on these assignments, the majority of the monologue pieces were just recited verbatim, without much depth of emotion or understanding of character development. I feel that the Eight's just don't quite have the range yet to take on this work, but I was impressed by the work that Rick put into this project, and I know that it will yield a strong group of Drama Nine students for the following year.
The Acting Eleven and Twelve students were working on play building and one-act plays in small groups. Not unlike my students, Rick provides his seniors with a great deal of freedom to self-initiate and self-direct their creative work. He also provides them with a great deal of class time to rehearse, workshop, and produce their plays. During the students’ creative process, Rick stands back, monitors from the periphery, and gently guides the students into finding important discoveries on their own terms.

I liked the fact that Rick begins every class with a fun spirited, highly energized warm up. Rick models what he wants his students to do, by playing and working with them. When they warm up, he warms up. When Rick allows talking and socializing, the students are grateful; and when he asks them to listen, they listen. The students respect and like Mr. Harmon, and therefore they listen to him, and ultimately enjoy being taught by him.

I truly enjoyed this opportunity to observe Rick at work. I began my own teaching career at Earl Marriott, with Rick Harmon as my sponsor teacher. I learned a great deal from him eight years ago, and I continued to learn from him today. He gives the students who he teaches a great gift, a gift that is usually reserved only for your immediate family or closest friends — he gives his students his true self. That is the work ethic that I learned from him, and I honor him for sharing that gift with me as well.
How Did I Become the Drama Teacher?

When I first began teaching Drama, I had barely read a book on the subject. I taught what I knew, what I had personally experienced myself as a Drama student in secondary school. I paid homage to the Drama teacher who taught me. A man with whom I am still in close contact, a man with whom I was able to transcend the student/teacher relationship, and grow into a friend, mentor, and a colleague. But I believe that my apprenticeship as a Drama teacher was taking place when I was in Grade Eight, and continued to develop as I went through the five years of secondary school. Did I know that I would one day be a Drama teacher? No. But something of some consequence must have taken place during those five years.

I went to university, and began a double major in both theatre and history, and it was only as a university under-graduate that I first began to explore the profundity and amplitude of writing in the theatre. I began to read Stanislavski, Brook, Grotowski, Artaud, and the plays and the playwrights from Sophocles and Shakespeare to Büchner, Strindberg, Ibsen, Chekhov, O’Neil, Ianesco, Beckett, Brecht, Shaw, Stoppard, Pinter, Churchill, Shepard, and George F. Walker. I was assigned texts in university, texts that told me how to be an actor, how to be a director, how to be a technician, or stage manager; I read texts and had professors attempt to prod me and mold me into an actor or director like them, like they used to be, like they wanted to be, but never were. Did I know then that I wanted to be a Drama teacher? No. I was still apprenticing.

I was given an opportunity to direct a play for the local Drama festival for my old high school, my former Drama teacher asked if I would be interested in the challenge — and I was. I worked with a fantastic group of Grade Ten and Eleven students (many who have gone on to become professionals in the field) and directed George Bernard Shaw's one-act play Village Wooing. I worked with these students after school, directing them, I guess (I know) the way I was once directed by my
former teacher (with respect and passion and a sense of joy), and our play did well. In the context of the local Drama festival, we came in second. We were successful, I was successful. And it didn't take long for the addicting effects to begin to really pulsate throughout my entire being. The addicting effects I am referring to are the fantastic pride and feeling of connection you receive when you collaboratively work with young people to create a meaningful artistic experience. I went on to offer my services to direct other shows, for other schools, whether they be for their Drama festivals or for just basic in-house presentation. I also began to realize that many of the Drama teachers who where paying me to direct plays (at a basic honorarium) had little or no actual theatrical or Drama background at all. In fact, on many occasions they were teachers who where quite literally thrown into the breach of teaching Drama as English or Social Studies specialists. I could go into these schools, and provide a valuable service, by teaching lessons that I had been learning either at the university, or that I myself had learned and now was able to recall from my own days as a Drama student. I somehow became a Drama expert for hire, and as an expert I had to begin to hone my knowledge.

