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The Disruptive Aesthetic Space

Drama as pedagogy for challenging pre-service teacher attitudes towards students with disabilities

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Abstract

Increasingly throughout Australia and internationally, there has been a movement towards the inclusion of students with mild to severe disabilities in regular classrooms. This has led to an increased need to ensure that regular teachers are adequately prepared to teach inclusively.

This study brings together pre-service teachers and their lecturers with members of a community-based theatre company for people with intellectual disabilities. In a reversal of the usual relationship, the people with intellectual disabilities, working with the researcher, lead the pre-service teachers and lecturers in drama workshops with a focus on teaching for diversity, in which they learn with and from each other. The workshops explore the education experiences of students with disabilities and inclusive education through practical activities involving applied drama, group activities and reflection.

This is a qualitative study that describes the nested relationship of three research methodologies that fit one inside the other and work together to inform research questions articulated as a shared research vision: teachers and people with disabilities working together in drama to foster enhanced understanding of teaching for diversity. The primary and overarching methodology is reflection on practice. The researcher as reflective practitioner spans the worlds of the theatre company in the role of workshop director, and the university in the role of teacher educator. The workshops have been repeated over five years and data was collected in three of these years allowing for a participatory action research approach. This second methodological approach opened a communicative space in which all those involved in the teaching and learning practice have a right to speak and act in transforming things for the better. The third approach is that of arts-based research, where drama strategies within the workshops serve both as pedagogy and a mode of inquiry.

The drama workshop as an embodied, cognitive and affective pedagogical encounter is considered and explored using post-structural concepts as tools to disrupt habits of thinking about practice. Analysis of the data reveals how elements of discomfort and disorientation, as well as shared experiences of beauty, grace and laughter, are significant. The disruptive aesthetic space of the workshop is understood ultimately as a creative space of transformation in which participants are stirred into new understandings about disability and inclusive education.

The thesis contributes to the body of research that considers the place of the arts-based encounter, affect and aesthetics in transformative learning. It has a particular contribution to make to the question of how we might disrupt negative or limiting attitudes that teachers sometimes hold towards teaching students with disabilities. It offers an example of a kind of transformative pedagogy that may inform other educators within higher education contexts, and in the professional development of adults, when pedagogies that can disrupt hegemonic attitudes are needed.

This research contributes to understandings about people with disabilities: their desire to contribute to preparing pre-service teachers for inclusive education, and their capability of making an effective contribution. It concludes that people with disabilities should be central within both the pedagogical and research processes.
Declaration

This is to certify that:

- the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD,
- due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,
- the thesis is fewer than 100 000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

_______________________________________

Jo-Anne Raphael
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First and foremost I wish to acknowledge the contributions of six Fusion Theatre actors who have been so central to this project: Alex, Andrew, Katrina, Jean-Marie, Vicki who are the pioneers and David who joined the team later. Their enthusiasm and commitment to the project has driven me and inspired me. I also acknowledge the support and contribution of the broader Fusion Theatre community: directors, board members, student volunteers, carers and support workers in particular Larry, June, Nick and Kate who were all there at the very beginning and Danni and Natalie who became involved later.

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

The beginning: a corridor conversation

Surprising things can happen in the liminal space, the space betwixt and between. This is, according to anthropologist Victor Turner, a space where usual structures, rules and hierarchies are suspended, creating a positive and active space of possibility and transformation. This project is concerned with the possibilities that arise within the liminal space of a drama workshop for student teachers that is focussed on inclusive education and is co-led by people with disabilities. The idea for this project also began in such a space through a chance meeting between a colleague and me in the corridor of the university where we both teach.

In this corridor space, between the thresholds of her office and mine, which could also be perceived as a space between her field of expertise and mine, we shared a conversation about our work as teacher educators in the School of Education. I was the lecturer in drama education and she was at that time preparing a new mandatory unit called ‘Teaching for Diversity’ for final year pre-service teachers to be offered for the first time in the following semester. During the course of our conversation she remembered my long term association with a group of actors with disabilities and asked if I might be interested in offering a lecture as part of the unit program. I hesitated for a moment because although I would be willing to present a lecture, I had an inkling of something that could prove more valuable as a teaching and learning experience. ‘I could do that,’ I replied, ‘but I have another idea.’ I proposed that rather than hear from me, it would be better for the student teachers to hear from the actors with disabilities, and rather than a lecture, I proposed a drama workshop, a method of teaching and learning that the actors were well acquainted with. ‘If you like I will ask them,’ I said, ‘but I think they will be interested.’ Although far more complex to organise than a lecture, I felt confident that the Fusion Theatre actors would be willing to work with me to design and present a drama workshop for the student teachers that focussed on teaching for diversity. So it was in the moments of that corridor conversation that my colleague and I moved beyond the limits of what we knew, and the limits of our previous practices, and the project at the centre of this thesis began to unfold.
Three months later

In the metropolis of Melbourne, known for its multiculturalism and vibrant arts scene, there live just over four million people, amongst who, according to statistical probability, there are approximately 800,000 people who have a disability. On the outer margins of Melbourne is the satellite city of Dandenong, known for its high level of cultural diversity and low level of socio-economic advantage. A short walk from the station, just past a strip of shops known as Little India on the corner of Robinson and Walker Streets, you will find the Dandenong Community Arts Centre. In this small arts centre is a studio style theatre and within this space fourteen members of Fusion Theatre meet to work with a director to develop skills in performing including voice, movement and improvisation, and to devise theatre for public performance. On this particular evening seven members of the Fusion Theatre Diversity Workshop team are staying on a little later to plan and prepare a drama workshop they will present for pre-service teachers in order to generate some thoughts and ideas about teaching inclusively.

The team members bring a range of experiences that have prepared them well for the task. All have been involved in drama and theatre for many years. I bring to the team many years experience as a teacher educator but the others bring a most important kind of expertise that I don’t have. They are insiders. They are experts on their lived experience of disability and have an understanding of what it is like to be a student with a disability because they themselves have disabilities. They have experienced firsthand the barriers to inclusion that they hope the student teachers will be able to identify and break-down in order to become better inclusive educators. We pool our collective expertise for the task at hand.

There are some risks involved but we are not daunted because this is not entirely new territory for our team. We have presented workshops at conferences for educators and arts workers to show how the company adapts theatre-making processes for diverse abilities. In fact, the origins of Fusion Theatre are linked to the university and to teacher education. The company of three ensembles has grown from a drama group that began in 1997. That group started after Alex, a man with an intellectual disability, made a phone call to the university in search of someone who might be interested in leading a drama group for people with disabilities in his local area. I received the call and
recognised it as an opportunity for a project in which university students of drama and education could work together with adults with intellectual disabilities in drama and theatre. Together with Alex, and with the support of the local Neighbourhood House, I established and led the drama group. The group known then as Dramability is now one of three ensemble groups incorporated as Fusion Theatre that meet on a weekly basis with a director for drama and theatre workshops.

This study has grown out of my career spanning thirty years as a drama teacher, applied drama practitioner and teacher educator working with young people in schools, universities and colleges of Technical and Further Education, and in community settings with long-term unemployed, people learning English as a second language and people with disabilities. It is closely linked to my involvement as founding teacher and artistic director of the drama group that became Fusion Theatre and builds on research completed for my M.Ed. ten years earlier; a qualitative case study of this group involving reflection on practice and focussing on the outcomes of involvement in drama and theatre for people with disabilities (Raphael 2003; 2004). Also participating in that study were student teachers of drama education who I was teaching at Deakin University at the time. These students were participants in the research process and their reflections on the work soon moved beyond what they saw the people with disabilities were gaining to what they, as student teachers, gained from working in drama with people with disabilities. ‘I have learned more from them than I have taught them’, explained one. ‘They have made me a better teacher and helped me remember why I love drama’, said another. I was learning too, so it seemed that one of the greatest attributes of being involved in the drama group was that we were all at different times the teachers and the learners. The dynamics of and reasons for these transformations were not the focus of my M.Ed study, although it became a recommendation for further investigation and one that this research builds upon.

Another important transformative learning moment in my M.Ed study was realising the degree to which the members of the drama group had invested in the research process. I had imagined that after going through the process of explaining my research project and gaining informed consent that they would soon forget about what I was doing, leaving me to gather notes on my observations and reflect on my practice. I was wrong; the idea
of research being undertaken on the work with the group particularly appealed to Alex, the founding member. He began to regularly email me comments of his own observations on the practice of the groups as well as reflections on group and individual development to add to my observations. I was surprised by the high level of animation and involvement in the group interviews I undertook and the way that several members took over the questioning of each other and of me. My study evolved as a participatory research project in ways I had failed to imagine at the outset. Finally, I discovered the extent to which participation in the research process was empowering for participants when they felt that their opinions were valued, their voices were being heard, and they themselves could be agents for change. This became a collaboration in which all participants were transformed through the research process. Change, for all of us, was not only a potential outcome of the completed and disseminated research, it was already occurring in the process of it. I had come to understand the importance and value of participatory research and knew that any future research I undertook in similar contexts would likely be done in this way.

**Inclusive education – a challenge to be met**

The research that informs this thesis has emerged from a real life challenge to be met in the education of student teachers in the unit ‘Teaching for Diversity’ at Deakin University. Clearly it has a relevance and importance to the educators involved in this unit as we work towards finding and understanding better ways to educate the student teachers in this course. However, the problem of preparing teachers to teach inclusively is part of a much wider concern.

According to Australian Bureau of Statistics data for 2009, twenty-six percent of people with disabilities do not go beyond Year 10 compared with eighteen percent of people without a disability and they are much less likely to have completed Year 12 and hold a post-school qualification (VEO&HRC 2012). The data also indicates that they are more likely to be unemployed and have significantly less income than people without a disability as well as often bearing higher costs of living because of their disability. Considering this, it is not surprising that forty-five percent live in or near poverty, more than 2.5 times the rate of poverty experienced by the general population (VEO&HRC 2012). For people with disabilities the right to an education is so important because
education ‘is a means for overcoming social and economic marginalisation and a foundation for achieving other human rights’ (VEO&HRC 2012, p. 22). Furthermore, society in general is diminished when people with disabilities do not have the opportunities to develop their abilities and gifts through education. Common sense tells us that improving the educational opportunities and therefore the lives of people with disabilities will have benefits for the whole of society.

Alongside a growing awareness of the right of people with disabilities to an education is an increasing movement within Australia and internationally, away from segregated or special education towards the inclusion of students with mild to severe disabilities in regular classrooms. Within Australia the Disability Discrimination Act introduced in 1992 was a catalyst for more widely accepted inclusive practice. One of the drivers for global movement towards inclusive education was the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) that proclaimed that ‘regular schools with [an] inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost effectiveness of the entire education system’ (p. ix). In 2009 this message was reinforced by UNESCO’s new Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education.

People with disabilities have a right enshrined in international law to an education and yet there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that these rights are not always fully realised. In response to concerns expressed by parents, advocates and community members, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission recently undertook a study of the experiences of students with disabilities in Victorian schools (VEO&HRC 2012). This report revealed numerous examples of breaches of law and policy. Students with disabilities have been refused enrolment or been told that schools would not be able to accommodate their needs. They have experienced lack of coordinated planning and infrequent support meetings and they have been denied participation in external assessments, access to excursions, camps and extracurricular activities. They have reported discriminatory attitudes from some teachers and two-thirds of those responding to the survey reported experiencing sustained bullying and
harassment by other students (VEO&HRC 2012). Clearly real challenges in the inclusive education project remain.

**Some notes on terminology**

The United Nations defines people with disabilities as ‘those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others’ (United Nations 2006, p.1). People do not have disabilities, they have impairments. However, they live with disability in a world that presents barriers because it does not take into account the impairments that some people live with. There are numerous terms used across contemporary international literature to refer to students with disabilities such as learning disabled, developmentally disabled, cognitively delayed, students with special educational needs (SEN) or students with diverse needs. I do not use labelling terms within this project without deep consideration because I understand the ways that labels of disability can be highly problematic in that they are social constructions that can limit our understanding of what a person is and can do. In this report the ‘people first’ approach is taken when referring to people or students with a disability – they are people and students first and foremost. The preferred term is therefore not ‘disabled people’ but ‘people with disability’. Within the disability movement there are critics of the people first approach to language who find it linguistically awkward and overly defensive. However, at the time of writing the terms used within this thesis are consistent with those used and deemed appropriate in contemporary Australian curriculum documents and discourse. The Fusion Theatre actors involved in this project identify as people who have an intellectual disability and refer to themselves and each other as being disabled or with a disability. Each of them is unique and despite the efforts of this thesis to present their characters and voices, in order to understand the nature of each person’s intellectual impairment it would be necessary to get to know them in person. I find that use of a label in this project is both highly relevant and irrelevant – ‘irrelevant because each person arrives as an individual and as a unique being, and highly relevant because without the label such a person would not be part of the project’ (Hellier-Tinoco 2005, p. 162). Indeed, it is being a person labelled as having a disability that contributes to their expert status in presenting
the workshop on inclusive education and participating as valued co-researchers in the project.

Often the term ‘inclusive education’ is used to refer specifically to children with individual differences of ability but in its broader sense refers to those at risk of exclusion, marginalisation or underachievement through difference and diversity including ethnic, cultural, religious and socio-economic diversity. Inclusive education involves recognising and removing barriers to learning and participation (Slee 2001). The unit ‘Teaching for Diversity’ is designed to address inclusive education in its broadest terms, although the workshop at the centre of this project is focussed more on teaching for diversity of ability. In relation to teaching students with disabilities, inclusive education should not be understood simply as a re-organisation of special education within the mainstream but rather involves a more radical ideology in which the education system is restructured to provide education for all children irrespective of individual difference (Slee 2011; Clough & Corbett 2000; Symeonidou & Phtiaka 2009). In recent decades educational institutions have had to find ways to accommodate this shift in paradigm and teacher educators are searching for better ways to prepare pre-service teachers to teach in inclusive programs (Forlin, Loreman, Sharma & Earle, 2009; Forlin 2010).

**The research question**

This research project was designed to make a contribution to understanding what happens when university students and lecturers work alongside adults with intellectual disabilities in a drama workshop program that is centred on understanding teaching for diversity. The key event of this project is a two hour long drama workshop that focuses on inclusive education and which is repeated twice each year for up to eighty pre-service teachers undertaking a mandatory unit, ‘Teaching for Diversity’, in their final year of their Bachelor of Teaching degree. These workshops have been presented each year over the last five years and data was collected over three of these years.

In response to the problem of preparing teachers to teach for diversity, the broad research question is:
• How can we better prepare pre-service teachers for teaching for diversity?

If stated as a vision, the vision is:

• Teachers and people with disabilities working together in drama to foster enhanced understanding of teaching for diversity.

Further questions that are central to this study are:

• What happens when student teachers, lecturers and people with disabilities work together in a university-based drama workshop?
• What happens in both pedagogy and research when people labelled as having intellectual disabilities are positioned as experts?
• What are the elements within the drama workshop that create a learning environment that can make a difference?
• What are the dynamics occurring within the drama workshop that allow spaces for learning to open up?

Aims of the research: who is looking for answers?
This research occurs at a time when teacher education course accreditation processes are increasingly demanding that courses address inclusive practices. Under the heading ‘general expectation of courses’ the Victorian Institute of Teaching (2007) requires that courses prepare graduates with the appropriate level of skills and strategies they will need to respond effectively to a diverse range of students including students with special educational needs. There are increasing demands on what graduating teachers should know and be able to do and yet little or no additional time or resources have been provided within teacher education courses to achieve this. This gives rise to serious concerns about how important areas of practical and theoretical knowledge can be effectively considered given the limitations on time and other practical constraints.

The recent report on the experiences of students with disabilities in Victorian schools (VEO&HRC 2012) found that discrimination is often grounded in negative attitudes towards disability, and a failure in teachers to set high expectations for these students can significantly limit their potential. This is reinforced by numerous studies that highlight the need for pre-service teacher education which encourages positive attitudes in teachers towards students with disabilities (for example Marshall, Ralph & Palmer
2002, Forlin 2006). This thesis has a contribution to make to the discussion and body of knowledge around preparing pre-service teachers and professionally developing teachers in general to teach in inclusive classrooms. It has a particular contribution to make to the question of how we might disrupt negative or limiting attitudes that teachers sometimes hold towards teaching students with disabilities.

It is not only systems, institutions and teacher educators who have an interest in finding better ways to prepare pre-service teachers to teach in inclusive programs. Pre-service teachers, newly graduated teachers and often even experienced teachers are demanding better preparation and lamenting the lack of effective professional development in this area (Tomazin 2009). Ultimately, those who have most at stake in the matter of preparing teachers and most to gain when teachers feel confident and competent to teach in inclusive classrooms are the students with special educational needs themselves and their families.

Overarching all of this is the consideration of pedagogical approaches in teacher education in general; and in particular the nature of drama as pedagogy in the professional development of adults. This research contributes to the body of research that considers the place of the arts-based encounter, affect and aesthetics in transformative learning. This research allows for a focus on applied drama and the elements of this approach that create a disruptive and aesthetic space that serves to shift and shape attitudes towards people with disabilities. It offers an example of a kind of transformative pedagogy that may inform other educators within higher education contexts or in the professional development of adults when pedagogies that can disrupt hegemonic attitudes are needed.

Apple (2010; 2013) suggests a major task of the critical scholar/activist in education is to ‘bear witness to negativity’ with a primary function ‘to illuminate the ways in which educational policy and practice are connected to the relations of exploitation and domination – and to struggle against such relations – in the larger society’ (2013, p. 41). This study bears witness to the educational experience of people with disabilities and through their integral involvement in this project it also attests to their abilities and determination to contribute and to lead. This thesis analyses and documents the
pedagogic experience that is the Teaching for Diversity workshop and in doing so achieves another key task proposed by Apple, ‘to point to... spaces of possible action’ and ‘critically examine current realities with a conceptual/political framework that emphasizes the spaces in which more progressive and counter-hegemonic actions can, or do, go on’ (p. 41). Documenting spaces, such as the Teaching for Diversity workshop, and the possibilities such spaces present is, according to Apple, ‘an absolutely crucial step, since otherwise our research can lead to cynicism and despair’ (p.41). I have found, as Apple suggests in his third task for the critical analyst in education, that this has meant ‘a broadening of what counts as “research”’ (p.41) both in the ways I have undertaken it and the ways I have presented it. This project is an opportunity for me to make use of my privilege as an academic ‘to open the spaces at universities and elsewhere for those who are not there, for those who do not now have a voice in that space and in the “professional” sites’ to which I have access (Apple 2013, p.43-44).

**Conceptual frameworks: my reasons for taking action**

In my earlier explanation of the background to this project, some of the values that led me to take action and generate this project along with members of the theatre company and my university colleagues may be evident. These are the values that give meaning to my professional life. Some of these values include:

- A commitment to educational improvement through respectful and collaborative working relationships
- A valuing of diversity, equality and social justice
- A belief in the right of each person to contribute and to learn together
- An appreciation that people acquire understanding and learn in different ways
- An appreciation of the potential of drama as a powerful way of coming to know and understand that is social, collaborative, embodied and aesthetic.

The conceptual frameworks, the ideas and concepts that inform the research, are formed and informed by values such as these.

Using prompts suggested by McNiff and Whitehead (2010), I consider the ontological, epistemological and methodological features of the research as well as the socio-political intent. I have come to understand that these features are inextricably entwined
with each other and entwined with the values I hold. Ontological considerations are concerned with who I am and what I bring to the action and the research or the various identities or ‘selves’ that I bring to the project. In considering my epistemological orientation I ask what is known and how it comes to be known. In this study I view the data through a constructivist ontological lens, whereby as researcher I work with co-researchers to construct and co-construct our understanding of what has happened in the research process and negotiate the meaning.

The methodology is another thread in the weave, joined together and shaped by my ontological and epistemological orientations. My choice of methodology is also connected to these values and socio-political intent. This alerts me to the need to be critically reflective about this research. I heed the warning implicit in Deshler and Selener’s comment that ‘What we decide to research and the way we conduct our research is a political statement about who and what is important to us’ (1991, p.9). My philosophical stance, with a strong leaning towards principles of social justice, also leads me to consider this research as potentially transformative, whereby the focus, the process, and the outcomes of research are a means by which we might address the problem and improve our understanding of how we prepare teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms.

One thing I have come to realise about myself as a researcher is how my identity is influenced through being raised in a family of practical people who do physical work with tangible outcomes. Members of my immediate family have built houses, boats and gliders. They grow their own food and sew their own clothes. They are valued by others because they can and will have a go at making and fixing anything – your car, your computer, your pants, and your catering disasters. They have learned, and love to learn, largely through the experience of doing. I am the first person in my family to attend university. My academic career seems antithetical in such a family and so it seems natural that I take a practical turn in my academic work and take up an active, practical and ultimately useful project to sustain me.

There is pragmatism to this project that is especially important to me at this stage of my career. It brings together three areas that I am currently working in: drama education;
disability arts and inclusive education; and teacher education. The workshop is in itself a practical response to a need in the unit ‘Teaching for Diversity’. Drama is a practical, social and democratic pedagogy so that the Teaching for Diversity workshop is not just about inclusive education, it is inclusive education. This is an assertion that I elaborate upon and illustrate throughout the thesis.

This PhD study also serves a practical purpose as training for an academic career. It is with this in mind that I have taken the opportunity to explore the post-structuralist conceptual frameworks that serve to create the conditions for transformation in my own learning. These are conditions that deliberately move me beyond my comfort zone. I understand reading and working with theoretical and philosophical literature is important because without it ‘we have nothing much to think with during analysis except normalised discourses that seldom explain the ways things are’ (St. Pierre 2011, p.614). In my desire to make this project truly useful, to reflect differently and more deeply on my practice, I draw upon post-structuralist tools to help disrupt my habits of thinking. Some of these philosophical concepts have not slipped easily into my tool kit, but the time and effort invested has given me conceptual tools that can be used for this project and beyond. In particular I have drawn upon concepts developed by Gilles Deleuze, and his negotiations with Felix Guattari (1987; 1990; 1994), in order to unsettle, shake and shift my understandings of my practice and to find new ways to consider and explain elements of this project.

I see the notion of disruption as a necessary element of transformative learning for myself and for all participants in the Teaching for Diversity workshop. To deepen my understanding of this I draw on concepts of pedagogy of discomfort (Boler & Zembylas 2003) and disorientation (Bogue 2004; Mezirow 2000) and affective pedagogies that provoke a ‘shock to thought’ (Massumi 2002; Thompson 2009).

Three nested methodologies
I am guided by what Mertens, Sullivan and Stace describe in their discussion of researching disability communities as the ‘transformative axiological assumption’, based on the belief that ‘ethics is defined in terms of the furtherance of human rights, the pursuit of social justice, the importance of cultural respect, and the need for
reciprocity in the researcher-participant relationship’ (2011, p.230-231). A transformative research paradigm calls for multiple and mixed methods that are culturally respectful and supportive of diverse needs (ibid). This project involves the nested relationship of three qualitative research methodologies that fit one inside the other and work together. Drawing on these multiple methods seemed to me to be logical, ethical and appropriate within this context. The primary and overarching research methodology is reflection on practice. The second research layer is participatory action research methodology in which all those involved have an opportunity to come together to explore issues and contribute to the research. The third research layer at the core of the project is an arts-based methodology, where drama becomes both pedagogy and a mode of inquiry as student teachers and teacher educators participate in a drama workshop led by people with disabilities.

**Reflection on Practice**

Reflection on practice is an important part of my professional work. As a drama educator and a teacher educator I am naturally disposed to reflection on practice. This is a disposition to ‘Dig deep into self in order to bring into consciousness the other-wise unconscious instincts, habits, values and learnt behaviours’ that shape my practice (Neelands 2006, p.17). As a teacher educator I believe it is essential that I model well-considered teaching practice and make transparent my reflection on practice so that student teachers might become effective and reflective educators themselves. However, reflective practice in a project such as this requires some deeper digging and for this I take up some tools. These include notes of observation, reflective journal, images and video taken during the workshops. I also draw on participants’ written feedback and conversations with student teachers, lecturers, the Fusion Theatre team members and critical friends, in recorded interviews and in less formal discussions. The other tools I take up are philosophical ones as I bring post-structuralist theory together with practice to see what new understandings can be reached. All that I discover in this dialogic process is folded back into my practice as part of the next layer, the action research process that seeks to draw upon this reflection to improve on practice.
**Participatory Action Research**

In my teaching practice I am committed to what Freire calls ‘co-intentional education’ whereby ‘Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge’ (1970/2011, p.69). The participatory action research approach takes up this notion of co-intentionality. It opens what Habermas calls a ‘communicative space’ (Kemmis 2006, p.104) by creating ‘circumstances in which all those involved in and affected by the processes of research and action (all those involved in thought and action as well as theory and practice) about the topic have a right to speak and act in transforming things for the better’ (Kemmis & McTaggart 2008, p.579). For the university lecturers it is an opportunity for interdisciplinary dialogues as they work with colleagues from different disciplines to design and implement pedagogy that makes a difference. For the student teachers this is an opening not just to evaluate but to contribute to an ongoing discussion about the learning experiences provided for them in their course. For the people with disabilities it is a chance to have a voice and provide valuable personal experience in the conversation about effective inclusive education, a conversation that has unfortunately often gone on without them.

The methodology, as it has played out in this project, has convinced me of the power of participatory action research:

...to push us to challenge and unsettle existing structures of power and privilege, to provide opportunities for those least often heard to share their knowledge and wisdom, and for people to work together to bring about positive social change and to create more just and equitable political and social systems. (Brydon-Miller, Kral, Maguire, Nofife & Sabhlok 2011, p.396)

**Arts-based Inquiry**

Within this democratic space, the drama activities offer an additional dimension to the research. It is this layer of arts-based methodology that has proved most enlightening. I have discovered through the process that the drama strategies in the workshop are a kind of liminal space that shimmers at the borders of art, pedagogy and inquiry. I recognise the drama strategies as critical in illuminating spaces in which we can consider inclusive education beyond set texts and privileged assumptions. The drama activities offer
aesthetic and affective experiences that can disrupt previously fixed ideas and because they are communal they can generate reflective discussion. An arts-based approach to inquiry allows us to use the body as a tool for gathering and exploring meaning in experience (Finley 2011, p.444) and to draw upon the imagination in order to consider other ways of thinking and acting towards the ideal of better inclusive education. The drama activities provide an experimental mode of inquiry allowing for the enactment of and reflection on different realities and seeking to further the participants’ individual and collective understanding of how teachers might learn to teach in inclusive classrooms. They are in themselves a highly practical and inclusive methodology. As Finley (2011) suggests, ‘From within the openings that are created by arts research, people – just ordinary people, you and me, researchers as participants as audiences – can implement new visions of dignity, care, democracy, and other post-colonial ways of being in the world’ (p.443).

The structure of the thesis
In chapter two I provide a summary of the literature I have reviewed in the area of preparing teachers to teach inclusively. I came to this project with a primary focus on drama in education and applied theatre rather than experience of research in the area of inclusive education and so this has for me been an important surveying of what I have found to be a vast new territory. In this chapter I describe some of the main aims and challenges in preparing teachers for inclusive classrooms, some of the models of practice that have brought varying degrees of success and identify the areas that appear to be of greatest need. I focus my attention on approaches that involve arts-based and aesthetic experiences akin to the drama experiences of the Teaching for Diversity workshop as well as practices that privilege the voices of people with disabilities that seem to offer some insights and parallels to this project.

I return to my familiar territory of drama education in chapter three and survey this literature as well as the literature in the more recently defined areas of applied drama and applied theatre. The work of chapter three is also to consider literature in the areas of drama, theatre and disability with a particular interest in finding projects that privilege the voices of people with disabilities. I also consider the ways drama has been
applied to teaching and learning in adult professional development contexts and in teacher education in particular.

In chapter four I map some of the concepts that relate to how I work with others to create, research and understand the learning experience that is the Teaching for Diversity workshop. This chapter provides a focus on experiential, aesthetic and embodied learning as well as concepts of transformative learning and pedagogies of difference and discomfort. In this chapter I also consider theoretical frameworks for inclusive education and the construction of concepts of disability including the medical and social models of disability and consider what possible alternatives could prove more useful as models. I explain my understanding of these concepts with the help of vignettes and stories of my teaching and learning experiences that seem to shed some light on theories. In chapter four I also introduce the post-structuralist conceptual frameworks that I draw upon to create the conditions for transformation in my own learning. In particular I introduce a rationale for drawing upon concepts presented by Deleuze and Guattari in order to disrupt my thinking and enable me to consider elements of my project in new and different ways.

Chapter five is a description of my methodology best understood in light of the conceptual frameworks described in chapter four. I explain more fully the rationale behind my methodological choices. I describe the geography of the field, the participants and the methods and tools that I have selected to help me collect data from a variety of sources and in a variety of ways. I also explain my approach to analysis as I work through categories to themes and to theory.

In Chapter six I present a vignette of practice to trouble the idea of drama as ‘magic’ and introduce the concepts of affect and assemblage that help me make sense of what is occurring within the drama experience. In preparation for the main discussion I also provide a narrative of the drama workshop experience as a whole and offer a brief introduction to each of the Fusion Theatre members in the diversity workshop team.

Chapters seven, eight and nine provide the main discussion of the thesis. The discussion weaves together what can be visualised as four strands of a quadruple helix. One strand
is made up of the data including the description of moments, voices of participants and images that reveal something significant is occurring in the learning. A reflexive strand reveals what this means to me and what I have learned about my own practice and the architecture of the learning experience. A conceptual strand reveals the concepts that help explain what is going on in the moments of learning. A fourth strand privileges the perspectives of the Fusion Theatre actors and brings their voices to the fore.

A final chapter maps interconnected ideas and understandings that have emerged from the project. These are ideas that speak into spaces of pedagogy and research methodology in and around how to prepare pre-service teachers for inclusive classrooms and how people with disabilities can be central to both the pedagogical and research processes. Chapter ten does not mark a conclusion to the journey but rather outlines intensities of thought, ideas and theories to take forward into future practice – never finished, always becoming – a trajectory and an ongoing process set in motion from those moments of that corridor conversation.
CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature: Preparing teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms

One of the most important factors in advancing the movement towards inclusive education worldwide is the preparation of teachers in university-based courses (Forlin 2010). If schools are to be fully inclusive learning communities then they will need teachers who have the appropriate formal and practical knowledge and skills as well as positive beliefs, attitudes and dispositions towards inclusion. There has been a vast amount of research in the field of inclusive education and the preparation of teachers to teach inclusively and much of the literature begins with an acknowledgement of the needs and the challenges involved in doing this effectively.

The importance of attitude in inclusive education

Assessing attitudes is seen as a crucial area of research in the field of inclusive education because of the ways that teacher attitudes towards people with disabilities can impact upon the teacher’s ability to implement successful inclusive practice. There have been many studies that highlight the importance of teacher attitude as critical to successful inclusive education (Forlin, Fogarty & Carroll 1999; Tait & Purdie 2000; Marshall, Ralph & Palmer 2002; Campbell, Gilmore & Cuskelley 2003; Forlin 2006; van Kraayenoord 2007). When pre-service teachers become regular classroom teachers they become key players in the successful implementation of inclusive education and are therefore required to respond to new challenges and develop new skills and competencies. Much work done in schools around inclusive education has focused on an ‘adaptive approach’ (Westwood 1997, 2005; Victorian Department of Education & Training, 2003) where teachers, working collaboratively with other relevant professionals, modify the curriculum to suit the special educational needs of students. The emphasis therefore is on what students with disabilities can do, not on what they can’t. This however, presumes that teachers are able to engage with students with disabilities in ways that allow them to see the possibilities for learning rather than the disabilities of the student.
Negative teacher attitudes towards children with disabilities are likely to have a negative effect on the ability to successfully implement inclusive programs. Tait and Purdie (2000) take this further as they draw upon a model by Antonak and Livneh (1988) that describes the way that people with disabilities operate within three social circles; the inner circle of relatives, friends and peers; the central circle of professionals (including teachers), and the outer circle of the general public. Considering this model, Tait and Purdie (2000) explain that one important role of the teacher is to mediate between the child with a disability in the classroom and members of these other social circles. They argue that the attitude of teachers is even more important because of the complex relationship between attitudes and behaviours. They stress the interconnectedness when the attitudes and behaviours of the teacher can impact upon the attitude and behaviours of the child and attitudes and behaviours within the wider community.

For good reason there has been a considerable amount of research to identify and understand teacher attitudes towards inclusive education. Some studies have used scales to assess attitudes towards people with disabilities and inclusive education such as the Interactions with Disabled Persons Scale – IDP (Tait & Purdie 2000; Forlin, Loreman, Sharma & Earle 2009), the Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Scale – ATDP-O (Forlin, Fogarty & Carroll 1999) and the Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale – ATIES (Forlin et al 2009). Other studies have allowed teachers to construct their own responses rather than select from researcher constructed alternatives and have used interview, focus-group discussions, observation and narrative inquiry to assess attitudes (Angelides 2003; Marshall, Ralph & Palmer 2002; Wong, Pearson & Lo 2004; Bradshaw & Mundia 2005; Berry 2011). A study by Pearson (2009) used data collected by word association and analysed using activity theory to understand prospective teachers’ attitudes to and construction of special educational needs and/or disability. A study by Paugh and Dudley-Marling (2011) used systemic functional linguistics and critical discourse analysis to explore how teachers’ language revealed normative or deficit discourses that constrained their efforts to teach diverse learners.

An example of a study within an Australian context that involved the IDP (Interactions with Disabled Persons Scale) is one by Tait and Purdie (2000) that involved over 1600 pre-service teachers at one large university. The survey was completed by students in
the first week of their year-long diploma course and again at the end. Tait and Purdie critiqued the IDP as an instrument and although they found it wanting in some respects, it was, they believed, useful in determining desirable and undesirable emotions experienced by individuals in the interactions with people with disabilities. They found that vulnerability was the predominant emotion experienced and that there were minimal changes in the attitudes of pre-service teachers, reporting that ‘the one year general teacher training course undertaken by these students was, for all practical purposes, unsuccessful in inducing desirable attitude changes’ (p.36). They concluded that while more research was necessary to determine whether a longer course would be more successful in changing attitudes, it was perhaps more important to assess the desirability and means by which opportunities for contact between pre-service teachers and people with disabilities could be provided.

Another large study that involved pre-service teachers from Australia, Canada, Hong Kong and Singapore sought to quantify the impact of different demographic variables on changes in pre-service teachers’ attitudes, sentiments and concerns about inclusive education following a course focussed on teaching for diversity (Forlin, Loreman, Sharma & Earle 2009). This study found that younger pre-service teachers were more readily able to adopt a more positive attitude to inclusive education than older, more experienced and highly educated post-graduates. They also found that those who began the course with more positive attitudes and those who had previous contact with people with disabilities were likely to make the greatest gains. They emphasised the need for teacher educators to differentiate curricula to meet the dissimilar needs of students and concluded that affirmative and rewarding engagement with people with disabilities is the factor most likely to encourage inclusivity.

A question of belief: fostering a philosophy of inclusive education

Some studies have revealed that a teacher’s lack of commitment to the philosophy of inclusive education can be a primary barrier to successful inclusive practice (Marshall, Ralph & Palmer, 2002; Engelbrecht, Oswald, Swart & Eloff, 2003; Wong et al, 2004; Bradshaw & Mundia, 2005). Studies in Australia, Canada, UK and USA have found that the majority of teachers agree with the general concept of inclusive classrooms (Scruggs & Mastropieri 1996; Kim 2010). However, surveys of attitude towards
disability can tend to elicit responses that are biased towards socially or politically correct views (Campbell, Gilmore & Cuskelly 2003). Carrington (1999) suggests that a teacher’s educational platform exists at two levels; their espoused theory (what they say they assume, believe and intend) and their theory in use (the beliefs and intents inferred from their behaviour). The two do not always match and the educational context is a further complicating factor that may cause incongruence between espoused beliefs and practical application of these beliefs – they say one thing and do another. Indeed education systems can also have espoused beliefs about inclusion and so long as they say they are inclusive while not being fully inclusive, systems and the individuals that work in them will fail to recognise what needs to be done (Graham & Slee 2008).

A need to build genuine support for a philosophy of inclusion amongst pre-service and post service teachers has been particularly noted in studies within countries where inclusive education has been relatively recently introduced (Bradshaw & Mundi 2005; Lambe & Bones 2006; Angelides 2004, 2008; Symeonidou & Phtiaka 2009; Forlin, Cedilla, Romero-Contreras, Fletcher & Hernandez 2010; Ben-Yehuda, Leyser & Last 2010). In a study of pre-service teachers in Northern Ireland, Lambe and Bones (2006) noted that the pre-service teachers who had been educated in the country’s selective education system, with its focus on academic achievement, appeared to support the ideal of inclusive education and yet were more comfortable with the traditional systems that they had experienced as school students. Less than one fifth of the 108 student teachers surveyed favoured the removal of the selection procedure as a means of securing a more inclusive system and the majority of responses suggested that inclusive classrooms should only exist with provisos. A study of Hong Kong teachers also found that a philosophy of academic excellence at a systemic level was in conflict with a philosophy of equality of inclusion (Wong, Pearson & Lo 2004). This study highlights the ways that systems that emphasise academic excellence and grades and rank schools accordingly are antithetical to inclusive education.

Such systems present a conflict for teachers who may on one hand understand inclusion as a social justice issue and yet on the other hand want to be seen as being successful teachers according to the requirements of a system focussed on standards. Australian teachers subject to the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy
(NAPLAN) testing and the consequent publication of school results are also vulnerable to experiencing this tension between some kind of assumed academic excellence and equity.

In a discussion of attitudes and beliefs of teachers towards inclusive education in Israel, Ben-Yahuda et al (2010) also raise the issue of prior experience, or inexperience, and its influence on beliefs. They draw from Richardson (1996) who provides three categories of experience that influence the development of teachers’ beliefs about teaching; personal experience, experience with schooling and instruction and experience with formal knowledge. Richardson suggests that both personal experience and experience of schooling have strong influences on the beliefs of teachers before they begin their experience with formal knowledge in pre-service and in-service courses. Studies by Garmon (2005) and Moran (2009) also underscore the importance of students’ unique biographies and brought attitudes, beliefs, values, dispositions and experiences and how these act as filters through which pre-service teachers interpret their teacher education courses and raise the challenge of how teacher educators might confront these deeply held beliefs. These studies emphasise the issue that as education moves towards more fully inclusive settings, teacher educators are often up against pre-service teacher beliefs that have been formed as a result of socially pervasive views and lived experiences in less inclusive or successfully inclusive settings. They highlight the important challenge of teacher education to turn around such attitudes and beliefs and the need for teacher educators, in the words of Lambe and Bones (2006), to be ‘more pro-active in winning the hearts and minds of their students towards an approach to teaching in a setting that is different from the accepted norms of the past’ (p 525). Symeonidou and Phtiaka (2009) suggest a starting point for teacher educators could be taking into consideration the prior knowledge, beliefs and expectations of teachers when designing inclusive education courses.

The idea that teacher education can effectively promote a philosophy of inclusion presumes that the teacher educators who will teach the courses have positive attitudes toward inclusive education. While greater experience, awareness of and professional knowledge about inclusion is often expected of teacher educators, it is not always the case that they themselves hold these positive attitudes. If we take Richardson’s (1996)
view on the kinds of experience influencing beliefs then we could also consider that teacher educators’ personal experiences of school are often remote and from times when inclusive education was even less common. While good inclusive education practice is still emerging, educators are expected to provide the conditions for learning that they themselves may have never experienced (Carrington 1999). A study by Angelides (2003) in Cyprus concluded that within the Ministry of Education, people in high positions who are charged with implementing inclusive education often carry traditional ideas that pose a barrier to effective implementation of inclusive education. A significant challenge in the preparation of pre-service teachers for teaching inclusively is that teacher educators and experienced teachers supervising and mentoring student teachers in schools may themselves have limited experience and ambivalent attitudes towards inclusive education (Moran 2009; Ware 2008; Florian, Young & Rouse 2010; Lambe 2011). Student teachers with some preparation for inclusive education are likely to be at odds with or influenced by the prevailing ethos of the school or system in which they are working (Jordan, Schwartz & McGhie-Richmond 2009; Florian & Rouse 2009).

On the positive side, a subsequent study by Angelides (2008) found that student teachers on teaching practicum took leading roles in regard to promoting inclusive practices in schools and in small ways were able to influence their more experienced colleagues and change school culture to be more inclusive. It appears that the reasons for holding certain attitudes are complex and that there is room for attitude change at every level of professional development, from student teachers to lecturers, as well as possibilities for collaboration across these levels to allow this to happen. As a solution to this concern, McIntyre (2009) advocates ‘the kind of discourse that bridges the theory-practice gap, so that the innovations of inclusive pedagogy are developed collaboratively with teachers in schools and communicated to students qualifying to be teachers in rigorous, balanced, integrated and practical ways’ (p.607).

**Beyond a philosophy of inclusive education**

While much of the literature seems to agree that it is important that pre-service teachers embrace a philosophy of inclusive education, some argue this in itself is not enough to set teachers successfully along the path to inclusive teaching (Maher 2011; Dukes &
Lamar-Dukes 2009; Jordan et al 2009). A practical understanding of inclusive pedagogies is also required. Teaching practice most often occurs during the practicum experience over which university-based educators have little control. Jordan et al raise the challenge that teacher educators face ‘to ensure that pre-service teachers have practicum experiences in which there are opportunities to examine and foster their beliefs and learn desirable lessons about how to address the needs of diversity in the classroom’ (p.541).

**Practical concerns about teaching inclusively**

Even when teachers state that they agree with the general concept of inclusive education, studies have shown that concerns are raised for them in their practice of inclusion (Scruggs & Mastropieri 1996; Horne & Timmons 2009; Blecker & Boakes 2010). Research has shown the reasons for teachers’ reservations about inclusive education are wide-ranging. A synthesis of twenty-eight study reports collectively involving over 10,000 teachers undertaken by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) indicated that teachers’ concerns and perceived needs related to time, training, personnel, materials, class size and severity of disability. Other studies report that the concerns of teachers include anxieties about behaviour of students with disabilities, the amount of teacher time taken up by students with disabilities and the negative impact that this may have on other students in the class. Other reported concerns include insufficient planning time, large class sizes, the lack of support services and perhaps most often reported, the feelings of not being adequately prepared and not feeling competent to teach students with disabilities (Marshall et al 2002; Horne & Timmons 2009). More than merely ‘concerns’, these factors have led to considerable stress amongst some teachers who are including students with disabilities in regular classrooms with some studies identifying and highlighting the stressors for teachers in inclusive classrooms as well as the factors that may ameliorate them (Forlin 2001; Forlin, Hattie & Douglas 1996; Forlin 2005; Engelbrecht, Oswald, Swart and Eloff 2003).

‘I wasn’t trained to teach them’ seems to be a recurring expression of concern amongst teachers. While a key determinant of the success of inclusive education is largely to do with the attitudes and beliefs of teachers, studies indicate that teachers lament the lack of preparation provided in terms of information, strategies and skills. Sze (2009)
identifies the concept of the self-fulfilling prophesy explaining the ways that teacher perception can create social reality when teachers’ beliefs about students, and their concerns about teaching students with disabilities can transform their behaviours in ways that confirm the initial expectations. These practical concerns can erode a teacher’s philosophical ideals about inclusive education and potentially lead to the development of negative attitudes that are difficult to change (Jobling & Moni 2004).

Despite the frequently expressed concerns of teachers about the lack of practical skills and training, the fundamental importance of attitudes and beliefs seems to be paramount in the literature. Marshall et al (2002) suggest attitude must come first, holding the view that ‘if commitment exists then it will facilitate desire to acquire knowledge and skills, but that knowledge and skills are insufficient in isolation’ (p.213). Forlin (2006) explains it this way: ‘By encouraging pre-service teachers to identify their own beliefs, values and personal expectations it is possible to encourage them to develop the desire to establish inclusive schools and classrooms. If trained teachers have the will then they will seek out the competence’ (p.273).