I realized that maybe I should read up on the subject matter. Yes, I could take the odd observation from Stanislavski or Brook and make use of it, and fall back on my other repertoire, but I needed more. I went out and bought Viola Spolin, Booth and Lundy, Kemp, Johnstone, and a handful of others, and began to read. I could certainly take the odd exercise out of any of these books, but so could the teachers who were employing me... and then it dawned on me... I was the one that they were paying.

It was me, not any of these books. It was me, and how I interacted, and approached, and worked with, and gained results from, and made kids feel, and think, and believe in themselves, and work collectively. It was me, and all that I had inside me, and all that I had become, and all that I already was, and would continue
to become; and yes I owed something to the books I read, and continue to read; and yes, I owed my teacher; and yes, I owed all those who have made me who I am and contributed to the type of person I am.

I owe greatly.

I do not have to read a book to become something I am not.

I don't because when I go into my classroom in the morning, and see my students who greet me with affection and respect, and a sense of familiarity, I know I am on my own, doing my own thing, making it up sometimes as I go, sometimes doing it as pragmatically and clinically as a scientist, and other times as recklessly and carelessly as a day time talk show host. There are days when I push the envelope, and days when I stand back. Some days I wear my contact lenses and my students think I am in a good mood, and sometimes I wear my glasses and they know that I am tired. When I wear a tie, I usually have a meeting later, and when I wear the ripped up jeans of my youth and a dirty T-shirt they know I'll be painting and building and hanging lights. Some classes begin with a monologue-like introduction as if I were David Letterman or Jay Leno... rolling out one liners and droll witticisms... and the students laugh and follow me through the lesson as if I were the 'Pied Piper'. Some days I come in with a tired frown, take attendance, list off a short description of the class, my expectations, and tell them to get going. I'm curt on those occasions. Short tempered, usually brought on by lack of sleep, administrative meddling, or by unsatisfactory student achievement on any given assignment... the students look seriously, whisper, "he's in one of his moods," and they still follow me through the lesson as if I were the 'Pied Piper'!

How did I get to be the Drama teacher?
Tape #6 - April 22, 1998 — (Observation - Part II)

I observed a full day of Humanities, English, and Social Studies classes today, taught by Mr. Mike Denos, at the Point Grey Mini-School, in the Vancouver School District.

It is interesting looking at the Humanities class in comparison to Drama. In the Humanities class, the landscape of the classroom is very defined. There is a teacher's desk, a lectern, an overhead projector, and a blackboard. There are notes to be made, and work sheets to be completed, homework to be checked, essays to write, tests to do, marking to be done, and evaluation to be monitored. Watching the students interact in the Humanities classroom, they had a way about them that, in a lot of ways, was dictated by the classroom, by the structure of the classroom, and the geography of the desks and the chairs.

When students were asked to present material to the class while sitting at their desks, in a configuration where all the students could look at one another (like around a conference table), the students seemed to have more difficulty presenting, than if they actually went to the front of the room and presented at the lectern. That difficulty seemed to come from the fact that, not unlike in Drama, the students were very consciously aware of their peers, and how their peers perceived their comments. The students presenting in this conference-like atmosphere of the Humanities classroom seem to wilt when their peers don't listen to them, or don't acknowledge their ideas as being relevant or meaningful. So the context and difficulties of any form of presentation have a great deal of similarity, whether it be in a Humanities classroom, or the Drama classroom.

The need to be acknowledged, listened to, and respected is universal. The students who presented at the lectern, in front of the class, seemed to command a great deal more respect, and had a great deal more confidence in the activity of presenting than their peers that had sat at their desks. The students who presented
at the lectern, not only seemed more relaxed, but seemed to have an ability to take on certain roles, that went beyond just a student relaying information, but became the student as a role taker, playing the role of expert. This idea of "the expert" was conceptually developed by Drama Theorist Dorothy Heathcote (1984, 'Mantle of the Expert').

I was also able to look at the interaction between student and teacher, and in so many ways the teacher at the front of the classroom for an academic course is very much the disseminator and the relayer of all relevant information. The teacher is presenting information, asking questions, getting answers, directing the flow of conversation, the flow of ideas, and ultimately acknowledging positively or negatively the students responses and feedback in such a way that the students are able to move throughout the discussion process on any given topic with the teacher in the role of the 'expert' and the facilitator of the discussion.

In Drama, of course, the teacher's role of 'expert' is not so much at the forefront, but is placed more discreetly in the background because as much as the teacher is the architect of the assignment, the students are the creators of the assignment. An architect draws a blueprint, and then that blueprint is interpreted by the builder, the general contractor, the framer, the plumber, the electrician, the painter, the drywaller, etc. Similarly, in a Drama classroom, the teacher is the presenter of the blueprint, and the students job is to interpret that blueprint. I wonder how many Drama teachers, and I include myself in this question, are more interested in seeing THEIR blueprint recreated, as opposed to the artistic and creative license of the students to interpret that blueprint, and how that affects the judgment that the teacher has in regard to the evaluation of those students.

I enjoyed my time at the Point Grey Mini-School. My day there provided me with a great number of self-reflective questions about the relationship between the teacher and the student, and the students' learning.
I now seek answers and meaning for some very basic questions, like: How much learning is based on listening? How much learning is based on interaction? Does the teacher always have to be a central focal point as a disseminator of ideas? Does the length of time that a teacher speaks enhance or detract from a student's learning?

When I teach:

... do I allow for the intellectual growth of my students?
... do I allow for a social context to be brought into the work?
... do I allow for positive student interaction?
... do I answer the questions that I ask before my students have an opportunity to figure them out?

... do I control the classroom, do I manage the classroom, or do I work with my students in the classroom?

I found it exciting to observe Mike Denos at work. Mike was my Drama teacher when I was attending Eric Hamber Secondary School, in Vancouver, from 1979 to 1984. Mr. Denos was an amazing Drama teacher, who provided his students with a sense of purpose and a desire to create excellent material. He instilled in me the love of Drama that I have to this day. He made school a place worth coming to. For a student like myself, who was constantly getting into trouble, and being threatened by the administration, Mike Denos stuck up for me, and stuck by me no matter what I had done. He provided me with the kind of support that I can only hope that I am now able to provide for my own students.

I realize now that I was not really Mike's Drama student for five years of high school, I was really his apprentice! I learned how to be a Drama teacher from him, and now I practice daily what he taught me. This is a grand legacy for Mike, who has taught more than twenty years, and now through me, will probably teach twenty more.
I honor Mike Denos, and his commitment to young people, to teaching, to being my friend, and most importantly my mentor.
Why Drama? (Act V)

The Dramatic Community

Theatre is more than just the performance of stories or tales. It is a place for human encounter, a space for authentic human experience, above all the kind of existence that transcends itself in order to give an account of the world and of itself. (Vaclav Havel, Essays. The Weekend Sun. March 26, 1994)

I enjoy debating with my colleagues about the validity and importance of Drama as an integral element within the framework of an education curriculum. I like to point out with a great deal of pride that the human experience, which through sheer necessity requires an intricate level of communication, evolved through a multitude of primitive aesthetic endeavors. Only when we mastered these forms of interaction (drawing, dancing, singing, chanting, and acting out), did we develop even the most basic levels of scientific inquiry. The art of communicating our needs, wants, and desires to one another also enables us to creatively portray and share our feelings and emotions, only to bring forth our imagination that leads to further inquiry and problem solving. Thus math and science are purely an extension of the creative arts. Saxton and Miller (1995) refer to this as a part of "the hidden or metacurriculum" (p. 33) that is culturally interconnected within our educational system to enable humans to engage in "social, behavioural, and psychological" development.