**Disabling ableism**

Studies that focus on the importance of ‘attitude’ raise the imperative of pre-service teachers being given the opportunity and encouraged to reflect on their beliefs and attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities (Baglieri 2008; Lambe 2011). Reflection on attitudes and previously held beliefs is of central importance in studies by Ware (2006; 2008) and Thompson (2012). Ware (2006) reports on a disability studies in education course that encourages ‘unlearning ableism’. She argues that years of reductionist and positivist indoctrination have caused educators to lose sight of more diverse and culturally rich understandings of lived experiences of disability and pedagogies that disrupt, or at least trouble limited clinical views, are necessary.

Also in search of such pedagogies, Thompson (2012) developed a social-justice oriented pedagogy for pre-service teachers that was designed to disable ableism: ‘the tacit and almost complete privilege granted the body/mind/thought of those already deemed to be capable /competent /proficient, etc.’ (p.100). Thompson found that the pre-service teachers tended to readily identify gender, race and sexual orientations as
social constructions but interestingly, not disability. He found that for them disability in education was entrenched in the individualised medical model and this was particularly the case when they considered inclusive education beginning with a particular label or diagnosis such as ‘intellectual disability’. He argues that disability is not the most useful place to begin teaching about difference in teacher education and suggests that what is needed are pedagogies that are more about community and less about disability. Examples of such pedagogies and attempts at influencing attitudes of pre-service teachers are discussed in a subsequent sections of this chapter that focus on models of practice in preparing pre-service teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms.

**Preparing pre-service teachers for teaching for diversity and inclusive education**

While there has been a great deal of research to describe pre-service teachers’ attitudes and beliefs and the implications of these on teaching inclusively, these studies often include an appeal for research that moves beyond descriptions of attitudes to exploring the ways that attitudes might be modified (Bradshaw & Mundia 2005). According to Florian, Young and Rouse (2010) there has been insufficient research on the role and effects of different pedagogies and the actual content of programs that aim to prepare pre-service teachers for inclusive practice.

Many studies agree that one of the main issues in the successful implementation of inclusive education is in the quality of preparation of teachers in order to implement it, and yet research that has investigated teachers’ views has revealed that teachers feel under prepared. One study (Murphy 1996, cited by Tait and Purdie 2000) surveyed teachers in inclusive classrooms and found that only 22 per cent had received special training and that of these only half believed this training was of any use. In a more recent study of 571 Australian primary teachers, 89 per cent believed that their pre-service training to meet the needs of a child with a disability in their classroom was inadequate and 91 per cent believed their in-service training was also inadequate (Forlin 2005). Foreman (2005) reported that only between 29 and 39 per cent of Australian teachers reported they received in-service training on teaching students with disabilities.
This section aims to review the research on different approaches to pre-service teacher education for inclusive education.

**Information-focused courses**

There is a growing trend for researchers in inclusive education to recommend that teacher education courses adopt a permeated approach in which inclusive education is infused within a course and embedded across all units (Slee 2001, 2003; Lambe 2007; Forlin 2010; Gill & Chalmers 2007; Florian & Rouse 2009). However, many teacher education programs have opted to tack on one often mandatory stand-alone unit focused on inclusive education. Sometimes one such dedicated unit is a requirement of the professional authorities who regulate and provide accreditation for courses. Alternatively a single dedicated unit can be seen by some course designers as a way to easily and clearly satisfy such bodies that courses do actually incorporate studies in inclusive education. Often these courses have a ‘special education’ focus and are taught by specialists and therefore reinforce the idea that inclusion is something that can only be done by specialists. Forlin (2010) is one of many researchers who reject the add-on course as a solution saying that unless ‘the idea of inclusion is infused across all aspects of teacher education, it will remain aloof and disconnected and continue to be seen by teachers as something different, special and not part of normal classroom teaching’ (p.652).

Research shows that permeated or infused models may also have negative outcomes. Criticisms include lack of time dedicated to inclusive education in units, variations in individual teacher educator knowledge, experience of and commitment to inclusive education and their ability to effectively include inclusive education principles within their classes and the difficulty of monitoring provision across a course (O’Neill, Bourke & Kearney 2009).

Stand-alone information-focused courses persist and units involving lectures and tutorials designed specifically to prepare pre-service teachers for inclusive education are evaluated in the research. Some studies have suggested that one unit of work focused on teaching for diversity can make a difference in preparing teachers for inclusive classrooms (Buell, Hallam & Gamel-McCormick 1999; Forlin, Loreman, Sharma &
Earle 2009) while others show that one information-based unit proves insufficient and
does little to change attitudes (Tait & Purdie 2000). Discussions of many such courses
provide few details about the kinds of activities that are experienced by students and
when no examples are made to the contrary, I make the assumption that lecture, tutorial
and prescribed readings would be the standard modes of delivery. I discuss the research
around these more traditional and didactic teaching modes here. Studies that identify
alternative teaching and learning experiences are discussed later in this chapter.

There are few studies providing in-depth descriptions of the content of the courses for
inclusive education. This is noticed by Baglieri (2008) who also draws the conclusion
that for many courses the medical model would be the pervasive one. She argues that
information-focused courses that reflect a medical model of disability are less effective
in nurturing a value for inclusive education in pre-service teachers. By comparison
courses that use a social model and a critical perspective, from the point of view of
people with disabilities, encourage complex thinking and the development of
philosophy of inclusive education. She makes a case for the importance of this because
without ‘a strong belief in the purpose and importance of inclusion, few of our
educators might muster the conviction and imagination to fight for and practice
inclusive education in school climates that remain largely exclusive’ (p.589). Clearly
the content and perspective taken within a course is important regardless of how it is
delivered.

Florian et al (2010) report on curricular reform in a teacher education course adopting a
critical perspective that aimed to ensure that social and educational inclusion was
addressed within the core program. This was a large mixed methods study that in part
involved video and/or audio recording lectures and tutorial sessions and qualitatively
analysing this data into strands of theoretical and pedagogic codes. Amongst the
findings of the study was that lecturers spent around 45 per cent of lecture time talking
about theory and practice and around 30 per cent talking about strategies. They also
noted that personal stories were often told to illustrate points. While these researchers
stress the importance of offering teachers ‘strategies that show them how it is possible
for classroom teachers to support the learning of all students’ (p.719), there is no
illumination in this report about what the pre-service teachers were doing in these
classes apart from listening to the lecturers talk. The spotlight here is on the spoken content of lectures with no consideration of student activity or of modelling alternative strategies that might support learning amongst a diverse group of pre-service teachers. One interesting finding of the study is the way that involvement in the research process encouraged lecturers to reflect on the content of their lectures and tutorials in relation to inclusive practice, even, or perhaps especially, when they declined to participate. Upon reflection, some expressed concerns that they felt ill-equipped for the task.

Some of the criticism of the ways that teacher education courses prepare pre-service teachers for inclusive education relates to the use of text books. Text books are often seen as a convenient and easily accessed selection of the most important and up to date information on a topic for the purpose of study. Smith (2006) suggests that while some text books can be useful, others might serve only to reproduce current societal attitudes that relegate some students to the margins. Her study involving text book analyses showed some commonly used education texts having a deficit oriented rather than competence oriented view of students with disabilities. She stresses the need for text books to offer a competence oriented view that challenges pre-service teachers’ expectations of incompetence and helps them to have higher expectations. She raises the problem of the ‘missing students’, when some types of students are not acknowledged at all. For example, a text book might recognise students with physical disabilities but offer little or nothing on students with intellectual disabilities.

Following an analysis of presentations of inclusion in education text books, Rice (2005) reminds us that authors write texts from their own ideological position and teacher educators need to examine texts for these ideologies to recognise and perhaps challenge them and to look out for what is included and what is excluded. Arguing with the text, she suggests, can be an opportunity for teacher educators to demonstrate that mainstream views can be challenged. Both Smith (2006) and Rice (2005) conclude that multiple perspectives are required, particularly from the perspective of people with disabilities and their lived experience hence they claim that going beyond texts to talk and listen to people with different viewpoints is necessary for developing a critical consciousness. This research suggests that any course that relies heavily on text books or printed course materials can be limiting.
Casting a critical eye over teaching for inclusive education in universities, Slee (2001) laments that courses often involve the mere transmission of chunks of special education knowledge to student teachers. He explains that this only serves to allow the professions to maintain their authority while offering a token gesture toward preparing student teachers for different kinds of students in their classrooms. Providing information is a poor substitute for encouraging deep thinking and real learning, although it is possible that this kind of thinking can be encouraged in well designed traditional lecture and tutorial modes. Rather than providing information about the pathologies of students with disabilities, as if it was possible to provide them with all the information they will need to know, Slee suggests ‘teacher education needs to explore new forms of knowledge about identity and difference and to suggest new questions that invite students to consider the pathologies of schools that enable or disable students’ (p.174).

Inclusive education, Slee maintains, is not a technical problem, it is cultural politics. Moran (2009) emphasises the need to engage teachers in deeper thinking and provide opportunities for them to explore and link previous knowledge with new understandings.

It means teachers recapturing their status and dignity, as some of society’s leading intellectuals, and not being the mere instruments and deliverers of other people’s agendas. Those who focus only on teaching techniques and curriculum standards, and who do not also engage in the greater social and moral questions of their time, promote an impoverished view of teaching and teacher professionalism. (p.59)

**Inclusive pedagogies: teacher educators should practise what they preach**

In a study of the needs of pre-service teachers that also focused on their different backgrounds and different experiences, Forlin et al (2009) emphasise that a one size fits all approach is not possible. Although it seems self-evident in a discussion about inclusive education, these researchers find it necessary to stress the importance of differentiating curricula and different pedagogies to suit different kinds of learners within teacher education courses. Forlin (2010) again emphasises that didactic lecture style teaching does not help student teachers to experience the kinds of inclusive pedagogies that they are expected to use in their inclusive practice. Forlin explains that inclusive pedagogical approaches ‘must incorporate more inventive, reflective and critical perspectives that mirror the type of inclusive practices that are needed in schools’ (p.652). This idea of teacher educators practising what they preach applies to
using inclusive pedagogies as well as modelling collaborative professional practices (Nevin, Thousand & Villa 2009).

There are relatively few studies in the professional literature that are focused on innovative teaching approaches. In a study that involved reflection on teaching practice, Ashman (2010) challenged himself to teach by example in a teacher education course on inclusive education by adopting inclusive education principles in place of a traditional, prescriptive approach. He adopted approaches from Universal Design for Learning (Scott, McGuire & Shaw 2003, 2006) including, for example, offering choice and flexibility in delivery of curriculum, response to individual needs and the establishment of a community of learners. The following section takes a close up view of some alternative approaches to teaching and learning.

**Collaborative approaches to understanding inclusive education**

School-based collaboration is founded on the premise that optimal educational outcomes are achieved when there is shared ownership of the planning and implementation of educational programmes. Because each member of a collaborative team, whether parent or professional, is regarded as possessing knowledge essential to effective program planning, collaborative partnerships require equity, respect and mutual understanding. (Scorgie 2010, p.697)

Collaboration amongst all stakeholders is an important factor in inclusive education, as the above quote suggests, and this is echoed throughout the literature. The literature reveals examples of projects that help teachers to become effective collaborators, projects that help to prepare teachers for inclusive education through collaboration, and projects that aim to do both.

**Teachers helping teachers**

It is argued by Villa, Thousand and Chapple (1996) that the act of collaboration is the most important one that teachers will need in order to survive in a profession in which no one person can possibly meet the needs of all students. They note that pre-service teachers are not always provided with the necessary skills and dispositions to be effective collaborators in planning, teaching and evaluating because they may never experience adults modelling the act of professional collaboration across areas of expertise. A study by Blecker and Boakes (2010) suggests that professional
development in the area of collaboration for inclusive education is a continuing need for teachers. To fill this void and better prepare teachers for inclusive education, Villa et al argue for collaborations between local education agencies, school districts, and universities.

In their review of the literature, Nevin, Thousand and Villa (2009) find a lack of evidence of a strong and positive collaborative ethic amongst teacher educators in higher education in general. McIntyre (2006) also calls for teacher educators to develop partnerships and work in more open and exploratory ways. Kozleski and Waitoller (2010) argue for greater collaboration between general and special educators, and schools and universities, in an effort to better prepare pre-service teachers to work in multidisciplinary teams. To this end they developed a model of teacher learning which is grounded in an apprenticeship approach that develops practical knowledge and a critical understanding of practices that result in marginalisation in more powerful ways than regular coursework and classes. Studies by Ford, Pugach and Otis-Wilborn (2001) and Gill and Chalmers (2007) describe productive collaboration initiatives that focused the combined efforts of teacher educators, teachers and pre-service teachers to develop strategies and understandings for inclusive education. A project involving collaboration between general and special education colleagues in a university is one that resulted in the development of a lesson-planning template to assist pre-service teachers in learning skills for planning for inclusive teaching (Causton-Theoharis, Theoharis & Trezek 2008; Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis 2011).

In a study by Berry (2011) experienced teachers, including both veteran and early career teachers and general and special education teachers, were interviewed and asked to provide advice for beginning teachers about what they need to think, know and do to be effective teachers in inclusive classrooms. Many of these teachers regretted a lack of effective preparation in their own pre-service education and the act of reflecting on what they had learned on the job, provided a valuable lens through which to view the needs of teachers entering the profession. Berry recommends developing communities of practice in which teachers are helping teachers because of the benefits it offers to all participants.
Another example of collaborative learning is reported by Moni (2006) who developed a collaborative assessment task between student teachers in a secondary English curriculum subject and students in a special needs course. Her aim was to simultaneously develop their knowledge and understanding of learners with special needs and effective planning skills. Like Villa et al, she found that the beginning teachers lacked skills for collaborative working and this needed to be scaffolded for them. Students reported enhanced understandings about planning for inclusive teaching and although the process of collaboration was not easy for many, this only highlighted the idea that more work in the area of collaboration would be valuable.

Learning about the parent-teacher partnership

An important collaboration for inclusive education is the parent teacher partnership. Research has considered how teachers might be better prepared to consider the parent view and work with families with respect and mutual understanding.

A study by Alonzo, Bushey, Gardner, Hasazi, Johnstone and Miller (2006) describes the effects of a twenty-five hour internship with families who have a child with a disability. Doctoral students in educational leadership spent time visiting a family in their home and community over one year. They reported increased understandings about the child as an individual and their talents, feelings and aspirations; increased understandings about how families can be supported; and the importance of including families in the decision-making process. This kind of awareness is important for future school leaders and also for teachers. Providing this kind of immersion experience for large groups of pre-service teachers in courses with time-restrictions would be impractical.

One practical idea in response to this need is reported by Scorgie (2010) in a project that involved pre-service teachers in a ‘Family Collaboration Portfolio’ which was an interactive simulation exercise that involved them becoming the parent of a virtual child with a disability. The folio allowed them to critically examine their assumptions of parenting a child with a disability and grasp a parent perspective. Scorgie used her research experience with parents to develop case studies of virtual children, creating one unique child for each pre-service teacher. For each virtual child there were 16 different scenarios from birth to adolescence. Activities for students involved readings, on-line
study, simulations and role play. Students maintained a journal of their thoughts on the unfolding of dilemmas such as the birth of the child, diagnosis of disability in their child, accessing services and dealing with public perceptions of disability. A final activity involved writing a letter as if to the virtual child about what they had learned through the exercise. Students claimed that involvement in the virtual parenting exercise heightened their understanding, respect for parents and sensitivity to the parent perspective. Some were surprised to find that they had become the kinds of parents they hoped to avoid encountering as teachers. As one student explained ‘I am keenly aware of what it feels like to be on the “other” side of the table’ (p.705).

**Learning about inclusive education through personal engagement**

It is the process of positive and rewarding personal engagement that is most likely to continue the furthearance of inclusivity. As teachers, parents and community members experience the success of others and the affirmative rewards for all when involved in establishing and living in inclusive communities, it is projected that such a movement will be more fully and openly embraced by the wider community and society at large. (Forlin 2006, p.274.)

Several studies have investigated ways of engaging pre-service teachers within university courses in learning experiences that will challenge the attitudes and beliefs that stand in the way of them being able to effectively implement inclusive programs. These range from experiential learning including practical teaching, through contact with people with disabilities, to vicarious experience of disability through film, literature and visual art.

Pernice and Lys (1999) investigated a range of learning experiences including traditional methods, contact with people with disabilities and the use of role play and simulation, for example, students experiencing what it is like to get around in a wheelchair. While they found that these experiences helped provide insights, they concluded that contact with people with disabilities was the crucial variable to enhance attitudes. Slee (2011) critiques simple simulation experiences suggesting that ‘the vicarious discomfort of bumping into a wall or finding one’s progress impeded by a narrow doorway or a set of steps means very little if it is not connected to analyses of the structural violence of disablism and the way in which particular kinds of knowledge or systems of rationality establish injustice as the natural order’ (p.118).
Several studies have shown that pre-service teachers who have had prior contact with people with disabilities hold positive attitudes and feel more comfortable towards teaching students with disabilities (Tait & Purdie 2000; Forlin et al 2009; Forlin et al 2010). However, studies have found that few if any pre-service teachers had any prior experience of people with disabilities and have concluded that teacher education programs need to provide the students with greater exposure to individuals with disability in order to challenge pre-service teachers’ views on learners with disability (Richards & Clough 2004; Lancaster & Bain 2007).

While there is a growing body of evidence that direct contact and positive personal engagement with people with disabilities is crucial to developing awareness and positive attitudes, it is widely recognised that putting this into practice within the time and resource constraints of university courses is a challenge. There are a range of models reflected in the research where pre-service teachers are provided with opportunities to engage with people with disabilities.

**Learning through teaching practice**

Studies have concluded that early and continuous exposure to students with disabilities in inclusive settings is advantageous for pre-service teachers (Avranidis, Bayliss & Burden 2000; Angelides 2004). Although all pre-service teachers experience practicum, not all practicum experiences provide positive and instructive experiences of inclusive education. Rademacher, Wilhelm, Hildreth, Bridges and Cowart (1998) found that the differences between those pre-service teachers with field-based experience and those without were minor. For some pre-service teachers negative attitudes were compounded when they participated in field-based experiences while feeling under-prepared. These researchers therefore question the value of setting up such field-based programs given the effort required to do so.

Some studies reveal what happens when pre-service teachers are given the chance to try out their skills and understandings in inclusive education by undertaking observations or teaching practice in inclusive settings, special developmental schools or adult education programs (Ford, Pugach & Otis-Wilborn 2001; Jobling & Moni 2004). An example of learning through practice was described by Jobling and Moni (2004) who investigated
what happened when pre-service teachers observed and then undertook a micro-
teaching project with students from their Latch-On program. This was a post-secondary
literacy program for young adults with intellectual disabilities which operated within
their university’s School of Education. In small groups the student teachers planned,
implemented and evaluated a sequence of lessons for the Latch-On students. All of the
pre-service teachers were positive about the benefits gained from being involved in the
project and felt they developed knowledge and understanding, and increased desire, to
work with students with special needs in regular classrooms.

A study by Lancaster and Bain (2007) investigated three different approaches to prepare
pre-service teachers for inclusive education with a view to identifying how each brought
about a change in attitudes and a heightened sense of self-efficacy. They found that
working one to one in a mentoring relationship with a student who had a learning
disability did not increase pre-service teachers’ sense of confidence. Those pre-service
teachers who completed a full 13 week university based program with no applied
experience reported the greatest change in levels of self efficacy. This was matched by
those pre-service teachers who completed a combined program of core lectures, tutorial
experiences and support while working in inclusive classrooms, either with individual
or small groups of students with learning disabilities. Thus, the research suggests that
not all experiential learning is productive. Questions arise about what kinds of
engagement enable pre-service teachers to develop greater awareness of the needs, as
well as sounder knowledge of skills to teach students with disabilities. As Lancaster and
Bain note, ‘What is less clear from the findings is the specific influence of the applied
learning experience on self-efficacy. As with studies of attitude, it cannot be assumed
that a direct experience with persons who have special educational needs is going to be

**Sharing equal power relationships with people with disabilities**

There are some very compelling studies that have involved placing pre-service teachers
in contact with similar or same-age peers with disabilities or in relationships with young
people with disabilities when the pre-service teacher is not in the teacher role. Relieved
of the responsibility of being ‘teacher’, they are able to engage in a different way.
Smith (2003) investigated a service learning project in which university students were paired with young people with disabilities who shared similar interests. They met for two hours each week over a semester to interact in activities that they negotiated together. The nature of the relationship was deliberately not defined. They were told they would be helping their partner to learn about life as an undergraduate student and their partners would be helping them to learn about disability-related issues. The data, collected through interviews, journals and observations, revealed that university students’ initial anxieties soon diminished and their thinking about disability-related issues was transformed. They showed a growing awareness of the implications of disability labels and a deeper understanding of social justice issues related to disability. Although disappointingly the study lacks mention of the views on the experience of the young people with disabilities, the voices of the university students are well represented and their comments indicate that they valued the experience highly:

> It’s one thing... to read it in a book, but it’s another thing to actually sit down and talk to someone that has these characteristics that you’re reading about... even if I only met Sam once, I guarantee that I would remember so much more, just because there are so many senses that are touched... I consider that way more valuable than any of the classes I’ve taken. (p.88)

Brownlee and Carrington (2000) note that ‘structured experiences (rather than unstructured) with people with disabilities had a positive impact on breaking down negative attitudes. When a person with a disability is similar in terms of age and status, and behaves in a non-stereotypical manner, then stereotypical beliefs and attitudes are more likely to change as a result of such structured interactions’ (p.100). They report on a project in which education students voluntarily interacted with a teaching assistant whom they refer to as ‘Sarah’. As well as being teacher assistant, Sarah was a student in the Bachelor of Education and had experience as a disability awareness consultant. As a person with cerebral palsy, she also had experience of being a student in both segregated and inclusive educational settings. Sarah presented lectures based on her experiences and participated in class activities and discussions. The study reported that this contact with Sarah provided the other students with knowledge about people with disabilities in general, increased comfort levels, and allowed them to look beyond the disability to the person. As noted by the researchers themselves, a limitation of this
study was that it failed to seek and report the views of Sarah and her perspective on the experience as a person with a disability.

**Valuing the voice of people with disabilities**

The literature reveals a few examples of practice in which the voice of people with disabilities is central. Clandinin and Raymond (2006) discuss the use of narrative enquiry to provide a public voice for students with disabilities whose education stories have gone untold. Goodley and Clough (2004) used a participatory narrative approach engaging 15 to 17 year olds as honorary research fellows. These young people had been excluded from school and the research aimed to understand what they considered to be good and bad professionals ranging from teachers to youth workers. Diaz-Greenberg, Thousand, Cardelle-Elawar and Nevin (2000) undertook dialogic interviews with adults with disabilities to better understand their ‘struggles’ in attaining their educational goals and inform the development of teaching and learning strategies that may help to respect and facilitate the struggle. Snelgrove (2005) developed a methodology of inclusion and pedagogy for research participation to position children with significant intellectual disabilities in a school setting as participants rather than subjects and as active agents in the inclusion debate.

The voice of a young person with a disability is featured in an essay by Biklen and Burke (2006) who present their work in the education-as-dialogue tradition. Biklen is a university educator and his co-author, Burke, is a secondary school student with autism who types to communicate. This collaborative process allowed the voice of the young learner with a disability to be central. The dialogue generated principles for inclusive schooling and in particular the presumption of competence. If readings of this kind are provided to pre-service teachers they can gain insights and emerging principles directly from students with disabilities.

Some other models turn the tables and invite people with disabilities to speak to pre-service teachers as guest speakers in lectures or tutorials (Mullen 2001; Van Laarhoven, Munk, Lynch, Bosma and Rouse 2007). One study by Mullen (2001) involves ‘Lisa’, a student disabilities specialist in a university and a ‘congenital amputee’ having been born with missing portions of her upper and lower limbs. Unlike
previously mentioned studies, Lisa is a respondent in the research with educative stories to tell. Mullin at first interviewed Lisa and shared highlights of her story with her pre-service teacher class. Lisa visited the class to recount her stories in person. Data collected from surveys and analysis of students’ reflective essays indicated that the pre-service teachers had gained new and significant perspectives from Lisa who they considered to be ‘well adjusted, confident, direct, resilient, delightful and independent’ (p.55). They gained insights into ideological, pragmatic and legal expectations of them as teachers. They highlighted the value of the ‘staged’ encounter and the opportunity to meet face to face.

In an example of a collaborative project reported by Brandon and Charlton (2011), the Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training at Northumbria University has developed a partnership that brings together teacher educators, teachers, trainers, researchers and learners as an inclusive teaching and learning community of practice involving local providers working in higher education, further education, adult and community learning, work-based learning, offender learning, specialist colleges and voluntary sector organisations. Of particular interest to my study is the involvement of the Lawnmowers, a theatre company described as being for people with learning difficulties. Members of the theatre company presented a drama performance on the topic of direct payments for disabled people. This was followed by a number of scenarios being acted out with audience members invited to join in the performance in an attempt to resolve an impasse between characters. Brandon and Charlton describe the role taken by the Lawnmowers as being an important one because it offers an example of ‘a group of learning-disabled actors who teach, train and educate a diverse range of disabled and non-disabled professionals and lay people. These very actions reverse the traditional positioning of people with LDD in education and encourage the audience to rethink their own and others’ status and roles’ (p.176).

Learning from those we label: in literature, film and visual art
In a university course called ‘Working with Diversity and Difference’, Thompson (2012) aimed to create a social justice-oriented and enabling pedagogy. He included a component entitled ‘Learning from Those We Label’. Students were asked to access texts, websites, videos, blogs and interviews that were written, created or constructed by
people in one chosen area of exceptionality. They were then asked to reflect on how this representation might influence either their practice or their concepts of dis/ability. However, in one of the assignment tasks, the Inclusive Teaching File, Thompson found despite a focus on learning from those we label, there was little evidence of students’ abilities to link ideas to concrete practices. One student described her feeling of conflicted hope knowing that she thought differently about disability but was unsure of how this would change her practice. Thompson attributes this gulf in part to the pervasive medical/individualised language of disability that is the language most readily available to us in schools and universities and the fact that far more research and information on inclusive interventions is still informed by individualised perspectives than by the alternatives.

While not specifically focussed on pre-service teacher education, Biklen (2000) draws upon critical disability narratives, works such as autobiographies and school-aged students’ commentaries to explore how discussions of school inclusion might be expanded to reflect disability voices. He argues that principles for inclusive action can be derived from such narratives. By contrasting representations of disability in popular culture and the lived experiences of people with disabilities he highlights the importance of taking a critical view, because not all narratives are useful or written from a non-dominant stance. His research focuses on four themes: resisting a static understanding of disability; creating and finding contexts for experiencing competence; resistance to normative narratives; and honouring the experience of disability. Through engaging with critical disability narratives, teachers are able to gain insights from students with disabilities who may have already developed their own strategies for engaging with the world. Accepting such a perspective, Biklen suggests, ‘recognizes that students with disabilities, as other students, can be leaders in their own education’ (p.352).

An alternative way of reading the writings of people with disabilities is offered by Mercieca (2011). He describes his own encounter with poems written by women with disabilities in an anthology called ‘Mustn’t Grumble’ (Keith 1994). He draws upon a Deleuzian notion of connections rather than interpretation, that which is ‘sensed’ before recognition or meaning is discerned. Mercieca invites us to read these writings of
disabled people using Deleuze’s concepts of difference and repetition; as ‘difference-in-itself’ rather than ‘difference-from-same’ (p.7). He explains a ‘difference-from-same’ view involves considering what is expected in order to understand or interpret, whereas adopting a ‘difference-in-itself’ view can serve to question and shake our safe boundaries. This kind of fresh view, he suggests, surprises us and opens us up to possibilities, and shapes an important attitude for teaching inclusively.

Ways that the imagination can be aroused to seeing new possibilities for inclusive education are also considered by Ware (2006, 2008). She draws on Greene’s project that urges educators to engage the ‘passion for seeing things close up and large... [as] this passion is the doorway for imagination; here is the possibility of looking at things as if they could be otherwise’ (Greene 1995 quoted in Ware 2008, p.564). Ware’s focus is on ways of releasing the imagination through the visual arts. She draws on the works of Riva Lehrer, a renowned visual artist who was born with spina bifida, and in particular her art work ‘Circle Stories’, a series of her paintings that are portraits of disability rights activists with disabilities. Ware describes a class activity for pre-service educators called ‘You be the curator!’ In groups the students were asked to curate their own exhibition using a selection of prints of Lehrer’s art works provided in packages. Through the process of selecting, reviewing and writing titles and staging (presenting to peers) their exhibition, conversations were able to be had about the sense they made of disability at this stage of their development as teachers. What was revealed was ‘how mindlessly they “read” disability as tragedy, sadness and anger’ (p.578) and the importance of confronting unexamined attitudes, assumptions and narrow constructions of disability.

**Conclusion**

My review of the literature in the area of preparing teachers for inclusive education has revealed a great deal of discussion about what is needed and a general consensus that much more research needs to be done to ensure positive developments in this area. There appears to be a strong divide in the literature between courses adopting a stand-alone unit in inclusive education and those adopting a more permeated approach. In either approach, when collaborations have been reported between students, academics,
teachers, other professionals, people with disabilities and families, these have been seen to be highly productive.

Many studies have focussed on the importance of teacher attitude for effective inclusive teaching. Although there are fewer of them, the studies that report on pedagogies that aim to transform unhelpful attitudes and foster positive attitudes are of interest to me in my study. It is to this small but important body of literature that this project will contribute.

A relatively small amount of literature is focused on inclusive pedagogies and the kinds of experiences that promote reflective dialogue. This is an under researched area (Florian 2010) and several authors have called for teacher educators to model and research the kinds of inclusive pedagogies that they would hope their students would engage with as teachers (Nevin et al 2009; Forlin 2010; Ashman 2010). While there are studies of models that involve contact with people with disabilities, models in which people with disabilities are positioned as the experts and models that make mention of some limited use of drama in the form of role plays, the drama workshop at the centre of this study offers a different kind of pedagogical approach to any reported in the literature under review. This is a pedagogy that provides an aesthetic and embodied experience through drama that involves pre-service teachers, lecturers and people with disabilities working creatively together towards shared understanding. It is not the same as, but shares something in common with the kinds of aesthetic learning reported to occur in projects that bring teachers in contact with disability through literature, film and visual art (Biklen 2000; Roman 2009; Mercieca 2011; Ware 2006, 2008).

Although it is reported, rather than researched, the contribution of a theatre performance and forum theatre session by the Lawnmowers at Northumbria University provides an example of a group of people with disabilities using their expertise in both theatre and disability to educate professionals (Brandon & Charlton 2011). The Lawnmowers session was not designed for pre-service teachers or part of a university course and was reported as an example of a productive partnership rather than the focus of the research. However, it flags the kind of partnership and approach that warrants more attention and the kind of approach that this project delves into more deeply.
There are several studies that conclude that contact with people with disabilities is a critical factor in helping to ensure the kinds of teacher attitudes that lead to successful inclusive education. This study is concerned with a different kind of contact to examples found in the research to date. In this project, not only are the student teachers brought into contact with people with disabilities, but they experience them positioned as experts. They work with them in the drama workshop in ways that involve physical activity, discussion and co-operation in creative problem-solving tasks. They have an opportunity to see them as competent adults able to make a contribution to society, with relevant stories to tell about their experiences of education and the ability to take leadership in a drama workshop.

There is a strong theme emerging from the literature. This is that the voices of people with disabilities should be more central in the inclusive education project. ‘Nothing about us without us’ is a guiding statement proclaimed by the United Nations in 2005 when addressing the desires of those directly concerned with disability issues. I am surprised that so many of the projects reported in the literature and reviewed for this chapter fail to include the perspectives and voices of people with disabilities. A few studies reviewed here provide examples of people with disabilities talking about what helps them learn. Fewer studies actually embrace people with disabilities in the research projects as participants and co-researchers. A distinguishing element of this project is that it provides a voice for people with disabilities within the education of teachers. The workshops go further than this by positioning people with disabilities as knower, leader and expert in the discussion on inclusive education. The participatory research methodology also positions the people with disabilities as co-researchers. Slee (2011) advocates for more inclusive research towards more inclusive education and refers to academic and disability rights activist Mike Oliver, who advises people with disabilities ‘not to partake in research that does not fully involve them from the outset; there should be no participation without representation’ (p.82). This project contributes to what is hopefully a growing body of research that explores methodologies that have people with disabilities at the centre.
CHAPTER THREE

Review of Literature: Drama, Theatre and Education

Introduction

Both drama and theatre are important in this study. Throughout the short history of theorising drama in education some educators and theorists have been at pains to point out the differences between drama and theatre (Slade 1954; Way 1967) as two distinct forms and to position them at extreme ends of a continuum. Just as many have pointed out that they are not so distinct. According to McCaslin (2005) drama and theatre share the same three objectives: both ‘offer an aesthetic encounter, an educational experience, and a social opportunity unique among the arts’ (p.19). Educational drama is a form of theatre in its own right, a theatre without walls, according to Neelands (2010a) and a complementary but different plane of aesthetic experience (O’Connor 2010).

Along with Way (1967), I recognise that theatre is largely to do with communication to an audience while drama has more to do with the experience of participants irrespective of audience (although they are at times the audience). However, I regard the arts of drama and theatre as being mutually inclusive. As Morgan and Saxton (1987) point out:

If drama is about meaning, it is the art form of theatre which encompasses and contains that meaning. If theatre is about expression, then it is the dramatic exploration of the meaning which fuels that expression. (p.1)

This study is concerned with the nexus between adults and learning and between drama and theatre in two spheres. The first is the sphere of the drama and theatre experiences of the people with disabilities within the activity of Fusion Theatre Company. This includes their experience as members of an ensemble and the ways the experience contributes to their ability to lead the workshops, to express themselves and communicate their ideas to a wider audience. The second sphere is that of the space of the drama workshop in which pre-service teachers come together with people with disabilities. Within this sphere drama is pedagogy.

These spheres reflect the two linked spheres that I operate within in my professional work as a drama educator. Firstly, that part of my work as a drama educator that brings
me in touch with the art form of drama and theatre and casts me in the occasional roles of theatre maker, performer, playwright, director, audience member, theatre aficionado (one who has an interest, seeks opportunities to see and learn about drama and theatre) and drama and theatre teacher (one who teaches about drama and theatre). The second sphere is that of my professional work as an educator, who understands and seeks to explore the potential of the art forms of drama and theatre for teaching and learning in a broad range of contexts. This chapter surveys the literature in the areas of drama in education and the literature in the more recently defined areas of applied drama and/or applied theatre. It also considers more specifically, the literature in the areas of drama, theatre and disability and drama and theatre applied to the professional development of adults and in teacher education in particular.

**Drama and learning**

Drama in education is not new in this country. Aboriginal Australians have been using performance, dance, song and drama to educate, to pass on culture and tell stories for more than 40,000 years (Natjul Indigenous Performing Arts 2012). Evidence of performance rituals and celebrations using song, dance and re-enactment has been traced to the earliest times in civilisations around the world. These dramatic traditions held the same important purpose as they do today, to ‘spark the imagination, provoke thought, inform, challenge, persuade and educate’ (Poston-Anderson 2008, p.6). While much of the detail is lost, the stories of this early drama have in many places been carved in stone and the rocky remnants of the community spaces built for these enactments remain today.

Discussions of the origins in the Western world often locate the beginnings of drama in education in the plays and performances of ancient Greece and the mystery and morality plays of medieval times (Taylor 2000c). O’Toole (2009) uncovers and describes drama and learning in these times as well as significant examples of drama and theatre in British and European schools in the 15th and 16th centuries. The more modern and continuous written history of drama within the curriculum seems to begin in the middle of the nineteenth century (Courtney 1974; Bolton 1984a). A wave of more progressive educational thinking emerging in the U.K. saw drama swept up by the New Education movement that began in the 1870s. New Education was a reaction against knowledge as
facts, rote learning, and the glorification of the three Rs. Drama in education suited the movement’s ideals of ‘child-centredness’, ‘self-expression’, ‘learning by doing’ and ‘activity method’ (Bolton 1984a, p.7). At around the same time the educational ideas of Dewey (1859-1952), describing the importance of art and experience, added strength to the argument for drama in education.

Ideas about drama that were revolutionary for their time included Harriet Finlay-Johnson’s 1912 book ‘The Dramatic Method of Teaching’ that described the ways that children learn through active and experiential ways through play and drama and in doing so re-defined the student-teacher relationship (Nicholson 2011). At around the same time Henry Caldwell Cook’s approach, ‘The Play Way’ (1917), promoted an active pedagogy that included ideas such as students acting out Shakespearean texts rather than reading them which at the time was noted as an innovation in the classroom. A few years later on the other side of the Atlantic, Winifred Ward through her book ‘Creative Dramatics’ (1930) was promoting drama as a way for the child to develop personal and professional skills such as communication, co-operation, concentration and tolerance that were deemed important qualities by society of the time (Taylor 2000c). The most commonly told history of drama in education is a more recent one set in an optimistic post-World War II Britain when the work of Peter Slade and his book ‘Child Drama’ (1954) emerged heralding more progressive educational times. Slade argued that children had their own particular kind of drama through which they developed personally and the teacher’s role was to provide the conditions to allow this to happen freely, without interfering; perhaps only at times offering some gentle guidance. Brian Way followed with Development through Drama (1967) in which he claimed the centre of the curriculum as the place for drama because of its ability to promote learning in all areas of the curriculum and to develop individuals. Arguably, the most influential figure of all has been Dorothy Heathcote whose work gained momentum in the 1970s and began to have a profound influence on understandings and practices in drama for learning. Heathcote modelled her style of drama for learning through her teaching of teachers and in film, particularly ‘Three Looms Waiting’ (1970). Her written works and detailed writings of others about her (for example Wagner 1979; Bolton 1998; 2002; Johnson & O’Neill 1984), have contributed many strategies to drama in education including the now ubiquitous drama strategies of teacher-in-role and mantle of the
expert (Heathcote and Bolton 1995). Her contributions have inspired the kind of drama for learning that has come to be known as ‘process drama’ (O’Neill 1995), which in turn, has inspired many of the strategies used in the drama workshop at the centre of this study. Many of the practices Heathcote embodied were extended and theorised in ‘Towards a Theory of Drama in Education’ by Gavin Bolton (1979). These practitioners and theorists have come under fire from proponents of alternative views of drama education such as Hornbrook (1989) who favoured teaching drama as cultural heritage. These were the figures that loomed large in my own preparation as a teacher of drama in the 1980s. Many others since then have developed and extended these emerging understandings of drama in education. The literature on drama for learning has grown exponentially with numerous books and journals devoted specifically to drama in education, applied drama and applied theatre. These have emanated from an increasingly wide range of countries and cultural perspectives with Australia making a significant contribution to the field over the last thirty years. Drawing from a range of this literature, this section considers the contribution to pedagogical theory made by drama. It is on such existing theories that new theory must build.

### Drama is an art

Drama is an art form highly accessible to young people. (Drama Australia, 2007)

Indeed, it is the artform which powers the process. (Taylor 2000c, p.98)

Drama is a strand of the arts and the arts are central to human development and important as a means of expression and communication. There is a good deal of literature that describes the strong spontaneous desire of individuals to create works of art in order to understand and express something that may not be able to be expressed otherwise (Dewey 1934; Langer 1953; Slade 1954; Way 1967; Gardner 1973; Courtney 1980, 1982; Best 1985). There is also according to Neelands (2010b, p.123), a human desire to act when people seek to enrich their sense of ‘self’ and ‘other’ through playing roles and taking on characters.

I place this discussion of drama as art up front and central to stress the importance of the artistic elements of the practice. There is a danger that the role of drama and theatre in education can be seen as utilitarian; as methods more than arts. If drama is powerful
pedagogy then it is because of the artistic elements and paying careful attention to the elements of the art form ‘produces not only better art, but better learning’ (O’Toole & Lepp, 2000, p.16). Bowell and Heap (2010) draw attention to a tendency for drama in education to be referred to by some practitioners in euphemisms such as ‘imaginative enquiry’, ‘experiential learning’ and ‘interaction development processes’. These terms, they assume, are used to ‘lend an air of legitimacy and ‘seriousness’ to the field’ (p.582). Each of these terms can stand on its own and does not equal drama. Bowell and Heap urge practitioners to stop treating drama as a dirty word and embrace drama as an art, first and foremost as they apply drama within educational settings. Such recognition they suggest ‘leads to the acceptance that it is an arts process and that making the drama as good as possible in its own artistic terms is the means by which the learning accruing from the experience will be of the highest level’ (p.586). Rather than acquiesce to an audience that does not understand the art of drama as pedagogy, they invite readers to ‘relish the struggle to articulate the complex aesthetic, creative, social and educative processes emerging in our field as new theory’ (p.589). This is a challenge taken up in this thesis.

**Drama is playful learning**

Imaginative play is fun, but in the midst of the joys of making believe, children may also be preparing for the reality of more effective lives. (Singer & Singer 1990, p.152)

Play is a fundamental human activity that occurs across cultures and across lifespan. As O’Toole explains, ‘the connections between play and art, and between both of them and learning, are fundamental’ (2009, p.6). Much is made of the importance of play in the ongoing education of individuals.

The role of play has been famously theorised by Freud from a psycho-analytic perspective, Piaget from a cognitive processing perspective, Bruner from a functional perspective and Erickson who saw play as rehearsal for life (Kitson and Spiby 1997). Vygotsky (1976) described play as creating a zone of proximal development or an opportunity for new learning as ‘the child always behaves beyond his average age... it is as though he is a head taller than himself’ (p.102). Slade (1954) assiduously studied the natural playing patterns of children and recognised and delighted in his observation of what he called ‘Child Drama’. He valued this highly and noted that play is the child’s
way of ‘thinking, proving, relaxing, working, remembering, daring, testing, creating and absorbing’ (p.42). Slade described the natural motivation for play and the level of concentration or ‘absorption’ apparent when children are engaged in dramatic play. This is comparable to what Csíkszentmihályi (2008) describes as ‘flow’ when one is fully emerged in a state of energised focus. Nicholson (2011) explains that both ‘Slade’s notion of absorption and Csíkszentmihályi’s notion of flow are regarded as pre-requisites for creative activity, because they are playful moments in which self-consciousness and fears of failure are diminished’ (p.52). Since Slade many others have gone on to describe and research the important links between play and drama and learning and the ways that drama educators can maximise learning through dramatic play through providing direction and focus (Smilansky 1968; Dunn 1996, 1998, 2008; Kelly-Byrne 1984; McCaslin 2005).

Although much is written about children, play and drama, learning through play continues through the lifespan. As with children, adults also experiment and learn through play. They try out alternative roles and ways of being and through play can take risks and experience danger in a safe place. This desire amongst adults for play is evidenced in the millions who subscribe to computer games such as World of Warcraft, The Sims and virtual worlds such as Second Life. In these digital based worlds adults experience a kind of dramatic-role play and play out their theatre on a digital stage (Carroll & Cameron 2009; Anderson 2005; Davis 2006). In real life adults engage in play through organised games and sports and even when they dress up in certain ways for certain events. An example is Box Wars, where replete in cardboard armour and weaponry participants fight to the bitter end – of the last box. Also in historical re-enactment groups such as the Society for Creative Anachronism, adults meet together and gear-up in medieval style and through the ensuing dramatic play not only learn about lifestyle and society of medieval times but more complex understandings about gender relations and cultural identity (Voss Price 2000). As well as being dramatic, this kind of play when shared and negotiated with others, becomes a social experience bringing a sense of belonging. There is a shared ‘feeling of being apart together in an exceptional situation’ (Huizinga 1955, p.769).
There is plenty of evidence of the desire for dramatic play amongst adults and the potential for learning. Play has an energy generated by fun and joy but it is far from trivial, it can be serious and productive work. Drama legitimises play and makes learning in this way acceptable for older children and adults. Drama educators can and do harness this energy and motivation for play and make use of the art form to achieve learning objectives with adult learners.

**Drama is embodied and kinaesthetic learning**

Embodiment in education has been increasingly used in pedagogical theory and has been used in different ways with different meanings. Perry (2011) refers to the tendency towards a ‘diluting of language’ (p.4) and with this in mind, provides her own clear definition of the term:

...embodiment in education describes teaching and learning in acknowledgement of our bodies as part of whole sensate beings in motion – inscribed, living, emerging and inscribing subjectivities. That is, the body is always in a state of becoming, at once as a representation of self, a site of experience, sensation and affect, and a mode of creation in progress.