Prescribed Drama curriculum is a broad-ranged affair with a host of both specific and subjective learning outcomes, rationale, instructional strategies, assessment, and evaluation. Drama educators and theorists have debated for decades about how to create a specific focal point in the creation of a unified curriculum in the field. They have vacillated between a number of differing schools of thought ranging from Slade's (1954) free-expression based 'child Drama'; to Way's (1967)
therapeutic and improvisationally based 'process Drama'. Theoreticians and academics like Dorothy Heathcote, Cecily O'Neill, Gavin Bolton, Keith Johnstone, David Hornbrook, Martin Esslin, David Kemp, Patrick Verriour, David Booth, and Charles Lundy (and many unnamed others) have ALL added a certain strength to the foundations and underpinnings that is the curricular thought in Drama education. And like anything worthwhile, the debate continues to this day — and has grown to include those teachers who value 'process over product', and those teachers who value 'product over process' (not to mention the theatre versus Drama debate). Philip Taylor (1996) points out that regardless of how the subject matter is theoretically or practically delivered, one salient fact remains "that the foundations and sources of theory lie in [the individual] teachers' practice" (p. 53).
Tape #6 - May 13, 1998 — (Observation - Part III)


Ann teaches English as a Second Language (ESL) to a variety of levels of students at this school, which is predominantly made up of children who have been in Canada for less than one year, and who are essentially coming from low income and 'at risk' households.

Ms. Thorup teaches in a poorly situated multipurpose teaching environment which essentially is a low frequency hallway in a poorly kept portable, detached from the main school building. She shares this space with up to three other colleagues, and noise and interruptions from other activities seem to be a constant intrusion while Ann attempts to teach her lessons.

It was exciting to observe Ann while she worked with these children because as a secondary school teacher, I never really get to deal with children at this age. I watched as Ann worked with these kids, and saw first hand how important a smile is when working with a seven year old.

A smile.

Just think about it.

How often in the university teaching programs do they instruct prospective teachers to simply smile, as a valuable teaching strategy?

I was amazed how Ann’s smile is contagious, and when she smiled, and her students' smiled back, she was able to increase the productivity of the students learning.

I was similarly astonished by the fact that my colleagues in the elementary school system NEVER really get a break from being teachers, care givers, baby sitters, and nurturers. It is never ending, non-stop, from the time the kids enter the school, right up until they leave the building. The elementary teacher's work is exhausting,
and goes unnoticed by the vast majority of society, and in particular, is not nearly appreciated enough by their secondary school colleagues.

This was my first time observing an elementary school in my career. Sure, I have been to the odd elementary school in my district when I have toured plays, but I have never taken the time to observe what actually takes place, and I was stunned at how hard these people work, in their jobs, which require them to take care of these very little and very complex human beings.

I watched as Ann coerced these children to read, and to sound out their words, and to listen to those words, and to think about their meanings, and to put them into a context that they understood. I watched as Ann positively reinforced students, with praise, attention, and lots of smiles. Kids like attention, and Ann is a willing provider for her students. So she is able to get the most from them. I see how much this process of reading out loud for Ann is like a special performance, which many of the children look forward to, and are excited to show off their new found abilities.

I wonder about my own Drama teaching, and how often I smile, or provide enough attention for my students. Are my sixteen year olds really all that dissimilar from Ann’s seven year olds? Besides the obvious physical maturity and supposedly increased learning capacity, do the young people that I work with not still have an innate desire to be cared for, nurtured, and attended to?

Ann Thorup makes me proud to be a teacher. Her commitment and dedication to her students and to her professional responsibility is admirable. Imagine the incredible responsibility of teaching new Canadian children, the Herculean task of learning this inconceivably difficult language called English.

I honor Ann for her efforts, and for giving so much of her personal integrity into her work.
Practice What You Preach

Of right and wrong he taught
Truths as rein'd as ever Athens heard;
And (strange to tell!) he practis'd what he preach'd.
{Dr. John Armstrong, Art of Preserving Health, (1744),
bk.iv,1.303}

As a daily practitioner of Drama education, I am afforded the luxury that many of
the ideas and theories that I have studied and personally developed over the years
as both a student and a teacher will make their way into my practice. When I
observe a colleague in action, and am interested by the methodology and outcomes
of their work, I will usually attempt to duplicate the activity or lesson with my own
students. Similarly, if I read an article or a book, or see something on television, or
hear something on the radio that interests me, there is a good chance that I will try
to create an assignment from it for my students to explore. The Drama classroom is
a laboratory in which I can work with my students to experiment with the aesthetic,
"psychophysical, sociological and personal" worlds we all live in (O'Neill, 1996, pp.
143-144).

Drama theories need to be actualized in a Drama classroom, not just lectured
on, or written about. Considering that there has been more than forty years of
academic postulating in the field, Drama education continues to be difficult to
define. Drama teachers must have the ability and willingness to develop teaching
strategies that can integrate many different philosophies and methods. If you
consider that Richard Courtney (1980) defines Drama curriculum as "what takes
place between teacher and student... [when] the student learns and the teacher
stimulates learning" (p.61), then within the scope of these endeavors, Drama

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6 Case in point: the "Greetings and Farewell" assignment/experiment that is described in this thesis (pp. 138-140), was
completely conceived while listening to a CBC Radio "Arts Report" story about a photographer who was opening a
gallery exhibition of photos depicting people greeting and saying farewell to each other at airports and train and bus
stations. I listened to the story and the ensuing interview with the photographer while I commuted to work in the
morning. From the moment I heard the story, the rationale for this assignment began to evolve — and by the time I pulled
up to the school and parked my car — I had a fully developed lesson plan from which to teach my classes for the entire
day!
teachers must also be willing to play a primary role in the creation and delivery of the Drama curriculum. When Drama teachers and students share their humanity with one another, mutual learning takes place, the curriculum is being implemented, and the many theories of Drama education are being actualized to their fullest.

Drama researchers need to direct more of their investigation and dialogue towards consequential issues that are likely to have an impact on the actual teaching of Drama in a classroom. What good is academic Drama discourse and research if it is totally removed from the teachers it is meant to serve, and the students it is meant to inspire? Jonathan Neelands (1996) is a great proponent of research being "grounded in classroom experience" so that it can "take root in the reality of classroom life" (p. 156). Drama practitioners need to continue to be equal partners in this endeavor, by not only acquiring and maintaining a high level of training in the field, but by also demanding that state authorized Drama curriculum guides continue to be dynamic blueprints for class instruction, and not static 'How To' books.
Today I am doing an observation at Garfield High School in Seattle, Washington. The school is an inner-city Seattle school in a predominantly low income area of the city with a very diverse ethnic and racial mix.

Some of the things that I had heard about Garfield High School, prior to my visit, was that it is a violent and tough school, with gangs and guns, and whatever other media images one can imagine about an inner-city American school. The reality, however, is that Garfield has a thriving Visual Performing Arts Department, and is recognized as a strong academic school.

I spent the day observing Ms. Susan Biles teach a Language Arts Ten class, an Introductory Drama class, and her senior Performance class. I also had the opportunity to watch a matinee production of the school musical "Zombie Prom," which Susan directed and produced.

To begin with some general observations that made me appreciate the British Columbia school system, and my school in particular, Garfield High School is an impressive old building which was built in the early 1920's. It is a huge physical plant with a great deal of history, but it has been poorly maintained due to budget and financial constraints. Graffiti fills the hallways, on the lockers, in the stairwells, and envelops the washrooms. There is a rat and mouse problem at the school which limits the places where people can eat. The day I visited, there was a dead rat in the corner of the staff room. Custodians are only supposed to clean classrooms once a week, and it is obvious. Class sizes are way over the thirty students as per the contract that teachers in British Columbia have. Teachers get little or no support from the administration with regard to truancies or lates. It is left up to the individual teachers to deal with the problem as they see fit. All staff in the school must wear an identification card on the outside of their clothing; next year the entire student body will similarly have to be identified to get into class. Teachers
who don’t want their cars vandalized park off school property. The lunch break is an absurdly short twenty-seven minutes which means teachers rarely get a chance to even leave their rooms to eat, socialize, or prepare for classes.