Embodiment is a state that is always contingent upon the environment and the context and Perry draws from Ellsworth when she adds that the body is ‘Continuously and radically in relation with the world, with others, and with what we make of them’ (Ellsworth 2005, p.4 quoted in Perry, p.5). The literature describing embodied pedagogy in drama is important to consider in the shared space of the drama workshops that invites physical expression and physical contact between the university students and people with disabilities.

In drama the body is the pre-eminent form of representation; ‘The body combines and orchestrates the communicative resources of speech, gesture and act’ (Franks 1996, p.105) and also requires the consideration of bodies in relation to other bodies and how they interact. In drama ‘students use their bodies, and the knowledge they hold in their bodies, as a form of representation to make meanings in the world’ (p.118). In this embodied way of knowing through drama ‘students are taught to use their bodies as centres of perspective, insight, reflection, motivation and agency. Students, therefore,
are taught both to listen to, and to be “in” their bodies, in order for them to express and be able to go “out” of them’ (Wright and Rasmussen 2001, p.227).

Wright (2005, p.1) describes the way that drama processes are designed to ‘dynamise’ the senses and prepare the body for ‘emergent consciousness’. This is similar to what Perry (2011) describes as a constant ‘state of becoming’ and a ‘mode of creation in progress’ (p.5). Wright notes the way that embodied processes and practices in drama, such as improvisation, generate challenging and unpredictable results. This he suggests is at odds with conventional assumptions about the body in education. In this he draws on Bourdieu’s argument that pedagogy relies on submissive bodies and pedagogy’s demand for respect is political. Drama, Wright explains, cannot work through a pedagogy constructed around submission and he wonders if this refusal to be submissive might be the reason for the marginalisation of drama in some schools and education systems.

While embodied learning through drama might be a threat in some contexts, in others it is embraced as an opportunity or an imperative. Gallagher (2002a) explains that drama’s capacities to explore relations in diverse communities lies in its dialectical and embodied features. She takes up Britzman’s (2001) challenge when she asks what we make of “wild thoughts” in the classroom, the kind of thinking that requires courage and imagination. She explains it this way: ‘To take imagination seriously in classrooms, to invite Britzman’s ‘wild thoughts’ in, is to provoke choice, invite alienation, and count on the unpredictable and the productive conflict within communities of difference’ (p.7). Gallagher calls for drama as ‘a pedagogy and artistry that self-consciously places embodied and imagined relations between collaborators at the centre of the action’ (p.3).

In a discussion of drama as embodied pedagogy, Nicholson (2005) suggests that drama is distinct from other ways of learning because it has an aesthetic dimension. She draws on Eagleton (1990) to remind us that the aesthetic is always a discourse on the body – it engages all the senses and through our senses we come to know the world. As an example she describes her drama practice with a group of children with learning and physical disabilities exploring the ideas in a scene from a play. She found that their
work in the more abstract physical languages of theatre was inventive and expressive whereas naturalistic work in role tended to be stilted and predictable. Learning was enhanced through tapping into the kinaesthetic imagination. The children were able ‘to make the transition from the physical representations of ideas and feelings into spoken and written language’ (p.58). This example of enhanced learning through the body involved children with physical limitations and sensory impairment. Interestingly Nicholson observed these children to be more aware of the limits and possibilities of their bodies than most able-bodied children of their age. Drama as embodied pedagogy is good news for all who lament the prevalence of teaching that largely involves students seated in chairs and behind desks and who understand that many learners, both children and adults, have a strong bodily intelligence and many learners prefer to move in order to learn (Gardner 1983).

**Drama is social, collaborative and democratic learning**

The arts bring people together in the experiencing, the making and the apprehending of art. The arts, therefore, provide a means of communicating and sharing understandings. Dewey (1934) emphasised the importance of communication through the arts by claiming works of art are ‘the only media of complete and unhindered communication between man and man that can occur in a world full of gulls and walls that limit community of experience’ (1934, p.105). In a project that seeks to provide a communicative space in which a diversity of participants come together to learn, art as a means of expression and communication, or an alternative language, becomes important.

Maxine Greene (1992) refers to people brought together through art as ‘communities of the wide-awake’. She explains ‘the world that the arts illumine is a shared world, finally, because the realities to which they give rise emerge through acts of communication’ (p.14-15). This notion of the shared world is what allows drama to hold a special place amongst the arts according to Bolton (1984), because drama is not so much about self-expression as seeking universal truths:

> Of all the arts, drama is a collective experiencing, celebrating, or commenting, not on how we are different from each other, but on what we share, on what ways we are alike. (Bolton 1984, p.154)
One of the most distinguishing aspects of drama is, as Bolton suggests, that it is social and experienced collectively with others. It is through this meaning-making together with others in drama that participants can come to understand what they share in common.

Neelands (2010) describes drama and theatre as ‘the art of togetherness’:

Drama and Theatre is the quintessential social art form and this quality is also essential to its educational uses. People must come together in order to make and to share in its makings. It is the art of togetherness even if much of its content and form is about representing un-togetherness. (p139)

An ensemble-based approach is common for students working in drama education and as is the case in many theatre companies, an ensemble approach with actors and directors working together is adopted in Fusion Theatre. Neelands (2009) describes such an approach as a democratisation of learning with some key common characteristics that include the uncrowning of the power of the director/teacher and a shared absorption in the artistic process of dialogic and social meaning making. Drama, Neelands claims, is a pro-social ensemble-based approach to learning that leads to social and political development and lies at the heart, not only of school drama, but drama in a democratic society. Because it demands ‘collective artistry, negotiation, contracting of behaviour and skilful leading’, an ensemble-based approach to drama ‘might become a model of how to live in the world’ (2009, p.175).

Togetherness is a feature of what social anthropologists such as Victor Turner (1969) call ‘communitas’. Communitas is a step further than community, it is involves feelings of intense community spirit, social equality and solidarity and some have argued that drama, particularly working as an ensemble, can provide a space for a sense of communitas to occur (Courtney 1990, Woods 1993; Booth 2002; Bayliss and Dodwell 2002). Booth (2002) suggests that of all of the potent things that the art of drama may offer:

Its greatest power comes from its sense of communitas, of ensemble of tribe, of group, of being among others who enable and support each other in creating and recreating the ‘felt knowledge’ of self and of the self we discover in others who appear so different from us. (viii)
Nicholson (2005) links drama to citizenship. The idea of citizenship is, she suggests, highly contested, and she defines it not as simply a collection of legal rights and obligations, but as a more fluid set of social practices. The creative and collaborative nature of drama and theatre practices provide opportunities for participants to come to grips with their identities and responsibilities as citizens. She explains:

Drama is a good way for people to extend their horizons of experience, recognising how their own identities have been shaped and formulated and, by playing new roles and inhabiting different subject positions, finding different points of identification with others. The idea that drama can take people beyond themselves and into the world of others is deeply rooted in the values of applied drama, and this chimes particularly well with a vision of social citizenship as a collective and communitarian undertaking. (p.24)

However, the pro-social learning that occurs in drama cannot simply be taken for granted and Nicholson offers a warning as well:

Of course, drama does none of these things automatically. Performance is not in itself politically radical, relationships between participants and practitioners are not automatically trusting, and theatre is not necessarily an instrument for change. It depends on the spirit in which these things are used. (p.24)

In a key text, ‘Drama and Diversity’, Grady (2000) advocates for pluralistic perspective for drama educators and students to structure work to reflect on issues of identity and difference. Like Nicholson she recognises that drama in itself does not achieve pro-social ends because when we teach our work can be loaded with assumptions, stereotypes and dominant culture views. She calls for drama educators to be more aware of such views and critically analyse ‘how bias operates, how privilege works and how stereotypes wound’ (p.xiv). Grady, amongst other drama practitioners (for example Saldaña 1999; Gallagher & Riviere 2007; Nelson 2011) presents drama workshop activities that are designed to encourage students to think about discrimination, to challenge stereotypes and to reflect on how preconceptions might be changed through drama.

As the drama educator in the context of the ‘Teaching for Diversity’ workshops I set out to magnify awareness of ‘ableist’ and other assumptions and preconceptions both through the process and the content of the teaching. I accept the challenge to facilitate the ways of working that foster productive relationships and seek to understand the
ways in which the conditions are enhanced for positive collaboration, shared learning and transformation.

**Drama is aesthetic learning**

[Aesthetic education is] an effort to move individuals (working together, searching together) to seek a grounding for themselves, so that they may break through the ‘cotton wool’ of dailyness and passivity and boredom and come awake to the coloured, sounding, problematic world. (Greene 2001, p.7)

It seems Greene finds it difficult to overstate the importance of aesthetic education. She is convinced that this ‘cognitive, perceptual, affective, imaginative undertaking we call aesthetic education can alter the atmosphere in schools’ (p.47). She describes stimulating aesthetic experiences as opening windows and doors for people, and argues that ‘releasing them to use their imaginations and their minds and their perceptual capacities may save lives as well as change them’ (p.47).

The idea of an ‘active aesthetic response’ in drama learning processes is proposed by Østern (2003, p.34). In this she brings together the active and the aesthetic to ‘generate a knowledge which is deeply rooted in the sensuous, a knowledge of the body where feelings and thinking are integrated in a holistic understanding’ (p.35).

Drama is defined by O’Toole (1997) as ‘an art, which by its very nature explores the metaphysical construction of alternative realities in aesthetic configurations’ (p.186). Drama is both artistic and aesthetic, it is simultaneously doing and perceiving as ‘the artist/maker plays audience to his/her own (and others’) creations’ (Gallagher 2005, p.92). Gallagher presents what she terms a sociology of aesthetics in drama practice referring to aesthetics as both cognitive and embodied responses to the ‘(extra)ordinary’ events in drama. She explains ‘in drama, we attempt – collectively – to represent our lives through art as we come to know the world and our sensuous responses to it’ (p.82). Explorations of the aesthetic, through drama, open up for participants ‘what is possible, what is knowable, and what may be just beyond their grasp’ (p.93).

While many have written about the particular power and potential in the quality of the aesthetic experience that makes drama powerful learning, Bowell and Heap (2010) argue that in order to use it well, teachers need a felt knowledge of what constitutes
aesthetic learning. To assist drama educators to understand the aesthetic in their practice, McLean (1996) developed an aesthetic framework. She identified three features: the importance of dialogue; the importance of experiential learning and teacher/students working as co-artists; and the importance of critical reflection. The work of Bundy (2003; 2003a; 2004) takes this further and is helpful in expanding my understandings of the conditions required for aesthetic engagement in the drama workshop. Initially working towards an understanding of the nature of intimacy in drama, Bundy drew upon the work of psychiatrists Malone and Malone (1987) who defined the characteristics of intimacy as being connection, animation and creativity. Bundy’s reflective practice led her to define the key characteristics of aesthetic engagement in drama as animation, connection, and heightened awareness and suggests these must be simultaneously present if a drama percipient is to engage aesthetically. She identifies seven further characteristics of human experience that need to be present when drama participants experience aesthetic engagement: self-acceptance, self-responsibility, risk-taking, other-acceptance, personal surrender, attentiveness and presence. Bundy asserts that it is not merely for pleasure that aesthetic engagement is important but rather that it offers opportunity for significant learning to occur. Bundy’s work offers both an insight into the nature of the aesthetic experience in drama and a useful framework for me to identify and analyse levels of aesthetic engagement in the workshop.

**Applied Theatre and Applied Drama**

Applied theatre is a mighty form and like fire can work for or against us. (Ackroyd 2000, p. 6)

So far in this chapter the discussion has been centred on drama in education and drama for learning. The use of the terms ‘applied theatre’ and ‘applied drama’ has gained momentum over recent years. While the terms are relatively new the practices are not new as similar practices of cultural performance for active change have been employed all over the world dating back to ancient times (Ahmed 2002). I have at times used these terms to describe the project. Applied theatre or drama seems to encompass both the work of Fusion Theatre as an inclusive theatre company and the work of the Fusion team when presenting the Teaching for Diversity workshop. The literature reveals a discussion about the use of these terms that warrants attention here.
Ackroyd (2000) reflects upon the rise in popularity of the term ‘applied theatre’ and describes it as an umbrella term that ‘brings together a broad range of dramatic activity carried out by a host of diverse bodies and groups’ (p.1). The terms ‘applied drama’ and ‘applied theatre’ have been used flexibly and interchangeably at times as a kind of shorthand according to Nicholson (2005) for ‘the kinds of dramatic activity that primarily exist outside conventional mainstream theatre institutions, and which are specifically intended to benefit individuals, communities and societies’ (p.2). Practices take place in a broad range of contexts including drama and theatre in education, within health education, in museums, in prisons, in workplaces, in marginalised communities, and in therapeutic contexts.

Practitioners in these fields employ a diverse range of dramatic practices. However, what they have in common according to Ackroyd is an intentionality, they ‘share a belief in the power of the theatre form to address something beyond the form itself’ (2000, p.1). With the rise in the use of the term, Ackroyd notes the enthusiasm with which applied theatre projects are taken up and promoted. She notes the underlying assumptions and rightly prompts us to question the purposes applied theatre activities are fulfilling and what values they are exemplifying. The medium is powerful but it will not necessarily be used in a way that will be powerfully good. There are intended benefits but she invites us to ask ‘whose needs are being served?’

Revisiting her discussion of the term applied theatre some years later, Ackroyd (2007) is concerned that it is being used to overzealously describe certain kinds of practices to the exclusion of others. Taylor (2003) in his book ‘Applied Theatre’ reminds us that it draws on techniques and strategies familiar to the drama educator. However, more than just ‘familiar’, Ackroyd argues, applying such strategies is the work of drama educators and therefore the term ‘applied theatre’ needs to be inclusive of a range of practices including drama in education.

**Community-based theatre, popular theatre and theatre for development**

Popular theatre... is about ways of employing the force of art in the service of change, about ways of putting the levers of change in the hands of those who would otherwise be its victims. (Prentki in Prentki & Selman 2000, p.1)
I have referred already to Fusion Theatre as a community-based theatre company. This term is meant to imply that the company grows out of and belongs to a community, in this case the community within the geographical area of Greater Dandenong as well as the community of people with disabilities. I use the term with the intent that it also implies that is not a professional theatre company. There are different motives that drive the work of the company and these include the desire to work together, to create a place of belonging and a public voice for people with disabilities. The term ‘popular theatre’ is not widely used in this country but where it is, particularly in Canada, it refers to a theatre by and of the people. Popular theatre encompasses both theatre process (drama) and performance and these are employed as part of a process of change (Prentki & Selman 2000). The issues and stories grow out of the community and that ‘community is a vital part of a process of identifying, examining and taking action on matters which that community believes need to change’ (p.9). Its influences are various and often have political and polemical purposes such as the theatrical intentions of Brecht’s dialectical theatre, Agitprop theatre, Freire’s ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ and theatrical application of these ideas in Boal’s ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’.

The term ‘theatre for development’ (TfD) tends to refer more to theatre practices for the purpose of community and social development in economically developing countries. While closely related to popular theatre, it is a more radical expression of it (Prentki and Selman 2000; Prentki 1996). According to Prentki (Merriman & Prentki 1997), TfD is also a cherished pedagogy that involves working with marginalised people towards areas of fundamental need such as health and sanitation, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education (see for example Carlin 1997; Pattanaik 2000; Nyangore 2000; Tanyi-Tang 2000; Dugga 2002; Chinyowa 2009). Over recent decades, the TfD literature has documented changing practices from top-down didactic and propagandist theatre presented to large numbers of people through to work generated with and within communities based on their perceived needs and resources – theatre by the people, for the people and of the people (Kidd & Rashid 1984; van Erven 2001). For example, Ahmed (2002) critiques TfD initiatives in Bangladesh presented by NGOs who are subtly influenced by the expected outcomes and agendas of the donors who fund them. He calls for ‘alternatives by which indigenous theatre performers may access directly the intellectual fermentation of the North with a decolonized mind and create
performances which allow debate, reflexivity and the flight to infinity’ (p.207). Ahmed (2011) offers Mukta Natak an example of this kind of practice whereby the voluntary contributions of urban animators and villagers generate theatre that effects the kinds of change that villagers want to see in their communities.

In ‘Popular Theatre in Political Culture’, Prentki and Selman provide a thorough discussion of the intentions of these community-based theatres in relation to both development and education, particularly of adults. They suggest the link between popular theatre and education lies in critical pedagogy as articulated by Freire, Giroux and others. This is a pedagogy that ‘liberates the mind and the imagination and thus begins the process of social transformation which starts in the psyche of the individual’ (Prentki & Selman 2000, p.39). Community-based theatre can provide a means for the kind of education that Freire called for; Prentki and Selman describe it as ‘the process whereby those whose voices typically go unheard in any given society or community, discover the confidence and means by which to articulate their own unmediated sense of the material reality in which they are compelled to live’ (p.39). Two strategies for involving participants in community education and community development processes are consciousness raising and ‘conscientisation’, Freire’s notion of the process whereby people are not only increasingly aware of the cultural forces that impinge upon their lives but are able to take action to make change. Drama and theatre practices can be the process of this conscientisation – ‘unveiling deeper and deeper layers of reality and of examining the implication of various courses of action’ (Kidd 1981 p.32 quoted in Prentki & Selman 2000, p.49).

The literature suggests that community-based theatre, TfD, and applied drama/theatre and drama in education all come with the same warning: along with the potential for positive transformation, there is the possibility that without care, more harm than good could be done. Prentki and Selman conclude that the ‘relationship is always dialectical, never static. Furthermore the intentions of the facilitators or activists have constantly to be checked against those of the community in order to ensure co-intentionality without which no social action initiated through popular theatre will be able to sustain itself’ (p.53). This literature reminds me of the need to be aware of the power of the workshop
in this study to transform for better or worse and to pay attention to ensuring that there is co-intentionality and a continuous dialectical relationship between all participants.

**Drama, theatre and disability**

The National Arts and Disability Strategy (2009) operates within the requirements of the Australian Government’s Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and is guided by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008). One priority of this strategy is to explore options to increase the provision of arts and cultural education and experiences for children and young people with a disability relevant to their context, such as in schools or through community or youth arts programs. In general the strategy aims to encourage access to the arts and recognises that improvements made to support the aspirations of people with a disability have a positive impact on the community as a whole.

Works by people with a disability can have a strong influence on changing public opinion. It can help to break down the attitudinal barriers that contribute to social exclusion. Increasing opportunities for audiences to experience innovative and outstanding work by artists with a disability will help to change community perceptions and attitudes about people with a disability and support an environment where people of all abilities have the opportunity to participate in every aspect of cultural life on an equal basis. (NADS p.17)

This section attempts to provide a sweep across the literature that describes the broad range of practices in the area of drama, theatre and disability. These practices range from dramatherapy and psychodrama, practices that O’Toole and Lepp (2000) suggest are located more towards the dramatic play end of the continuum tending to be more ‘private, informal, negotiable and exploratory activities’ compared to the more ‘public, formal and fixed, mainly dealing with the communication between actors and audience’ (p.33). At the other end of the continuum a range of theatre practices for and by people with disabilities are also described in the literature.

**Drama as therapy**

A good deal of the literature about practices in drama and theatre and people with disabilities includes discussion about psychodrama and drama therapy, often referred to as ‘dramatherapy’.
Psychodrama, as its name suggests, is a drama-based form of psychotherapy pioneered by psychiatrist Jacob Moreno and involves participants in acting through problems rather than talking them through (Moreno 1974; Francis 1973; Courtney 1974; Nolte 2000). Practitioners need to be highly skilled in the protocols and processes. For people with disabilities, the practice of psychodrama is aligned with the medical/individual model of disability, because it presumes that participants in the process have particular psychological issues to work through and is intended to provide individuals with healing and catharsis.

Similarly dramatherapy is associated with the medical/individual model of disability. Landy (1982) explains, ‘drama therapy generally implies work with a group that is in some way disabled. ...emotionally disturbed, physically disabled, deaf, blind, developmentally disabled, sociopathic, or elderly’ (p.135). He describes it as interdisciplinary, combining the art of drama with the science of psychology and requires practitioners who are both experienced in the art forms of drama and theatre and trained in psychotherapy. Dramatherapy is defined by Jennings, another pioneer of the form, as being ‘the application of theatre art in clinical, remedial and community settings with people who are troubled or unwell. Whereas theatre art could be termed preventative in relation to mental health, dramatherapy is curative’ (1998, p.12). In her presentation of an integrated model Emunah (1997) highlights the similarities between psychodrama and dramatherapy suggesting both essentially work with creativity, spontaneity, role and interaction. A major distinction is that psychodrama tends to focus on an individual within the group whereas dramatherapy can be for individuals although it more often involves group process and interaction. Another key difference is that dramatherapy tends to work in the realm of fiction whereas psychodrama considers the person’s real-life experiences and is more self-disclosing.

Developments in educational drama, with its emphasis on process over product, allowed people to see opportunities not only for education but for personal growth and many practitioners involved in the early use of dramatherapy credit educational drama in its evolution (Jones 1996; Meldrum 1994). Jennings (1998) describes her methods in dramatherapy as including ‘movement, voice, dance, theatre games, role play, improvisation, text work, puppets and masks. Indeed all skills from theatre are
selectively applied with client groups to enable verbal and non-verbal expression and resolution within a dramatic or story structure’ (p.12). This list of processes resembles those that the Fusion Theatre ensemble experience, yet we would never talk about the work as therapy. It appears that the distinguishing feature between dramatherapy and drama and theatre education practice is mostly to do with perception and purpose. The dramatherapist perceives participants as being in need of therapy and approaches the work with the intention to improve the participants’ health and wellbeing.

The proponents of dramatherapy make similar claims for their drama work as drama educators in general including its potential for expanding perceptions and for learning (Brudenell 1987; Jennings 1992, 1998). Aims of dramatherapy outlined by Jennings include ‘enabling communication, stimulating new thinking, providing means of resolution, developing new skills, transforming unhelpful experiences, looking at choices, enacting new journeys, understanding gender issues, exploring politics and so on’ (1998, p.33) and are precisely the sorts of aims that drama educators in general would claim for drama. However, the fact that dramatherapists have staked a claim in the space of working with people with disabilities may have acted as a deterrent to some regular drama educators. Peter (1994) suggests that the idea of drama being therapy might cause them to feel ‘reluctant to expose their pupils if they inadvertently “took the lid off something”’ (p.vii).

Kempe (1996) is a drama educator who has worked with students with disabilities and also chooses not to label the work he does as dramatherapy. However, he concedes that while not intending to provide therapy, experiences provided in drama can be therapeutic. Drama ‘can give the individual a greater sense of competence and self-worth’, allows us to externalise and reflect upon inner impulses and is a ‘manifestation of our humanity’ (p.11). While the sorts of arts experiences Kempe and others facilitate can be therapeutic, Walsh and London (1995) express the concern that the notion of art as therapy can be limiting in relation to disability if it prevents artists from having their work taken seriously.

People do not have to have a disability to be able to say that they find creative activity to be therapeutic, recreational or time-filling. It would be simplistic to argue that the arts activities of people with disabilities are less ‘worthy’, or not concerned with artistic excellence, simply because such activity can be therapeutic. (p. 13)
Drama may be therapeutic as a side benefit and this can be good for all people, not only people with disabilities. The main difference is that the dramatherapist is focused on the disability and therapeutic goals whereas the artist practitioner or drama educator is focused on the aesthetic, creating the art of theatre and the ability of the individual and what can be achieved in the creative process (Landy 1982, 1993; Kempe 1995).

**Drama and the education of people with disabilities**

Much of the literature that describes the practices of drama in education for people with disabilities comes in the form of handbooks for practice describing approaches and strategies (Cattanach 1992; Peter 1995; Kempe 1996; McCurrach & Darnley 1999; Sherratt & Peter 2002). Such books invariably testify to the benefits of the drama experience for all and particularly the profound gains to be made for people with disabilities (Smith 2001; Peter 2009). Many of these texts provide ideas for adapting drama for people with disabilities and tend towards a ‘can do’ approach that puts the emphasis on what the participants can do rather than what they can’t do.

Dorothy Heathcote’s work in drama education included working with people with disabilities and the high profile of her work documented in texts and on film meant that many drama educators who were not trained in special education gained insights into this field. In Heathcote’s view, drama for people with disabilities is like drama for any group. She is concerned with ‘what all human beings hold in common rather than what separates them’ (Wagner 1979, p.210). Drama ‘means that we can, by a shift in the head, experience an ‘as if reality’, and for the time perceive it as the real world’ (Heathcote 1978, p.149). The notion of going from the particular to the universal is a well-documented Heathcote idea and she stresses the importance of this for people with intellectual disabilities. Heathcote explains how drama works by providing scaffolding for participants as they strive to make meaning:

> By its nature it slows time down, forces attention, and is concretely made manifest at every stage. It is essential in all learning, that we first must be able to deal at the concrete level of ideas before we can develop abstraction skills. (p.152)

Heathcote also provides suggestions for enhancing the drama experience for people with disabilities to allow for greater impact. These include empowering the participants by recognising their rights, allowing them to have power in the situation and creating an
appropriate pace which allows adequate time to respond. She also suggests how practitioners might notice signs of ‘progression’ in drama amongst the participants with disabilities. These can range from ‘showing opinion and sticking to it’ through to ‘a new eyelid flutter’ (1978, p.154).

According to Heathcote, experience in drama leads to emergent exploratory people. While providing people with intellectual disabilities with the opportunity to develop opinions and ideas might be the aim and a positive outcome of drama, for the staff of the institutions and residential care units, or even for parents and carers, having their charges become radical or even independent thinkers is problematic. Drama can become:

Too intrusive, too upsetting to the developed power patterns in hospital relationships which have come about because of the need these people have to be kept safe, looked after physically and controlled in the warmest sense for the good of all of the residents.

We have choices. …I am never sure whether ‘happy cabbages’ are preferable to ‘emergent exploratory people’. … I can only say to myself when I ask that question of myself, ‘please life, let me participate in my living existence’ (p.153).

On the other hand, when family, carers and staff have an opportunity to observe people with disabilities participating in drama as expressive and creative individuals, adopting roles and working collaboratively it can serve to disrupt ‘incapable assumptions’ (Hatton 2009, p.93) and lead to new visions of possibility.

**Theatre and disability**

The meeting of applied theatre and disability offers a productive area of discursive practice according to Conroy (2009), in which the ‘work of disabled scholars and scholars of disability, disabled practitioners and makers of theatre with and for disabled people needs a creative space to articulate and explore the tensions between us all’ (p.12). Such a space was created in a special edition of the Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance that was dedicated to the area of disability in 2009. In this section, I draw on the literature from this edition and a range of other sources to discuss some of these tensions and key themes that seem relevant to the work of Fusion Theatre in this project. These include the ways disability may be represented through theatre; the ways that theatre can offer visibility and voice to people with disabilities; and the role of the non-disabled practitioner in the process.
Conroy plots three moments in the history of disability and theatre that help to describe a kind of evolution. It begins with drama and people with disabilities, the terrain of the previous section, in which drama and theatre is seen to be ‘good’ for people with disabilities in providing entertainment, recreation, social interaction and opportunities for personal development.

The second stage Conroy suggests is appropriately marked by the publication of Tomlinson’s book ‘Disability, Theatre and Education’ (1982) that described theatre and people with disabilities exemplified by the work of Graeae Theatre Company in the UK. This phase focuses on the encounter between disabled performer and non-disabled audience in which the performer ‘is empowered and is accorded status because of his presence on the stage as performer, as speaker and actor, as object of the audience’s attention’ (2009, p.7).

The third phase is the move to disability arts and disability culture. This idea is expressed in the words of Marcus, ‘disability is not a brave struggle or courage in the face of adversity, disability is art’ (Kuppers & Marcus 2009, p.154). Kuppers explains ‘Sometimes, we confound non-disabled understanding by celebrating our differences, by affirming to ourselves the pleasures of disabled lives, different sensoria, our ways of being in the world’ (Kuppers & Marcus 2009, p.143). There are many examples of affirmative action through disability theatre in the literature and discussed in the following section. Such a paradigm is also exemplified by the many international theatres of the deaf such as the Australian Theatre of the Deaf that works to create high quality bi-lingual theatre for hearing and deaf audiences that is not usually about deafness. The Australian Theatre of the Deaf seeks to make a unique contribution to Australian culture and promotes deaf culture and expression while generally promoting understanding and awareness of cultural difference (Arts Access 2012).

These stages reflect the movement through models of disability: from the individual/medical model, through the social model to the affirmative model that presents disability culture positively and confidently. These stages also roughly mirror the evolution of Fusion Theatre that began as a drama group for people with disabilities with a focus on what the experience of drama offered them. The project gained
momentum as they developed as an ensemble to create theatre for a broader audience. Now the company has developed ways, through the workshops and related activities, for the actors to use their skills and understandings in drama and theatre to articulate their experience of disability in a positive and proactive way in which they are the leaders and experts. They have moved beyond communicating the issue to being active in working towards a solution.

**Disability, theatre and the purposes of performance**

I see performance as a machine that produces difference: as a poetry machine that makes people and words, metaphors and stories, bodies and breaths touch each other. In performance we can create [a] hundred words for ‘disabled’. (Kuppers in Kuppers & Marcus 2009, p.151)

Theatre, according to O’Toole (2000) at its most effective ‘works obliquely – it raises questions, makes analogies and permits people to explore implications and consequences of their lives and attitudes’ (p.24). Performance is a machine that produces myriad ways of understanding disability according to disabled performing artist Petra Kuppers who is quoted at the beginning of this section. For some performers and companies, disability is the central issue of exploration in their work and a performance is created to subvert or invert assumptions about disability (Roulstone 2010).

One such company is Workman Arts, an inclusive company in Toronto that creates performance works that represent mental illness in ways that encourage audiences to re-imagine mental illness (Johnston 2009). Eckard and Myers (2009) list examples of companies with explicitly activist agendas such as the DisAbility Project in St. Louis, Wry Crips in San Francisco and the Actual Lives Projects in Texas dedicated to ‘crip theatre with attitude’ (p.59), a kind of inventiveness and subversion elsewhere called a ‘crip aesthetic’ (O’Reilly 2009; Roulstone 2010). The research by Eckard and Myers involves dialogue with actors in the Arizona based Improbable Theatre Company. While not holding an explicitly activist agenda, these actors desire their disabilities to become transparent while being highly visible and through performance broaden audience understanding of living with a disability.
In some cases works are created with the specific purpose of educating audiences about disability. ‘A Big Blue Whale’s Dream’ is an interactive Theatre in Education performance for primary school students commissioned by the South Korean government to increase disability awareness at a time when the country is moving towards inclusive education (Kim 2009). The research conducted around this project reveals productive dialogue and change to a more positive attitude towards inclusion of students with disabilities amongst non-disabled students, teachers and actors. This project differs from others mentioned in this section because while the performance is about disability, the company does not involve actors with disabilities. Neither is there any indication of the involvement of young people with disabilities in the audience, in the generation of the performance or the post performance discussion.

In the BluYesBlu PARIP (practice-as-research-in-performance) project involving participants with disabilities, Leighton (2009) was careful to avoid a rehabilitating approach: ‘the intention was not to ‘teach’, improve social skills or raise consciousness. The aim was, rather, to collaboratively devise an accessible show which all the participants could contribute to and understand’. Odyssey Theatre is described by Wooster (2009) as an inclusive community theatre where anyone can participate according to their ability. While process is important, it is the idea of working towards a performance that motivates the participants. Although many members of the company have disabilities, the company chooses to avoid patronage by not making ‘disability’ the subject of the theatre; rather they work with people’s stories in a universal context. Without specifically presenting disability issues, performances provide ‘the opportunity to show the ‘outside world’ their talents, their views and, more important, their freedom of movement, expression and evaluation’ (Hodgkin 1996, p.126). Calvert (2009) puts it more plainly, explaining a fundamental purpose of disability theatre companies is to address ‘the historical need to reintroduce learning disabled and non-learning disabled people to each other’ (p.76). Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2011) in their consideration of children with disabilities in the theatre company Oily Cart, write about the importance of an opportunity to be visible and to be involved in cultural production, particularly as producers of counter-hegemonic narratives of disability in their cultural lives. Burn, Franks and Nicholson (2001) explore the politics of visibility in a theatre making collaboration between head-injured people and secondary students. The project
challenged the invisibility of disability and built metaphors of visibility as well as literally increasing physical visibility through use of large projected images of performers. For Marcus (Kuppers & Marcus 2009), a disabled performing artist, theatre and disability is about ‘making the spirit visible’ (p.141).

Throughout the literature on theatre and disability there is evidence of the tension between process/product, therapy/art, and community/mainstream. Hatton (2009) explains the problem of the ‘labeling effect’. She suggests, ‘although a “learning-disabled” label can create easier access to support and services, the effects of labelling on the individual will nearly always be detrimental’ (p.91). This is a tension I have often felt and raised in chapter one with reference to Hellier-Tinoco (2005) who shares concerns about using the label ‘learning disabled’. She finds it to be both irrelevant and highly relevant explaining it is ‘irrelevant because each person arrives as an individual and as a unique being, and highly relevant because without the label such a person would not be part of the project’ (p.162).

Ineland and Sauer (2007) describe this tension in detail through their work with Olla, a theatre group for people with disabilities in Sweden originally established as a disability service. They describe the actors’ self-understandings that include ‘on the one hand, being a theatre actor and, on the other hand, a client to the welfare state. In this sense they are balancing between normality (actors) and deviance (intellectually disabled clients)’ (p.56). Rather than view this as negative, they suggest it is helpful in the formation of identity and a challenge to the established social meaning of intellectual disabilities. Other companies also consider the tension as a positive. In researching the work of the Shysters, Karafistan (2004) quotes their director who suggests that ‘Some other companies whose actors have learning disabilities try and make their actors “normal”: we try to keep them different’ (p.265). Amongst the Shysters there is a belief that the actors’ disabilities actively inform their creativity and take it to a new level. Karafistan argues this kind of theatre has a unique beauty and unpredictability that surprises and challenges audiences and forces them to confront stereotypical views leading to a re-visioning of disability. There might also be a re-visioning of what it is to be an actor. In a study of the work of the U.K. theatre company Mind the Gap, Hargrave (2010) describes what the learning disabled actors of that company can offer:
Tantalisingly, they offer – each in very different ways – something new, uncharted and imprecise: a dis-precision, a performance aesthetic that draws an audience to examine its own cherished beliefs about what an actor actually is. (p.507)

This ‘dis-precision’ is disability theatre’s contribution – a new performance aesthetic that requires a ‘reconceptualisation of excellence’ (Band, Lindsay, Neelands & Freakley 2011, p.906). Hargrave (2009) reviews three pieces of contemporary theatre featuring learning-disabled actors (‘On the Verge’, a work by Mind the Gap; ‘Pinocchio’ by York Theatre Royal in collaboration with the Shysters, Full Body and The Voice; and ‘Small Metal Objects’ by Australian company Back to Back) and finds a hybrid artistic form that is not pure and an aesthetic that troubles the boundaries between disabled and non-disabled:

These pieces work best when they offer us a close, almost conversational glimpse of ‘selves’ so often marginalised from our stages or screens. Ultimately, these works transcend any debate about pure form: every performance discussed here is radical because at some level it deepens a rift in our consciousness of what or who is ‘disabled’. It is radical theatre because it punctures the form. It blurs boundaries between ‘disabled’ and ‘non-disabled’. It forces us to put these terms in quotes and it shakes our understanding of terms such as good or bad, normal or abnormal. It is a conjuring trick. Disability appears and disappears within this aesthetic. Flickering, intangible, it is something far more elusive than any one label could signify: a pure product gone crazy. (p.52-53)

**Who makes the decisions?: relationships and power in disability theatre**

Our job is to do plays and tell stories that will stay in people’s heads long after they leave the theatre and go home. (Canby, Chillcott, Davis, Goater, Hogan, Kelly, Knight, Lane, Lansdown, Long, McGreevy, O’Brien, Rees, Rimmer, Stafford & Wiltshire, 2009, p.55)

The quote above is taken from a small article in the special edition of the Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance that was dedicated to the area of disability in 2009 and has sixteen authors (Canby et al 2009). These are the members of Firebird Theatre who describe the vision of the company and their approach to theatre making. This article sits in a journal alongside academic articles about theatre and disability largely written by non-disabled researchers. While one of these articles is a dialogue between two performers with disabilities (Kuppers & Marcus 2009) and some of these include the voices of people with disabilities (for example Eckard & Myers 2009; Hargrave 2009), there are few that include people with disabilities as co-researchers and writers about theatre projects. I recognise that only a small proportion of the literature I have
encountered involves people with disabilities responding to, collaborating or engaging in research processes on theatre practices.

However, within the artistic processes described in the literature, there are many examples of attention to co-artistry. This is important because as O’Connor, Szaunder and Bentsen (2003) strongly warn, without good productive partnerships performance with people with disabilities becomes ‘at worst an exhibition of highly trained automatons who confirm and retell their stories of oppression as audiences gawp and stare at the cleverness of what they have been trained to do’ (p.60). They remind us that drama and theatre has a dark history with reference to the likes of Barnum’s travelling freak shows of the nineteenth century that made a theatrical spectacle of people with disabilities.

An increasing number of drama theatre courses have become accessible for people with disabilities and such courses provide skills to create independent artists and leaders. The literature calls for more opportunities of this nature (O’Connor et al 2003; Dacre & Bulmer 2009; Band et al 2011). There are also examples of mentoring programs and training opportunities within companies as members take on the role of leaders of workshops for other people with disabilities and the non-disabled (Johnston 2009; Wooster 2009). However, such examples are few and non-disabled practitioners will continue to lead theatre practice with people with disabilities. O’Connor et al (2003) suggest a range of questions for practitioners to ask themselves including whose story is being told, who gains, who learns and who loses from this performance?

These are the kinds of questions that Leighton (2009) asks as she struggles with the dilemmas she encounters as a non-disabled performance researcher working with learning-disabled people. She heeds Oliver’s (1996) argument that too much research has involved people with disabilities as passive objects and has done little to serve their interests. And yet Leighton is mindful that non-disabled experts ‘continue to conduct research and arts projects with learning disabled people because the latter are unlikely to undertake either their own academic research or theatrical performance independently’ (p.98). Not to research would be to further render their experiences invisible. As O’Connor et al (2003) implore, more practitioners in this field need to research practice
and publish it. Leighton diligently attends to the ethical issues of her performance-making practice that made an ‘immediate improvement in the situation of learning-disabled people’ and the ethical issues of her research in which she concludes the ‘mutual dependency of “researcher” and “research participants” promoted intersubjective communication and respect’ (p.111).

To some extent Leighton’s concerns for ethical relationships reflect my own and I am encouraged by Roulstone’s (2009) invitation for ‘disability drama practitioners and writers to move beyond doubts based on essentialist orthodoxies of disabled versus non-disabled sensibilities and positions’ (p.437). He argues that the new social and affirmative models of disability are now strong enough to ‘underpin more daring and transformative relations with the non-disabled world’ (p.437).

Drama and learning for teachers
This project involves drama applied to the professional learning of pre-service teachers. As in many projects of this nature, the professional learning can occur on several levels. At the most basic level, simply participating in drama activity can mean practising important skills for teachers such as expression, communication, improvisation and inter-personal skills. At another fundamental level is the design of drama activity to promote specific learning important for the profession (inclusive education in the case of this project). At another level, pre-service teachers are experiencing drama as a pedagogy that is new to many of them and one that they might draw upon in their own practice. The literature spans these three areas.

Teaching has often been compared to performance. In a study of pre-service teachers in New Zealand, Whatman (1997) notes a close relationship between performing and teaching in students who were also experienced in performing arts. In particular she describes the importance of the skills of role-taking, reflection in action, metaphor, use of space, intra- and inter-personal skills, communication and improvisation developed through involvement in performing arts as being critical to effective functioning as a teacher. This understanding leads her to develop models of practice and to argue for the inclusion of experiences in ‘teaching as performance’ (Whatman 2000, p.251) as part of professional studies programs for all pre-service teachers. In the Netherlands, Coppens
(2002) also recognises the potential for drama to bridge a gap between theory and practice in the preparation of more effective teachers. Like Whatman, she identifies role and improvisation as being important areas of experience in drama. She draws on Goffman’s (1971) use of the imagery of theatre to analyse social action and Johnstone’s (1981) theory of improvisation and other related skills that are important in teaching such as awareness of status and accepting and blocking offers. A much earlier study by Carroll and Howieson (1978) showed similar findings when psychodrama was used as a means of increasing teacher effectiveness. Through involvement in a group drama program, pre-service teachers experienced playing new roles that served to engender empathy, developed awareness of others’ emotional states through understanding body language and showed increased spontaneity.

Although potentially useful, drama experiences for teacher education are often viewed with scepticism or even hostility by some students and educators (Whatman 2000). Drama practices can be perceived as fun and therefore not real work (Coppen 2002) or a cause of ‘drama anxiety’ amongst some student teachers with limited or negative prior experience of drama (Wright 1999).

**Applied theatre and the professional development of teachers**

If we want teachers to rethink the way they teach students, then we must also rethink the way we teach teachers. To make sustainable changes in instruction, teachers need to experience what happens when they are allowed to work in collaborative, dialogic, professional development environment. (Dawson, Cawthon & Baker 2011, p.315)

There are many examples of drama and theatre applied to adult professional learning in fields outside education. The literature reveals examples of drama applied with success to the training of nurses (Lepp 2000), doctors (Cahill 2005; 2008; Jacobsen, Råheim & Rasmussen 2010) and for palliative and other care workers (Haseman 2000; Deeny, Johnson, Boore, Leyden & McCaughan 2001; Lepp, Ringsberg, Holm & Sallersjö 2003), police officers (O’Toole 2000a; Bates & Stevenson 2000) and judges, priests and journalists (O’Connor 2000). In each of these cases there are important lessons to inform practice in drama for professional education. Taylor (2000) recounts some examples of role-plays in professional education contexts that are at best ineffective and at worst destructive. She argues the importance of skilled facilitators who have a solid understanding of dramatic structures and strategies in order to ‘structure and modify
role-play so that it provides the multi-functional learning experience of which it is capable’ (p. 272). Smigiel (2000) also notes the preponderance of ineffective role-play facilitated by inexpert trainers in workplace and vocational training. She conducted a project that involved training the trainers in the theory and techniques of educational drama that resulted in the trainers changing their practice from the narrow application of role-play to broader and ultimately more educationally satisfying range of drama techniques.

Having skills in educational drama seems to be critical to both desire and success in implementing it in professional contexts. I believe that it would be difficult to find a unit designed for preparing drama teachers that did not also apply drama to learning about teaching. For example, in drama method classes that I teach for pre-service teachers, applied drama/theatre strategies such as forum theatre, playback theatre, process drama strategies and even simple role-play are sometimes used to enhance learning about classroom management, professional relationships, teaching for diversity and so on. Applying drama in this way serves two main purposes; it enhances learning about the topic and also models the use of such strategies. They are learning about drama and through drama. However, pre-service teachers who are not preparing to be drama teachers are likely to experience fewer opportunities to learn about teaching through drama.

This was one of the reasons for faculty leaders proposing a professional development day focussed on pedagogy in the university where I teach. Following an invitation to contribute a presentation on drama as pedagogy at this event, I undertook a small project with a drama colleague (Raphael & O’Mara 2002). We designed and led a drama workshop for our faculty that explored the student experience. The exploration of the possible experience of one student through the form of process drama dramatically altered perceptions amongst faculty members of what life can be like for students. The drama experience as professional development involved experienced educators working together in new ways as a community of learners giving rise to the kinds of understandings that could not be gleaned from the usual PowerPoint presentation. Although a one-off experience it resulted in further dialogue about both the student experience and alternative pedagogies and new teaching partnerships, and although its
impact was unmeasured, ten years later it is sometimes still mentioned amongst colleagues such was the impact.

Jacobs (2011) reports on a partnership between teaching staff and students in the School of Communication and Creative Arts and those in the School of Education in the university where I teach. Through a process of consultation, performing arts students in a unit on applied theatre developed forum theatre scenes based on final-year education students’ ‘deepest fears’ of school practicum experiences (frequently related to classroom management). In the final forum theatre event, education students viewed the scenes, discussed possible interventions, suggested changes and at times took on the role of teacher in the scenes to experiment with strategies that could affect a different and more positive outcome. The project serves a need for both groups of students and its success has led to its continuation over five years.