With respect to Drama, Washington State only has two courses for Drama as part of the prescribed curriculum for high school: Introductory Drama and Advanced Drama. Because the high school encompasses students from Grades Nine to Twelve, any student can sign up for either of these courses. The curriculum does not prescribe specific outcomes for specific age or grade levels like it does in British Columbia. In fact the curriculum for both Drama courses is really quite cursory. Susan has a Drama room which is an old fashioned proscenium arch stage in a basic classroom, as well as a 600 seat auditorium. Her technical equipment is mostly obsolete (circa 1950), and she has to borrow or rent a great deal in order to get any of her productions off the ground.

I was impressed by Susan’s commitment to her students, to what she brings with her into the classroom, and what she gives her kids. I watched as she got the majority of her Language Arts Ten class excited about reading Shakespeare’s "A Midsummer Night’s Dream" out loud. I watched as she motivated her Introductory Drama students (a mixture of almost thirty students, with a variety of commitment and experience), to explore the subtleties of presenting character monologues. And I watched in awe, as she organized more than sixty students to put on a superlative musical matinee for more than five hundred adoring audience members.

Being able to go to Garfield, and to observe Susan, made me feel fortunate to be a Drama teacher in Canada, in British Columbia specifically, where Drama has a historic place in the secondary school curriculum. But I also greatly enjoyed watching someone as committed as Susan Biles give so much of herself to her job and to her students. Whether in the United States or Canada, it makes no difference, good teachers sacrifice and share their humanity with their students.
The Time Is Now

Drama is the mind's most perfect expression. It is in the nature of profound things to clash and combine, to evolve from one another. Action is the very principle of life. {Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, 1958, p. 148.}

The time is now to take action, to begin a new more demanding, immediate, and pointed dialectic within the field of Drama education. The never ending cyclical nature of discourse within the field has become so tired, threadbare and worn out that even those scholars and theorists who have staked their names and reputations on writing and researching within this domain have begun to shamelessly recycle and rehash their ideas, theories, and arguments. The fact of the matter is, that Drama education has ceased to evolve or grow because of a scholarly paralysis that has existed for the past forty years. This 'Drama malaise' stems from the continued debates that rage on: Drama versus theatre; process versus product; teacher centered role Drama versus student initiated play; developmental Drama versus therapeutic Drama; and most importantly, a desperate attempt to reaffirm Drama's place as a course of curricular significance within the education system.

I, myself, as a relative neophyte to the world of academic discourse have spent a good deal of time in this thesis visiting all of the aforementioned paradigms. I have submitted examples of theories, cited noted scholars, and made numerous references and examples of my own practice to validate and prove that Drama BELONGS. I have recounted, reflected, and ruminated on the job of being a Drama teacher, on working with Drama students, and on living and teaching dramatically. Yet, I still feel an ardent desire to attempt to begin a new line of inquiry more suited to the needs of the Drama practitioner in the classroom on a daily basis, and less theoretically situated solely for the advantage of academic discursive publications and conferences.
Saldaña and Wright (1996) argue that research in Drama education must prove that it "works" in order to silence the skeptics "with power to distribute funds and mandate programs" (p. 129). I agree with them in part, because of the way that society puts such a high value on all things tangible, simply ignoring anything that is in the slightest way considered ethereal, but it is of paramount importance that research in Drama education cease to operate from a self-induced position of inferiority. Our research must provide: more than just reasons to belong; more than artificial scientific data; more than postulative discourse on the same old academic theories. Research in Drama education should be able to aid classroom Drama teachers by providing them with a practical theoretical language suitable for both teaching and learning Drama.
Drama with a Capital "D"

Drama is a language on to itself, and is thus deserving of an upper-case "D". Drama is based in the immeasurable realm of human communication, which is a medium that crosses all boundaries in order to connect with both the viewer and the participant, the actor and the audience, the student and the teacher. So universally communal is Drama, that it is a language of hundreds of tongues, thousands of glances, gestures, and movements, an array of emotional responses and interpretations, and an infinite number of meanings.