A Californian study used a performance of the play ‘The Laramie Project’ and post-performance activities including drama, to disrupt homophobic attitudes amongst pre-service teachers (Elsbree & Wong 2008). The researchers concluded that the affective instructional interventions (viewing the performance and the subsequent drama activities and discussions) seemed more effective than cognitive instructional conventions on their own (lecture, readings and discussions). They argued for the inclusion of both affective and cognitive approaches to anti-homophobic pedagogy. Also in a North American context, Souto-Manning (2011) used two Boalian theatre games in preparing white teachers to educate a diverse society. The theatre games were used as ‘powerful yet playful and innovative approaches for accessing values and beliefs shaping pre-service teachers’ views of the[ir] world’ (p.997). Souto-Manning found that games as metaphors and sites of possibility can serve as spaces to play with and consider challenging issues such as white supremacy that may be avoided or remain unchallenged in other learning contexts.

A study by Wright (2007) engaged a small group of sixteen pre-service teachers in a series of creative, experiential and drama-based workshops to explore creativity and imagination, how creativity and imagination can enhance pedagogical outcomes and how beginning teachers might make use of them in their teaching. Many indicated that
the small group and reflective nature of the learning meant that the drama-based approach was far more meaningful and lasting than being ‘force fed’ in a lecture theatre (p.51).

A project that shares many common elements with the project in this study is one undertaken over successive years and reported at many stages by Cahill (2005, 2006, 2008, 2011) in which secondary school students worked with groups of pre-service teachers and groups of medical students in a curriculum of shared drama workshops. Her work with teachers is particularly relevant to this study. Cahill’s aims for the teachers were to enhance their capacity to communicate with adolescents as well as to explore the impact of social problems on student engagement in learning. The aims for the secondary school students were for them to enhance skills in drama and their use of the medium to contribute to their community (2005, p.60). Bringing these two groups together creates a community of learners along similar lines to the bringing together of pre-service teachers and people with disabilities in the Teaching for Diversity workshops at the centre of this study. Both projects involve drama for professional learning but more significantly bring together groups of people who ‘learn with and from each other’ (p.65).

In her early analysis (2005) Cahill noticed six key themes critical to the learning experience. These included that the workshops create a level playing space in which teachers and students are equal. The workshop offered a humanising approach in which there is an increased awareness of the ‘other’ (p.66). In this approach young people are given meaningful roles and there is an opportunity for them to learn through teaching the teachers. The drama strategies provoke deep thinking for all participants and access to the discourse is made visible when characters words, actions and thoughts are revealed through the drama. For Cahill this suggests the possibility for ‘profound learning’ when ‘dramatisation makes visible and accessible the discourses that govern thinking and behaviour’ (p.67) because when existing discourses are revealed and understood, the opportunity for the creation of new discourses occurs.

Considerable attention is given to understanding and describing the architecture of this professional learning experience and Cahill outlines a series of meta-questions that
underpin the drama strategies and help frame and orient the workshops (2005). Cahill is concerned that the sole use of naturalistic drama conventions can lead to the replication and reinforcement of dominant stereotypes whereas the antinaturalistic drama devices that she applies can lead to deconstruction of the discourses that shape teacher – student relations. She draws on post-structural theory in examining the strategies and understands that the drama is ‘not itself inherently benign... [the] improvised dramas could inadvertently invite us to demonize, glorify, pity, judge, or blame’ (2011, p.30).

There is a theme running through the literature which underlines the power and potency of applied drama that may work for gain or if mismanaged, for detriment. With the benefit of several iterations of the workshop over time, Cahill’s reflective practitioner research provides close scrutiny and analysis of her carefully honed drama devices to understand how they might work to ‘provide a pedagogy that probes, provokes, and provides a space within which to generate new possibilities’ (p.30).

**Conclusion**

This chapter sweeps with a broad brush across literature that defines and describes the areas of drama in education and the areas of applied drama and applied theatre. This part of the review returned me to my home ground and enabled me to review a long tradition of drama in education and consider the range of practices from which this project emerges. Separating out the features of drama that contribute to good learning has enabled me to view the workshop through these lenses and appreciate how learning occurs in the drama workshop and and why.

This review also considers the literature in the areas of drama and theatre in connection with disability with particular consideration of examples of groups and companies that involve people with disabilities. I have reviewed this literature while thinking about how the range of drama and theatre practices described resonate with those experienced by the members of Fusion Theatre. It has caused me to think about the ways that their drama and theatre experiences have enabled them to do the work they do in the drama workshop. Sometimes through offering good examples and sometimes because of a lack of evidence, this literature has alerted me to the importance of people with disabilities...
having genuine agency not only in their drama and theatre work but in its research and its dissemination.

Finally the chapter considers drama and theatre applied to professional development and in teacher education in particular. Although there are relatively few examples in the literature, each suggests that with careful application of drama that this is an area of great potential, not only because of the cognitive and affective learning achieved through drama as pedagogy, but because of what the experience in drama generally can do for teachers. This is a field in need of further research to which this study contributes.
CHAPTER FOUR

Mapping my conceptual territory

Make a map, not a tracing... What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields... The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group or social formation... A map has multiple entryways...(Deleuze & Guattari 1987, pp.13-14)

In this chapter I map for myself some of the concepts, ideas and theoretical frameworks that inform my thinking in this project. Some of these are concepts that have resonated harmoniously with me when I have encountered them in my reading, providing existing theories for some of the ways I am already enacting and thinking about theory in my practice. Others have resonated with more dissonance at first and have challenged me to think about things differently and in doing so led me to new understandings.

In choosing the concept of a map for this chapter, I declare it to be an active sketching of my conceptual frameworks as a journey that is never complete. Like a rhizome with shoots and connecting nodes, pathways link the features of the map and new paths are constantly being formed. Deleuze and Guattari explain that ‘the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight’ (1987 p.23). Writing this is an active involvement in the mapping of concepts and theoretical territories against the landscapes of my lived experience in education. I map my journey over time, marking and signposting some significant places and spaces – these are stories that help me make sense of the theories and ideas. Alongside these stories I map theoretical concepts as I encounter and interact with them at this time, knowing that the map is open to modification and at the end it will not be finished.

The concepts I map involve the ontological theories of being and how I identify myself, especially in relation to others in the teaching and learning process. They involve the epistemological theories of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the known (McNiff & Whitehead 2010; Morrow & Torres 2002). These concepts also
inform my methodological choices, although these are more closely focussed on in the following chapter. In short, the theories that I present in this chapter relate to how I work with others to create, research and understand the learning experience that is the Teaching for Diversity workshop.

Learning is at the centre of this thesis: how I learn and how I create and present learning experiences that allow others to learn. My epistemological mapping involves a sketching of theory that resonates with my understandings about the ways learning is often best collaborative and dialogic; that participants construct knowledge together and diversity of participants is valuable in this process. In this chapter I map the resonances I find in theories of Critical Pedagogy and roles of the teacher in moving beyond boundaries and teaching to transgress. As a drama educator I map contours within the vast areas of experiential, aesthetic and embodied learning and point out a path that connects to concepts of transformative learning and pedagogies of difference and discomfort. I explain these ideas alongside experiences that seem to shed some light on theories.

I map my thinking around theoretical frameworks for inclusive education and the construction of concepts of disability including the medical and social models of disability and consider what other models might provide new frames of reference.

Finally, I map the post-structuralist conceptual frameworks that serve to create the conditions for transformation in my own learning. I move myself into a zone of discomfort by drawing upon post-structuralist tools to help disrupt my habits of thinking. In particular I indicate how the projects of Deleuze and Guattari prompt and provoke me to consider elements of my project in new and different ways.

**Education and theory of experience**

Every experience is a moving force. (Dewey 1938/71, p.38)

In her book ‘Teaching to Transgress’ (1994), bell hooks begins with reflections on her experiences of education – what she has learned about teaching from her experiences as a student and as a teacher and how this shaped her pedagogy. This caused me to reflect on the ways that my own early experiences of education have influenced the values and
philosophies that I hold. Time serves as a filter and when I think back to the learning and the teaching I experienced throughout the years of my formal education, only a small number of moments or events come vividly to mind.

From grade two I remember the nature table. Our table was covered with natural curiosities we had collected; shells, seed pods, stones and eucalyptus leaves, emperor gum caterpillars and cocoons in a box. These objects, common in nature but foreign to the classroom, were exciting, they seemed like contraband, smuggled into the classroom from the outside world. From my year in grade three I remember the teacher who allowed us to use spare moments in the day to count grains of wheat into a large container. This was a long-term project and in the early days we would enthusiastically count the grains and add the amount to the tally as we worked towards amassing one million. By the middle of the year we had lost interest and had not yet reached a million but when running our hands through the pile of wheat we understood well the vastness of that number. In grade four I remember a man visited our class. He was our teacher’s friend and he was famous for completing a solo crossing of Bass Strait in a canoe. He didn’t talk like a teacher. He answered all our questions. I still remember some of the things he told us and yet I don’t remember one particular thing our teacher told us in that year. In grade six I remember making a strip map for our school trip from Melbourne to Adelaide and including information about towns and features. I remember using the map on our bus journey to Adelaide and I remember vividly so many details from that trip as I physically moved through and stood in the places I’d drawn and written about.

I ask myself why these particular experiences stand out amongst all the experiences of my primary school education. Why did they have particular intensity for me? In a simple analysis, they all involved connections between learners in the classroom, both students and teachers, as well as with the world beyond the traditional classroom such as the natural objects, the visitor and the school trip. Perhaps they are memorable because they were unusual. These experiences were not only communal but also tactile, visual and active, and in the experience of counting wheat, sustained over time, in a way that allowed conceptual learning to dawn upon me and remain in my memory so that
even now I can feel my hands run through the mountain of wheat grains when I think of the number one million.

For me these are some of the educational experiences that I remember despite the passing of so many years and in recalling them at different times of my life and with a professional lens, they have undoubtedly influenced the kind of experiences that I seek to create for my students. There were many painful experiences in my education, mostly unintentionally inflicted upon me, that are remembered and that have taught me valuable lessons as well. In ‘Experience and Education’ Dewey (1938/71) suggests that the quality of an experience can be measured by its influence not only at the time but on later experiences. An experience potentially ‘arouses curiosities, strengthens initiatives, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense’ (p.38) to carry over into the future. As a reflective educator I draw from Dewey’s theory of experience in education to make connections between my experiences as a learner and as a teacher and how I create educational experiences for students.

Dewey (1938/71) proposed his theory of experience in response to criticisms of a new progressive philosophy of education. He viewed traditional education to be focussed on teaching of fixed content imposed by adults on students in ways that were highly organised and structured. The new progressive philosophy of the time provided a more liberal approach to education in which individuality and learning through experience was valued. His concern was that progressive education had to do more than just offer experience. Experience in learning needed to be informed by a theory to ensure that the learners gained as much meaning as possible and a lasting benefit from their experience. Dewey saw a theory of experience as having two principles; continuity and interaction. The principle of continuity of experience involves building on past experiences and applying understandings gained from past experience in future circumstances. Dewey explained that ‘every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after’ (1938/71, p.35). He believed that the most important attitude that can be formed in a learner from an experience is ‘that of desire to go on learning’ (p.48). This is a principle I subscribe to in all my teaching, knowing that content is never enough and an ability and desire to keep on learning is essential in an ever changing world.
The second principle of experience proposed by Dewey is that of interaction between the internal and objective conditions of the experience. An experience is a transaction between an individual (and their needs, desires, purposes and capacities) and the environment of the experience (the situation, participants, materials, texts, ideas and so on). Dewey therefore charges educators with the responsibility for understanding the needs, capacities and prior experiences of individuals when selecting the objective conditions of teaching and learning experiences in order to ensure educative quality and opportunities for positive future growth.

Dewey’s principles of continuity and interaction in experience suggest a constant process of change in the individual resulting from their experiences. Nothing is ever done with; rather there is a constant interplay between past and present experiences and the objective and internal conditions. Dewey’s theory has similarities with Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of ‘becoming’ (1987). As ‘becoming-teacher’ is a continuing process of not ‘being’ but ‘becoming’, I am connected to and interacting with the rhizomatic system of memories of past educational experiences as I view them now with different internal conditions, not only having them interact with years of other accumulated experiences, new experiences, encounters and dialogue with others but also new needs, purposes and desires. This is not a single linear journey. In a Deleuzian sense ‘becoming is not about origins, progressions and ends; rather, it is about lines and intensities’ (Sotirin 2005, p.118). ‘Becoming’ involves an internal flexibility that is ‘responsive, relational, artistic and life-giving – insofar as life is generated through a continual Deleuzian unfolding of thought and practice’ (Davies & Gannon 2009, p.4). In this chapter I draw lines back and forth between particular moments of intensities, past and present, in a process of becoming.

**Beyond boundaries: a critical pedagogy of teachers as students and students as teachers**

As part of my undergraduate degree in education in the 1980s, I took a unit called Drama and Special Education. It was taught by Bob Holden who had undertaken professional development in the United Kingdom with the well known drama educator Dorothy Heathcote. The unit involved us in applying Heathcote’s methods including teacher-in-role in planning and implementing drama workshops for children with
disabilities at a special developmental school called Urimbirra. The model of the unit was such that we all met within the tertiary institution for one hour once a week to collectively plan a two-hour drama session that we would teach two days later at Urimbirra with a debriefing immediately following the workshop.

Usually we came to the planning sessions with a blank slate. Each week had to solve the problem of how to plan a meaningful learning experience that would engage a group of ten to fifteen children many of whom had profound intellectual and physical disabilities. These planning sessions were intense as we threw around ideas and often most of the hour would pass without any firm decisions being made. However, we always managed to come up with a plan by the hour’s end. I remember I often worried we’d never get there and sometimes willed Bob to save the day and just tell us what to do. Bob resisted filling the gaps and listened as we made suggestions. At best I thought he had extreme faith in us and was providing us with a challenge, at worst I thought, ‘Lazy lecturer!’ Occasionally he’d throw us a provocation, ask questions, guide us through offering insights based on his experience and indicate when he thought we were on to something good. He was as excited as we were in the process, and probably as fearful at times. He was our teacher but he was also part of our team and we had a real job to do. We had shared aims and there was a sense of solidarity. Augusto Boal (1995) quotes Che Guevara when he explains that solidarity means taking the same risks. Bob was running the same risks as we were in the teaching and learning process. I learned more than I realised at the time from this experience.

Later on in my teaching I chose to work in the same way with senior drama students and student drama teachers to plan for and work with people with disabilities both in my work with Fusion theatre and Kew Cottages before that. For the last fifteen years during my university teaching, I have applied the model in primary schools where I have joined with student teachers, primary school teachers and primary students collaborate in responding to a brief, the posing of a problem to be solved and planning, presenting and responding to applied drama processes for learning across the curriculum. The project at the centre of this thesis is another example of this pedagogy applied – lecturers, student teachers, people with disabilities working together. Through using this approach in my practice I have come to more fully understand and appreciate Bob’s plan for us, the risk
he took, the trust he invested and the learning that he also derived from the process when he posed problems for us to collectively resolve. These have become lived theories for me, theories in action, and through my research I have come to find an articulation of them within the theories of critical pedagogy.

I have been influenced by Paulo Freire’s ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ (1970/2011) as a key text in the philosophy of critical pedagogy. While Freire’s pedagogy arose out of his work in Third World adult education and empowerment strategies for marginalised groups (Morrow & Torres 2002), educators from all over the world have received his theories and applied them in a range of educational contexts. bell hooks (1994) found in Freire ‘someone who understood learning could be liberatory’ (p.6) and his ideas resonated with hooks as they do with me in teaching within higher education. In ‘Teaching to Transgress’ (1994), hooks celebrates ‘teaching that enables transgressions – a movement against and beyond boundaries’, it is that movement, she explains, ‘which makes education the practice of freedom’ (p.12). While Freire calls for a revolutionary leadership, hooks calls for progressive professors, wholly present in mind, body and spirit who embrace the challenge of self-actualisation for themselves and their students and who are prepared to take risks themselves when encouraging their students to take risks.

Freire criticises a ‘banking’ concept of education in which teachers are assumed to hold all knowledge and students are considered as empty receptacles who passively receive this knowledge. The students’ role is reduced to that of processing and storing information deposited by the teacher. Freire describes this as a dehumanising process (1970/2011) and argues that ‘Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other’(p.72). The banking concept of education is utilised to suppress the development of a critical consciousness or what Freire (1970/2011; 1973) calls ‘conscientizacao’ or conscientisation, a deep awareness of oneself in the world. bell hooks (1994) translated this for herself as ‘critical awareness and engagement’ (p.14). This involves a heightening of consciousness, an awareness of the reality that shapes their lives and the capacity to take action to change it. However, conscientisation leads students to ask questions and this can be feared by
those who favour maintaining the status quo. Freire emphasised the importance of ‘praxis’ – action and reflection on the world in order to change it. In contrast to the ‘banking’ educator, the revolutionary educator creates the conditions for critical thinking. In describing the revolutionary educator, Freire explains:

Her efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. His efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power. To achieve this they must be partners of the students in relations with them. (p.75)

In the examples above Bob and I can be seen to be trusting in the collective creative power of all involved as becoming teachers, active in planning, teaching, reflecting and theorising. We are enacting what Freire would call ‘co-intentional education’ whereby:

Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators. (Freire 1970/2011, p.69)

Common reflection and action is at the basis of the pedagogy that Bob and I employ in these examples as we find a solution to the teacher-student contradiction that Freire proposes. We reconcile the two in that we are simultaneously teachers and learners (Freire 1970/2011). We do this by engaging with the student teachers in what Freire terms ‘problem-posing’ education. In dialogue with the student teachers we are engaged in the critical thinking required to solve a problem – the authentic task of planning, presenting and reflecting upon a drama lesson. According to Freire, pedagogy must be problematic, knowledge acquisition begins with problems and tasks that are relevant to the learners’ immediate situation (Matthews 1980) and learning is dialogic, through ‘subject-subject dialectics’ as knowledge arises out of the contribution of ‘experts’ and that which is latent in the experience of the participants through dialogue (Morrow & Torres 2002, p.46). For me, actively engaging with students who are becoming teachers through practice of teaching, while simultaneously engaging with theory, seems the most logical and natural approach to teacher education. There is also something more in it for me as I am learning too. In this I share with hooks (1994) an interest in ‘pedagogical strategies that may be not just for our students but for ourselves’ (p.134). I see teaching and learning bound together as two sides of a coin with the substance and
the value being at the centre. I share this belief with Maxine Greene (1978) when she explains that students ‘are most likely to be stirred to learn when they are challenged by teachers who themselves are learning, who are breaking with what they have too easily taken for granted’ (p.51).

**Teaching for transformation**

In 1997 an unusual phone call was put through to my office at the university. The man on the other end of the line had spoken to many others before being put through to me. He spoke with an accent and a speech impediment and I had to listen carefully to understand. He explained that he wanted to get a drama group started for people with intellectual disabilities in his local area and he wanted to know if I knew of anyone who could lead the group. I said I’d be happy to talk more about the ideas and he made arrangement for me to meet him and community development professionals at the municipal offices. Having not long returned to work after the birth of my second child, I did not desire any additional voluntary work at that time; although I recognised an important opportunity. I agreed to help establish a group on the understanding that I would be inviting drama education students to work with us in the project. When I put the idea to the university students some were interested but many were not interested or unavailable. A small group who signed up also recognised an opportunity for learning beyond the formal curriculum. The drama group eventually grew to become Fusion Theatre Company.

Giroux (1997), building on Freire, presents a concept of emancipatory authority that suggests that ‘teachers are bearers of critical knowledge, rules, and values through which they consciously articulate and problematize their relationship to each other, to students, to subject matter, and to the wider community’ (p.103). This, he argues, provides the scaffolding for teachers to define themselves as transformative intellectuals, who are not only concerned with individual achievement and traditional forms of academic success but to the concerns of social transformation. This involves ‘educating students to take risks and to struggle within ongoing relations of power in order to be able to alter the grounds on which life is lived’ (p.103). As transformative intellectuals, the radical educator brings students into the process of recognising and
identifying with oppressed groups, those who are marginalised or excluded, and engaging with and for them in transformative action towards social justice.

These were the opportunities that I acknowledged during that phone call in 1997. For Alex, the caller, a man with an intellectual disability, finding someone prepared to support his dream to begin a new drama group represented an important opportunity. I recognised an opportunity to become involved myself and bring student teachers together with members of the community with disabilities to work creatively together in drama. This opportunity offered possibilities for not only individual transformations but social transformation as two diverse groups of people are brought together – people with disabilities in the community and university students. After the workshop the student teachers admitted they had felt some anxiety anticipating the first workshop and approached it with caution. By the end of the first sessions they had come to understand that their fears were based in ignorance and as one student realised, ‘I gained more than I could ever give’. Together we invested and learned that teaching a group of such diverse ability sharpened our skills in awareness and sensitivity to needs of learners and the ability to adapt and respond in the moment (Raphael 2003). As Giroux explains, ‘Pedagogy is about the intellectual, emotional and ethical investment we make as part of our attempt to negotiate, accommodate and transform the world in which we find ourselves’ (1997, p.226). Together we came to understand a new pedagogy of openness.

The artistry of teaching and teacher as artist

I am nine years old and I’m standing in the kitchen, the hub of the house with my art works spread all over the kitchen table. ‘I am going to be an artist when I grow up’ I announce to the family. ‘Don’t be an artist! You’ll never have any money’ is my father’s instant response. He voiced his own justification for having shelved his own artist ambitions for the kinds of jobs that could support a family. I did not become an artist, I became a teacher.

Thirty-five years later, most of my faculty colleagues have left for the day and I am alone in the drama studio. I am preparing for my early morning class the next day. It is primary arts education and I have planned a class on drama and children’s literature. I have chosen a range of texts that all have black and white images and a sense of
mystery about them. I clear the space and draw blinds to darken the room. Beneath a single spotlight I begin to build an installation. I arrange a tower of rostra blocks and carefully drape them in lengths of black velvet fabric. I take care to arrange the texts, carefully choosing each page to be displayed. To reflect one of the illustrations of a particularly mysterious moment, I add some artefacts – an ancient book, some trailing vines and a sandalwood scented candle. To add to the chiaroscuro effect, tomorrow I will come in before any students arrive and light the candle, music will be playing (I have chosen Albinoni’s Adagio in G Minor) and this is what the students will experience from the moment they enter the room. I have experienced a state of flow when creating this aesthetic experience and I can’t wait until tomorrow when the drama education class I have planned will unfold and develop from the momentary experience shared in this beginning.

The artist that was in me as a young girl did not simply disappear. My artistic expression is in my teaching. My classes are my creations and the ‘artist’ in me drives my pedagogy. I seek to create aesthetic learning experiences for my own sake, for clearly it satisfies a desire in me to create. However, I desire, above all, to create experiences for students. I design learning experiences that unfold, to engage, to leave students thinking, to invite wonder, to surprise and to disrupt just as art can do for a percipient. In addition, the experience invites them to be creative themselves, become participants in the aesthetic experience. In my mind and practice, art and education are inextricably linked – for students and teachers. Although often spoken of in unified terms, art and aesthetics are not one and the same and as Best (1992) reminds us, to fail to recognise the distinction may contribute to the trivialisation of the potential of arts in education. Through the aesthetic, we can come to appreciate the artistic (Martin-Smith 2005). Granger (2006) quotes Dewey when he explains the relationship between art and aesthetics thus:

Art objects may well be the most potent and ready source of such enhanced, aesthetic experience, being intentionally created to refine and intensify in certain ways the experience of the perceiver. But they are not, to Dewey’s way of thinking, the sole or even principal medium of the aesthetic. Art, he tells us, is best seen more liberally as ‘a quality that permeates an experience’, whereby, in any number of life contexts, the meanings of objects and events become ‘the matter of a clarified, coherent, and intensified or “impassioned” experience’. (p.45)
When I consider ‘quality that permeates an experience,’ I draw a connection, a trail that leads right back to my teacher in grade two who laid out the nature table and Miss Smith in grade three who dreamed up the mountain of wheat that has become fixed in my memory. I can define a trail directly from these experiences to the objects I bring in and experiences I design for my own classes. I chart my living theory of teacher as artist alongside the theories of others who have acknowledged and described the teacher as artist and artistry in teaching (Dewey 1964; Greene 1978; Eisner 1979; Schön 1987; Simpson, Jackson & Aycock 2005; Winston 2010; Dunn & Stinson 2011). Eisner (1979) presents a thesis that teaching is ‘an art guided by educational values, personal needs, and by a variety of beliefs or generalizations that a teacher holds to be true’ (p.153). He suggests that when performed with skill and grace, teaching can become an aesthetic experience for both the student and the teacher. Simpson, Jackson and Aycock (2005) draw upon Dewey’s analogy of teacher as artist and his observations that ‘artistic teaching entails enthusiasm, technique, imagination and vision’ (p.14). These authors describe such educational experiences as ‘aesthetically fulfilling, emotionally exquisite, intellectually delicious, and personally rewarding’ (p.19).

Maxine Greene (1978) focuses her attention on the artistic-aesthetic in education not only, she explains, out of a belief in the intrinsic value of the arts, but because of a concern for the anaesthetic character of many educational institutions that serve to render students ‘passive – gazers not see-ers; hearers, not listeners’ (p.169). She refers to the notion of ‘wide-awareness’ (p.42), a kind of heightened awareness that involves both ‘cognitive clarity’ and ‘existential concern’ (p. 48) and the importance of this for both learners and their teachers. Such wide-awareness, Greene suggests, can come through teaching of art and aesthetics that can ‘open doors’ and ‘move persons to transform’. She explains that ‘the world that the arts illumine is a shared world, because the realities to which the arts give rise emerge through acts of communication, the encounters we are enabling students to seek are never wholly autonomous or private. ... Communities of the wide-aware may take place’ (1995, p.150). She refers to both encounters of artworks and practical engagement with art forms when she explains that these can provide sensuous openings, new perceptions, new perspectives and increased consciousness. Furthermore, Greene suggests the arts liberate and transform when they

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provide shocks of awareness that can move us from immersion in the everyday and impel us to wonder and question.

It is not uncommon for the arts to leave us somehow ill at ease or to prod us beyond acquiescence. They may, now and then, move us into spaces where we can envision other ways of being and ponder what it might signify to realise them. (1995, p.135)

However, it is not just encounters with the arts, it is the teacher, Greene suggests, who makes the difference (1999). She expresses hope for educators who are committed to an emancipatory pedagogy based in ‘an unabashed love for the arts’ (1995, p.135), who bring a ‘cherishing’ and also a ‘questioning’ (1999, p.15).

Like Greene, Winston (2010) considers what might counter the dominant technical-rationalist approach to education and restore a kind of wonder and heightened awareness. In his consideration of the place of beauty in education, Winston finds the answer to be not just in the arts, but specifically in beauty.

Beauty can soften the technical, find a valued place for the mysterious and the uncertain, remind us that the technically excellent is not always that which we value most in the way of human achievement. It introduces a language of pleasure into education, for teacher and learners, seeing value in the sensuous, more immediate rewards of the aesthetic... Beauty’s emphasis on experience and holistic achievement rather than skills and technical progression is particularly significant in the education of the emotions. (p.134)

Winston calls for teachers who can recognise the rich potential for the aesthetic and the power of beauty and who can create spaces and recognise opportunities where students are able to immerse themselves in it. He calls for teachers who are able to construct lessons as narratives planned ‘as something shapely and complete, with an eye to its patterns and its rhythms, its discords and its harmonies, its textures and its colours, as well as the strictures of curriculum content’ (p.136).

In 2009 as a visitor to the University of Warwick, I had the opportunity to attend and observe one of Joe Winston’s drama education workshops for Masters of Education students. I noted the way he had prepared it, carefully selecting the text, images and music for his process drama workshop. The workshop was a series of selected drama strategies that unfolded meaningfully as he worked deftly with students unpredictable responses to the tasks and questions he posed. It was thoughtfully paced with moments
of high energy through to quiet contemplation and stillness. I knew the care that had been put into the planning because I recognised the elements of preparation in my own practice. At the beginning of the three hour workshop I had to explain that, much to my disappointment, I needed to leave before it was due to finish, in order to get a lift back to where I was staying. Joe quipped ‘Oh then you’ll miss the best bit!’ In this light-hearted comment I recognised a sense of dissatisfaction, shared by me, that I would not experience the playing out of the workshop to its carefully considered and potentially satisfying conclusion. I recognised this because I have frequently felt this myself when students or observers of my classes have arrived late or departed early and have not been able to experience the full story of what I had planned – the workshop as narrative, something ‘shapely and complete’. In observing Joe Winston’s teaching I had the opportunity to shift perspectives between teacher and student and come to appreciate something about the aesthetic learning experience for both.

I return to Eisner to understand more of what it means to say that teaching is an art. Teaching as a source of aesthetic experience is one of four senses in which Eisner (1979) considers teaching as an art. In a second sense he suggests teaching is an art when the teacher makes qualitative judgements in such things as tempo, tone, pace and use of space towards qualitative ends. Teaching is also an art when, like artistic practice, it involves a highly complex combination of automaticity and inventiveness responding to ‘qualities and contingencies that are unpredicted’ (p.154). In a fourth sense teaching is an art because the ends it achieves are emergent, they are created in process. I am struck by the similarities between what Eisner describes as elements of artistry in teaching and the teaching practice of any good drama teacher, particularly in the teaching of process drama. The qualities he describes sit comfortably within the dramatic elements that we draw upon to create drama and theatre. However, as all of the educational philosophers I refer to here suggest, such artistry in teaching can, and perhaps should, be an aim for all teachers in all areas and is not exclusively the domain of teachers of the arts or confined to classes in the arts.

**Drama, aesthetics and a pedagogy of grace**

It is 2006 and I am directing a Fusion Theatre production. The ensemble has spent some hours over a few weeks exploring the themes within the story of Icarus and Daedalus.
We are working through a process of shaping the scene for an audience and together we have made some decisions about how to represent the story. We have reached the point in the story when Icarus begins to soar through the air and a large piece of blue fabric representing sky is stretched across the stage to conceal the actors who have, to this point, played the roles of Icarus and Daedalus. Projected onto this is a shadow puppet version of Icarus who, to the strains of music, acrobatically soars ever closer to the sun failing to heed his father’s warning. As the sun melts the wax on his wings, single feathers begin to float from the sky until finally Icarus falls and drowns in the sea. Alex and Paul allow the blue fabric to drop to the floor and I direct Alex to remove it ready for the next scene. However, instead of whisking it away, Alex acts intuitively and slowly, arm over arm pulls the fabric closely into his chest and cradles gracefully in his arms this bundle of blue that we all understand to be the dead body of Icarus. For some moments we are all spellbound by this simple action in the drama. There is a silence and then a quickening of the heart as we realise we are deeply feeling the loss of the young Icarus and understanding for the first time what it meant for Daedalus to provide his son with the means of freedom and then to tragically lose him. ‘That was beautiful,’ I said out loud at length, ‘let’s keep that in!’ The ensemble agreed.

The simple embodied action by Alex created an intense moment, a moment in which people connected and a highly aesthetic moment that opened a space for a new level of shared understanding. The fact that those few minutes, out of many hours of rehearsals, have stayed vividly in my memory for so long is testimony to the significance of the moment and a reminder that I need to reflect upon it to understand the special powers of the aesthetic in teaching and learning for revealing meaning.

Nicholson (1999) describes the aesthetic as being about feeling fully alive and as being ‘a particular kind of knowing and feeling which allows us to be both fully “present” in the moment and also conscious of its past and future significance’ (p.81). Louis Arnaud Reid (1986) in ‘Ways of Understanding in Education’ emphasises the aesthetic character of artistic experience that promotes a particular kind of ‘noticing’. He describes the aesthetic as ‘absorbed attention to the interesting forms and other qualities of whatever are apprehended “for itself” or “for its own sake”’ (p.140). In the words of Greene, students may through aesthetic experience, ‘see more, and feel more, and hear
more, and reach further and maybe become something more’ (interviewed by Taylor 2000d, p.4).

Nicholson (2005) reminds us that the aesthetic is a discourse on the body and drama as an embodied pedagogy is ‘composed of material elements, of bodies and voices in space, and the physical embodiment of knowledge and understanding is integral to the art form itself’ (p.57). This is at odds with ‘our Western heritage’ that has ‘defined learning as a mental process that takes place in the mind – never mind that we cannot locate the “mind”’ (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner 2007, p.189). This separation of mind and body goes right back to the ancient Greeks and was further described by Descartes in the seventeenth century in whose honour it became known as Cartesian mind/body dualism. This notion of the superiority of the mind that has persisted has meant that learning today is commonly equated with cognitive processes and knowing through thinking with a tendency for the body to be ignored (Zembylas 2007). The focus is on one aspect, the mind rather than the whole person – mind, body and spirit (Merriam et al 2007). The actors and director in my story thought they knew all they needed to know in order to recreate the story of Daedalus and Icarus; however, through embodying the story through drama, and witnessing Alex cradling Icarus, we encountered a deeper knowledge and found new meanings within the story. Gallagher (2005) explains that one of the significant ways that participants in drama ‘engage aesthetically is through critically examining and physically embodying their own and others sensuous perceptions and interpretations of a shared world’ (p.93). In the shared space of the drama workshop that invites physical expression and physical contact between the participants, a level of trust and sensitivity is important, but so too is ‘a more complex understanding of how the body is culturally and socially constructed and experienced by different members of each drama group, and how the discourses of the body might be enacted, interpreted and re-interpreted in the process of the work itself’ (Nicholson 2005, p.59).

A broader understanding of embodied or somatic learning is sought by Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007) and for this they draw upon Amann (2003) who proposes there are four dimensions to somatic knowing – kinaesthetic, sensory, affective and spiritual. Kinaesthetic learning involves the physical action and movement
of the body. Sensory learning refers to what we learn through our senses. Affective learning involves the emotional or feeling dimensions because we feel things in our body. The spiritual dimension can also be considered embodied because it involves ‘meaning-making through music, art, imagery, symbols, and rituals and overlaps or intersects with the three other dimensions’ (p.195). This kind of meaning-making, that often involves playfulness, openness, creativity and imagination, can lead to the making of new connections as disparate ideas and experiences are put together in new ways allowing for the visualisation of new possibilities (Merriam et al 2007). Graves (1997) prefers the term ‘grace’ to spirituality and identifies seven characteristics of grace in pedagogy. Grace is transforming, healing, it transcends the ego, it opens the possible, it points to what is right, it enhances creativity and finally, grace is surprising. Graves explains, ‘Grace cuts through the boundaries of culture, language, race, social class, economic level, handicaps, intelligence level, geography and birth. Grace interrupts the expected and creates its own channel’ (p.19). However, grace in learning is difficult to plan for and if grace is to occur then there must be space left for it and conditions of dialogue and listening. As Graves explains, ‘If grace ever comes into pedagogy, it will be there not because it was planned but because the conditions were right and because some sensitive soul had the wisdom not to thwart it’ (p.20).

In his consideration of ‘authentic education’ Peter Abbs (2003) acknowledges the need for educators to engage feelings and the latent energy of students’ aesthetic and existential responses. Releasing this kind of energy suggests a responsibility for teachers to manage if not harness it in order to make the most of the experience. Here I find a need to map a path back to Dewey’s theory of experience to pay attention to the responsibility for not merely opening up opportunity but for maximising potential for learning. There is much agreement about the power of the aesthetic experience in teaching and learning, variously described by those referenced above as having the ability to prod, shock, illuminate, awaken, open, move, liberate, transform and even leave us ill at ease. In mapping my conceptual territory I follow these leads to other pedagogies and conceptual frameworks.
Transformative learning and pedagogies of difference and discomfort

It is 8.45 am and I am in the performing arts studio with my colleagues, five actors from Fusion Theatre. We have moved all chairs to the outer edges to clear the room as much as possible to prepare the space for a large group of participants and we are reminding each other of the planned activities for the drama workshop that we are about to present. Soon the university students from two tutorial groups within the unit ‘Teaching for Diversity’ and their lecturers will arrive. The students have been told that instead of their regular tutorial group in their regular tutorial room, today’s class will be a drama-based workshop presented by members of Fusion Theatre who have intellectual disabilities. At nine o’clock the students start filtering in. The environment of the studio is unfamiliar to most, there are no tables to hide behind and many make a bee-line for the chairs at the outskirts where they sit themselves down. Some retreat to check their phones or turn their backs to engage in tight conversations between two or three. In this waiting time before the workshop begins, the Fusion Theatre members have decided to mix with the university students. They make eye-contact and smile and manage to engage a few students in a few words of conversation. Amongst the students there are some faces easily beaming with anticipation but most show signs of being ill at ease. The space, the people and the pedagogy all seem different and strange.

The ability to prod, shock, illuminate, awaken, open, move, liberate, transform and even leave us ill at ease is the capacity ascribed to arts and aesthetic considerations in teaching and learning. This has propelled me towards following leads to find and map pedagogies of transformational learning, particularly in the context of higher education.

In his book ‘Pedagogies of Difference’, Trifonus (2003) brings together educational theorists and practitioners in the fields of feminist pedagogy, critical pedagogy, anti-racist or post-colonial pedagogy, and gay and lesbian pedagogy to reflect upon and articulate pedagogies of difference. This work highlights the need to acknowledge the specificity of difference as well as the need to try to bridge the negative values of difference. Ultimately the aim is to work towards ‘an inclusive articulation of difference through the conceptualization of pedagogical possibilities that create an openness toward the horizons of the other’ (p.4).
In his contribution to this edition, Giroux (2003) suggests that if the academy is to respond to racial injustice, class hierarchies, and the politics of inclusion, progressive educators will need to find ways to move beyond a reliance on text-based strategies and connect the work within the university to broader struggles in society. Giroux acknowledges the political and pedagogical risk of combining theoretical rigour with social relevance will be outweighed by gains in social justice; however, he does not elaborate on how this could occur and makes no mention of experiential and embodied approaches. This study has at its centre a project that brings people with disabilities as workshop leaders, into a university where they would be unlikely to ever be accepted as students. It offers an example of a bridge between the university and the community and an approach that goes beyond the text-based and theoretical approaches. I take the opportunity to map this project against pedagogies of difference.

Boler and Zembylas (2003) use the term ‘pedagogy of discomfort’ (p.111) as a necessary kind of pedagogy that shifts both educators and students beyond their comfort zones in order to recognise emotional habits and taken-for-granted or hegemonic assumptions that are often invisible and open them up for interrogation and transformation. This, they suggest, requires a good degree of emotional labour in the often unsettling process of ‘deconstructing identity, worldviews and, ethical beliefs’ and ‘(re)constructing one’s own beliefs, values and assumptions’ (p.114). There is a discomfort involved in giving up simple binary oppositions but they call for a pedagogy that embraces ambiguity. They argue that educational processes need not be comforting. They suggest that a pedagogy of discomfort which works at both cognitive and emotional levels, is ultimately positive because of the ways in which it encourages ‘vitalism, critical thinking and new ways of being in the world... [it can offer] a new sense of interconnection with others and expand the borders of comfort zones’ (p.133).

Mezirow’s (1991, 2000) theory of transformative learning evolves out of his work with adult learners. He describes transformative learning as the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference including our meaning perspectives, habits of mind and mind-sets, ‘to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide
Like the critical consciousness raising and dialogic pedagogies proposed by Freire and Giroux, Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning depends upon participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to challenge assumptions, provide insight and inform action. Mezirow’s focus is more on personal transformation than social transformation. For such transformation to occur something must challenge previously held assumptions and precipitate critical reflection. Mezirow’s transformative learning theory begins with experience, a disorienting dilemma, which is then interpreted in further phases of reflection and rationalisation.

I am interested in the catalyst for transformation, which is according to Mezirow’s theory, the ‘disorienting dilemma’. Such a dilemma could be a life-changing experience such as death, illness or loss of job. However, Mezirow suggests it could equally be an eye-opening discussion, a book, poem, painting or any challenge to an established perspective and I propose it could be a drama workshop. There are echoes of Boler and Zembylas’ pedagogy of discomfort when Mezirow suggests such challenges ‘are painful; they often call into question deeply held personal values and threaten our very sense of self’ (1991, p.168). Dewey also contended that learners are prompted to learn when they experience the disequilibrium of uncertainty or are presented with a problem to be solved (Simpson, Jackson & Aycock 2005). The role of disequilibrium in learning is also central to the developmental theorists Piaget and Bruner (Reushle 2005). Greene (1997) also recognises that ‘disorder’, ‘dislocations’ and times when ‘what was once familiar abruptly appears strange’ can propel individuals to learn as they seek to ‘reconstitute meaning, to close the gaps, to make sense once again’ (pp.141-142).

There is a common theme of disorientation, dislocation, disequilibrium and discomfort that resonates with the potential to ‘prod, shock and move’ attributed to arts and aesthetic considerations in teaching and learning. In this thesis I ask to what extent the diversity workshop (or some aspect of it) provides a disruption or a disorienting dilemma? To what extent might it offer a catalyst for transformation? And if it does, for some, how does this occur?
Theoretical frameworks for disability and inclusive education

It is 1987 and I have accepted an artist in residency at Kew Cottages, a large residential facility for people with disabilities. I am there to run a drama workshop once a week for a group of thirteen residents and two support workers. I note that the support workers refer to the participants as ‘clients’ and they are familiar with their pathologies and needs. I’m told Bobby is paraplegic and is inseparable from his wheelchair, Wade is autistic and mute, George has Down syndrome, Krissy has Tourette syndrome so she’ll just keep saying the same thing over and over and, by the way, none of them can read or write. I have respect for the relative expertise of the disability workers and feel tempted to head off to the library to learn more about the various syndromes and conditions but for some reason I resist. The energy and thought involved in preparing the workshop takes all my time. Each week I take an opportunity to go over my carefully considered plan with the support workers before the workshop. They warn me not to expect too much and prepare me gently for failure by warning me that the clients almost certainly won’t be able to do some of the things that I have in mind. I know that they think I am unrealistic in my expectations but I don’t know what is not possible until we have tried. In the weeks that follow drama allows us to visit imaginary worlds. We become involved in finding lost campers, serving demanding customers, freeing a slave, opening a restaurant and other adventures in imagined worlds that cause, I am told, small miracles to occur. Bobby chooses to get out of his chair, Wade finds his voice, Annie sticks up for herself, Gina is focussed on the task and Geoff shows us he can write. At the end of the term, one of the support workers confides in me saying ‘I feel so ashamed. I would never have thought that they could do the things they do in drama’.

There are a many competing perspectives and discourses on disability as well as a variety of views on how these are named and described. The story I recount of my work at Kew Cottages reveals some perspectives. I now turn to a consideration of theoretical perspectives and models of disability and will return to the story above to map these in relation to my own perspectives.

The medical/individual model

One traditionally held view of disability is often referred to as the medical model. While there are few who would claim to support or hold such a view, it is one that is pervasive
and many have written about it particularly in relation to contrasting models of disability (Oliver 1990, 1990a, 1996, 2009; Brisenden 1998; Shakespeare 2006). The medical model involves the diagnosis of individual defects in a person. Disability is viewed as a deficit; an illness, a syndrome or a condition. Such a view renders a person with a disability as less than ‘normal’. It follows that a person with a disability might be ‘normalised’ through medical management in the form of therapy, remediation or special care in order to allow a person to participate in society as ‘normally’ as possible. A medical diagnosis makes it possible to apply a label so that a person becomes known as having autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and so on. This puts significant power into the hands of medical professionals especially when such a diagnosis might then determine a person’s entitlements such as access to care, housing, education or financial support. A deficit view of disability leads to an erosion of self-esteem and a person with a disability is at risk of becoming caught up in a cycle of dependency.

Oliver (1990, 1996) suggests that what is commonly known as a medical model is more appropriately referred to as an ‘individual model’ of disability because the oppressive elements of this model are more than those imposed by medicine and diagnoses. In the individual model of disability the ‘problem’ is seen to reside in the individual with a disability. The individual has a lack of ability and must adapt in order to fit in to society as it exists. He describes it as ‘a personal tragedy theory’ (1990, p. 10).

Within the context of education, the medical model is aligned to traditional special education with its roots in medicine and psychology. Special education teachers tend to be focused on understanding the special needs of students by becoming familiar with diagnoses and causes of their specific defects, disorders, illnesses and syndromes (Slee 2011). Slee refers to an essentialist perspective on disability that regards the disability of an individual as their essential condition. Within the context of inclusive education Slee (1998/2011) claims that proponents of an essentialist perspective identify and treat ‘those whose pathologies “naturally” exclude them from regular academic and social entitlement’ and educators adopting this perspective ‘merely respond to practical problems presented by the individual differences of children’ (p. 67).
The social/relational model

A social model of disability has been advocated by the disability movement and widely accepted over recent decades as an alternative to the medical/individual model. This model, named and described by Oliver in the 1980s, shifts the ‘problem’ of disability from the individual to being a ‘problem’ of a disabling society. Oliver explains: ‘It is not individual limitations, of whatever kind, which are the cause of the problem but society's failure to provide appropriate services and adequately ensure the needs of disabled people are fully taken into account in its social organisation’ (1990, p.3). Therefore society and environments place limitations on people with disability rather than the people with disability having the limitation. These limitations are barriers to inclusion and may involve negative attitudes, inaccessible environments, inflexible systems and inadequate support (Crow 1996). The solution to the problem is not in the individual treatment of the person with a disability but rather in social change through the removal of barriers in society.

In the Scandinavian context a relational model of disability brings together the individual and the social or environmental models explaining that disability is both relative and situational. The focus has moved from the person with a disability and their essential condition to the obstacles in the environment as they affect people (Ineland 2005). A relational model of disability is useful in that it can be seen as existing on a ‘shifting scale between the individual and institutional level’ (Ineland 2005, p.751).

The social model, while being widely accepted within the field, has come up against some criticism. These criticisms mainly arise out of the basic concept that the social model is not about the personal experience of impairment but the collective experience of disablement (Oliver 2009). Priestly (2003) redefines both the individual and social models to reveal a more complex view of disability. He elaborates upon the individual model by considering it as having two strands: biological and psychological and suggests the social model also has two strands; cultural and structural. Priestly argues that the interesting questions about disability are to be found in understanding disability as being both individual and social and in the considerable overlapping areas between the four themes: biological, psychological, cultural and structural.
As a person with a disability Crow (1996) originally embraced the social model but like Priestly has come to understand its limitations. She is concerned that a focus on disability in a disabling society and rejection of the medical model has silenced any discussion of impairments (loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function) and how these are experienced by individuals. She argues that many people are frustrated by impairments; these are part of their lived experience and ought not to be silenced as these impairments will remain even when any barriers to inclusion have been removed. Crow concedes that turning the focus to impairment may increase the possibility for viewing disability as personal tragedy. However, she suggests that this is also a social construct as ‘tragic’ is not an inevitable way of thinking about impairment. She argues people who experience impairments should apply their own meanings to these experiences and calls for a renewed social model that recognises disability and impairment incorporating a holistic understanding and potential for change.

**The affirmative model**

Building on the social model of disability, Swain and French (2000) propose the affirmative model that has emerged from the disability arts movement. The affirmative model ‘is essentially a non-tragic view of disability and impairment which encompasses positive social identities, both individual and collective, for disabled people grounded in the benefits of life style and life experience of being impaired or disabled’ (p.569). Swain and French suggest that while the social model redefines ‘the problem’ of disability as a consequence of a disabling society, both the social and medical model suggest a tragic view of disability. The medical or individual model suggests that a person experiences disability as a personal tragedy while the social model suggests a person with a disability is oppressed by a society that is disabling. It is no less tragic that a person is, for example, restricted in accessing public transport or entering a building (Swain and French 2000). As Hickey-Moody (2006) suggests, the ways in which bodies with disabilities are understood in the medical and social discourses ‘mark a limit in thought that needs to be moved beyond’ (p. 190).

Swain and French propose a non-tragic view that shifts the focus towards ‘disability as a positive, personal and collective identity, and disabled people leading fulfilled and
satisfied lives’ (p. 571). Despite widespread acceptance of a social model, it would come as a surprise to many non-disabled people to know that a person with a disability could lead a rich life and be pleased and proud to be the person that he or she is (Swain & French 2000; Simmons, Blackmore & Bayliss 2008).

‘Nothing about us without us’ is a slogan taken up by the disability movement (Charlton 1998). The affirmative model is one that needs to be held by disabled people about disabled people as they present positive images of themselves as valid individuals with a right to be ‘equal, but different’ (Swain & French 2000, p.578). The importance of the arts in presenting an affirmative view of disability has been widely discussed (Swain, French & Cameron 2003; Hickey-Moody 2007; Cameron 2009). Swain and French (2000) explain Disability Arts is a powerful way for positive identity to be expressed:

Through ‘song lyrics, poetry, writing, drama and so on, disabled people have celebrated difference and rejected the ideology of normality in which disabled people are devalued as ‘abnormal’. They are creating images of strength and pride, the antithesis of dependency and helplessness. (p.577-8)

Also working in the field of the arts, specifically with dancers with intellectual disabilities, Hickey-Moody (2008) cautions that thinking disability as socially constructed can take the focus away from disability as being embodied by the individual. She alerts us to the concern that individual experiences of disability can be overlooked. Allan (2005) also argues the importance of disability arts as a powerful form of ideological critique that celebrates difference and provides opportunities for reimagining disability. The significance of artistic practice for celebrating difference is a common theme in studies of theatre companies for and with people with disabilities (Ineland 2005; Eckard & Myers 2009). Furthermore, Ineland and Sauer (2007) claim that the practice of theatre is emancipatory when it provides people with disabilities with ‘an instrument with which they deal with their experiences of ambivalence in relation to the surrounding environment’ (p.56) and also provides an instrument through which to express their individuality to a wider audience. Hickey-Moody (2007) takes this further by suggesting that when people with disabilities are engaged in performing arts they generate new affects that provide a way of fighting back against stereotypes because ‘theatre is an affective realm that…changes the ways that bodies with intellectual disability are thought’ (p.81).
I now map this discussion back to the beginning of this section and the story of my artist-in-residency at Kew Cottages and consider this in relation to concepts of disability. At the time of my residency at Kew I was not thinking in terms of concepts or models of disability and only sought to do the job that was asked of me; to provide the arts experiences of drama and theatre for this particular group. I was aware that the context of the residency would require me to find a suitable approach and would require some flexibility and experimentation in the drama work which would be the case with any new group. When I encountered the support workers at the Kew Cottages workshops I found them to have compassion for the clients in their care. They had an understanding of the clinical features of their clients’ disabilities that was an important part of their job in caring for individuals and attending to their needs. Their orientation was towards the medical, individual and essentialist model and focussing on individuals’ disabilities, they were focussed on what they (tragically) would not be able to do. On the other hand, I was naive in my understanding of the particular features and characteristics of syndromes and conditions and yet resisted the impulse to go away and study these areas. I realised that if I was not focussed on the limitations posed by particular disabilities I remained open to the possibility that the participants would be able to succeed. I was prepared to take the risk and find out what was possible and fail if necessary and then try something new. The support workers were there to provide support based on their expertise and understanding of individual needs. My focus was on removing barriers to participation through working to provide enabling structures in the arts experience. Frequently the support workers were surprised by what was possible. Ultimately, through the drama and theatre experience, the participants were able to express themselves positively both individually and collectively and through what they were able to achieve they changed the ways the disability support workers thought about them.

Although not thinking philosophically about concepts of disability at the time, I became aware that I held a view different to the support workers. Approaching the workshops from an arts perspective and by thinking about what participants can do rather than on what they can’t do, I was adopting an affirmative model – focussed on possibilities and ways to rethink difference and disability.
A ‘crowbar in a willing hand’: putting Deleuze and Guattari to work

[Deleuze] calls his kind of philosophy ‘pragmatics’ because its goal is the invention of concepts that do not add up to a system of belief or an architecture of propositions that you either enter or you don’t, but instead pack a potential in the way a crowbar in a willing hand envelops an energy of prying (Massumi in Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. xv)

Earlier in this chapter I described the concept of transformative learning and the importance of disruption, discomfort and a disorienting dilemma in promoting such learning. For this study I draw upon the post-structuralist conceptual frameworks that serve to create the conditions for transformation in my own learning. In particular I indicate how the projects of Deleuze and the negotiations of Deleuze together with Guattari provide the conceptual tools, like a crowbar in a willing hand, to prompt and provoke me to consider elements of my project in new and different ways. Deleuze’s own image for a concept is a ‘toolbox’ to be opened up and put to work by others. And so it is that I take up and put to work Deleuzian concepts of rhizomes, affects, smooth and striated spaces, assemblages, territorialization, differenciation, desire, becoming, and lines of flight.

As a practitioner, my foray into post-structuralist theory has been far from easy or comfortable as I have struggled at times to grasp many of these concepts, keep hold of them and gain the confidence to fold them into my praxis. While some of the concepts jumped out at me and seemed immediately useful, many of the texts and ideas within them have proved challenging and I have read and re-read them until the language has seeped into my consciousness and become more familiar. I have persisted in the task by understanding the effort involved as a leveraging open of spaces in my own mind and one that is necessarily uncomfortable because it is disrupting habits of thinking. It is worth the effort because philosophy provides lenses that afford the prospect of finding something new and understanding something in a different way. Allan (2008) explains that it is the imaginative function of philosophy which is of greatest value for it serves ‘to take us from the impasse in which we find ourselves to new beginnings’ (p. 56). St.Pierre (2011) warns that ‘If we don’t read the theoretical and philosophical literature, we have nothing much to think with during analysis except normalised discourses that seldom explain the ways things are’ (p. 614). In the words of Deleuze, philosophy ‘is imagination which crosses domains, orders and levels, knocking down partitions, co-
extensive with the world, guiding our bodies and inspiring our souls’ (Deleuze 1994, p.22, quoted in Allan 2008, p.56).

My starting point was Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘A Thousand Plateaus’ (1987) which they invite us to read as an open system or a rhizome composed of plateaus wherein ‘Each plateau can be read starting anywhere and can be applied to any other plateau’ (p. 24). Upon their invitation I began with a rhizomatic reading of this text, other works by Deleuze and the work of scholars who have found ways to apply Deleuzian concepts particularly within educational contexts. My rhizomatic reading of the texts is non-linear and involves moving nomadically from here to there mapping different concepts with which I find resonances or my own plateaus of intensities. ‘Reading with love’ is what Deleuze calls this intensive way of reading and making contact with what is outside the text. It is ‘a flow meeting other flows... tearing the book to pieces, getting it to interact with other things, absolutely anything...’ (1995, p. 9). Mine is not a logical, systematic approach that may please a purist. However, I believe it is an approach taken in the spirit of Deleuze, to find connections with other concepts, ideas and practices; although I am also conscious of attempting to do the philosophy justice. Philosophical understanding needs non-philosophical understanding claims Deleuze; for together these are philosophy’s two sides or ‘its two wings’ (1995, p. 139-40). The power in a concept, according to Deleuze, comes from ‘the way it’s repeated, as one area links up with another. And this linkage is an essential, ceaseless activity: the world as a patchwork’ (1995, p.147). Massumi (in Deleuze & Guattari 1987) suggests Deleuze invites us to lift a dynamism out of the project and incarnate it in our own projects.

The question is not: is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make possible to think? What new emotions does it make possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body? (p.xvi)

I am encouraged to know that other researchers have found the work of Deleuze unsettling because of its potential to disrupt thoughts, and yet many have found their entry points and discovered that when concepts are inserted into their own fields and assemblages the concepts make new thought possible (St.Pierre 2004; Hickey-Moody & Malins 2007; Mercieca 2011). St. Pierre (2004) describes them as the kinds of concepts that ‘you will never be able to figure out what it really means, nor, if you become the
least bit Deleuzian, will you want to’; what is most important is not being concerned with what Deleuze intended but to use the concepts to open possibilities for new thoughts (p.284). Describing students in his philosophy courses Deleuze explains that ‘nobody took in everything, but everyone took what they needed or wanted, what they could use, even if it was far removed from their own discipline’ (1995, p.139). Along with Honan (2004) in her application of Deleuzian theories within education policy and Allan (2008) in her application of Deleuzian constructs within inclusive education, I accept Deleuze’s invitation to take up only the concepts that prove useful and although I attempt to apply them with integrity, I too realise that ‘there may be aspects which purists of these scholars would balk at’ (Allan 2008, p.56). My response to those who have a different take on Deleuze, would be to paraphrase Honan who draws from St.Pierre (2001), and remind them that ‘your’ Deleuze cannot be ‘my’ Deleuze because the ideas and concepts have entered into our very different assemblages.

**Why Deleuze?**

A postmodern perspective rejects the grand narrative in favour of ‘little narratives’. The history of philosophy is a grand narrative and a discourse of intimidation for novices like me. Do I need to read Plato, Descartes, Kant and Heidegger in order to think? (Gregoriou 2004). Philosophy can be a ‘formidable school of intimidation which manufactures specialists in thought... An image of thought called philosophy has been formed historically and it effectively stops people from thinking’ (Deleuze & Parnett 1987, p.13, quoted in Gregoriou 2004, p.235). Gregoriou (2004) calls for a minor philosophy of education, not grand, transcendental philosophical perspectives but new encounters of ideas in the minor, or the narrow focus: ‘becoming, changing, shifting, connecting’ (p.245). I have found that Deleuze’s crowbar comes in handy here, poking from many angles into some of the small spaces, moments, events and assemblages and helping me to crack open the hard nut of philosophy. Gregoriou explains:

> Philosophizing in education recommences by minoritizing the language of philosophy so that singularities in the field of a classroom, a lesson, an encounter, a face can be assembled into new multiplicities instead of the old names for teacher-student, child-adult, passive-active, right-wrong. (Gregoriou 2004, p.248)

Post-structuralism responded to the ‘impossibility of founding knowledge either on pure experience (phenomenology) or systematic structures (structuralism)’ (Colebrook 2002,
p.2). Instead of viewing this impossibility as a limitation or loss, Colebrook (2002) explains Deleuze viewed it as an opportunity, a cause for celebration and liberation. Gregoriou (2004) suggests Deleuzian concepts are valuable for educational encounters; catching things at work, in the middle, affirmative and playful.

Deleuze and Guattari attempt to present the chaos of life and argue that life is an ‘open and creative whole of proliferating connections’ (Colebrook 2002, p.5). All this can be a little destabilising for an educator like me who is attempting to get a grip on practice. Deleuzian philosophy serves to pull the rug out from under my feet; nothing just ‘is’; things are not ‘being’ but ‘becoming’; thought is unstable and dynamic; writing does not represent but invents. However, it is because these concepts seem to invite me to invent, create and experiment that I find them appealing. Morss (2000) considers Deleuze’s contribution to thinking about education and notes his commitment to both a kind of empiricism and a kind of pragmatism recognising the role of creativity in a world that is unpredictable. For Semetsky (2010) Deleuze’s philosophy is ‘pragmatic to its core’ (p.477). Philosophy, Deleuze admits, depends upon a non-philosophy of sensory experience and making connections between theory and practice and is therefore of importance to me as a teacher/reflective practitioner. Philosophy that recognises creativity and is life affirming holds a particular appeal for me as teacher/artist.

I find myself able to map the concepts of Deleuze alongside the concepts of others that I have drawn upon in this chapter; and bringing them into contact with the particular events of the teaching and learning experience at the centre of this project creates ‘a flow meeting other flows... a series of experiments... in the midst of events that have nothing to do with books’ (Deleuze 1995, p.9).

What Deleuze details in his accounts of learning and teaching is that dimension of education that inspires all true students and teachers, the dimension of discovery and creation within the ever unfolding domain of the new. It is also the dimension of freedom, in which thought escapes its preconceptions and explores new possibilities for life. (Bogue 2004, p.341)

Therefore, in an experiment towards understanding, Deleuzian concepts become part of my assemblage and I view the workshop as assemblages of multiplicities: all of us,
students, teachers, academics, actors, and people with disabilities *becoming-other* in spaces through particular interactions, intensities and flows. I look for spaces; *smooth* and *striated*; *affects* and *percepts*; *becomings* and *lines of flight*. I bring philosophical understanding together with its counterpart non-philosophical understanding and I am folding, unfolding, refolding to see if I might discover something new to add to this ever evolving, never completed map.
CHAPTER FIVE

Nested Methodologies for an artist/teacher/researcher

What we decide to research and the way we conduct our research is a political statement about who and what is important to us. (Deshler and Selener 1991, p.9).

This research project is focussed on understanding what happens when university students and lecturers work alongside adults with intellectual disabilities in a drama workshop program that is centred on understanding teaching for diversity. The key event of this project is a two hour long drama workshop that focuses on inclusive education that is repeated twice each year for a cohort of approximately seventy-five pre-service teachers undertaking a mandatory unit ‘Teaching for Diversity’ in their final year of their Bachelor of Teaching degree. Chapter two outlined the challenges faced in teacher education courses to ensure that graduates gain the appropriate skills and strategies and, more importantly, the necessary attitudes and dispositions required to teach effectively in inclusive classrooms. Much of the literature is concerned with a search for effective approaches given the limitations on time and other practical constraints within these courses. In the broadest sense this research project responds to this concern by asking:

- How can we better prepare pre-service teachers for teaching for diversity?

Further questions that are central to this study are:

- What happens when student teachers, lecturers and people with disabilities as leaders work together in a university-based drama workshop?
- What happens in both pedagogy and research when people labelled as having intellectual disabilities are positioned as experts?
- What are the elements within the drama workshop that create a learning environment that can make a difference?
- What are the dynamics occurring within the drama workshop that allow spaces for learning to open up?

In this chapter I outline my methodology choices and methods of data collection and analysis. I reflect also on the various selves that I bring to the research as I reflect on methodologies for someone who brings certain values to the research project and plays
different roles within it including artist, teacher and researcher. As researcher I share with my participants, including student teachers, teacher educators and people with disabilities, an interest in how teachers may be prepared for teaching students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. As a teacher intent on co-intentionality, I reflect on my practice in order to understand and improve what I do in teaching and learning with others. As artist I employ the elements of my medium, drama, to explore with others the question of how we might better teach for diversity.

**Three nested methodologies**

This project involves a nested relationship of three qualitative research methodologies that fit one inside the other and work together to inform research questions that are also articulated as a shared research vision: teachers and people with disabilities working together in drama to foster enhanced understanding of teaching for diversity.

The primary and overarching methodology is reflection on practice wherein as researcher and teacher educator I reflect upon my pedagogical choices in a creating a learning environment that seeks to make a difference.

The second research methodology is participatory action research that opens a communicative space by creating ‘circumstances in which all those involved in and affected by the processes of research and action (all those involved in thought and action as well as theory and practice) about the topic have a right to speak and act in transforming things for the better’ (Kemmis & McTaggart 2008, p.579).

The third research methodology is arts-based, where arts are engaged as a mode of inquiry for researching experience. In this study the focus is on drama as both pedagogy and research method/methodology as the student teachers and teacher educators participate in a drama workshop led by people with disabilities. This is a playful and experimental mode of inquiry allowing for the enactment of and reflection on fictions that explore different realities seeking to further the participants’ individual and collective understanding of how teachers might learn to teach effectively in inclusive classrooms.
In this chapter I explain how the research process was designed and how it continued to emerge and evolve. Although I have briefly introduced the three nested methodologies in my introductory chapter, I elaborate on my understandings of them in this chapter and explain how they connect and overlap with each other. I explain my use of these methodologies as my means of inquiry and how they work together to inform my understandings.

**Dancing on rough ground: designing the research**

In the beginning there was the research site and the research questions or vision and the requirement to draw up a research design in order to get this study underway. While some strategies and methods for inquiry seemed appropriate from the outset, the design of this research project has, through a process of improvisation, evolved and emerged over time. Janesick (2000) uses the metaphor of the dance for the design of qualitative research and suggests that a good qualitative research design requires the use of a set of procedures that are at once open-ended and rigorous (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p.377). For me, arriving at the design has been a process of creative problem-solving towards a methodology that satisfies the research needs of the project and my own philosophical orientation. It has taken me some time of dancing around ideas, improvising moves and accepting surprising discoveries in order to arrive at a practical and aesthetically satisfying idea of the nested relationship of the methodologies in this study.

O’Toole and Beckett (2010) describe an inherent messiness in both good education and good research and invoke Wittgenstein’s metaphor of smooth ice compared to rough ground. While the surface that has an absence of friction can seem ideal, in fact without friction and traction there can be no progress. Therefore the rough and messy ground needs to be embraced as the ground we can seek to negotiate to discover some things and move forward. In this project I have danced on rough ground. I have improvised movements while negotiating the changing terrain. In the process of improvising I have discovered and sometimes stumbled across methods that have worked to negotiate the field as I move toward understanding and knowledge.

Central to my choice of methodologies are two main factors: an opportunity that presented itself to me and my theoretical and philosophical orientation. My search for
an appropriate methodology for this study required consideration of the following factors:

- The research question arising from the problem to be solved and the vision that is held.
- The possibility to take some practical action with colleagues to enhance learning in the unit ‘Teaching for Diversity’ – this presented itself as a site of investigation.
- The influence of my earlier M.Ed research involving the members of the theatre group for people with disabilities and our shared philosophical leaning toward participatory research.
- My own areas of interest, experience and the values I hold that form my theoretical and philosophical orientation.
- A valuing of experience as education involving body, mind and spirit.

In my earlier description of the background to this project in chapter one, I outlined some of the values that give meaning to my professional life. These are values that led me to take action and to generate this project along with members of the theatre company and my university colleagues. In chapter four I presented narrative accounts of my learning and teaching experiences that resonate with the conceptual frameworks and philosophies of teaching and learning that I am working with. Some of the values that may be evident through these stories and reflections include:

- A commitment to educational improvement through respectful and collaborative working relationships
- A valuing of diversity, equality and social justice
- A belief in the right of each person to contribute and to learn together
- An appreciation that people acquire understanding and learn in different ways
- An appreciation of the potential of drama as a powerful way of coming to know and understand that is social, collaborative, embodied and aesthetic.

My epistemological orientation, my understanding of what is known and how it comes to be known, is informed by values such as these and to some degree exemplified in the stories I have told. In this study I view the data through a constructivist ontological lens, whereby as researcher I work alongside co-researchers to construct and co-construct our understanding of what has happened in the research process and negotiate the meaning together. As a reflective practitioner I am at the centre of the study and I show how I understand my practice through reflection and study. As action researcher I am also an
‘experimenter’ (O’Toole 2006) and need to find some distance at times. As participatory action researcher, I am a co-participant but I acknowledge that I am the participant with the biggest investment in the research and the most at stake. I recognise that I need to acknowledge what this means for the research and all the biases and preconceptions that I undoubtedly bring to the research.

**My ‘selves’ in the research**

Ontological considerations are concerned with who I am and what I bring to my practice and the research. Who I am has a bearing on what I am interested in, the focus of my research, the questions I ask, my choice of methodologies and the meanings I make from my research are filtered through attitudes and previous experiences as well as through both the formal and informal theoretical positions I understand or believe in (Ely, Vinz, Downing, Anzul 1997). I acknowledge that as qualitative research it is likely to be value-laden and it is therefore important to reveal my values and biases (Creswell 1998; Janesick 2000). The stories I present are part of this reveal and are evidence of my willingness not only to be reflexive – critically reflective on the self as researcher (Lincoln & Guba 2000), but also to embrace subjectivity and celebrate my biases whilst being prepared to question any ideas I may have brought to the study (Janesick 1998; Errington 1996). I recognise the need to embrace the hard work of examining how my multiple identities shape and inform engagement with participants in the project with particular awareness of the dynamics of power and privilege (Brydon-Miller et al, 2011).

I have applied to this study, as I did in my earlier M.Ed study, a framework developed by Reinharz (1997) for analysing the role of the self as a research tool. Reinharz identified a variety of selves in the field, both brought and created and further categorised these into three groups: ‘research based selves’, ‘brought selves’ and ‘situationally created selves’ (p.5). Despite the sometimes arbitrary nature of clustering these perceived selves, and the inevitable cross-over, I found the categories proved useful to me as a way of teasing out and making visible the very complex web of selves within my research and the multiple roles I play within it.
Borrowing the categories presented by Reinharz, I have identified and categorised some of the various selves I bring to the field:

**Research based selves**: being a researcher who is a practising drama teacher and theatre maker, a committed reflective practitioner, a person who holds certain educational philosophies and beliefs, a person with a purpose and a goal to contribute something new and of value through research and to make a difference, a person who has been enlightened by a positive experience of participatory research, a drama educator with experience in applying drama strategies for collectively making meaning.

**Brought selves**: being a drama and theatre enthusiast, an occasional participant in drama, artist/performer and drama teacher, an academic, a woman, a parent, a teacher, a person committed to issues of social justice, a person with a history of working with the arts in areas of disability and disadvantage, a person who does not have a disability, a person who holds certain philosophical and ideological views.

**Situationally created selves**: being a lecturer, a colleague, a workshop facilitator, a member of Fusion Theatre Company, a mentor and a role-model in the workshop facilitation process, an advocate.

Although not exhaustive, these lists begin to indicate the complexity of my researcher identities and reveal the nature of research as a complex ‘interactive process shaped by one’s personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity’, not only of me as researcher, but ‘those of the people in the setting’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, p.5).

The image of the qualitative researcher as bricoleur has been widely applied in recent times (Denzin & Lincoln 2011). The bricoleur creates works from whatever happens to be available to them. The researcher as bricoleur ‘uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand’ (p.4). On the one hand I have selected, refined and articulated my understanding of research methodologies to satisfy the requirements for gaining ethics approval and for writing it up in this chapter. On the other hand, I have done this knowing that in
practice the research process is not so fixed, it is a much more interactive and responsive one. As with the bricoleur, it is shaped by what is needed, what is possible and what is available. The interpretive experience, creating the bricolage, has an aesthetic dimension as it brings together different perspectives, voices, textual formations and narrative styles into a meaningful emotional whole. In this qualitative research study the interpretive practice of making sense of my findings is both artistic and political (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, p.15).

Reflective Practitioner Research – the overarching methodology

In my professional work, reflective practice is a way of life. This was and is the case in my teaching of drama. I also desire to make this reflection transparent in my teaching of teachers. I want to model reflective practice for the pre-service teachers I work with. For me, reflective practice is a disposition to continuous scrutiny of practice, for self-knowing and other-knowing, that occurs on a daily basis over a professional life-time (Taylor 2000c; Neelands 2006). The reflective practitioner strives to:

Dig deep into self in order to bring into consciousness, the other-wise unconscious instincts, habits, values and learnt behaviours that shape their practice as well as to self-distance their interpretations of the effects of self-as-teacher on the lives, achievements, experiences and aspirations of those they work with, both colleagues and students.

(Neelands 2006, p. 17)

I see my disposition towards reflective practice as being connected to my practice as a drama educator wherein I am constantly reflecting in practice as well as on practice. Taylor (2000) suggests: ‘To be an arts educator is to be a reflective practitioner. Both give birth to ideas; both search for a medium to express and honour their vision’ (p.85). I am driven to work in the arts and drama in particular by the opportunities to explore possibilities with others, the excitement of being surprised, of seeking to understand and of making and communicating meaning. I am predisposed to reflective practice for the same reasons. Taylor makes the connection between artist and reflective practitioners and draws on Maxine Greene’s description of what artists do to describe them both by saying they:

...are for disclosing the extraordinary in the ordinary...They are for affirming the work of the imagination- the cognitive capacity that summons up the “as if”, the possible, the what is not and yet what might be. They are for doing all this in such a way as to enable those
who open themselves to what they create to see more, to hear more, to feel more, to attend to more facets of the experienced world. (Greene as cited in Taylor 2000, p.85-6)

In my role as an educator of professional teachers I am required to be able to articulate my professional knowing. Schön (1983) suggests that often we cannot say what it is we know because our knowing is *in* our action. He draws upon Polanyi’s notion of tacit knowledge: ‘the workaday life of the professional depends upon tacit knowing-in-action’ (p.49). I recognise that in my professional practice I know more than I can say. McNiff and Whitehead (2010) explain that many researchers draw on the idea of tacit knowledge as the basis of good practice. This suggests to me that to be able to identify the tacit knowledge I bring to my practice, to make it explicit and to share it with others is important. Beyond Schön’s concepts of knowing-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action is the idea of reflexivity-in-practice. Neelands (2006) draws upon Freire and describes this reflexivity as:

An active commitment to articulating and making visible the essential dialectic within teaching and learning processes and within/between the experiences of teachers and learners and others who are directly or indirectly effected by these experiences. (p.19)

Taking up a reflective practitioner research methodology requires me to be reflexive, to reflect-on-action and reflect-in-action in order to know more than tacitly what it is that I do, to do it better and to articulate what I have learned. In order to do so, it requires me to identify and adopt the tools and attitudes I need. When my practice or rather praxis, which is the dynamic encounter of theory and practice (Freire 1970; Taylor 2000), involves so much presence of mind in the ‘action-present’ (Schön 1983, p.62), or the doing of it, I need also to find the spaces and some distance for reflection to take place. Neelands (2006) draws a distinction between technical and critical models of reflective practice. The technical has more to do with short term inquiry, focussed on localised problems and functional outcomes. Such a model does not necessarily identify or seek to challenge the bigger socio-political context that may impose restrictions or controls. A critical model of reflective practice is one that holds the expectation that change is possible both in relation to the local teaching practice and more widely in the world (Neelands 2006). It is this model of reflective practice, based in critical and emancipatory theory, that I subscribe to and it is one that seeks the involvement of others: my faculty colleagues, the student teachers and the members of the theatre
company. I aim to critique my practice in an effort to recognise unquestioned hegemony and patterns of power and work towards levelling out imbalances of power and access to opportunity. I see my reflective practice as a partnership informed by the voices of the others involved: ‘a dialogic pedagogic practice so that every lived classroom encounter resonates with the possibility for renegotiation between teachers and learners, between theory and practice’ (p.20). The way that I understand reflective practitioner research works for me in this project has much in common with the Participatory Action Research methodology that forms the next layer of my nested methodologies.

**Participatory Action Research – the second methodology**

For me there is a natural fit in the relationship between the nested methodologies. I can identify four shared qualities of reflective practitioner research and participatory action research. Both methodologies:

- Are centred on action
- Start from a belief that change is possible and seek to improve practice
- Involve reflexivity
- Are cyclic processes wherein the reflection gives rise to new understandings which then feed into changed practice then further reflection
- Involve people and partnerships and value the voices of participants

Each of the above factors describe elements central to my professional practice. In describing my ontological focus as reflective practitioner, I have outlined my focus on the doing of my practice, learning through doing, and the desire to reflect and implement changes based on this reflection. In thinking about my project as action research, I identify the Teaching for Diversity drama workshop as a pedagogical event to be reflected upon. It is an event that will occur more than once allowing the opportunity to put that change into effect and reflect again. In this action research project, there have been at least two cycles of the workshop during which data has been formally collected as part of the action research process. The fact that this is also participatory action research is highly significant to me. My style of learning, through research, is through doing – with others. This is perhaps best explained through the telling of the story that explains how I discovered how important it is for me to adopt a participatory approach in my research.
A revolution and a revelation: coming to understand the importance of collaborative and participatory research

My M.Ed research (Raphael, 2003) was a qualitative case study investigating the experience of drama and theatre for people with intellectual disabilities in a drama and theatre group (called Aurora-Co for the purposes of that study). Participants in the study also included student teachers who were working with the group at the time. Three of the six participants with disabilities in this study were involved in my M.Ed study and so bring to this project an expectation to participate as co-researchers.

From the beginning of my M.Ed research project I believed that the participants with disabilities were more than subjects of the study but did not yet understand what their role would be. Research was new to me as well as to them and I was not sure what their response would be to my invitation to them to be participants in the project. I need not have worried as theirs was a resounding ‘Yes!’ to the invitation and they contributed their voices enthusiastically to all stages of the research process. I realised that being asked their thoughts and opinions on the topic of drama and disability, or any topic, was not something they had experienced before and that while some considered this a novelty others saw it as an important opportunity to have a voice. This led to wholehearted participation and animated responses to questions in group interviews and even to what I termed ‘surprise data’ which included unsolicited emails and other unexpected contributions to the research data.

As I became more aware of the nature and value of collaborative research I began to consider some other ways of involving the participants in the research process. I read Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999) work on ‘Kaupapa Maori methodology’ and the importance of the researched researching back. This caused me to reflect upon ways that I could present the data and allow the participants in the research to ‘talk back’ to the findings. I was aware of the value of ‘member-checking’ whereby I periodically checked my interpretations with the participants (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, McCormack Steinmetz 1991). However, I was also interested in gaining the participants’ thoughts on the emerging themes. My initial analysis had resulted in some ‘data poems’ including transcript poems (Ely et al 1991; Richardson 1997) that I had written based on the participants’ responses. I presented some of these to the participants in an informal group
interview situation and asked them to comment. This gave them a chance to verify, deny, clarify or elaborate on the data and initial analysis. They seemed to really appreciate this opportunity and enjoyed hearing their own words reported back or as Rudduck puts it, ‘to hear their voices in print’ (1993, p.19). I also shared my emerging themes and read poems based on the data to the university students and carers. Their feedback helped me to establish credibility and also ‘deepened and substantiated data gathered in other ways’ (Ely et al 1991).

While I was experiencing a revelation in the importance of providing opportunities for participants to participate and collaborate in the research process, the participants seemed to be growing in awareness of how they could take opportunities for themselves. That is, they were seeking ways to take the research into their own hands. The following account from my M.Ed thesis describes one such moment.

**The Revolution**

Towards the end of my time in the field some other participants executed a real coup when they effectively took over my final interview with them. This interview took place on the bus as we travelled between venues touring the performance of Big Frog. This was not a scheduled interview and I am so pleased that I had the presence of mind to take out my tape recorder so that I could capture some thoughts and comments. When listening to this interview later, I was struck by the passion in the voices. It was even more apparent to me that my interview had been hijacked by three of the participants. One of the first voices heard is Robert’s as he grabs my recorder, ‘Hang on, can I do the interviewing? I know how to hold the tape’. Sally’s voice is heard ordering ‘Me first, then you then her!’ Robert proceeds to ask the questions of other participants. Neil is also heard taking control of the interview for a time and proceeds to turn it around and question me. ‘Who is the researcher now?’ I wonder. Robert and Neil are heard at the end of the interview making pleas about ensuring the continuation of Aurora-Co. These participants seem to be feeling a need and desire to express their ideas voluntarily as well as elicit responses from each other to help put their view forward. It is like a desperate last chance for them. They also take the opportunity to make their pleas on behalf of others including members who are not involved on this day and possible future participants in the group.

Recording this interview was a spontaneous decision and I had not prepared questions. Despite this my voice is still heard trying to regain control over the interview. In the moment I was not fully aware of the positive aspects of the revolution that was taking place. Because the participants took control of the research agenda, because they asked the questions and answered them, I find
this interview, more than any other, most accurately captures the feelings and beliefs of the participants. (Raphael 2003, pp.69-70)

For me this story describes a watershed moment when I became aware of the potentially empowering nature of research and the importance of researching in a truly collaborative way. I understood that collaborative processes serve to reduce the distance between the researcher and participants (Errington 1996). At that time I found justification in my approach from Ely (1991) who makes use of Freire’s (1970) terms when she suggests ‘the social responsibility of qualitative researchers is to avoid seeing and treating participants as passive objects and instead, to work with them so that they become increasingly knowledgeable, active, responsible, and, therefore, increasingly liberated’ (p.229). In fact, through the described revolution, both participants and researcher are liberated. I felt liberated from the dubious desire to speak on behalf of participants with disabilities because they were also speaking for themselves.

**A circle with hands joined**

The above story explains why I brought to the design of this project an abiding concern for collaborative and inclusive processes. I believe that for research that is concerned with how people teach and how people learn, participants should have an opportunity not just to respond but to be more fully part of the conversation about the practices in which they interact. According to Brydon-Miller, Kral, Maguire, Noffke and Sabhlok (2011), research as ‘a social process of gathering knowledge and asserting wisdom belongs to all people, and has always been part of the struggle toward greater social and economic justice’ (p.388). Participatory action research affirms ‘the notion that ordinary people can understand and change their own lives through research, education and action’ (p.388). Kemmis and McTaggart (2008) call upon the Habermasian notion of communicative action opening up the communicative space that they believe participatory action research can open between participants. They suggest such a space aims ‘to create the circumstances in which people can search together collaboratively for more comprehensible, true, authentic and morally right and appropriate ways of understanding and acting in the world’ (p.578).
There is an assumption that I make in adopting this approach and that is that the three groups of participants share my interest in the vision of coming together and searching for right and appropriate ways of understanding and acting in the world. In this case, for learning about how this coming together in the drama workshop might reveal understandings of how teachers might teach more effectively in inclusive classrooms.

The members of Fusion Theatre have clearly expressed their interest in taking part in action and conversation that may enhance the education prospects for students with disabilities. However, I cannot deny that their involvement as co-researchers has something to do with my socio-political intent. I desire that they be involved in the research process and have found ways to make it accessible and facilitate their involvement. Nevertheless, they have grasped the chance and have explicitly expressed their belief that they have a unique opportunity to speak not only for themselves but on behalf of people with disabilities.

The university lecturers, in being charged with the responsibility of teaching the unit ‘Teaching for Diversity’, have a professional interest in working together to seek ways to better prepare their students for teaching in inclusive classrooms. I needed only to assume that they would want to do this in collaboration with people with disabilities, their students and with me.

In order to imagine the student teachers’ interest in collaborating in the research I needed to make a greater leap of faith. I know that students are generally concerned about the quality of their education and that they will be adequately prepared to begin their teaching career. While they might desire that their lecturers find effective ways to engage them in their learning, I ask myself, do they really desire to be part of the process of transforming practice or would they rather their lecturers get on with the task they are paid to do? I am aware that this study occurs at the end of the final semester of their four year course and their attentions are elsewhere. As reflective practitioner I value the student voice in the improvement of my teaching practice. I regularly seek direct and indirect ways to understand the students’ experience of my teaching in order to improve my practice. I want to know from them: How is the experience of my teaching for you and how might I do this better? I also hope that in making the
processes of my reflection on teaching transparent, they will recognise it and become reflective practitioners themselves. Although it may not be as apparent to them, I see their involvement in the research process as an opportunity for learning and a part of their education as teachers. I also recognise that many will not see it as I do and cannot be expected to invest in the research process as I do.

Kemmis and McTaggart (2008) explain that ‘participatory action research issues an invitation...to participate in a common process of communicative action for transformation. Not all will accept the invitation, but it is incumbent on those who do participate to take into account those others’ understandings, perspectives and interests’ (p.579). One of my roles as researcher is to create the circumstances in which all participants have the right and opportunity to speak and act in transforming things for the better. I issue the invitation knowing not all will choose to be involved to the same extent. I realise that if I am to reach understandings that have some legitimacy, I have to be aware of the silent voices of those who have, for whatever reason, chosen not to be involved.

A participatory research approach suggests a shared ownership of the project and yet I am aware of a major dilemma – the project is not equally owned by all participants. This is my PhD research project through which I demonstrate my ability to design and conduct research and make claims to new knowledge. I am the key player and yet in researching true to my values and beliefs, I feel compelled to adopt an inclusive methodology within the nest of three methodologies that embraces the participants as co-researchers to the extent they should so choose. My interest in transformative teaching and learning practice might be shared by my university colleagues and my Fusion Theatre colleagues but the students are less likely to share this interest. Nevertheless, I have extended the invitation and some students have accepted the opportunity. I return to the metaphor of dancing on rough ground. The methodology is not perfect but I acknowledge the dance of my socio-political intent and a need to negotiate the unevenness of this playing field.

I am aware that how I research is directly connected with the kind of teacher and learner I am and that my preference for an active and participatory approach is linked to the
quality of experience I seek to create in my teaching and in my professional learning. To see teachers and learners welcomed mutually and equally as participants in this project – as in ‘a circle with hands joined’ – is a romantic notion but these poetic words of Freire resonate with me:

When we live our lives with the authenticity demanded by the practice of teaching that is also learning and learning that is also teaching, we are participating in a total experience that is simultaneously directive, political, ideological, gnostic, pedagogical, aesthetic, and ethical. In this experience the beautiful, the decent and the serious form a circle with hands joined. (1998, pp 31-32)

**Arts-based Research – the core of the nest of three**

The arts, and in particular drama as a way of knowing, is a long held belief for me. It is at the basis of what I have understood and worked for throughout my professional life as a drama educator and one who educates through drama. And yet, even though this project has drama at the centre of it as a teaching and learning experience, in the original conception of it I did not appreciate the potential of drama as part of an arts-based research methodology. This is something that I have come to understand through my focus on the workshop during the research process. In the beginning I did not fully appreciate or imagine the ways that drama could contribute to ‘real’ educational research. It was not something I found widely written about or encouraged in my reading of qualitative methodologies. It was a surprising discovery to find through reflection on practice that understanding how teachers might be best prepared for teaching in inclusive classrooms was not only able to be answered by researching the workshop or by observing and reflecting on the event. I became increasingly aware that understandings about how improve our teaching to be more inclusive were being generated for and by all of us through the aesthetic activity of the drama workshop.

In subsequent reading of descriptions of arts-based inquiry (Finley 2005, 2011; Barone & Eisner 1997) I found similarities with what was going on in the workshop even though these descriptions and examples did not specifically mention drama activities as research methods. Two projects close to home had particular relevance to my own project and offered insights into the potential for drama as a research tool. One project by O’Connor (2003) explored process drama to understand and challenge attitudes towards people with mental illness. The other project by Cahill (2008), also involved
the three research frames of reflective practice, participatory action research and arts-based inquiry. Cahill employed post-structuralist drama techniques in workshops with medical and educational professionals-in-training working together with young people to enhance understanding in the professional relationship. Both these projects found that drama activities revealed a great deal about attitudes within the professional relationships and what was needed to make them more positive and productive.

I now recognise and pursue my understanding of the drama workshop as a practice in arts-based methodology that is at the core of the nest of three. I consider it as methodology rather than a method because of the philosophical beliefs I hold about it as a system rather than simply a tool and turn my attention now to how it fits with the other methodologies in this study.

In her description of the characteristics of arts-based research Finley (2005) claims arts-based inquiry as an ‘action-oriented’ process of inquiry that is useful within the local community in which the research originates. Finley notes the way arts-based research fits within a postmodern framework and with participatory action research. In participatory action research, researchers seek the methods and techniques that will help advance understanding of the practice. Kemmis and McTaggart (2008) explain that as ‘participatory action research becomes more sophisticated in its scope and intentions, it will draw on transdisciplinary theoretical resources... and multiple teaching methods and techniques that will allow participant-researchers to gain insight into the formation and transformation of their practices in context’ (p.575). Brydon-Miller et al (2011) understand participatory action research to be ‘fertile ground for experimentation with arts-based methodologies’ which have the potential to ‘challenge and change’ (p.390). So it is in this project that the drama workshop activities are simultaneously action-oriented inclusive education and a way of exploring and researching questions and ideas about inclusive education. In written responses, interviews and conversation, participants from each group commented on specific activities in the workshop and the insights and ideas about teaching inclusively and teaching others to teach inclusively that were revealed to them in the doing of the drama.
The aesthetic experience of the drama workshop and all of the drama activities provides a shared experience for the participants. It provides a further and more intimate communicative space in the participatory action research in which participants come together to play. There is ‘a physical dimension to making something, a confluence of mind and body applied in efforts to understand’ (Finley 2005, p.686). As an artist/teacher/researcher reflecting on my practice, there is an aesthetic dimension to arts-based research that I find satisfying. In making the drama component work I must consciously manage the aesthetic elements of the art form, this in turn affects the data generated and collected, and provides aesthetic outcomes as well as cognitive findings of the data analysis. In this workshop, lecturers, student teachers and people with disabilities come together to play, create and present responses to dramatic problem solving tasks or short performances and to talk about it together – both in the process of creating and also in responding to what others create and present. Participants are moved into action, drawn into dialogue and their bodies and minds become a tool for gathering and exploring meaning in experience (Finley 2011). The aesthetic research space is also an affective space that has the power to disrupt pervasive hegemonic attitudes and allows for the drawing upon imagination – so as to imagine other ways of thinking and acting towards the ideal of better inclusive education.