By endowing Drama with a capital "D", it seems like we are righting a wrong. Upper case "D" Drama is all about moving forward, finding new questions to seek answers for, to begin a valuable new dialogue in the field with theories that don't need to be underpinned by paying homage to the past, or by validating one method of teaching only by discrediting another. The more united we are as Drama educators, scholars, and theorists, the more successful we will be in our ability to share the unique richness of our language with others.

I am proud to say, that my thesis, my words and my writing, are written in the language of Drama — with a capital "D".
I am always struck by the monumental feelings of accomplishment that our school's Graduation Ceremony provides our students, their parents, and the teachers, with a grand sense of purpose and completion.

Of the 180 or so students that walk across the stage, shake hands with the dignitaries, and get their 'Leaving Certificates', a few of these young men and women, were an integral part of my life, my work, and my teaching for the past five years. All of them so different from each other, so diverse and un-alike, yet they were all passionate about Drama, and Drama brought them together with a purpose.

I watch Paula, a beautiful young lady, with talent, and intelligence, and grace. There's Steven, for whose parents this milestone means so much, and as he walks across the stage, I get the honor of awarding him the department 'Book Award', as I shake his hand, I think about how many times I had to fight with him to keep him on track, how many times the administration had to be deterred from suspending him, how many times his parents needed to be reassured that their son could actually do it. I see Sherri, a crooked smile running across her face. She never thought she would make it to this day either. Drama gave her a purpose to come to school, to be a part of something other than partying and drinking. There's Lena who tried so hard to belong, to prove herself to everyone else, that in the end she grew stronger and more self-assured than she could have ever imagined. I watch as Jessica moves towards the stage, this strong, mature, and brilliant young lady who worked so hard at everything she did, and was able to be a top academic student while dedicating herself to the Drama program. I see Emily, who has so much talent, passion, and a desire to make a difference in the world. I watched her go through a love and loathing of the program that was so much a part of her life. Here comes Melissa, who survived five years on the periphery of the program, with a smile and a great deal of dignity. There's Josh, who hurt so much early on, that he tried to stop
the hurt forever, and Drama and Theatre Company were there for him to provide a niche where he belonged, and where he became a keystone of the program. I see Alesha who will come back again next year, but walks across the stage on her arthritic and painful legs, her smile and gratification is contagious, her leadership a joy, her talent unsurpassed. The love that she shares with everyone is abundant. And then finally, there is Chelsea who early on tried everything in her power to self-destruct, but neither her counselor nor I would let her, no matter what her friends wanted her to do, no matter how her parents treated her, no matter that the Vice Principal wanted her gone, no matter that she continued to test everyone around her. She still made it.

Graduation, what a strange rite of passage.

For many, this is the pinnacle of their scholastic endeavors. After this they will go on to work, marriage, children, mortgages, and the circle of life continues. For others, they will choose the opportunity to explore furthering their education, and then, they will also join that same circle of life.

After the graduation ceremonies, a number of parents came up to me and thanked me. Some had tears in their eyes, some held onto my hand tightly, but they all tell me emphatically how important I was to their children, how important I was in getting their son or daughter to this juncture in their lives, and how grateful they are to me for all the time that I have put into what I do.

This is the most satisfaction that I get as a teacher. To know that what I have done makes a difference in the lives of the people that I have had the pleasure to work with makes me very gratified, and then I know that it is all worth while, and it is worth starting all over again — the following year!
References


Regarding Student Writing

ALL student writing was reprinted with the permission of the student, under the strict understanding that anonymity would be maintained.

Each of the students whose writing appears within this thesis has already graduated from my school, and is of the age of consent.

Regarding Student and School Identity

The names of students referred to in this thesis are ALL pseudonyms.

By retaining the name of my school district and school in this thesis, I seek to honor the fact that my daily practice and research have been nurtured while under their employment.
Bibliography