The primary aim of any research is to further human understanding, and the aim of educational research is to further understanding so the quality of educational practice can be improved (Barone & Eisner 1997). In this active and dialogic space created by an arts-based approach, diverse participants further their understanding of themselves and others as thoughts are revealed and considered through the art form of drama. I am one of those participants and one that brings particular intentions and questions. I carry the responsibility for writing down the story in order to write up the research, and report on the understandings and theories that have emerged from the practice, in order to inform future educational practice. In the discussion section of this thesis I describe some of the arts-based approaches and what they seem to reveal.

Presenting the thesis
Another aspect of arts-based research that I am mindful of is the artistry in the writing-up of the research. My desire for inclusive practices in my research approach leads to a
desire to ensure that the voices of participants remain in a final reporting of that research. Finley asks the question that I ask myself: ‘How do researchers “write-up” their understandings without “othering” their research partners, exploiting them, or leaving them voiceless in the telling of their own stories?’ (2005, p.682). I share a fear with Linda Tuhiwai Smith when she expresses concern that ‘the voices of the researched become increasingly silenced as the act of organising, analyzing and interpreting the data starts to take over’ (1999, p.14). In my writing of the research I seek to draw upon the data and write in ways that allow the reader to vicariously experience the events. This means telling the story through vignettes and thumbnail sketches to provide insights into the participants and the practice.

While the research report is far from being a work of art, I have attempted to draw upon aesthetic qualities and design elements. There are two main purposes for this. One is that the process of writing and choosing images helps me to make meaning of what I have observed and experienced. I write in order to understand (Ely, Vinz, Downing & Anzul 1997; Richardson 1997; Charmaz 2005; Richardson & St.Pierre 2005; St.Pierre 2011). I am seeking to capture the ephemeral and short-lived teaching and learning experience so as to hold it in my mind’s eye for some time, to apprehend and attempt to comprehend it. The second purpose is to capture that ephemeral moment and make it evocative for readers. Finley (2005) refers to Eisner’s insistence on the ‘power of form to inform that included a call to use many different art forms... as well as the various different narrative forms’ (p.684). Using aesthetic elements to help provide a meaningful learning experience, using form to inform, reflects what I aim to do both in the drama workshop and in exploring narrative forms, or ways of writing about the research. Finding an engaging way of telling the story of the research is important for an academic audience (Sword 2009). It is my hope that the research will have a life beyond academia and the kinds of writing and images that I create out of this project, both for this thesis and outside of it, will resonate with and be meaningful and accessible to a more diverse audience.

**Mapping the field: the sites of the research**

The central pedagogical space of this research is the drama workshop that takes place within a unit of study called ‘Teaching for Diversity’. It is here that the question of what
happens when student teachers, lecturers and people with disabilities as leaders work together in a university-based drama workshop is investigated. This is a mandatory unit for all final year students in the Bachelor of Teaching (secondary) course at Deakin University. The workshop takes place on campus in the regular tutorial times within a studio space instead of the regular tutorial room. In each year of the study participants in this workshop include approximately seventy-five students and two lecturers involved in teaching this unit. I am involved in the planning and presenting of the workshops as well as five members of Fusion Theatre company who have intellectual disabilities, and one or two assistants to the company who are themselves current or former Deakin University students.

In the second and third years of the research (and the second and third phases of the action research) a follow-up session to the workshop was held in the regular tutorial classrooms and became another research site to further investigate how we might better prepare teachers for teaching for diversity. For all four lecturers and the small percentage of students (eleven in total) who chose to participate further, group interviews took place on campus at mutually convenient times.

Data was collected during meetings with the five (and later six) members of Fusion Theatre. These meetings included planning sessions held a week or so before each of the workshops and at other times when I had an opportunity to meet with them. These meetings usually took place at the community theatre where they meet each week. Data was also able to be collected at times when we met for other purposes such as preparation for and presenting at education conferences or performances by the company.

**The participants**
In this section I outline the involvement of each of the participant groups in the research and the contributions they make to the data.

**The student teachers**
As part of their studies in this unit the students were required to attend the two hour drama workshop that occurred in class time as part of the normal unit program. In each
year there was a cohort of approximately seventy-five students divided into three
tutorial groups. Two of the tutorial times overlapped so these two groups combined for
the first workshop and the workshop was repeated a second time for the third tutorial
group later in the day.

Early in the semester I attended each tutorial class to explain and extend an invitation to
students to participate in the research project. Permission was requested from the
students for the workshop to be video recorded and photographs to be taken on the
understanding that these might be used in presentations, my thesis and publications of
the research. After the project was explained to them and they had read the plain
language statement, all students in attendance at those tutorials agreed to participate in
the research and signed the informed consent.

The students were invited to undertake a short survey at the beginning of the unit and
again at the end. I considered that an anonymous questionnaire was appropriate as it
provided an effective way of collecting information from the wide range of student
teacher participants in this unit. The open ended questions allowed them to provide
information on their attitudes and understandings about disability and teaching students
with disabilities both prior to and following the workshops to consider whether there
has been any change. These questionnaires were similar to the questionnaires that
students participate in as part of the usual process of determining the effectiveness of
teaching and learning in the units they study. The questionnaires took place at the
beginning or at the end of normal class time. Over 2009 and 2010 the total number of
pre-workshop questionnaires collected was 106 and over the same period 94 post-
workshop questionnaires were collected. After the first year of data collection and
analysis the post-workshop questionnaire was adjusted in order to further explore some
of the emerging themes (see appendix 3). The questionnaires were not administered in
2011 because I realised I was making less use of them than other data. I did not want to
continue to generate data that would not be used in this thesis and instead resolved to
draw upon some of the data already generated through the questionnaires for analysis
and publications after this thesis.
In class time immediately following the workshop, the students were invited to spend approximately five to ten minutes writing a short reflection on the experience. These were usually between one and three paragraphs in length. This data was collected in order to capture the participants’ immediate responses to the workshop. Over the three years of data collection 125 written reflections were collected from the 210 students who participated in the workshops. Some students were not able to stay to write comments and while a few emailed reflections to me later the rest did not submit a written reflection. The post-workshop anonymous questionnaire provided a second chance to collect data on the experience of the workshop for the students.

Approximately one third of all students checked the box to say they would be interested in attending a follow-up focus group interview although of these, only eleven followed up on email requests to organise an appropriate interview time.

Across the three years of data collection a total of eleven students participated in a semi-structured interview of about forty-five minutes in duration taking place at a mutually agreed time within the university. In most cases these were group interviews of between two and four participants. I chose to bring participants together to respond to open ended questions and to react to and build upon each others’ thoughts and ideas about the research questions. Three of the eleven were not able to attend when others were available and opted to be interviewed individually. In the spirit of participatory research, the interviews also provided opportunities for the student teacher participants to raise further questions and issues occurring for them within the research topic. With the permission of the participants this interview was audio recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

**The university lecturers**

The four education lecturers (sometimes referred to as tutors) involved in teaching the unit over the three years of the study were invited to participate in the research project. Reflecting on the effectiveness of programs and teaching is a normal part of their professional practice and as participants in this project they were encouraged to reflect on the practice and contribute their thoughts and ideas on the project. After the workshops a semi-structured interview of about one hour duration was audio recorded.
and transcribed with their permission. These interviews were held within the university at an agreed time. As participants in the participatory action research process, the lecturers also provided other reflections and comments on the research, for example during the planning process and during and after workshops. These also contributed to data. When given the option of using a pseudonym the lecturers chose to be identified by their first name.

**Fusion Theatre members**

The Fusion Theatre participants in the study include five members of the theatre company who have mild intellectual disabilities. A sixth member joined the team towards the end of the study. There are approximately thirty people with disabilities involved in three different groups that meet weekly as part of the activities of Fusion Theatre. The six who are involved in the workshops are from the longest standing and most experienced group of actors that meets Wednesday evenings. In 2007 Fusion Theatre raised funds to take five members of the company to Hong Kong for the IDEA congress (conference of the International Association for Drama and Theatre in Education). An interview and audition process was undertaken to determine which members of the company would go to Hong Kong. These five, who were selected along with the artistic director and two Deakin students, worked with me to design and present a workshop for that conference that showed how the company creates theatre work which was presented as part of the proceedings at the conference in Hong Kong. The same team members went on to present similar workshops at education conferences in Melbourne and then the Teaching for Diversity workshops at Deakin University. The sixth member joined the company later and expressed an interest in being involved in the workshop team. As a younger person than the other members with a different range of education experiences, the team members considered he would be a valuable addition to the team.

In each year of the action research there were also one or two assistants working with the company who were Deakin University students of drama education at the time. They had volunteered to work with the company on their regular performance making programs. The current artistic director of the company also participated in the planning and presenting of the workshop in one year of the study. Another participant was June, a
parent of one of the Fusion Theatre members, who regularly stays for workshop planning sessions and who has felt compelled at times to contribute her thoughts during group interviews.

All members of the Fusion Theatre team were invited to participate in semi-structured group interviews of between thirty and forty-five minutes duration which were audio recorded and transcribed. These interviews took place at the Community Arts Centre where the group regularly meets. When given the option, all members of the company involved in the project strongly preferred to be referred to by their real name rather than a pseudonym.

As participants in the participatory research process, all members of the theatre company were able to provide other reflections and comments on the research, for example during the planning process, the workshops, immediately after the workshops and at other times the company met. This correspondence and conversation also contributed to data and ongoing analysis.

**Critical friends**

During the data analysis process of the research project I welcomed critical friends. These were interested people from outside the project who were able to contribute to the research by helping me to achieve a critical perspective. In two cases critical friends were able to attend the workshops. Photographs and video recordings of the drama workshops, taken with the consent of the participants, were viewed and analysed by the researcher and a critical friend to open up the possibility of alternative views and new observations and to render the familiar strange. This research technique is another that reflects my usual practice. I always value the informal conversations with colleagues around our practice particularly when they are able to provide some critical appraisal. As Woods suggests, colleagues can ‘help sharpen up concepts, spot weaknesses, suggest alternatives, provide more data’ (1986, p.131).

**Gathering data**

In order to answer my research questions I needed data that would give me insights into the experience of the drama workshop for the various participants. To a certain extent I
could make my own observations during the workshop sessions and after through viewing images and video of the workshop activities. I also needed to be able to check my observations by asking the participants, student teachers, lecturers and Fusion Theatre members to explain the experience from their points of view through questionnaires, written responses and conversations. Finally I needed critical friends to bring fresh eyes to the project. My principal tools for collection of data in this project included the following:

**Reflective practitioner’s journal**

This journal was maintained throughout all stages of the process and was used to record my thoughts, reflections and observations on all aspects of my practice in the project including notes on planning, notes on reflection-in-action made as soon as possible after the event, reflection-on-action made at later times and notes on conversations held with Fusion Theatre members, colleagues, student teachers and critical friends. As I began writing up my field notes I began the process of analysis. Writing created distance and through it understanding emerged. Notes of on-going analysis that occurred from the beginning were also made in the journal. A blank page was left to one side so that notes could be made alongside adding layers to the analysis and links to data, literature and other ideas.

The journal was on paper rather than electronic and over the course of the project filled several books. I preferred this to an electronic journal because the book was a tangible object, immediately accessible and portable and allowed me to make notes at any time and in a range of ways including quick diagrams and sketches and other visual organisers for my thoughts.

**Questionnaires**

Pre-workshop questionnaires were completed by all students in attendance in class on the week that I visited the tutorial to explain the project. This was usually during the week before the workshop. A post-workshop questionnaire was completed by all students attending classes during the week following the workshop (see appendices).
**Written reflections**

The student teachers were asked to write a short reflection of one or two paragraphs or one page maximum immediately after the workshop. This was to capture their thoughts as close as possible to the time of the experience. Further written reflections were provided in the post-workshop questionnaire completed one week later.

**Interviews**

Five thirty to forty-five minute small group or individual interviews with student teachers were undertaken over the three years of the project. Four lecturers were interviewed, two together and two individually, for between forty minutes and one hour. All of these interviews took place on campus and were audio recorded and later transcribed. Other critical conversations related to the project occurred at different times and although these were not formally recorded, notes were made.

Members of Fusion Theatre were also interviewed at eight times throughout the project. These were not formal interviews so much as recorded discussions as the group was required to meet in order to discuss and plan the workshop. These group interviews included the five and later six members with intellectual disabilities. On three occasions these discussions also included the artistic director of the company, the university student volunteers and one parent, June, who happened to be present at the time. At times I guided the discussion beginning with questions that I had prepared, however, in several of the interviews the Fusion Theatre members can be heard asking questions about the significance of the workshop of each other and of me. I took the opportunity to record discussions held after each workshop that the group presented.

**Email responses**

During the first round of group interviews with students I gained permission to email five of them a short list of questions. This occurred at a time close to the end of their first year of teaching. Questions asked them about their experience of inclusive education in general and what if anything they remembered of the workshop and whether anything they had learned from the experience had in any way informed their practice now as teachers. Their responses provided a small amount of longitudinal data in a project that had not originally been set up as such.
**Visual data**

With permission of all participants each of the workshops was video-recorded and photographs were taken. These images offered a rich source of descriptive data. Photographs allowed me to have a new perspective on the workshop and looking at them instantly returned me to a moment in time and allowed me to appreciate the workshop in a way that I was not fully able when the photos were taken. The ability to view the moment captured in the photograph at length allowed me to examine expressions, gestures and the relationships between bodies in the space. Similarly the video-recording of the workshop allowed me to gain another perspective on the workshop – from the outside rather than in the midst of it.

The visual data was also useful in the participatory research process. I used the photos during the interviews as a reference point for discussion. In the second phase of the action research the group devised scenes recorded on DVD were played back to the students as a focal point for discussion. Viewing the video-recording with critical friends provided more data as the critical friends responded to what they saw. These conversations were also audio-recorded.

**The drama activities as data**

I have discussed my discovery of the significance of the drama activity in the workshop to provide data. Later in the thesis I provide examples of how the drama activity revealed new understandings both in the process and upon reflection of the processes. The video-recordings were very important in enabling me and all participants to gain a new perspective on the activities and reflect on what we could learn from them. Upon reflection on the first stage of the action research process with my university colleagues, it was decided the video-recording provided rich data for analysis that was only partly able to be explored within the time constraints of the workshop. In the second year of the project we designated tutorial time after the workshop as a follow-up opportunity during which time a video recording of short scenes created by the participants could be viewed and discussed with a view to understanding more about effective inclusive teaching.
**Crystallisation**

The crystal as proposed by Richardson (1997) rather than the triangle works best for me as the image of validity. Through a multi-dimensional crystal I glean reflections on the work from the different facets or groups involved in the research process. I am also aware that the more I look into the crystal, at different times and from different angles of repose, the more I see seemingly endless permutations. Crystallisation can occur when data is collected using more than three different methods, in relation to more than three different sets of people and viewed by at least three different agents (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010). The diagram below (Figure 1) attempts to show the various facets or perspectives involved that may throw light on the research question. The groups of stakeholders involved are shown in the diagram to be overlapping in order to represent the communicative space of the research and the critical community that is formed when participants as co-researchers are invited to reflect on the research question.

![Diagram showing overlapping groups of stakeholders](image)

**Figure 1** Participant reflections on the research question

The pillars of reliability, validity and generalisation in arts-based research are described by its critics as ‘at best shaky’, according to Barone and Eisner (1997, p.84). While they suggest that we should question the assumptions in these terms that belong to a particular paradigm, they also draw attention to an idea of validity in arts-based research based on the ways it helps us notice, understand and appraise. They suggest that ‘Artistically grounded research that furthers understanding and that enables a reader to
notice what had not been seen before, to understand what had not been understood, to secure a firmer grasp and deeper appreciation of complex situations contributes to the end to which educational research is committed’ (p.85). In another sense, they suggest validation occurs when ‘the observations are acknowledged and valued by a competent, critical community’ (p 85). Situating arts-based research within the participatory action research model through the workshop drama activities means that ideas are exposed to a community of students, lecturers and people with disabilities and their opinions are sought. Whether this community can be seen as ‘competent’ or ‘critical’ may be open for interpretation but the community does arguably involve those with an investment in the quest for understanding and learning from the research. The research community involves diverse participants (lecturers, student teachers and people with intellectual disabilities) who all bring different perspectives to the study. There is benefit in the promise that we can ‘learn most from those who are least like us’ (Barone & Eisner 1997, p.87). In sharing the responses between the various participant groups we can appreciate the different perspectives as well as recognise the resonances that are occurring.

**Seeking the negative data and silent voices**

From the outset I recognised the risk that this research could slip into advocacy. I acknowledged the need to be doubly rigorous and look out for the negative data, the discrepancies and silent voices in the research; ‘those who choose to remain silent as well as those who are silenced’ (Charmaz 2005, p.527). I resolved to find ways to check my assumptions and maintain an open mind about what I might find in the data. To seek not only the confirming evidence but the disconfirming evidence (Ely 1991). The recursive nature of the research project had me repeating the data collection process over three years and three action research cycles. I had an opportunity to return to the workshop experience via the photographs and video recordings and had access to the participants at times outside the formal data collection processes for member checking.

An anonymous questionnaire seemed to be a useful tool for helping to reveal negative data and for picking up silent voices in the research. However, early in the data collection process I wondered about the effectiveness of a formal looking questionnaire that was produced and administered by me, ‘the researcher’. I was concerned that it had
a distancing effect that seemed in opposition to the participatory research methodology. I eventually came to understand this distancing effect as a positive and the questionnaire as being a useful way of capturing a range of data. When the student teachers responded anonymously, they may have been more inclined to respond honestly. As all students were asked to complete the pre and post workshop questionnaires during class time, the survey had the potential to capture all student voices including those who had remained silent at other times.

**Analysing and interpreting the data**

In analysing the data I am adopting a constructivist grounded theory approach whereby data collection and analysis occurs simultaneously. Each informs and focuses the other. This is consistent with each of the three nested methodologies in which I take a reflexive stance on practice (Charmaz 2005). Through the participatory action research process, together with my co-researchers, we construct and co-construct our understanding of what has happened in the research process and negotiate the meaning. This is a recursive process – a kind of spiralling towards understanding (Charmaz 2005; Woods 1986). As reflective practitioner I attempt to transform my embodied knowledge into propositional knowledge. It is impossible for me not to analyse as it is a natural part of the reflection process and analysing commenced from the beginning of the project. The insights I gleaned from early analysis have not only informed my practice but have enabled me to focus my questions and adjust the data collection process along the way.

As well as layering my journal with analytic memos as I have described earlier, I compiled students’ written contributions and transcribed interviews. I analysed this data and coded it by highlighting selections in colour. I created a column alongside the data in which I recorded notes of analysis, recurring ideas, metaphors and further questions for consideration. For each interview or collection of written responses I attempted a summary list of key observations that formed emerging and still tentative categories. These summaries from the various sources of data were then cross-referenced to form a rhizomatic schema of categories, themes and metathemes.
Making the familiar strange

As the data was constantly revisited throughout the project there was growing familiarity with it. I feared that this familiarity would stop me from seeing some important elements and I recognised the need to find ways to view the data with fresh eyes. Each time a new theme emerged or a new question arose, the data was scanned again with that in mind. I found it useful not to simply read transcripts of interviews but to listen to them again for all of the subtle and nuanced information that is provided through the voice such as in intonation, pace and pauses.

Viewing the visual data (video and photographs) with participants and critical friends also helped to shift my perspective and make the familiar strange so that I might notice something new. Through electronic albums as well as the creation of a photo wall in my office I invited commentary from colleagues, students and other people unrelated to the project although showing some interest in viewing images and video from the workshop. At times their responses would concur with my thinking but every now and then an unexpected response would allow me to see something differently and recognise something that I had not already considered.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the three methodologies that I work with although they are nestled together with common elements binding them. I have described the geography of the field and the participant groups within it. I have explained the methods and tools that I have selected to help me collect data from a variety of sources and in a variety of ways as well as strategies for shifting my angle of repose or shaking the data up so that I might see things differently and find something that had previously eluded me. I have described my approach to analysis as I work through categories to themes to theory and how I have written my way into understanding and finding ways to best represent the data and what I have come to know in a way that will be useful to others.

Throughout this explanation of my methodology and approaches to the research, I explain how these have evolved out of my personal and professional values and commitments and resonate with the ways I act in everyday life. My commitment to reflection on my practice, to the enriching nature of collaboration with others and my
valuing of the arts and in particular drama, as a way of making meaning and coming to
know and understand are for me intertwined and are encompassed in the nest of three
methodologies that I have described.
CHAPTER SIX

The Teaching for Diversity Workshop

Introduction to the discussion
In the following chapters my discussion weaves together what can be visualised as four strands of a quadruple helix. One strand is made up of the data, including the description of moments that reveal something significant is occurring in the learning. A reflexive strand reveals what this means to me and what I have learned about my own practice and the architecture of the learning experience. A conceptual strand reveals the concepts that help explain what is going on in the moments of learning. A further strand offers the perspectives of the Fusion Theatre members, drawn from their comments, observations and questions during the research process. Throughout this weaving, different strands come to prominence in the discussion at different times.

This chapter, as an introduction to the discussion, presents a narrative of the two-hour Teaching for Diversity workshop in order to provide a sense of the experience as a whole. As a prelude I offer a moment from a recent diversity workshop that was conducted with year nine boys with Dave, a member of Fusion Theatre who joined the workshop team for the first time. I have chosen this particular encounter because it serves as an analogy as well as to introduce and illustrate some thoughts about the notion of drama as pedagogy that I feel ought to be ‘troubled’. It also provides a context to introduce and begin to put to work some of the conceptual tools that I draw upon to animate my thinking.

Some kinds of magic
The universe is full of magical things, patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper.
Eden Philpotts

When the time comes in the workshop for the Fusion members to tell a little about themselves, Dave, the newest member of the workshop team, is the last to speak. All participants are sitting in a circle. Dave tells the year nine boys a little about himself, his learning disability, his experience of autism and his bouts of depression. He tells of his experiences of education, his love of art, drama and performing magic. ‘Would you like
to see some?’ he asks as he deftly executes his shuffle of a deck of cards. ‘Yeah’ they chorus. Dave looks at me to check if this is an appropriate deviation from the planned course of the workshop. I give the nod and the boys reassemble into a tight semi circle around him. Most lean in close but a couple sit back, legs outstretched and arms folded as if to say, ‘This’ll be good!’ I note, in some, the sarcastic lift of one eyebrow. Dave draws them in with his magician’s charm. ‘Pick a card’ he invites and after an adroit shuffle and a magical tap the buried Ace of Hearts inexplicably turns up at the top. Time after time the deck is cut and the chosen cards mysteriously reappear. The boys lean in close, even the doubters, and sound out ‘oohs’, ‘ahhs and ‘Maaate!’ They are enjoying this, now focussed in a different way, and to prolong it some call out ‘Show us more’ and ‘What else have you got?’ At this point I let go of any idea of moving onto the next workshop activity because what is happening now seems to me to matter much more. Dave produces a dollar coin that appears to do the impossible, to defy gravity by falling upwards from his lower palm to his hand above. For a while they are mystified delighting in the inexplicable. Dave, a young man not much older than them, who is self-described as having multiple disabilities, is making apparently impossible things seem possible. The schoolboys are impressed, they offer praise and ask, ‘How do ya do it mate?’ because they know Dave’s magic has a logic behind it. He doesn’t give anything away but he explains that his tricks are skills learned through his research, attention to detail and hours of practice. It is hard work made to look easy and he tells them that anyone can learn to do it.

In this pedagogical encounter revolving around Dave there are at least two kinds of magic at work. One is his repertoire of magic tricks that he explains anyone with the internet and time can learn. For these there are step by step instructions and rules; if you follow them carefully you should succeed. The other is not as easy to explain. It has to do with what occurs in the ‘thisness’ or moments of Dave’s magic performance. This is more than his deliberate spellbinding showmanship, without which the magic would be dull; it has to do with Dave and the impression he makes as a body in relation to other bodies with a capacity to affect. It has to do with the connections within this assemblage of Dave, the boys and the other Fusion team members – the flows, intensities and the often unpredictable combinations of sensation and feeling so often created through the arts that are what Deleuze and Guattari call percepts and affects (Deleuze and Guattari
The concept of percept is explained by Hickey-Moody (2009) as ‘a physical fragment of the world imagined through an artwork’ while an affect is ‘the sense or feeling that is enmeshed with the materiality of the artwork’ (p.2). Combined together percepts and affects form what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘a bloc of sensations’ and are the language with which art speaks (1994, p.164).

**Affects, percepts and the power of the drama experience**

Drama and theatre when applied to learning have sometimes been referred to as a kind of magic, they provide spaces where impossible things seem to happen. And drama practitioners are sometimes seen to be the conjurers of this magic. However, drama practitioners and participants are often at pains to explain the mysterious qualities of the drama experience and why the impossible seems possible. Sometimes, like Dave’s audience, they are more than happy to sit with the mystery for a while. It is easier to refer to the ‘magic’ than to struggle with language that seems inadequate to describe what occurs in drama.

More than just struggling to define the effects of drama, O’Toole (2000) suggests that words ‘such as “magical”, “spell-binding”, “enchantment” and “enthralling”, give clues to our ambivalent attitudes – for today’s rational mind, magic is the trivia of children and charlatans’ (p.20). This trivialising comes from a deep suspicion that adults have towards drama. However, O’Toole also reminds us that spells and enchantment were (and still are for some) believed to have dangerous powers and so it is drama can be considered dangerously powerful and in need of negations through trivialising or controlling. This is evident in the banning and censoring of drama and theatre that ‘continues to be a preoccupation of repressive political regimes, macro (governments) and micro (educational systems)’ (p.21). It is this power of drama that is so feared by some, that I am interested in investigating by analysing what occurs within this drama workshop.

In their responses to the Teaching for Diversity workshops, participants have described the workshop immediately after the experience in words that evoke notions of magic such as ‘brilliant’, ‘fantastic’, ‘inspiring’, ‘amazing’, ‘wonderful’ and ‘powerful’. Each of these words appear in the data multiple times in the university students’ attempts to
describe the workshop experience. However, such descriptions provide little insight and are not useful on their own. This study seeks to zoom in closer in order to understand what is happening and what is possible in these pedagogical encounters between bodies and minds. I consider the ways that the aesthetic arts-based experiences of the workshop provide the blocs of sensation, the combination of affects and percepts that prompt the students to respond to the experience in terms that suggest both magic and epiphany. I am interested in this power both in terms of how it is experienced by percipients and how it is wielded as pedagogy and to understand this I consider the workshop with notions of affects and percepts in mind.

‘Affect is crucial in mobilizing response in pedagogical encounters’ according to Gannon (2009, p.73-4) and thinking through affect focuses attention on the sensory capacity of the body. A body, in a Deleuzian sense, is ‘dynamic, creative, and full of plenitude, potential, and multiplicities’ (Springgay 2008, p.3). A body is conceptualised as a series of processes, flows, energies and intensities and is ‘understood through what it can do – its processes, performances, assemblages and the transformations of becoming’ (p.3). Deleuze and Guattari, inspired by Spinoza, ask ‘What can a body do?’ and what are ‘the affects of which it is capable’? (1987, p.283). Rather than dwell upon what Dave is, I ask ‘what can Dave do?’ and ‘what are the affects of which he is capable?’ He has already sparked a moment of surprise and a significant part of the ‘magic’ he wields is that his deft execution disrupts the students’ low expectations of him and therefore of all those labelled as disabled.

Affects in Deleuzian terms are not feelings but rather something that comes before the felt intensity of an emotion like goose bumps, the pricking of tears or an impulse to laugh. Affect is ‘that which is felt before it is thought; it has a visceral impact on the body before it is given subjective or emotive meaning’ (Hickey-Moody & Malins 2007, p.8). Affect precedes articulation through language. Relevant to this study of a drama workshop is the understanding that affect is a bodily sensation that is sustained and provoked particularly by aesthetic experiences (Thompson 2009; Deleuze 1994). Deleuze explains the forces of percept and affect in this way:
Percepts aren’t perceptions, they’re packets of sensations and relations that live on independently of whoever experiences them. Affects aren’t feelings, they’re becomings that spill over beyond whoever lives through them. (1995, p.137)

Within this assemblage that is Dave’s magic show, and within many moments throughout the pedagogical encounters that make up the drama workshop, there is significance in the abilities of bodies to affect and be affected that I desire to be attentive to.

Like Dave with his magic tricks, the drama practitioner-conjurer is also drawing on skills that come of research, attention to detail and hours of practice. To some extent this pedagogical ‘magic making’ is learned from the sharing of drama strategies and conventions between practitioners. However, a good deal of it comes only from cycles of experience, trial and error, and is based on things that are difficult to pinpoint and define, like gut feelings, instinct and intuition. In this project I reflect on practice in order to understand what lies beneath notions of drama as ‘magic’ and move beyond vague notions to try to understand and explain, for myself and others, what is happening in the pedagogical encounters and the moments in the drama workshop when spaces are created for possibilities of learning to open up.

**Putting concepts to work**

Cracking open the hard crust formed by old habits of thinking about drama practice is not an easy task and to achieve this I choose to take up some tools. As I have explained in chapter four of my thesis, I have chosen to draw upon conceptual frameworks, and in particular the projects of Deleuze and the negotiations of Deleuze together with Guattari to provide conceptual tools, like ‘a crowbar in a willing hand’ (Massumi in Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p.xv), to prompt and provoke me to consider what is occurring in the learning spaces of this project in new and different ways. These concepts are not hard and fixed as the notion of a tool might imply. Rather they are ‘conceptual bits’ (Rajchman 2001) applied, as needed, in relation to different problems and contexts making new thoughts possible to think.

Powerful moments that fill participants with a sense of wondering and surprise do happen in the drama workshop and if the conceptual tools can help me attend to and
understand what is going on in seemingly magical moments, then I might notice more and understand more about how the conditions are created to foster such qualities in learning or at least through recognising them, have the good sense not to stifle them when they do occur. Better still, through recognising that when the spaces for learning have opened up, there is potential for learning to move to a new level.

**From effect to affect and a return to beauty, hope and magic**

Theories of affect have been used in relation to learning and the arts for a long time (Courtney 1974; Reid 1986). Affect, as conceptualised by Deleuze and Guattari, is beginning to be used more widely as a conceptual resource in educational theory (Hickey-Moody & Crowley 2012). However, Albrecht-Crane and Slack (2007) suggest the importance of affect in the classroom is still inadequately considered. For them affect matters and they draw upon Deleuze and Guattari to ‘illuminate the affective dimension of teaching’ (p.100) proposing a pedagogy of affect. I notice affect and aesthetics in learning as an emerging theme in recent literature in the area of disability and inclusive education (for example: Allan 2012; Hickey-Moody 2008; Mercieca 2011a) as well as in applied drama and theatre (for example: Ellwood & Camden Pratt 2009; Thompson 2009; Perry 2011). Nicholson notices this affective aesthetic turn too when she describes a ‘marked move away from “redemption” language to describe applied theatre work, making a space for the discovery of a vocabulary around notions of beauty, hope, magic, utopia and dreams’ and a rediscovery of ‘an aesthetic which is magical’ (Low 2010, p.456, reflecting on Nicholson’s plenary address at 2010 Theatre Applications conference, London). Winston (2010) has turned his attentions to the significance of beauty in education lamenting that if ‘beauty is sleeping, few educationalists are trying to awaken her, and the vast majority seem happy to forget her altogether’ (p.1). He proposes beauty as a concept that can provide a necessary counter to utilitarian values, such as outcome driven curriculum, which can warp students’ educational experience. Winston argues that beauty in education provides for the mysterious and uncertain and affords hope, pleasure and the promise of happiness. Through the many ways that Winston describes beauty in historical and contemporary contexts, I am able to recognise examples of a kind of beauty that encompasses mystery, uncertainty and hope, in the encounter between Dave and the year nine students. This has caused me to turn my attentions to moments of beauty in the
workshop and the triggering of affects that lead to feelings that have inspired the participants to describe the experience as ‘brilliant’, ‘fantastic’, ‘amazing’, ‘wonderful’ and ‘powerful’.

In an applied theatre context Thompson (2009) makes a case for the shift from a focus on effect to affect. He argues that applied theatre ‘is limited if it concentrates solely on effects – the identifiable social outcomes, messages or impacts – and forgets the radical potential of the freedom to enjoy beautiful radiant things’ (p.6, emphasis in original). His concern is that by failing to recognise affect – ‘bodily responses, sensations and aesthetic pleasure’ (p.7) – much of the power of applied theatre can be missed. Thompson takes up Deleuze’s understanding that it is only through affect that the force of art can be understood. He explains:

Artistic experience and practice are here best understood for their capacity to agitate at the level of sensation, and it is this force that propels a demand to know more. The communicative model of art – the focus on the impact, message, or precise revelation – is countered with a notion that the stimulation of affect is what compels the participant to thought and to be engaged at every level. (p.125.)

Theories of affect, including those of Deleuze, have enabled Thompson to argue for a shift from being concerned about effects (impacts) to noticing affects that stimulate and ‘loosen the icy grip of certain visions of how we should be in the world’ and ‘to consider the encounter in the arts process as the key terrain from which to consider its power – and its radical potential’ (p.125, emphasis added). As I reflect on the encounter that is the drama workshop, I also shift my focus to affect. In analysing practice in the workshop I take up Deleuze’s suggestion that inquiries should be functional or practical and instead of asking ‘is it true?’ or ‘what is it?’ I ask ‘what does it do?’ or ‘how does it work?’ in order to also consider its power and potential.

**The workshop as assemblages**

Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of assemblage is another conceptual tool that I draw upon. The term in French is *agencement* and refers to arrangement or putting together but is not a static arrangement of something but a process of arranging or bringing together heterogeneous elements (Macgregor Wise 2011). An assemblage is a whole of some sort that claims a territory, not a fixed territory but one that is constantly being
made and unmade – reterritorializing and deterritorializing (ibid). Assemblages are constantly coming together and moving apart. Assemblages may be small scale (such as me and my dog, in the back-yard, a cup of coffee, and the sun on our backs) through to large scale constituting cultures or ages. The elements in an assemblage do not only include things and bodies but also qualities, lines, flows, speeds and intensities. Macgregor Wise explains that ‘We do not know what an assemblage is until we find out what it can do’ (p.92, emphasis in original) explaining that assemblages select elements from the milieus (the surroundings, the context, the mediums in which assemblages work) and bring them together in a particular way. The encounter involving Dave and the boys as described above can be understood as an assemblage shifting into new assemblages. The assemblage ‘necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections’ (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p.9) When Dave tells us a little about his life the assemblage includes the context that is the workshop, including its aims and discourses, there is Dave, a young man with a disability, each boy sitting in a circle, the speaking, the listening, the contingencies and capacities, the expectations, the pace, the flows, the intensities and the perceiving, sensing and feeling. When Dave offers to show some of his magic tricks a reassemblage occurs; bodies in the space physically cluster around Dave and are rearranged in relation to each other as Dave with a deck of cards becomes magician, boys become audience and the practice of magic sets off a different kind of language and listening, different intensities and flows of agency, affects, feelings and expressions that flow both ways and include awe, appreciation and respect. The boys’ rapt attention drives Dave’s performance and Dave’s performance produces affects which disrupt any previously held ideas of Dave as victim or Dave as disabled and potentially ruptures any fixed understandings of what a person with a disability is and can do. My role as educator in this moment, in this assemblage, is not to block the flow, my role is to recognise the potential of affects and not force a return to a predetermined workshop plan, one that could not foresee this possibility for learning.

Understanding the workshop as dynamic assemblages helps to animate my thinking. To view the discrete elements of the workshop – subject or object in isolation would be limiting. Instead I am thinking about the complexity of the relationships between various diverse elements that make up assemblages and the possibilities provided in such encounters. Thinking of the workshop as assemblages meeting other assemblages
opens up the possibility of seeing the connections and understanding what an assemblage can do.

Affect and assemblage are two key concepts amongst other theoretical concepts that I fold into my practice. Some of these have already been introduced in my chapter on conceptual frameworks and others are put to work in my discussion. By means of introduction, I have placed my understanding of these concepts before the following description of the workshop as a whole. In the discussion chapters that follow my focus will turn to a close-up view of particular moments in the workshop. At this point in the thesis I pause to present a narrative of the workshop as a whole, without analysis, as a way of providing the context from which the micro-moments and selected pedagogical encounters described in the following chapters are taken.

**The Teaching for Diversity Workshop – a narrative**

No matter how they are conceived lessons are in essence performed narratives and, like all narratives, they have a plot as well as a storyline – in other words, a pattern through which information unfolds in ways that can make them more or less interesting. Surprise, suspense, sudden reversals can all serve to deepen interest, as can a variation of pace, tone and rhythm. (Winston 2010, p.136)

The Teaching for Diversity workshop has been designed and re-shaped with my Fusion Theatre colleagues over time. It has been presented to a range of participant groups more than twenty times, and presented for different groups of university students ten times over five years. Over time we have attended to and refined some of the aesthetic elements of the workshop described by Winston in the quote above. Each workshop has had between thirty and forty university students depending on whether there is one tutorial group or two groups coming together. Through reflection on practice and the action research process, the workshop has evolved and will continue to evolve over time so that what is presented here is just one version of it.

For the Fusion team members the workshop begins the week before when we meet for what we call a workshop rehearsal. This is an opportunity to remind ourselves of the particular focus of the workshop, the purpose and our aims and to make any changes we think might be necessary. Change tends to be incremental rather than radical. We run through the activities to make sure every member understands and remembers what they
need to do, who will lead each activity and who will be responsible for making different points.

**The arrival**
The student teachers and lecturers in the unit ‘EXC440: Teaching for Diversity’ begin to arrive in the performing arts room at the commencement of the class time. The classes for this unit usually take place in tutorial rooms. By contrast, the performing arts room is an open and expansive carpeted space. There are no tables, just a row of chairs on the outer perimeter. Most of the students head straight to these chairs and sit down. Some chat in small groups and others check their phones. In the time of gathering, the Fusion Theatre team members begin to introduce themselves informally to some of the students and attempt to engage them in a little conversation.

**Beginning the workshop**
When it seems the majority of students have arrived the Fusion team assemble at one end of the room. I provide a general welcome and briefly introduce the Fusion Theatre team then each of the team members; Alex, Andrew, Katrina, Vicki and Jean-Marie (and Dave in a later workshop) introduce themselves and talk briefly about how long they’ve been involved with the company and each adds a few details about their daily activity including work and other interests. The one or two university students who also work as volunteers with the company introduce themselves and talk a little about their involvement.

I briefly outline the aims of the drama workshop that are:

- To provide an opportunity for learning *from* and *with* and not just *about* people with disabilities.
- To work together to discover some of the things we need to understand in order to create inclusive classrooms.
- To do this using drama as pedagogy to facilitate the inquiry

I briefly explain the reasons why drama as pedagogy has been chosen for this workshop by explaining that drama is:
- a medium that the Fusion Theatre company members are experienced in – drama and theatre have become ways for them to express themselves and have a voice in the wider community
- a teaching and learning medium that offers a kinaesthetic and embodied learning experience
- a social medium which brings people together in creative endeavour
- a playful learning medium which can be exploratory and enjoyable.

Part 1 – Warm-up/preparation activities

**Stretching**
All workshop participants are asked to form a circle. Andrew, one of the Fusion Theatre team members explains that when the company meets for workshops and rehearsals they often begin with stretches. He explains that the reason for these stretches is to warm-up muscles for movement and to prepare for vocal work in drama. He leads the first stretch and everyone in the circle performs the same stretch in unison. Andrew then hands on to one of the other Fusion team members. Each takes a turn to lead a stretch and explain the purpose for it.

**Walking into spaces**
Participants have been standing in a circle and are now asked to walk in all directions through the space taking care not to collide with anyone. As they walk around additional instructions to make eye contact and smile are given by the Fusion team members.

**Game of Clumps**¹
Participants continue walking and when a number is called out they are instructed to quickly get into groups of that number. Anyone who cannot fit into a group is ‘out’ and thus excluded from the game and asked to sit at the side. This seems harsh and the game is played until only a small number remains. Those caught out are asked, ‘What are some of the thoughts or feelings you have when you are not included?’ There is a very short discussion about reasons for and feelings about not being included even though we know this is only a game.

¹ I first experienced this game used as an analogy in ‘Defining Moments’, an anti-bullying workshop by Helen Cahill (2002).
**The Continuum/Walking statistics activity**

The length of the rooms is used to represent a continuum from zero to ten. Fusion members stand with numbers to indicate the 0, 5 and 10 points. Participants are asked to think and move quickly to stand at the point on the continuum that best represents how they perceive themselves in response to the following questions:

- How much are you looking forward to starting teaching?
- How much experience have you had of doing drama?
- How many people do you know personally who have a disability?
- How much experience have you had of teaching students with disabilities?
- How confident do you feel about teaching students with disabilities?

This activity provides an instant visual representation of responses for all to observe. I conclude it by leading a short discussion that includes an acknowledgement of the range of responses and the widely varying experiences of participants.

The walking statistics activity provides instant data that is of interest to all participants but for the Fusion team members this is an opportunity to recognise their relatively high level of experience in drama compared to the majority of university students as well as noting the student teachers’ generally low level of experience of and confidence in teaching students with disabilities at this stage of the workshop.

**Mirror exercise with chairs**

The Fusion team sets out a row of chairs down the length of the room with every second chair facing in the opposite direction. Facing each row is another chair for the two people who will be the leaders in this exercise. In the first instance of this activity the leading is done by the Fusion members. Volunteers sit in the other chairs and the remaining workshop participants observe. Slow music that has been selected by the team is played and the leaders begin slow movements and gestures that are closely mirrored by the bodies in the chairs facing their direction.

A short discussion takes place and one of the Fusion team members explain the reasons for doing this exercise and how in the work of Fusion Theatre we often adapt exercises

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2 This version of the mirror exercise was introduced to me by Kate Sulan, Rawcus Theatre’s Artistic Director, at a workshop in 2007.
according to the abilities of members. Exercises like this one can liberate movement in those who have limited mobility such as wheelchair users and as well as provide a structure to extend movement vocabulary. Mirroring can also provide a supportive structure in performance for those who have difficulty remembering choreography.

**Mirror exercise with guides**
The mirror exercise with chairs is repeated with a new group of participants. Those in the chairs are invited to close their eyes during the exercise and are asked if they will allow themselves to be guided through the actions by the people who stand behind them. The guides, acting as their eyes, gently talk and/or physically move their partner through the actions.

At the conclusion of the exercise participants are invited to talk to each other about what the experience of guiding or being guided was like for them before bringing some of these points to the whole group. The Fusion Theatre members follow this discussion by adding comments about the ways the company adapts work to needs including for those with sensory impairments to enable moving beyond limits. They also talk about the implications of some of the experiences inevitably raised in the discussion: including vulnerability, trust, care and supporting others. At the conclusion of both versions of the activity comments are made about the visual impact and affect of the lines of bodies moving in unison but in different and often complimentary and artistic ways.

**Part 2 – Activities to explore Diversity and Inclusion**
This section allows for small group problem solving activities that include the student teachers, lecturers and Fusion team members. The activities also relate to some of the themes of the workshop. The following activities are first explained by me with Fusion team members interspersed amongst groups to participate, model and further explain activities when necessary.

**Activity #1 – Groups and numbers game**
All participants are asked once again to walk around the space in random directions. When a number is called out they are asked to quickly form groups of that number. In those groups they have to work together to use all the bodies in the group to make a shape that represents a given word. They must work quickly to solve the problem in
about thirty seconds. This is repeated a few times with different size groups and words such as ‘open’, ‘closed’, ‘curious’ and ‘defensive’.

**Activity #2 – Human sculpture**
In four groups participants are asked to work together to create a shape using all the bodies in the group. A reference is made to the university’s mission statement including core commitments and values. The shape to be made is to be like a public sculpture or a monument designed for the grounds of the university. Two groups are asked to create a sculpture that reflects the university’s commitment to ‘equity and access’ and two groups create a sculpture for ‘diversity’. Each sculpture is viewed and the audience comments on how the values are interpreted through the creation of the sculpture.

**Activity #3 – Still-Image³ Exclusion → Inclusion**
Participants are asked to form groups of 5-6 and to create a still image (like a freeze frame on a video) using all the bodies in the group that shows a moment of exclusion. They are asked to imagine ‘what might happen to turn this picture around?’ They then create another still image that reflects inclusion. Using eight slow counts (of the claves) they morph or move gradually from their image of exclusion to inclusion. Each of these dynamic images is viewed with opportunity for brief comment at the conclusion. A point is made by the Fusion members that the shift to inclusion is rarely as easy as this in reality.

**Part 3 – A closer look at inclusive practice**
Around an hour has passed and this marks the half way point in the workshop. The pace of the workshop has been deliberately fast up until now with all participants being actively involved. At this stage of the workshop the pace slows as all participants are asked to sit in a circle, either in chairs or on the floor.

**Fusion Theatre telling their ‘education stories’**
Each of the Fusion Theatre members gives a brief outline of their education experiences from their primary years and beyond. They talk about where they were educated, the

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³ This drama convention and many others used in this workshop are explained by Neelands (1990) in ‘Structuring Drama Work’.
opportunities, the challenges, their achievements and the sorts of things that helped them to learn (see figures 2-7).

Figure 2: Alex

Alex talks about his experience at a mainstream primary school and how he enjoyed receiving some special attention from staff. He explains some difficulties he experienced in keeping up with the curriculum due to being absent frequently to attend medical appointments. For the last four years of his education he attended a special school and talks about his disappointment that each year seemed to cover the same ground and he felt unchallenged.

Figure 3: Katrina

Katrina begins her story by describing her early years at a special school and how with tenacity she overcame some of her mobility issues. She was then moved to a mainstream school for primary and secondary and continued through to year ten. She explains how she wanted to complete her Victorian Certificate of Education but was talked out of it by an integration aide, something she bitterly regrets. She also talks about her successful completion of TAFE courses since then including a Certificate One in Work Education.
Andrew talks about his experience in mainstream schools and how it took some years before teachers knew what to do with him. He mentions some critical moments in his education when inspired teachers helped him by connecting learning in literacy and Maths to his particular interests at the time such as science fiction and football. He also explains that it was both helpful and disappointing that he was withdrawn from Drama classes in order to attend additional English classes with students for whom English was a second language.

Vicki does not remember much about her early years of education in a mainstream school. She is able to talk about her positive experiences in a special school even though she felt some disappointment when not attending the same school as her sisters. She mentions specific strategies that teachers used to help her with skills for living like understanding money and using a calculator.

Jean-Marie speaks with some frustration about her experience in a special school which was, in the 1970s, the only option offered to her. She mentions that had she been educated today, she would have most likely attended a mainstream school. She explains how she did not really take school very seriously at the time seeing it more as an opportunity to socialise, even though ultimately she made no lasting friends.
Dave’s education spanned five different schools before he found one that suited him. He describes the difficulties faced by professionals in understanding his disability and how he believes he was wrongly sent to a school for autistic children. He describes his loneliness at that school and how he made friends with students in a neighbouring secondary school through the fence which eventually led to him being integrated into that school for two days per week.

**Fusion Theatre in Conversation**

The participants are then invited to form five smaller groups each with one Fusion member who is able to elaborate on parts of their education story. The participants are invited to ask them questions.

**Activity #1 Short scenes – What are some obstacles to inclusion?**

This activity is the substantive part of the workshop and once again the pace picks up and participants become active.

To introduce the activity a reference is made to one of the course readings by Westwood (1997) which some of the students may have read. Westwood poses the question: ‘What are the obstacles to the inclusion of students with severe or multiple disabilities in regular schools?’ (p.201). In groups of about five or six (including a Fusion team member) participants are asked to discuss obstacles to inclusion and then choosing one, they work together to create a short scene of about thirty seconds to a minute to show a moment when a person with a disability is experiencing a barrier to full inclusion. Someone in role as teacher must be in included amongst the characters in the scene. They are asked to have an idea in mind about what each character in the scene is thinking. The Fusion Theatre members are part of the scene-making and can take on any role. Each scene is viewed.
Audience/actors discussion: Following the scenes, both audience and actors are asked to reflect on the nature of the barrier and to consider that given the obstacle, could the situation have been averted or different outcomes have been reached? Depending on the scene, one of the following strategies is applied:

Forum theatre\(^4\): An audience member (spectactor) with a suggestion for a different approach is invited to take the role of the protagonist (usually the teacher). The scene is repeated with the spectactor implementing the alternative approach. The audience and actors then comment on the success of this approach or otherwise.

Tapping for thoughts/ thought-tracking: The audience members are asked if there are any characters in the scene whose thoughts they would be interested to hear. These characters are then asked to speak their thoughts. If appropriate, they may be further interrogated. Alternatively each character in the scene is ‘tapped-in’ for their thoughts.

Hot seat: Individual characters from the scene are asked to take the ‘hot seat’ and remaining in role, they respond to questions from the audience.

Activity #2 – Thought Tunnel
Reference is made to the unit reading by Sigafoos and Arthur (2005) providing a case study that begins with the story of a teacher who is approached by the principal while on yard duty and told that a new student who has multiple disabilities and a range of complex support needs will be coming into her class. Participants are asked to think about some of the thoughts and concerns that would be going through the mind of the teacher in the case study. A volunteer takes the role of the teacher and walks down the ‘thought tunnel’ that consists of two lines of people facing each other. All participants are involved and those standing on one side speak the positive thoughts (including hopes and ideals) and the other side negative thoughts (including doubts and concerns). As the teacher role walks slowly through the tunnel, the thoughts are spoken aloud, one from the positive and then the negative side alternately. Once the end of the tunnel is

\(^4\) A simplified version of Forum Theatre adapted from Augusto Boal (1995)
reached, the person in role of teacher summarises the teacher’s thoughts and makes a final comment on ideas that seem to influence and resonate most powerfully. A short discussion ensues.

**Activity #3 – Role on the wall – advice for the inclusive educator**

Still imagining the teacher from the case study, participants are asked to consider the kinds of advice that could be useful for the teacher who is preparing for the inclusive classroom. They work in pairs or small groups to discuss, decide and write words of advice for the teacher on sticky notes. In order to encourage a broad range of responses, rostra blocks with images on them are placed around the room; each poses a different question and provides a place to post their advice.

- Bag – What do you need to take? (resources)
- Brain – What do you need to think about?
- Heart – What should you feel? What is a helpful attitude to hold?
- Hand – What could you do? (strategies)
- Ear – Who should you take time to listen to?
- Mouth – Who should you talk to?
- Foot – Where should you go? (To get help, information, resources etc.)

At the conclusion some of these are read out and following the workshop all are compiled into a resource that is uploaded on the unit web site for each student to access.

**Closing of the workshop**

All participants are invited to take a few moments to share their thoughts in small groups and then the focus is returned to the whole group to share a few comments. Participants are invited to think about:

- What new understandings about teaching for diversity might we take away from the experience of this workshop?
- What questions do you have now?
Participants are asked to write a short reflection on the workshop (as soon as possible after the workshop) and to bring this and any questions or discussion points they have to next week’s follow-up tutorial.

**Conclusion**

The part of me that is artist-teacher feels satisfied to have at least sketched out the complete workshop experience as the unified whole it is intended to be. The workshop is not a random collection of activities but rather a cohesive body that has been shaped and re-shaped in collaboration with my Fusion Theatre artist colleagues over time. We have given careful consideration to the aesthetic elements of the experience. It is a narrative that has its opening overture, its developing and unfolding content, ideas and experiences through different paces, rhythms and intensities through to what we hope is a satisfying conclusion.

In this chapter I have used the story of Dave and his magic tricks, a few moments in a workshop, to introduce the Deleuzian concepts of affect and assemblage that I draw upon along with other theoretical concepts to understand my practice and the pedagogical encounter that is the Teaching for Diversity workshop. I have identified assemblages and bodies in the workshop in what Deleuze would call ‘their dynamic mode, that is, their capacity to affect and be affected’ (Zembylas 2007, p.31). The workshop, as a whole, has been outlined in this chapter so that it may be broken down in the following chapters when the discussion calls for a close-up and non-sequential view of some activities and smaller moments within it. In the following chapters I put these and other concepts to work in order to understand, describe and articulate the affective and embodied pedagogy of the workshop. Together with this conceptual strand, I weave a reflexive strand, a strand that represents the Fusion Theatre members’ perspectives and a strand that is the data – including observations, images and the written and verbal responses of bodies who teach and bodies who learn.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Disrupt: like a storm in a forest

A few years ago I visited the Daintree rainforest in Northern Queensland. I took a board-walk through the forest and admired the diversity of the tall trees that supported entanglements of vines and creepers shading an understory of palms, cycads and a multitude of creatures seen and unseen. I imagined this rainforest ecosystem unchanged over thousands of years. I was then disappointed to come across a section of the forest where a storm had passed through and uprooted some larger trees that now lay flat on the forest floor, bringing down with them a mass of creepers and vines. It looked to me like a scar on the pristine rainforest environment. I then noticed an interpretative sign that pointed out that storm events, such as the one that has passed through this place, were important and necessary because they allowed for new growth as the forest regenerated and would likely result in an even greater diversity and a healthier ecosystem than existed before. I now take up the metaphor of the storm in the forest to focus on some of the disruptive elements of the workshop and to consider the ways that assumptions are disturbed and new spaces are opened up for learning.

This chapter focuses on some of the pedagogical elements of the approach that many experience as something new and different and something that disrupts the status quo. I identify and briefly discuss three main elements of the workshop that emerge from the data as being discomforting for participants and which seem to cause a disruption of fixed ideas about pedagogy and disability. These are described as strange space (the drama studio as opposed to the tutorial room), strange method (the drama workshop) and strange companions (people with disabilities as leaders, experts and co-participants). I also describe and explain the ways the Fusion Theatre team members understand and manage the discomfort they perceive in their fellow workshop participants and attempt to direct it towards positive outcomes.

I draw upon a range of pedagogical theories of discomfort, disruption and disorientation to further an understanding of the significance of these notions for learning. I begin to identify what can happen when some old assumptions are shaken and shifted. I consider
the importance of imagination when exercised in some of the drama strategies, in continuing the work of agitating thinking and prising open cracks in these assumptions and pushing workshop participants beyond old familiar thresholds.

Finally I turn my attention to the importance and significance of laughter in the drama workshop. I consider the ways laughter both emerges from and dispels awkwardness and discomfort and ultimately serves to disrupt usual hierarchies by uniting people as diverse as university students, academics and people with intellectual disabilities and opening them up to one another.

**The disorienting jolt of something new**

> To learn is to encounter signs, to undergo the disorienting jolt of something new, different, truly other, and then to explicate those signs, to unfold the differences they enfold. (Bogue 2004, p.327)

‘At first when the students come in they seem a bit scared, a bit unsure’. This is how Fusion team member Jean-Marie describes the demeanour of the student teachers as they arrive in the room for the workshop. ‘They have confessed,’ said Alison, one of the lecturers, ‘that some of them were extremely anxious about it before hand’. The observations of both Jean-Marie and Alison are confirmed by the student teachers descriptions of their feelings before the workshop began. In the anonymous post-workshop questionnaire about a third of the students wrote that before the workshop they felt ‘interested’ or ‘excited’ with some mentioning feeling ‘reticent’, ‘hesitant’ or ‘intrigued’. However, the majority wrote that they felt ‘nervous’, ‘apprehensive’, ‘anxious’ and ‘unsure’.

I take a reflexive turn now to consider the pedagogical implications of this discomfort that a number of the student teachers admit to feeling. In planning for the workshop we considered that some participants would be out of their comfort zone and we thought about what we might need to do in order to, as Katrina described, ‘ease them in’. In focusing on alleviating discomfort, I wondered whether in doing so I was missing something more significant about this pedagogical experience that took students beyond comfort zones. I turned my attention to noticing the potential for transformative learning that can occur in experiencing something that for many of them is new and different;
both the encountering of drama as pedagogy and an opportunity to connect with people with disabilities. Does the workshop provide what Bogue (2004) describes as ‘the disorienting jolt of something new’? I wondered if the discomfort could be considered a sign of a disruption, a crack in the shell that indicated the opening up of spaces for learning.

**Encountering the new**

One cannot teach the truly new in its newness, but one can attempt to induce an encounter with the new by emitting signs, by creating problematic objects, experiences or concepts. (Bogue 2004, p.341)

The drama workshop offers a pedagogical *encounter* that is, for a start, *counter* to orthodox university teaching and learning experiences – one that aims not to teach the new but rather to set up an encounter with the new. To encounter is to meet with something unexpected and something that may be difficult to deal with. This chapter is an opportunity to analyse the undoing of orthodox connections and the reconnections that are made in the process of the workshop and the variety of smaller encounters it makes possible.

Not all students fully explained the reasons for their feelings of apprehension. However, amongst those who did, the fear seems to be attributed to experiencing something which is new or different from the usual teaching and learning experience, things that are out of the ordinary. The differences include a new space for learning – a space devoid of the usual desks, its openness allowing for different activities in which bodies can assemble in different ways; a new teaching and learning method – the nature of the workshop as a drama workshop; and new kinds of encounters with unfamiliar people.

**Strange space**

The comments of students indicate that one of the immediate impressions of the workshop was the sense of strangeness that they encountered as they entered and saw the space set up for the drama workshop. The Fusion team could sense the apprehension in some student teachers as we noted their double-take at the door and their quiet retreat to the outer edges of the room as they avoided eye-contact and took refuge in sinking
their faces into their mobile devices. In the post-workshop survey some of the student teachers reflected:

*The rearrangement of the room was odd so was scary.*

*The space* was intimidating to begin with – not used to such a large space.

Odd, scary and intimidating for some, the space is not neutral or passive. Rather, space is active in causing sensations of disequilibrium. When entering the space the students, who were accustomed to lecture theatres and tutorial rooms, recognised that this was not the usual arrangement for university classes. The studio was an open space with an absence of tables and a circular arrangement of chairs. Such a space opens up different possibilities for the relations between learners and educators and, it seems, possibilities that some students feared. The students quoted above sensed discomfort and uncertainty but for others encountering the workshop space was surprising in more positive ways:

*Was good not having tables and moving around.*

*The big space we had was way better than a classroom.*

These comments were written after the workshop when the student teachers had already had the opportunity to participate and reflect positively on the way the space was used in the workshop. Significantly, encountering the space provided something new and some student teachers reflected positively on the possibilities for relationships and pedagogical encounters that the space allowed:

*Great use of space, we kept moving and engaging with new people.*

*Great – got everyone interacting – moving around.*

*Great way to learn. Not just another uni tute!*

They also recognised the relative freedom from constraint and the openness to possibilities for transformation.

*I loved the space and how it was used! It felt so open and free.*

*Great not to feel confined for once.*
Space is a theme that reoccurs throughout this discussion. The idea of space as a physical place is only one small part of that discussion. More important is what space can do or what possibilities spaces can open up for learning. Students stand at the physical and metaphorical threshold of the workshop space and perceive it as strange and find that to enter it is to move beyond their comfort zone and step into that ‘uncertain realm we discover just beyond our familiar thresholds’ (Frichot 2005 quoted in Hickey-Moody 2007, p.82).

**Strange method**

Some students attributed their initial feelings of discomfort and disorientation at the beginning of the workshop to being aware of its nature as a drama workshop. This fear of drama is evident in the following comments:

*My first impression was this is drama, I’ve never done it and I don’t want to be in the spotlight.*

*For people who do not like drama it can be a very intimidating experience.*

*The drama component turned me off because I hated drama in school and felt really uncomfortable.*

*Urgh! I didn’t want to get up and participate.*

The first two comments suggest the fear that participants can have for drama. In chapter three I reviewed examples of drama as pedagogy being viewed positively by adult educators and participants. However, for many reasons the experience of drama can be unsettling, particularly for adults. O’Toole (2000) explains the negative attitudes adults can have towards drama can range from deep suspicion and denial through to deep ambivalence. He explains that adults can view drama as ‘trivial and certainly only as part of the world of leisure and carnival, not “serious” – consigning it to the playground, which is for play, not the classroom, which is for something else’ (p.20). The student teachers through their education studies ought to be aware of drama as pedagogy although it seems very little drama as pedagogy is modelled within their university classes. One of the lecturers, Don, commented on his surprise that for so many of them the methodology proved to be a discomforting factor:
The methodology was a bit confronting for my students which I was a bit stunned by. For people who are involved in drama this was all cool for them but for some of the others getting involved in drama, theatre and movement was a bit difficult... that was quite a surprise for me... When I asked people what was confronting some of them said that was the thing... what actually disturbed those students is the methodology of drama full stop, irrespective of who was involved in it... that is what floored me.

O’Toole reminds us that the ‘actions of drama and theatre are always ambiguous and protean – they always raise questions, not answers – which is uncomfortable for an age whose institutions and many of its intellectual, political, social and economic assumptions are still positivistic’ (p.20). Another challenge to adult sensitivities is that in drama ‘Chaos lurks just round the corner’ (p.20). For student teachers who are often struggling to prove themselves in their practice through demonstrating good order and outcomes, the possibility for chaos needs to be avoided at all costs and drama as pedagogy is a risk they are not prepared to take.

The student who commented, ‘I hated drama in school’ reveals how prior negative experiences of drama could contribute to being turned off it as an adult. Not all drama teachers are proficient and drama in the hands of an ineffective or incompetent drama teacher could lead to an experience of drama that is embarrassing, alienating, and anxiety inducing as well as educationally meaningless. The comment ‘I didn’t want to get up and participate’, suggests that discomfort in the drama experience can come through the expectation that drama requires active participation and a need to ‘get up’. For this student it was the physical embodying of learning activity that posed a threat.

When it comes to feeling confident and comfortable in the drama activity, members of the Fusion workshop team are at an advantage. They are highly experienced in drama having participated in drama workshops and rehearsals for two hours each week for at least seven years, and for three of them more than fifteen years. In a way they acted as role models setting an example for some of the student teachers as this student explained:

*I was surprised by the level of understanding that the [Fusion members] had and how well they were able to interact with a group of strangers. I think that their liking of drama has given them the confidence to be at ease. They seemed to feel much more comfortable with the activities than I did.*
Here are people with disabilities as guest presenters modelling participation in drama, and modelling the use of drama as pedagogy, in ways that neither the students nor many of their education lecturers may have been prepared to do.

Strange companions
For other students it was the thought of an encounter with people with disabilities that was most daunting. Data collected in the pre-workshop questionnaire indicates a range of prior experience of people with disabilities amongst the student teachers. However, the vast majority of students report having little to no prior experience of people with intellectual disabilities. Alison sums up the students’ likely prior thinking about people with disabilities as ranging from ‘totally oblivious to fear and anxiety and [thinking] these are strange people and I do my best to avoid them whenever I come across them, through to people who have family members or experience with people with disabilities in a classroom who are well informed’.

The unfamiliar speech of a few of the Fusion members that can at first be difficult to understand was identified as a concern by some students. Alex, for example, has both a speech impediment and an accent. One student commented:

*It was scary to see some members of Fusion because I thought they would talk properly.*

For others it was a fear of not knowing the appropriate things to say and ways to act with people with disabilities.

*I was sort of thinking ‘Oh how do I speak to them?’  
I felt surprised [to see the Fusion members] and uncomfortable for fear of coming across ignorant.*

It is possible that the students’ responses are somewhat restrained for fear of offending. As one student explained in a survey response, ‘Political correctness tends to shroud the topic’. The student teachers are often aware of what they are expected to think and say; therefore their greatest fears about working with people with disabilities may be unmentionable. I gained insight through a colleague’s frank admission of her own level
of discomfort in anticipating the workshop. This colleague, an experienced drama teacher, was involved in the running of a state drama education conference where the Fusion team was presenting a version of the workshop for drama teachers. This is how she explained it to me:

_I didn’t know if I wanted to attend your workshop with Fusion Theatre but I was a bit interested so I poked my head in through the door at the beginning to have a quick look. I could see everyone sitting on chairs and watching as the people from Fusion Theatre were talking and I thought that looks OK. I think I can handle that. So I came in and sat down. Well, just after that you said OK everyone let’s get up and start the workshop and I could see that they were going to do the activities too and I thought Oh, no! I am going to have to work with them. I might have to touch these people! And I thought I don’t know if I can handle it. I was looking at the door and wondering if I could sneak away. But I stayed and you know I am so glad I did because it was fantastic and they were so good at it and they were so friendly and genuine and now I just feel so ashamed that I had that view._

The idea of a drama workshop being co-presented by people with disabilities provoked both fear and curiosity in my colleague. She had made a pre-judgment and was focused on difference as negative. Eventually, she decided she could face this difference on certain terms, if they were to talk and if she was to sit and listen. Doing drama was a familiar experience for this highly experienced drama educator; it was therefore not this factor that she feared. Nor did she fear the idea of sitting and listening to the people with disabilities. It was the idea of working more closely with people with disabilities in drama, and the possibility that close contact would be involved, that increased her anxiety and took her beyond her comfort zone. It was only out of politeness that she stayed. Ultimately the shared experience of the workshop removed the focus from difference, and served to dissolve her prejudice, causing her to reflect on her previously held beliefs and attitudes. It seems that her transformation was so significant that she felt the need to tell me about it. I believe it was also enduring as I was present when she recounted the experience again for the benefit of mutual colleagues over a year later. How well we remember depends on the strength of the emotion that was influential in our learning (Mezirow 1991).

This example suggests the ways that the three factors that I have discussed in this section: space, method and confrontation with difference, contribute to feelings of
discomfort and can come together as a kind of triple threat. I have drawn upon some theoretical concepts around which to animate my thinking about the nature and role of discomfort in this workshop. Many of these concepts have been introduced and illustrated in chapter four. In the following section I put the theory to work alongside the data to understand more about the significance of discomfort in the workshop.

A pedagogy of discomfort
Assumptions are taken for granted views that we may not even be aware that we hold. Many educators have described the challenge involved in finding pedagogies that are effective in making assumptions explicit as well as understanding the sources and consequences of these assumptions (for example Mezirow 1991; Cranton 1996). A ‘pedagogy of discomfort’ is the term used by Boler (1999) to describe a necessary kind of pedagogy that shifts both educators and students beyond their comfort zones in order to recognise emotional habits and hegemonic assumptions and open them up for interrogation and transformation. It needs to be emphasised that discomfort in education, in itself, can be unproductive. A pedagogical framework such as is described by Boler and Zembylas is required to make discomfort productive, ensuring that it has a purpose and an outcome. Boler and Zembylas (2003) explain that a pedagogy of discomfort is aimed at encouraging critical inquiry at a cognitive and emotional level by addressing how “‘inscribed habits of emotional attention” limit, constrain, and/or open possibilities in the process of constructing difference’ (p.112). There is, they suggest, an emotional labour involved in ‘the difficult work of (re)constructing one’s own beliefs, values, and assumptions’ (p.114).

In a project focussed on preparing teachers to teach inclusively, I am aware of inscribed habits of emotional inattention that need to be confronted. Mezirow (1991) draws on Goleman’s (1985) theory in describing ‘the incompatibility of attention and anxiety that teaches us to exchange diminished attention for lessened anxiety’ (p.18). This theory suggests that the mind can protect itself from anxiety by dimming awareness and creating a ‘blind spot’ – a zone of blocked attention. If there is anxiety about teaching students with disabilities then a natural response to this for some might be to try not to think about it too much. This is a kind of self-protection that is also a self-deception and creates a blind-spot in educators when it comes to thinking about teaching students with
disabilities. It is likely for some students, who have developed a self-protective habit of inattention, that the focus of this workshop on teaching students with disabilities as well as the direct encounter with people with disabilities will cause some discomfort.

In the pre-workshop surveys the large majority of student teachers revealed that they had little or no prior experience of working with students with intellectual disabilities or any prior contact with people with intellectual disabilities in general. This is consistent with the findings of studies reviewed in chapter two that suggest that such experience with people with disability amongst pre-service teachers is often lacking and yet a preponderance of literature suggests that contact can be a critical factor in building confidence, lessening anxiety and fostering a positive attitude that is so important to effectively teach them (for example Tait & Purdie 2000; Jobling & Moni 2004; Forlin et al 2010). Of course, those who have had experience may not necessarily have had a positive experience, making the consideration of brought attitudes, beliefs, values, dispositions and experiences important when preparing inclusive education courses (Garmon 2005; Moran 2009; Symeonidou & Phtiaka 2009).

The Fusion team took into account the possible range of prior experience of people with disabilities as they prepared the workshop. ‘That’s why Jean-Marie, Alex and I try to use humour to break the ice and try to make them feel a bit more comfortable’ explained Andrew, indicating the team’s perception of both a need and a sense of responsibility for providing reassurance. Also implicit in this comment is that the Fusion team members are in control of the situation. In this case people with disabilities have the advantage which is not the usual order of things. For the most part, the Fusion members had greater experience of drama, were senior in age, with the added experience and wisdom that may bring, and were highly experienced in working alongside people with disabilities and certainly experts in their own disability. Some student comments reflect that they felt they owed a debt of gratitude towards the Fusion team members for not only sharing their stories but for doing so in a way that was professional and sensitive to the student teachers’ needs. The following comment indicates a student’s perception of how the Fusion team members took a risk and took on responsibility when they:
...interacted with a whole group of strangers... it was like they found themselves as teachers, enlightening us about themselves, their knowledge and experiences. They really made me feel comfortable interacting with them.

Perceiving people with disabilities in the role of leaders, teachers and experts challenges hegemony and the students’ comments suggest that they are also processing this new order. This workshop disrupts any view of people with disabilities as those who need to be helped by casting them as those who help teachers to learn. The following comment suggests that the elevated status of people with disabilities within the workshop may have led to heightened concerns amongst students about the need to do and say the right things:

I was very interested in working with adults with disabilities and scared at the same time. I was scared to be rude or discriminating against Fusion members.... I didn’t want to do something wrong.

For many of the student teachers, previous understandings were cast into doubt as they perceived people with disabilities as people who speak-up, as leaders in the role of guiding and teaching those who would be educators. For some this was surprising and challenged their assumptions as explained by this student:

The Fusion team demonstrated just how capable they are! I learned how assumptions could affect my initial understanding – they were the ones who directed the workshops and without hesitation or problem.

The encounters occurring in the workshop set off a range of affects that would require processing over time. Boler and Zembylas draw upon Dewey’s (1985) fusion of ‘belief, body and emotion into a single construct – habit’ (p.127). Altering one’s beliefs therefore, means altering one’s habits and relinquishing the comfort of these habits requires emotional labour. After reading this I noted in my reflective journal what I perceived might be some habits of mind for the student teachers. I wrote:

Are some of them stuck at thinking difference as deficit and disability as a problem? Do they hold reductive conceptions of difference? Are they stuck on wondering ‘How will I cope?’ Are they thinking of students with disabilities as needy of help, sympathy or pity?
There are clues in the data to suggest that these kinds of thoughts were prevalent amongst some students prior to the workshop as indicated by these responses to the pre-workshop survey:

- *I fear that I am at a point where I wonder if schools should or should not integrate SEN students into the mainstream cohort.*
- *I feel I will be thrown in the deep end when I begin teaching.*
- *I don’t think uni has covered this enough.*
- *When I couldn’t identify the associations of a mentioned disability I felt really inadequate... [I want] more specific knowledge about disorders.*

Such comments reveal a fear that teaching students with disabilities will be difficult, that they are inadequately prepared for the task, and blaming university courses for failing to provide what they felt was the required ‘specific knowledge’. This is presumably knowledge they felt they needed in response to a clinical approach to disorders and a medical model of disability, for example, how to teach a child with autism. There is the suggestion of inevitably being ‘thrown in’ to teaching in diverse classrooms and that the responsibility for their preparation does not reside in themselves but rather they believe they should be prepared by others. If all such habits of thinking are not disrupted, there is the danger of the ‘self-fulfilling prophesy’ described by Sze (2009) when beliefs and concerns about teaching students with disabilities can transform teachers behaviours in ways that confirm the initial expectations. A preoccupation with practical concerns and perceived gaps in specific knowledge can erode a teacher’s philosophical ideals about inclusive education, entrenching negative attitudes that are difficult to change. Such attitudes are not surprising because of what Ware (2006) describes as years of reductionist and positivist indoctrination that requires ‘unlearning ableism’. The following student comment describes some soul searching:

*It was interesting to reflect on the fact that the discomfort I have felt in the past when speaking/interacting with people of special needs is much more indicative of my own discomfort/uncertainty about how to ‘deal’ with people with special needs rather than being an accurate reflection of their capabilities.*

Student teachers require more diverse and culturally rich understandings of lived experiences of disability and pedagogies that disrupt, or at least trouble, limited views.
If some students continue to be occupied by habitual thoughts of this nature, then something significant is required to disrupt the status quo and shift these habits of mind to open a space for re-thinking disability as possibility and for believing in one’s self as being capable and resourceful toward becoming an effective inclusive educator.

**Exposure and vulnerability: a pedagogy of openness**

Student teachers are likely to endure a level of vulnerability as they find themselves under the direction of strangers – the drama practitioners who happen to also be people with disabilities. There may also be a level of concern they feel for the risks and responsibility taken on by the Fusion team members. Perhaps the student teachers wonder: How will people with disabilities manage in this context? What if we don’t understand them? What if they stumble and fail? Will they be disappointed? Will we be expected to jump in and help them out?

The Fusion team members also express a level of anxiety at the start of each workshop. They must recast themselves in a role that is different from their usual role in relation to others. Our workshop rehearsal held in the previous week is amongst the strategies that help them to ease their fears. Although it has become easier with experience, each new workshop takes some courage, as Andrew explains, ‘We show our limitations and then we go beyond them’. The lecturers also take a risk as they undertake to participate in the activities on equal terms rather than stand aside only to observe and comment. One tutor, Alison, talked about the risk for herself and the importance of tutors ‘putting themselves out there’, she said, ‘as teachers it is important to sometimes be vulnerable too’. This leads back to the idea that pedagogy of discomfort shifts both educators and students, individually and collectively, beyond their comfort zones. In this workshop, student teachers, lecturers and Fusion theatre leaders are all, to some extent, running risks in a project that does not conform to university teaching and learning norms and we are all challenging and extending the safety of our personal comfort zones.

To those who would question the ethics of putting participants into a position of vulnerability, I would ask why educational processes must necessarily be comfortable. Boler and Zembylas (2003) argue that educational processes need not be comforting and that pedagogy of discomfort is ultimately positive because of the ways in which it
works at both cognitive and emotional levels to encourage ‘vitalism, critical thinking and new ways of being in the world... [and offers] a new sense of interconnection with others and expand[s] the borders of comfort zones’ (p.133). In the written responses the majority of students reflected thoughtfully on new ways of thinking:

...now that I have had that small experience I will feel more comfortable and more equipped with strategies for inclusion.

I’m less afraid of having students with special needs in my class. With more help I feel I could deal with this.

Perhaps the most important thing I gained from the workshop was the reminder to see the students as individuals and not to make assumptions.

Having the time to speak to the people from Fusion Theatre worked in two ways – it made me more nervous and more confident.

Didn’t know what to expect. Especially not what happened. I was surprised and worried about participation, but thankful that there was [eventually] a relaxed atmosphere. I don’t know whether I liked it or not, but I did learn.

These quotes reflect the complex range of emotions experienced by the student teachers as they labour emotionally with mixed feelings of being ‘more nervous and more confident’ or in labouring to ‘not make assumptions’. Some allude to shifts in feeling and thinking that have occurred when they proclaim: ‘I will feel more comfortable...’ and ‘I am less afraid...’ In the final quote the student describes conflicting emotions feeling at times uncertain, surprised, worried, thankful and relaxed. Ultimately the student was not sure if he or she liked the experience although seems confident to say that learning occurred. This resonates with Boler and Zembylas when they say that educational processes need not be comforting in order to be educating. The workshop seems to provide an educational experience that disrupts hegemony, unsettles thinking with the students’ comments suggesting vigour in their thinking, a view to the future and new ways of being in the world.

**Shock to thought**

I recognise this new thinking as felt thought, thought that comes through the senses, in the workshop experience that brings bodies together in multi-sensory or ‘sensational’ ways, with all of the implications that the word holds. Bennett (2005) explains that
Deleuze uses the term *encountered sign* to describe sign that is felt rather than perceived through thinking. She explains:

Deleuze’s argument is not simply, however, that sensation is an end in itself, but that feeling is a catalyst for critical enquiry or deep thought;... For Deleuze affect or emotion is a more effective trigger for profound thought because of the way in which it grasps us, forcing us to engage involuntarily: “More important than thought there is ‘what leads to thought’... impressions which force us to look, encounters which force us to interpret, expressions which force us to think.” (p.7)

While Bennett refers to affect as a ‘trigger’ for profound thought, Massumi (2002) and Thompson (2009), who both also develop Deleuze’s work on affect, refer to the notion of a ‘shock to thought’ which resonates with notions of the disorienting jolt of the new. A body does not choose to think, writes Deleuze, it is *forced* to think as Massumi explains:

Thought strikes like lightening, with sheering ontogenetic force. It is felt. The highest operation of thought is not to choose, but to harbour and convey that felt force, repotentialized. The thinking is not contained in the designations, manifestations and significations of language, as owned by a subject. These are only partial expressions of it: pale reflections of its flash. (p.xxxi)

Following this idea, the written and verbal responses from students that are available to me for analysis, only represent pale reflections of the full force of their felt thought. Nevertheless, they are a reflection of affects experienced in the workshop encounter and do give a sense that a surprise, if not a shock to thought, has occurred. The following is one example of the many testimonies in students’ short written reflections on the workshop that indicate what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) might describe as a new line of flight, not a line of division or separation but a deterritorialized nomadic line that carries them beyond old territories of understanding:

*This workshop is an in-your-face reminder to see the person not the disability. You know to do this but you don’t always do it. The workshop made me want to be better and more inclusive. It made me want to educate myself and my students about disabilities and bring the knowledge into the classroom. I want to break down the wall of stigma and misunderstandings. I want my students to accept, not just tolerate. Anything less is really not good enough when you consider that a person’s or group of people’s well-being is at stake. I hope I can do it.*
New becomings require constant effort according to Deleuze and Guattari who describe the labour necessary to move beyond striations and territorialized space – the habits of the mind. The workshop encounter has provided for this student an ‘in-your-face’ experience, suggesting an unavoidable up-close and embodied face-to-face encounter. She recognises the struggle required to dismantle the prevailing limited individual/medical view of disability in education. She knows it but finds it hard to always move beyond it – ‘you know to do this but you don’t always do it’. She realises what Deleuze and Guattari describe as the deterritorialized space which is constantly being reterritorialized and reorganised returning her to old ways of being. She desires to ‘educate’ herself and her students and to ‘break down the wall of stigma and misunderstandings’. Dismantling the familiar ‘face’ of the prevailing limited view is hard work – the same as ‘breaking through the wall of the signifier and getting out of the black hole of subjectivity’ (p.208). Deleuze and Guattari explain in terms that resonate with the words of the student:

Find your black holes and white walls, know them, know your faces; it is the only way you will be able to dismantle them and draw your lines of flight. (p.208)

‘I hope I can do it’, she writes finally. In this she articulates a commitment and responsibility to the other. This is what the philosopher-ethicist Emmanuel Levinas suggests is an inevitable consequence of the face-to-face encounter (Hutchens 2004). When we meet someone close-up and face-to-face, the ‘face not only pleas and commands; it is strange and disorienting; it unsettles – and overwhelms’ and it calls us into question (Morgan 2011, p.81). This student teacher’s strong desire is an important first step but lasting transformation requires more than a shock to thought, a disruption or disorientation. In the following sections I consider another theory of transformative learning and the role of imagination in assisting with transformation.

**Transformative learning and the disorienting dilemma**

Mezirow’s theory of transformative learning has been described in chapter four as the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference including our meaning perspectives, habits of mind and mind-sets, ‘to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action’
Mezirow proposes the catalyst for such transformation is the ‘disorienting dilemma’ that provides a challenge to an established perspective. A disorienting dilemma could be a life-changing experience such as death, illness or being made redundant. However, Mezirow suggests it could be much less cataclysmic. It could be any challenge to an established perspective such as a discussion, book, poem or painting that opens the eyes. I propose it could also be a drama workshop that provides the challenge. The description of the workshop as ‘eye-opening’ occurs most frequently in the data. The following examples come from the short written comments:

*Today’s workshop was an eye-opening experience.*

*It opened my eyes and made me more aware of the issues at hand.*

*I feel like my eyes were opened, enabling me to have a better understanding of how people with disabilities feel in a classroom and in a school context.*

*I saw many people have their eyes opened.*

For many the workshop experience provided a surprising situation that revealed something previously unknown. In Mezirow’s terms it is a disorienting dilemma and as explained earlier in this chapter, one that works on a number of levels: the strangeness of the space and the unfamiliarity of the drama approach for the student teachers and the unusual collective of people who, in the space and through the method, are brought together to encounter each other in extraordinary ways.

Mezirow (1991, 2000) proposes that while transformation might begin with a disorienting dilemma, it comes about through some variation of the following phases:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame
3. A critical assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition that one’s discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration of one’s life on the basis of conditions dictated by one’s new perspective (2000, p.22)
Some have criticised Mezirow’s theory as being too reliant on rationality in the meaning-making process and not giving enough attention to affective learning (Taylor 2000; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner 2007). I turn my attention to processes of thinking through and beyond the workshop experience in more detail in chapter nine. At this point, I take up Mezirow’s basic idea that becoming disoriented is just the beginning of a process of learning from that disorientation.

I now consider what happens when disruption and disorientation cause assumptions to be challenged or invalidated, thereby creating spaces that need to be filled. When old worldviews are challenged alternatives need to be imagined and this requires continued emotional labour as one breaks with existing patterns of thought and action (Cranton 1996). In articulating his theory of transformative learning, Mezirow also emphasises the importance of imagination:

> Imagination is central to understanding the unknown; it is the way we examine alternative interpretations of our experience by ‘trying on’ another’s point of view. The more reflective and open we are to the perspectives of others, the richer our imagination of alternative contexts for understanding will be. (p.20)

The next section considers some of the strategies in the workshop that put the imagination to work in order to continue the process of disruption and transformation through imagining alternatives and possibilities for the future.

**Realms of the possible: imagining alternatives**

*The Possible’s slow fuse is lit*  
*By the Imagination*  
*(Emily Dickinson 1914/2003, p. 273)*

It is the imagination, according to Dewey (1934) that is the most potent of our capacities to break through the inertia of habit (Greene 1995). Many of the aesthetic and artistic experiences of the workshop were designed to lead participants to imagine alternatives. Boal (1995), who developed many theatre techniques that the workshop activities are derived from, describes imagination as a process of amalgamation of ideas, emotions and sensations drawn from memory to create ‘realms of the possible’ (p.21). Memory is retrospective and imagination is prospective and both ‘project onto – and into – the aesthetic space subjective dimensions which are absent in physical space’
The aesthetic spaces of the workshop provide an affective dimension in which a subject is ‘moved, thinks, remembers and imagines’ (p.22).

**Imagining exclusion changing to inclusion**

The simplest example of this imagining of possible futures occurs in part two of the workshop when the participants are asked to involve all the people in their group to create a still image in response to the notion of ‘exclusion’ and then to imagine the alternative and morph into a new still image that represents ‘inclusion’. Working together in groups quickly and creatively in this five minute exercise is one important purpose but it also serves to stimulate the imagination as people consider what exclusion and inclusion can be, what it can look like, and how an image of exclusion might be changed to an image of inclusion (see figure 8).

![Figure 8: Morphing exclusion to inclusion](image)

An exercise such as this is a quick task, and with no time allowed for critical reflection, can result in stereotypical responses. As such, it can be considered something of a throw-away activity for drama educators. Although it is made relevant to the theme, by
choosing appropriate concepts to explore, its purpose is ultimately to prepare for something more important to follow and this is how I have tended to regard it. On reflection, I can appreciate that it does so much more. When the group comes together in the creative problem-solving required in the task, there is little talk and more action that represents a kind of felt bodily thinking. The group assembles, they rapidly exchange ideas, agree, or at least settle on an idea about which they have a shared understanding. This collective reimagining is then made visible through body and movement and they share an understanding of what exclusion can look like and what the alternative might look like. In morphing one image into another the group members were asked to consider what could possibly occur in order that inclusion is achieved and to show this in the eight counts, sounded with the claves, that it took to morph from one to the other. Each group performed these scenes and those moments of transition, when exclusion dissolved, produced affects evident through the spontaneous audience responses, including gasps resulting from small shocks of awareness or the surprise of recognition, and a mixture of laughter and sighs. Connections are made when patterns emerge as different groups reveal similar images. This exercise was fast-paced, and the immediate showing of the work left no time for over thinking. The responses were gut felt and communally sensed and in the few minutes we took to view the images, we (audience and performers) also shared a vision of what is, and more importantly, what could be – a vision of hope and possibility.

**The importance of imagination: identifying and analysing obstacles to inclusion**

Theatre... is a mirror which we can penetrate to modify our image. (Boal 1995, p.29)

We cannot simply fantasise and bring about the disappearance of obstacles to inclusion but the dreaming or imagining is important. Imagining something being different is the important first step to believing change is possible. Greene (1995) suggests, ‘a general inability to conceive a better order of things can give rise to a resignation that paralyses and prevents people from acting to bring about change’ (p.19). The ability to imagine is important because tapping into the imagination allows the possibility that we may ‘break with what is supposedly fixed and finished... [and in doing so] a person may become freed to glimpse what might be, to form notions of what should be and what is not yet’ (p.19).
While the still image activity left participants pondering idyllic moments of harmony, the substantial performance-making task of the workshop took us straight back to the realities of inclusion. This activity involved students in groups of five or six creating and presenting very short scenes of less than a minute to show obstacles to inclusion in an education context. In this exercise theatre is used to present a collectively imagined moment that shows an obstacle to inclusion in action and that also includes a teacher in the scene. Slee (2010) explains that an important part of becoming an inclusive educator requires being able to identify the manifest and insidious ways in which exclusion occurs in schools and the ways that teachers can be complicit in it. In order to move beyond a simple cognitive understanding, this activity seeks to heighten empathic awareness of the nature of exclusion and the way it operates as well as what teachers may do to counter-act exclusion. The student teachers commented that the ‘role play activities also highlighted some of the obstacles we could come across next year’ and ‘gave us views of what not to do as teachers’. Theatre as Jones (1996) suggests, is ‘both an activity set apart from everyday reality, which at the same time has a vital function to play in reflecting upon and reacting to that reality’ (p.3). The students commented on the ways the short fictional scenes provided a sense of reality:

*The role plays all gave valuable insight into everyday realities.*

*Role playing provided real life scenarios.*

*Most beneficial were the scenarios because [they] presented some of the problems realistically and prompted thought about how to respond.*

The performance-making task that asks participants to focus on obstacles to inclusion, is what Freire (1970) calls ‘problem-posing education’ as we turn our attentions to ‘the problems of human beings in their relations in the world’ (p.79). This performance-making activity requires each small group to identify a problem, in this case an obstacle to inclusion, and then present that problem to the rest of the class so that we may collectively (student teachers, lecturers and Fusion actors) react to it and imagine ways that the problem may be overcome. This represents Freire’s dialogical theory of action; in this activity, as subjects, we ‘meet to name the world in order to transform it’ (p.167).

The first part of the process involved the group coming together to identify and discuss a range of obstacles to inclusion. The group then quickly chose which of these obstacles
they would show in their scene. The requirement that a teacher be included in the scene meant that they had to consider the role of the teacher in relation to this obstacle and how a teacher may be complicit. After discussion, the members of the group decided the roles that each would play and then they began to rehearse the scenes. It is interesting to note that the Fusion theatre actors within the groups often play a teacher or a non-disabled student but they do not usually play the role of a student with a disability.

Over the history of the workshop many scenes have been created in response to this task. The majority of these scenes have been set in classrooms involving teachers and students. Sometimes the obstacle shown has been the teacher’s attitude, such as when the teacher demonstrates a lack of patience or attention to the needs of a student with a disability or is seen to favour other students in the class. Sometimes the barriers include negative actions and attitudes shown by other students towards a student with a disability and the teacher is implicated when he or she fails to do anything about it. Time has also been presented as an obstacle when teachers have become preoccupied with other teaching tasks and fail to find time to attend to a student’s educational needs. Some scenes show a teacher’s failure to recognise and respond to particular needs of students who may not hear instructions well or be able to see the board. Other scenes are set in the school grounds when the social and recreational needs of students with disabilities are not met or when students with disabilities have difficulty negotiating physical obstacles to getting to class on time. A few scenes have been set in a staffroom when teachers encounter unhelpful attitudes or a lack of support from colleagues in order to help them to teach inclusively. One student noted:

In the activity of acting out exclusion in the classroom there were some ‘eye-opener’ situations presented where exclusive practices were well picked out. This gets me thinking about my own practices in education.

By asking for scenes that show obstacles to inclusion rather than examples of how obstacles have already been removed, we are posing the problem that needs to be solved. It is not a closing down by providing answers with the problems fixed and finished but rather an opening up of Pandora’s Box. For the student quoted above, the obstacles to inclusion were well defined and proved to be eye-opening. Watching these short performed scenes allowed the audience to encounter signs; ‘felt signs’ and affects
that are sustained sensations that linger longer than the actual performance. The scenes are blocs of sensations, comprised of percepts and affects, which set off ongoing thought processes. Viewing them ‘gets me thinking’, explains the student. It can be said of the affective dimensions of these performances that ‘far from foreclosing on thought, it agitates, compelling and fuelling inquiry rather than simply placating the subject’ (Bennett 2005, p.36). The scenes have for this student served to trigger and vitalise thinking about his or her own practices in education.

Within the field of disability studies, Allan (2005) explains the importance of the role of disability arts in facilitating the reimagining of disability. She suggests that disability arts (poetry, song, dance visual art etc.) with an emphasis on ‘performing, rather than exposing, ideology’ are responsible for ‘playful and disruptive boundary work’ that needs to be encouraged (p.48). Such works of art can serve to ‘discomfit able-bodied people, by forcing them to examine their own normalizing and disablist attitudes’ (p.42). The performance elements of the workshop, although collaboratively devised, and not the kinds of arts works created and presented by disabled people that Allan describes, can also be seen as a playful and disruptive work within the project of inclusion. Although the subject matter in these scenes about obstacles to inclusion is serious, and the thinking seems productive, the method is playful and there is a great deal of laughter. Allan suggests that such performances can ‘force able-bodied people to confront their own banality, to laugh at their stupidity and to recognise how this disables’ (p.48). I have found shared laughter in the performance-making and other workshop processes as being worthy of attention. Rather than being incidental or a mere side-effect, I now consider the place of laughter as an important central element of the drama workshop.

**Community in laughter**

When I focus my attention to the soundtrack of the video recordings of the workshops I notice the regular bursts of spontaneous group laughter. ‘Laughter and conversation and acceptance’ was one student’s written summation of the workshop and ‘fun’ and ‘enjoyable’ are other words frequently used by the students to describe the workshop. This certainly accords with the intention of the Fusion theatre team. As mentioned previously, they are also aware of the role of fun and humour to ‘break the ice’ as
Andrew has explained. Creating a positive mood and an atmosphere of fun is a shared aim for the team and one that Andrew, in particular, takes very seriously (see figure 9).

Andrew is the self-described ‘comedian’ of the team and king of the wry one-liner. He frequently chips in humorous asides and instigates a playful banter between the Fusion team members. He regularly asks the team whether he needs to ‘tone down’ his jokes a little and the team always confirms that it is an important element in the success of the workshop. When humour seemed to be an emerging area of interest to me in the second year of the study, I added a question to the post workshop questionnaire asking students to ‘describe a moment in the workshop that amused you or made you laugh’. More than half of the responses specifically mentioned Andrew. For example:

- Andrew’s hilarious sense of humour!
- Andrew was great at making jokes and really helped me relax.
- Andrew was so funny he was always making me laugh.
- Andrew cracked me up! Very funny guy.

Figure 9: Andrew the joker

Other members of the team are also mentioned for their contributions of funny, cheeky and sometimes irreverent comments and observations. As one student explained the
‘playful “bickering” between Andrew, Alex and Katrina was really fun to witness’. This was also valued by the lecturers, as Claire explained:

*That’s one of the things I enjoyed the most about it. Some of those people had such great senses of humour and they are bagging each other and then get everyone else laughing and stuff and that kind of helps break down barriers, not only between them and the students, but me and Alison and the students, and the students with the other students, so there’s all those different sorts of barriers.*

When the team prepares for each workshop all members are very aware of maintaining a level of humour and the important role it plays in breaking down barriers and easing any sense of discomfort. Alex in particular laughs loudly and freely at Andrew’s jokes and other funny incidents in the workshop and sometimes it is Alex’s laughter that seems to provide permission to laugh for others and sets them off in laughter because his uninhibited and robust laughing is funny and endearing in itself (see figure 10).

![Figure 10: Alex laughing out loud](image)

While we can work towards creating an atmosphere that allows for fun and laughter, we cannot make laughter happen, it simply happens when it happens. I viewed the video recordings of workshops to try to understand the reasons behind the laughter. I found that it was not always obvious why laughter occurred and realised that if I was to attempt to describe many of the instances in words they would not seem funny at all – as the saying goes, ‘you had to be there’. Even in the moment, I might not have been able to explain exactly the reasons for laughter when it occurred in the workshop. These
are moments of affect, a response that is felt before it is thought. Laughter is also contagious and we might find ourselves laughing simply because others are laughing. From viewing the video it seemed that often laughter occurred in response to surprise and incongruity in the workshop such as the challenging, unusual and intimate physical configurations that participants found themselves in (see figure 11) or to funny comments that seemed to have a commonly recognised ring of truth (see figure 12 & 13).
Figure 11: Laughing matters – strange physical situations

Figure 12: Laughing matters – outrageous comments

Figure 13: Laughing matters – shared laughter
The scenes created by the students in the main performance making activity are of a serious nature as they are required to show obstacles to inclusion in education. In every case the presentation of the scenes was preceded by and followed up with serious discussion. However, as a counterpoint to this seriousness, there were often eruptions of group laughter. When I focus my attention on some of these moments that produce laughter, I find that there is a sense of the incongruous.

In one scene the obstacle to inclusion was shown to be a lack of tolerance amongst students. In this scene Alison, who in real life is one of the lecturers and a former principal, plays the role of a recalcitrant student. In the scene she screws up her worksheet and throws it at the student with a disability who is struggling to spell a word out loud. The action is inappropriate but the audience laughs, including Alex, who recognises a truth in the scene and calls out ‘I know that, I’ve been there!’ In real life there is nothing funny about this incident of gross intolerance but laughter comes in our shared recognition of the absurdity that the role of the insensitive student is played by Alison, who we realise would never condone such action, and who as a former principal was probably often in the position of having to reprimand students for similar behaviour. I noted in viewing the video that this shared moment of laughter was followed by intense and meaningful discussion about issues presented in the scene including ideas for what teachers may do to encourage peer support and positive student attitudes. If I view this as an assemblage I see audience who are students, almost-teachers, people with disabilities, lecturers coming together in this intensity around the event of the paper missile and Alison, who is simultaneously actor/rude student/lecturer/former principal. Alison sets off an affect that manifests in spontaneous group laughter. In that split second we do not know why we laugh; we are disoriented and when we pause to think, we recognise the absurdity and contradiction in this scene. We may also search for meaning in this contradiction and reflect on the many layers of Alison and the richness of experience and understanding that she brings to our learning table.

It so happened that the obstacle to inclusion shown in the fictional scene of the drama also involved laughter. However, this is laughter of a malevolent kind – the inappropriate and insensitive laughter directed at a student with disabilities in the class.
In the scene a student attempted to spell a simple word and made a mistake which caused the teacher and students to laugh and emboldened one student to throw the paper missile. In the following discussion the audience was invited to ask questions of the characters. Alex was the first to jump in: ‘I would like to ask the teacher some questions,’ he stood up amidst laughter from the rest of the audience. ‘Why did you laugh at that poor kid?’ he demanded prompting more subdued laughter. The student, in role as teacher responded,

‘Everyone in my class should be able to spell that easy word.’ There is laughter at the teacher’s arrogance.

‘What would you have done if one of the other students had made a mistake on a more difficult word?’ pressed Alex.

‘I probably would have given them another chance.’

‘Then why didn’t you give that poor kid a chance?’ It seems Alex may have outwitted the teacher and there is laughter again.

The audience responded with sounds of appreciation to real-life Alex challenging the fictional teacher. Once again we laughed at something that surprised us, the incongruous situation; that of a person with a disability challenging the inclusive teaching practices of a teacher. Several students mentioned the poignancy of this moment in their written reflection including one student who wrote that they had been particularly surprised and amused by ‘Alex questioning the teacher character and putting her in her place’. The situation, although unlikely to occur in real life, is a revolution to behold. It prompts the question: what would students with disabilities like to say to their teachers if they were given the chance? It invites us to imagine a world in which students can challenge the way teachers teach. The opportunity to question the role of teacher also seemed to give Alex tremendous satisfaction as he became the interrogator able speak up on behalf of the student in a fictitious scene; one that seemed to him to be authentic based on his own personal experiences.
Taking laughter seriously

I turn my attention now to the significance of laughter within the pedagogical encounter of the workshop with a view to taking this laughter seriously. Vlieghe, Simons and Masschelein (2009; 2010) contend most current research on the merits of laughter in education is focussed on laughter as an instrument to increase motivation and make learning memorable or fun – to sugar the pill of learning. They argue that this is a limited view and laughter in education is not taken seriously enough. Laughter, they argue is often negatively appreciated or is absent in education which is often defined as a place of seriousness, discipline and hierarchy. Roaring with laughter, they suggest, can disturb all of this and laughter can therefore be seen as a subversive and critical force. Vlieghe et al prefer to take an affirmative view of laughter suggesting that ‘communal laughter not only grants the possibility to revolt against the unequally structured organisation of the Western schooling apparatus and society, but moreover that it might constitute a moment of radical equality or democracy’ (2010, p.720). A fear of and an aversion to laughter can be a sign of a desire to avoid this democratisation and a desire to maintain fixed identities and positions; the usual rank and order of the classroom. This leads me to consider that by encouraging humour and laughter the workshop team is intuitively attempting to disrupt any sense of the usual hierarchy and desiring ‘the equalizing and communizing experience laughter might lead to’ (p.722).

Another scene to show an obstacle to inclusion was set in a staffroom. In this scene four teachers stood around talking when a fifth teacher entered. After some teacher small talk, he mentioned to them that he had a student with special educational needs in his class and was wondering if any of them could help him with ideas for adapting work. They looked at each other blankly shaking their heads. One colleague looked him in the eye and shrugged ‘Don’t ask me, I went to Deakin!’ At this all in the room burst out laughing and for a time we were united and equal in that laughter. In the space of this workshop, bracketed off from the rest of university, we lost ourselves and we could share a joke at the expense of the institution in which we all had a stake. Laughter may start because of a subversive joke but when students, lecturers and people with disabilities surrender to laughter together, the differences between them are cancelled out and they undergo an experience of equality. After the laughter had died down we began to discuss the obstacle presented in this scene, ‘lack of support’ volunteered one
student teacher, ‘teacher attitude’ and ‘blaming their training’, suggested others. The irony of the scene, and in particular the characterisation of the graduate teacher from Deakin University not having any ideas for teaching a student with special needs was not lost on Alex who prompted more laughter when he highlighted the irony by saying ‘I imagine that in the future because we are here doing this at Deakin, he won’t have to say that’.

While we can stop to consider the humour in moments such as these that are the cause of laughter, as mentioned earlier, there are many moments when it is not so easy to understand why laughter occurs. Considering communal laughter as a phenomenon and a corporeal behaviour helps me to appreciate laughter in itself rather than attempting to analyse the humour that produces it. I appreciate laughter as an educational event (Vlieghe at al 2010). ‘Laughter shatters the dream people cherish to be nothing but mind’ explain Vlieghe et al (2010, p.723). They suggest that an aversion to corporeality can be another reason why laughter is negatively appreciated in education. When we laugh we give ourselves up to involuntary bodily reactions, muscle spasms in the face and body and uncontrolled vocal expressions. To accept and encourage laughter is to accept that we are our bodies and to encourage being fully and authentically human together – it is what Vlieghe et al call a ‘democracy of the flesh’ (p.729).

**Laughter, disorientation and disruption**

I have described the ways that the workshop can be a disorienting dilemma and now draw a link between this feeling of disorientation and laughter. For those who view disability as tragic or pitiable, laughter and disability may seem incongruent. Young children who notice a person with a disability are taught by adults not to stare and not to laugh – the message is that disability is not a laughing matter. Therefore, it may be surprising, if not a little disorienting, for some participants in the workshop to find so much laughter shared and welcomed between those who are perceived to have disabilities and those who are not. As outlined above we even laugh at some of the problems faced by students with disabilities in the barriers to inclusion – the teacher who is insensitive, the students who are impatient, and the colleagues who are unsupportive. Our laughter is a collective recognition of the foibles of humans and the
absurdity and stupidity of these events. This is not the non-disabled laughing at the disabled but a unifying communal laughter at what we all perceive is unacceptable.

Plessner (1961) according to Vlieghe et al, argues that laughter originates in a disorientating situation in which it is impossible for subjects to speak or act in an individualised way: ‘In laughter man gives up a certain position. She answers directly and impersonally. She is delivered to an anonymous automatism. It’s not really she who laughs, but something laughs in her and she is, so to speak, only the theatre and frame of this event’ (Plessner 1961, translated by and quoted in Vlieghe, Simons & Masschelein, 2009, p.205). Vlieghe et al (2010) argue that in this experience of ultimate self-loss, people communicate in a radical way, a state of unconditional transparency, which opens us up to one another. In the workshop students, lecturers and actors with intellectual disabilities, sharing an experience of self-loss, become a community-in-laughter. Vlieghe, Simons and Masschelein describe the implications of this:

> When communal laughing disrupts the order of positions and hierarchies we usually adhere to, we live a deep sense of contingency and we are confronted with the possibility of a future where our living together could be radically otherwise (that is, where we will hold positions that are presently unimaginable). In communal laughter the only thing that matters is that we are flesh; this is an equalizing experience that implies that everything could start anew. (2010, p.729)

While it might not be possible to plan for laughter to happen, we can accept it and value laughter as plain positive reality and for the moments of radical equality and democracy it provides. Laughing should be taken seriously when we consider the important role it plays in this workshop. Laughter both emerges from and dispels awkwardness and discomfort and ultimately serves to disrupt the usual rank and order, it reminds us we are all flesh. Laughter is an answer to a disorientating situation. Laughter unites people as diverse as university students, academics and people with intellectual disabilities and provides a smooth space in which they open up to one another so that they may confront ‘the possibility of a future where our living together could be radically otherwise’ (p.729).

**A storm in a forest**

In this chapter I have proposed the drama workshop is a disruptive space with elements that can be discomforting for all who come together as both learners and teachers but
particularly for the student teacher participants. There are many reasons for this discomfort and these can be considered under three areas: the strangeness of the space; the method (a drama workshop); and the unusual assemblage of people who are brought together to encounter each other in unfamiliar relationships and in extraordinary ways.

This discomfort is a critical element in the learning process signifying the triggering of a series of affects. Such disruption can lead to learning and has been variously referred to as a ‘disorienting jolt of something new’ (Bogue 2004), a ‘pedagogy of discomfort’ (Boler & Zembylas 2003), a ‘disorienting dilemma’ (Mezirow 2000) or a ‘shock to thought’ (Massumi 2002; Thompson 2009).

On a metaphorical level, I have considered the pedagogical event that is the drama workshop to be something like the event of a storm in a forest. It is a force that disrupts and disorientates and shocks and shakes some old assumptions and views that are not useful in the project of inclusive education. A storm event in a forest may cause some old trees to come crashing down, and while there might be some discomfort at first in missing the security of their towering presence, their familiarity and the history we share with them, they will as they decompose, provide nutrients to the forest floor – food for thought. Furthermore, as these old trees no longer obscure light from the forest floor, their absence provides an opportunity for new growth to emerge. In the next chapter I focus on what can happen in this drama workshop when this sunlight hits the forest floor.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Illuminate: Sunlight on the forest floor

I feel that drama can take people to a different and loving place, this was evident today.

(Student teacher – written reflection)

I feel inclined to agree with this comment from a student’s written reflection made immediately after a workshop. However, it prompts me to ask, what is this ‘different and loving place’ that drama can take us to and what is it about the drama that can transport people so? In this chapter I take a close-up view of some of the pedagogical moments in the drama activities to understand how they work to take participants to a ‘different place’ – a space where they open up to one another and perceive new possibilities. I consider the notion of ‘loving’ as mentioned by the student as representing a feeling of connection, intimacy and empathy that occurs where bodies encounter each other in the drama experience through what I understand to be an affective embodied pedagogy.

The ‘illumination’ that the title suggests relates to the ideas put forward in chapter seven whereby elements within the workshop experience lead to disruption that cause some of the ‘old trees’ of hegemonic assumptions to come down. This results in the illumination of the forest floor allowing for new things to be seen and to grow. I shed light on some drama activities, consider the reasons for their place in the workshop, and realise that these activities have layers of meaning and purpose that go deeper than those originally articulated in our workshop planning. In particular I consider the exercises in the workshop that involve a kind of synchrony and attention to the other that draws people together. I find, emerging from the data, notions that seem best described as beauty and grace. I consider a range of shifts and turns in the workshop that take students to a new place of intense, attentive listening.

Finally, I consider how during the workshop we collectively gain understanding about what teachers need to know and ways they ought to think to be effective inclusive educators. In an analysis of one activity, the thought tunnel, I reveal how within the participatory action research framework the activities can be simultaneously pedagogy and also arts-based research where we can all seek to benefit from the active and
dialogic space that allows possibilities for elucidating understandings of what is required to be a good inclusive educator.

**Synchrony: a collective wave of energy**

There are several times in the workshop when all participants come together in a kind of synchrony. The first moment of synchrony occurs at the beginning of the workshop when participants are asked to form a large circle and each Fusion Theatre member leads the group through a stretching exercise. We have always begun the workshop with this exercise and have been cognisant of a number of reasons for keeping this activity at the beginning. The reason stated by the Fusion members, as they introduce the exercise, is that it is good drama practice to stretch and warm-up physically before launching into other physical activities within the workshop. An additional reason is that it is allows each member of the Fusion team to confirm their position as a leader in the workshop as each takes a turn to verbally explain and physically model a stretching exercise.

![Figure 14: Communal stretching](image)

I return now to further consideration of the pedagogy of affect because in addition to the practical reasons stated above, I sense something more is happening. There is a strong unifying affect on the group as everyone stretches and moves in synchrony as one giant organism (see figure 14). Deleuze’s provocation that ‘we do not know what a
body can do’ comes to mind as I note that the simple movement of one person is powerfully amplified when the entire assemblage picks up and follows that movement. I am reminded of the effect of the singer or musician at a concert who claps her hands above her head a few times to signify to the audience to do the same. The action is contagious and soon there is the pulsing force of an audience clapping, as one, in time with the music. Individuals in the audience are united in that haptic and sonic action and collectively generate energy that drives a performance to new heights. At this important early stage of the workshop there is a similar surge of energy for the Fusion leaders as they recognise what they can do, the powerful effect of which they are capable, when their instructions and demonstration sets off a collective response that unifies the group and unleashes a wave of energy to urge them on. The other participants go with it in this moment of solidarity and are also caught up in this unifying wave of positive energy. Later some reflect on the leadership by the Fusion team and some, such as the student quoted below, have admitted surprise at the competency of people with disabilities to lead the workshop.

One of the key points of interest for me was the capability displayed by those disabled individuals... [in] running a high-quality session such as this one.

In summary, this one simple exercise positions each Fusion team member, in turn, as a capable and effective leader. Within the democratic space of the circle, the action they set in motion unifies the participants and generates a collective energy that launches us into the next stage of the workshop.

The mirror exercise: mimicry and mimesis

There came a time in the planning when the team members and I felt we were attempting to do too many activities in the workshop so we went through the list to see which ones we could do without. The mirror chairs exercise is the most time consuming of all so it was a contender for removal. Alex insisted, ‘We must keep that one in!’ and the team was unanimous. Of all the activities, this one seems to have the least to do specifically with the topic of inclusion and yet for the Fusion team members, and for the student teachers, this exercise seems particularly memorable and important. Even the four pieces of music we originally chose remain unchanged. There is something
reassuring about the familiarity and the positive associations we have with the music selections and the aesthetic responses have always struck me as being beautiful.

Figure 15: The mirror chairs exercise

The exercise is simple. Six chairs in a row face in one direction and between each of them is a chair that faces in the other direction (see figure 15). Two rows of chairs, each row facing two single chairs – the same but opposite. ‘We do this exercise in chairs’ Alex explains to the student teachers, ‘because some of the members of our company might have problems moving. Also copying others helps them move their bodies in different ways to the ways they normally move. They might have balance problems and you can do this exercise even if you are in a wheelchair’. The student teachers sit in the chairs in rows and the Fusion theatre actors volunteer to sit in the single chairs; they will be the first leaders in this exercise. All start in neutral, hands on knees. The music begins; it is low, slow and soulful. It is Cat Power with a voice that is rough and smooth, raw and vulnerable and the lyrics speak to us as adults.

We’ve lived in bars
And danced on tables
Hotels, trains and ships that sail
We swim with sharks
And fly with aeroplanes in the air

Eyes are focussed on the leaders to secure the mimetic connection. There is intensity and rhythm that grows as the leaders set off a wave of motion in response to a single lyrical gesture. The followers are focussed and concentrating hard as is seen in their outward expressions (see figure 16).

Figure 16: Focussed observation

Those observing from the outside are able to appreciate the capacity for one small movement by one individual to be amplified through this animate and sensate assemblage. One row rises, arms in the air as the other row falls stretching forward and low; one row sweeps to the left, the other surges to the right, different and the same. All are connected in synchrony and harmony and although each side moves in different directions, there are easy and pleasing combinations of movement and sound. In the totality of the exercise – leaders become indistinguishable from followers, and with audience, space, movement and music – there is oneness and a sense of belonging to this moving mass. The observers are part of this assemblage, they see and sense the same motions, and they hear the same music, the same lyrics:

Send in the trumpets
The marching wheelchairs
Open the blankets and give them some air
Swords and arches, bones and cement
The light of the dark of the innocent of men

As the music fades the movements are brought to a close, stillness and silence and the exercise has ended. The participants and observers are invited to talk to each other about what they have just experienced.

In an essay that examines the phenomena of sympathy, synchrony and mimetic communication, Gibbs (2010) theorises affect and mimesis which includes ‘corporeally based forms of imitation, both voluntary and involuntary’ (p.186). ‘At their most primitive, these involve the visceral level of affect contagion, the “synchrony of facial expressions, vocalizations, postures and movements with those of another person,” producing a tendency for those involved “to converge emotionally”’ (Gibbs 2010, p.187, quoting Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson 1994, p.5). This exercise sets up a very deliberate opportunity for mimicry, or mirroring as we call it in the drama exercise, which requires not only absorbing but reflecting back. A follower in this exercise might say I see you and I read you and try to do as you do, but because I am human, and not an inanimate mirror, I can only attempt to reflect you after what has been observed and absorbed through my own body. It is a rendering rather than a reproduction. It is you, absorbed and reflected through me. I see you and try to move like you and you see me being like you. We recognise each other as being alike. The resulting mirror dance is made up of us both, and ultimately, of us all.

I recorded a discussion of the exercise by the Fusion Theatre team. ‘When we do it I see people getting really involved. It’s like they are watching every move’, explained Vicki. Dave elaborated, ‘It brings the group closer together and I think because everyone is focussing on one another it brings it just that little bit tighter together. It sort of connects us’. Katrina extended the idea of connection beyond the activity to a broader sense of connection in society, ‘Also, on our part, we used to feel that we were isolated and just on our own, now that we’re mingled we feel like we’re are doing something good’. ‘I feel the same as Katrina,’ said Andrew, ‘you tend to feel you are helping people which is very important’. Andrew’s comment suggests the importance to him of feeling as though he can do something to help others, such as leading this exercise.
In this exercise a person with a disability takes on the responsibility of leadership. In society people with disabilities are often not visible; they are marginal rather than central and subject to the averted gaze. In the mirror exercise, they are not only visible; they are placed in the spotlight, watched intently and appreciated while their movements are multiplied and magnified through the bodies of those who copy. When we take into account the totality of the exercise, with the two sides creating one aesthetic whole and encompassing the observers who are also part of the greater aesthetic experience, we see what a person with a disability is capable of doing. A space is created for bodies to come together and this is a space that facilitates the convergence of emotions and ‘affective attunement’ that Gibbs suggests may come through a mimetic capacity for synchrony (2010, p.197).

This feeling of capacity is not lost on the leader who gains a sense of agency along with responsibility for leading the action. In an unsolicited email, a visiting doctoral student who observed one of the workshops described the skilled leadership of the Fusion team members in this activity:

*I especially liked the mirror exercises – when the student teachers tried to imitate the movement, they were very nervous, tense and worried to be failing. Seeing their clumsy movement compared with the accomplished movement by Fusion members, you could be hard [pressed] to tell who was able and who was disabled.*

Her comment suggests that the activity not only disrupts notions of disabled and non-disabled but highlights the competence of people with disabilities within the activity. The Fusion Theatre members do not hesitate to take the leading roles because they have prior experience and they enjoy it. However, they also want to share the experience and encourage the student teachers to take the leadership in a second round of the activity that is done with different people in the chairs.

**A touch of vulnerability**

As an extension of the mirror exercise each of the chairs in the rows has two people attached to it – one who sits in the chair to mirror the action but with eyes closed and an assistant who stands behind the chair and who guides their action by gently moving them or by talking to them or both. Because this exercise involves touching another
person, and touching another is not a usual experience in most university classes, a step is introduced where the assistant asks permission to guide the person who is seated.

In this phase of the exercise twice as many participants are involved in an interconnected assemblage of leaders, followers and guiders who are also followers (see figure 17). There is an intensity of concentration as the guiders assume the responsibility of carefully guiding their charge and in the followers, who with eyes closed, are often seen to be struggling to relinquish themselves to the guide.

![Figure 17: Guiding and relinquishing](image)

At the end of this exercise there is a sense of relief expressed as participants invariably break into spontaneous conversation about the experience. The ideas generated in this discussion are then brought back to the whole group. Those in the chairs talk about feeling vulnerable and helpless, feeling it was difficult to not be in control and frustrated to know that they were probably not replicating the action of the leader closely enough. Some felt a desperate urge to open their eyes. Some mention feelings of appreciation towards the guide’s efforts. The guides talk about feelings of responsibility and not doing enough to help the person in their charge. The leaders recognise the difficulty experienced by the guides and describe feeling a responsibility to make their actions easy to follow. When some of these comments are shared with the whole group, the
links are made to the inclusive classroom and we consider parallels to the roles of teacher, students and integration aides.

I spoke to the Fusion Theatre team members asking them to reflect a little more on this exercise and they also raised the idea of vulnerability. Andrew explained, ‘There is a sense of dependency because when you’re sitting down you are dependent on someone else so you are getting an idea of how much some people are dependent on others’. Dave explained further, ‘It’s very daunting and you don’t know what to expect so you sort of feel a little bit scared. So when the person who was being led the first time round swaps and becomes the guide I noticed they are a lot kinder and gentler to the other person because they know what it is like to be the vulnerable one’. The idea of heightening empathic awareness was important to the team members and it appears that some student teachers were able to gain this empathic awareness as suggested in the following reflection written by a student after the workshop:

*In closing my eyes during one of the warm-ups, I felt an incredible sense of vulnerability and I think that reflects the attitudes of the students with disabilities coming in to the classroom – we need to make them feel a sense of safety and belonging.*

In a post-workshop tutorial this exercise prompted some lively discussion. One student proclaimed he ‘hated’ having to close his eyes and ‘hated not being in control’ while another commented, with equal passion, that she had particularly enjoyed the feeling of relinquishing control. Becoming vulnerable in this exercise means to drop your guard and to let go of any pretence as you surrender to others. Surrendering is not easy for all, but those who had the courage to allow themselves to be vulnerable and the willingness to trust another, seem to be rewarded with a feeling of authentically being in the world with others.

**An aesthetic turn**

Critical friends, who are also arts education academics, both separately commented on the significance of the mirror exercise. For Chris, the mirror exercise signified an aesthetic turn in the workshop and she attributed this to the introduction of the music that added another aesthetic dimension. She explained, ‘You add the aesthetic of the music and that is such a profound shift. That’s the aesthetic element. This is not an
aesthetic space, this is a pretty ugly space, but you play that music in that exercise and it creates the aesthetic moment’. A few student responses also included particular mention of the importance of music:

The mirror exercise was eye opening for me, as I was emotionally moved by the power of the music.

The powerful aesthetic element of music in the mirror exercise was also discussed by students in a post-workshop tutorial when the question was raised by one who asked, ‘where are music and other aesthetic elements in the regular university classroom?’

Jill, a colleague who came to some of the workshops as a photographer and critical friend, observed that the mirror exercise was followed by a shift in attitude. She felt the experience of concentrated awareness and human touch that was provided in a very structured way in the mirror exercise meant that the small group problem solving activities were taken up in a different spirit. She noticed that ‘barriers had been broken’ and there was a more relaxed attitude and increased willingness in the way that people worked together. I believe that Jill was noticing the same empathic awareness, increased sensitivity and closeness that Dave and the Fusion team had recognised and reflected upon. Indeed, Jill’s photographs are evidence of her noticing and framing these moments of sensitive touch (see figures 18 & 19).
While I agree that physical touch is a significant feature of this exercise, I also believe that even without physical touching, there is a sense of being ‘in touch’ and an intimate connection that draws together participants regardless of whether they are directly participating in the activity or acting as observers.

I return now to concepts of intimacy and aesthetic engagement raised in chapter three to consider what is happening in the close encounters of touch, vulnerability and
creativity. Intimacy according to Malone and Malone (1987) is made up of the characteristics of connection, animation and creativity. In her work on aesthetic engagement in drama, Bundy (2003; 2004) drew upon this work and further identified the characteristics as animation, connection, and heightened awareness and suggests these must be simultaneously present if a participant in drama is to engage aesthetically.

In the post workshop reflection some students also mentioned feeling a sense of connection afforded by the exercise and also made the link to the importance of connection and belonging in the inclusive classroom:

*I especially enjoyed the mirror activity as it was very inclusive and calming and created a sense of harmony and connection. It helped me to understand how simple means can create an inclusive environment for all students.*

*When I felt the connection of the people involved is was a significant moment. I think having that connection is very important when you are trying to cater for diversity in your classroom.*

The mirror exercise involved the animation of bodies and required as well as compelled a level of concentration and connection both optic (visual) and haptic (touch). This created something mysterious and difficult to describe according to this student:

*...there was this weird thing going on between those five people and that one person that kind of zoned everyone else out. It was like this connection and I don’t know if it’s the right word to say but a ‘spiritual’ thing.*

The exercise involved other characteristics of aesthetic engagement as listed by Bundy including other-acceptance, personal surrender, attentiveness and presence. The exercise was also an inclusive one, serving to unify participants. As one student said in an interview, its value lies in the fact that:

*Everyone can do it because it is so slow and relaxed. People with all different abilities can keep up and involved and feel part of the whole, part of that one. I think someone made the comment at the time that we felt like we were the one person.*

I recognise in this creative activity, as with several others in the workshop, the kind of energised focus that Csikszentmihályi (2008) calls ‘flow’. This occurs when there is a lessening of self-consciousness and loss of a sense of time. Several students referred to
this in written comments about the workshop such as, ‘two hours felt like no time at all’ and ‘time passed very quickly’.

**Beauty and grace reflected**

When forming a rationale for keeping the mirror exercise, I doubted whether my perception of it as being ‘beautiful’ was a good enough reason to keep it in a workshop focussed on preparing teachers to teach for diversity. I now realise that I was at risk of planning the workshop according to ‘narrow rules of logic rather than the rich potential of the aesthetic’ (Winston 2010, p.136). In reviewing the data, it turns out that I am not alone in finding beauty in the mirror exercise. ‘It was so beautiful to look at’ is a common response immediately after the exercise and in the surveys and short written responses, the mirror exercise is commented upon more than any other exercise with frequent reference to beauty as evident in these examples:

- *Really loved the mirror exercise. It was so beautiful. Everyone could participate and it was a really soothing activity.*
- *When we followed the movements of the leader it was so peaceful and beautiful.*
- *Mirror exercise was a beautiful, controlled, structured performance that anyone can participate in.*
- *A key moment in the workshop was when we did the mirroring exercise. This activity really broke down the barriers and was such a beautiful moment.*

These and other similar comments suggest that beauty is more than skin deep here. It is not that the exercise *looked* beautiful but *was* beautiful which leads me to reflect on what it is that so many recognise as beautiful in this exercise. The aesthetic elements of the music must surely contribute, along with the slow graceful motions. I believe beauty also resides in the synchrony of motion that comes of a willingness to give and to take; to guide and to yield. It is found in the connectedness, the harmony, the concentrated personal and collective effort and the imperfections in striving for this perfection. I understand it to be all of these in some kind of inseparable combination. Although beauty may be difficult to define, it seems it is not difficult to recognise.

The physical movements in this exercise are graceful and in this we recognise a visually perceived and a rhythmic, bodily sensed notion of beauty. The sensations connected to
an experience of beauty are affective responses (Thompson 2009). These are affects, not feelings; participants are not describing how they felt but rather describe a sense of a more amorphous ‘beauty’, ‘harmony’ and ‘calm’. I recognise a quality in this activity that seems to be best described as grace. Grace in education is surprising and according to Graves (1997), it is also transforming, healing, it transcends the ego, it opens the possible, it points to what is right and it enhances creativity. Grace, in the mirror exercise, comes in the willingness to give and to take; in the courage to lead and the willingness to surrender. Grace says Graves, cuts through boundaries and interrupts the expected. It can awaken the senses as it did for this student who wrote that the most meaningful moment in the workshop had been:

...Alex leading the mirror activity. Obviously this is a powerful activity anyway, but to see Alex so comfortable and confident was fantastic.

In ‘Beauty and Education’, Winston (2010) claims ‘the moral and the aesthetic cannot be so easily separated... and the concept of the ‘beautiful’ helps to articulate a set of educational virtues that might otherwise be sidelined’ (p.136). He reminds us that grace and charm have moral as well as aesthetic connotations. In the quote above, I recognise this attentiveness to and concern for the other as a sign of grace. Here Alex is named twice and generously celebrated by someone who has only just met him. Beauty reveals its power to surprise, to inspire awe and wonder, and in doing so can disrupt and shift thinking. This example shows how beauty has served to heighten awareness, and has concentrated attention on and appreciation of Alex (see figures 20, 21 & 22). As Winston suggests, raising consciousness in this way ‘brings us closer to a truthful, more objective vision of things as they really are, a vision often masked by our prejudices and common, everyday anxieties’ (p.84). Grace and beauty in this exercise become transformational forces that cause surprise, disrupt views of a person with a disability as being vulnerable and needy and serve to recast Alex, in this student’s perception, as a ‘comfortable and confident’ leader.
Figure 20: Alex leads the mirror exercise

Figure 21: ‘Comfortable and confident’ leader
In his discussion of applied theatre Thompson (2009) takes up beauty as his emblematic concept for performance affect. It is his term ‘for that moment of pleasurable, world-stopping sensation created through observing and, more particularly, participating in artistic activity’. Like Winston, Thompson sees a radical potential in beauty and understands that its ‘power to disturb is crucial and has important, rarely acknowledged, political power’ (p.140). Furthermore, Thompson suggests that affects that are the sensations associated with beauty do not disappear but rather can linger well after the object of that beauty is gone. This is the power that Greene (1995) suggests that experiences of the arts have when they provide shocks of awareness that can move us from the everyday and impel us to wonder and question. The lingering effects of beauty and the continuing ripples of the disturbance it has caused are what critical friend Chris noted as an aesthetic turn and that my colleague Jill and the Fusion team members observed as a positive shift in the relationship between participants in the workshop. The recognition of beauty comes as a result of affects that agitate at the level of sensation. I have a renewed awareness of the significance of these moments of beauty and grace as pedagogical encounters. I can appreciate more fully the importance of not underestimating their value – not only in the moments they occur, but for the lasting impressions they may leave. Thompson explains:
Performance affects continue to happen – to linger – and we should be focussing on the shape and intensity of that sensation in our planning, execution and analysis of what is necessarily an elongated performance moment. (p.158)

I began this section by explaining how I had wondered about the purpose of the mirror exercise which had seemed important but was difficult to rationalise within the limited educational terms in which I was thinking. I now understand this inability to rationalise is because beauty and grace are not part of common education discourse even though they are the very elements behind the potency of this learning experience. Beauty and grace need to be considered, embraced and discussed more by educators because although moments of this kind cannot easily be planned for in teaching and learning experiences, when they are recognised they should be valued and nurtured. The mirror exercise is one that creates an aesthetic space and the conditions of attentiveness and connectedness to the other that are necessary for them to occur. It is an assemblage of bodies and affects that creates new connections (Zembylas 2007) and, as such, deserves attention to the powers and desires it may create. I understand the mirror exercise to be an aesthetic pedagogical encounter that is also ‘a form of cultural and aesthetic exchange, a dialogue across differences that includes the physical and the aesthetic, the cultural and the political’ (Winston 2010, p.85). Having focussed on this exercise and the voices of all who have participated in it, I have a heightened awareness of the conditions that need to be created for beauty and grace to emerge and I now fold this into my understanding of an affective embodied pedagogy, one that seems radical in this higher education context.

**Listening deeply to the ‘untold story’**

At the halfway mark in the workshop we reach a moment when the Fusion Theatre team members each tell a little about their experiences of education (briefly outlined in chapter six). After we have heard a little from each team member, as they address the whole room, each individual has a group of students gather around them to ask questions. For many of the students listening to these stories is a very important part of the workshop:

> A significant moment was talking to Alex further about his experience and listening to everyone else’s. It was significant because it had seemed like an untold story until now for me.
It is not so much that the story had never before been told, but that it had not been heard, at least not by this student for whom it seemed new. I have noticed during each workshop when the time comes for the stories to be told, there is a very particular kind of attentiveness signified in the listeners’ posture, gesture and facial expressions (see figures 23, 24 & 25).
Figure 23: Listening – posture

Figure 24: Listening – gesture
Figure 25: Listening – faces

This listener attentiveness is also signified not merely by the usual hush of respectful listening but in a deeper collective silence. The stories are told at the half-way point in the workshop after an hour of drama activities. The Fusion team members introduce themselves at the beginning and it would have been possible to tell the stories then. However, we deliberately chose to wait until after a range of activities have been experienced before settling to tell the stories. Chris, as critical friend, observed and commented on the placement of the stories:

One of the things that jumps out at me quite powerfully is the timing of the stories, where those stories are placed is really such a central kind of thing in the construction of the experience because they introduce themselves at the beginning and they could tell those stories at the beginning but it is actually part of the texture of that engaged embodied experience. It is enclosed in a different kind of quality of space. It is what you have established in terms of the relationship and what they are. They are in a different space to hear it.

I have reflected on how that ‘different space’ came to be, one that opened up a desire to listen so actively and attentively to others. Simply hearing the stories directly, rather than reading them or hearing them from a secondary source, affords authenticity and immediacy that creates a level of intensity. One student explained, ‘hearing the stories from the person makes it more “real” than second hand information from a text book’. However, when the stories were being spoken about as being the most important part of the workshop, I asked the student teachers whether it might have been just as effective having the Fusion theatre members come to a tutorial class to tell the stories instead of
them being told as part of the drama workshop. There was a general consensus that this would not have been as effective. As students in two different interviews explained:

...because of all the drama activities you do get to build a little bit of a relationship and you sort of have with the copying actions almost like building a trust there. I think just having them come in and talk, while that would be really beneficial... I still think there needs to be activities to break down because otherwise it could be quite confronting for both sides... for them to come in and just have to share their stories with strangers.

...drama activities tend to break down the barriers between people and break down any awkwardness. [Otherwise] it’s like ‘I don’t know you and you don’t know me’, there is no sharing, so having those activities means that you are starting to share the same space and everything.

This prior building of trust was seen as important not only for the listener but for the teller. Some students also attributed the drama activities to creating a sense of relaxation and a reduction in formality as described by this student:

*I think the drama things sort of relaxed them as well because they weren’t sitting in rows in the classroom... it was more like informal learning because sitting in the classroom you sort of feel the pressure of thinking ‘Oh I should be taking notes about this or I should be studying it somehow’ whereas I think you absorb things better just sitting cross legged in a circle.*

The circle mentioned here is the democratic space for learning. The drama activities involve whole group and smaller group activities and constantly begin with and return to a circular configuration that brings all participants together to share the experience in a way that sitting in rows in a classroom or lecture theatre does not. This allows for what critical friend Chris described as ‘a collective listening’. She explained, ‘If they just came to the class there would be a whole group of individuals, whereas here it is a shared experience’. She also agreed that the drama activities were crucial to bringing into being a particular kind of listening. Chris explained the drama activities:

... are the bridge to those stories, it opens them up to listen to someone they already have a relationship to and some experience of in terms of the way they have embodied experiences of inclusion and exclusion so they are listening in a different way through their own bodies as well.
Aesthetic engagement in the drama activities required participants to engage in ways that encouraged collaboration, communication, intimacy, touch and different configurations and combinations of active bodies in space. Drama developed a sense of intimacy and awareness of the other so that when they sat down to tell or to listen to the stories, they became a new assemblage and a pedagogical space for learning had opened up. The story tellers, having been participants in the workshop, were aware that they were no-longer strangers but among friends, and having been leaders were affirmed as people who had something to offer. They were in the company of those who had come to know them a little through shared experience and who desired to know more about them. The assemblage is made up of intensities, desires, and flows between those who desire to tell, those who desire to listen and to understand.

When participants reassemble in smaller and more intimate groups around each Fusion member, a new assemblage is formed that sparks different intensities and flows as individuals ask questions that require natural responses. We move from a pre-planned storytelling and listening to a conversation that continues to be fuelled by a desire to listen and a desire to tell but is also individual, spontaneous and unpredictable. The smaller groups also involve more risk and responsibility. It is not possible for me to be present in each group to support each Fusion theatre member, to be there to interpret or reword questions or answers for the benefit of the people with disabilities or the student teachers. In configuring the small groups I place my trust in the Fusion team members and the student teachers that all individuals involved will work out ways to manage these conversations and make them meaningful. They must also trust themselves and trust in each other.

These small group conversations invited questions about a person’s experience of disability. In a post-workshop interview a student described the significance of this for her:

That’s something that I went home and told my mum about... I guess sometimes as a teacher you feel like you’re up here and the students are all over here and there is a real separation. You feel like you can’t ask the students these questions because you are supposed to be keeping this boundary. But it is really good to be able to ask questions. They were really open and I didn’t feel like any of my questions would offend anyone or
anything because it was just really like I wanted to know... and they didn’t mind me asking questions that I wouldn’t have felt comfortable necessarily asking a student.

Many student teachers spoke about and wrote in their reflection that they had realised through conversing with the Fusion Theatre members the importance of asking students with disabilities they may have in their future classrooms about what helps them learn. For some, this was a revelation as these remarkably similar quotes from students in two separate interviews suggest:

... if you have a kid in your class with some kind of different learning need, usually you ask your supervisor or ask one of their other teachers, you very rarely ask the kid themselves which sounds a bit stupid when you think about it.

It is a bit stupid but I always initially thought before this that you talk to the person who cares for them and you talk to medical people and the disability person at the school but now after [the workshop] I think the most important person to talk to is the student.

These students express some surprise that it had taken this experience of people with disabilities in the workshop for them to realise that students with disabilities can also be authorities on what can help them learn. For some students listening to the stories provided a shock to thought in more ways than one. The following written comment explains two reasons for this ‘shock’:

I was really shocked by some of their experiences and they were so articulate about disability issues... [and showed] the ability to reflect and tell us, using quite complex language and anecdotes.

For this student the shock came in hearing the lived experiences of people with disabilities who, as adults, are in a position to reflect on their experiences as students. Hearing these stories was particularly shocking and discomforting for some students because it caused reflection on how they themselves might have contributed to some of the unhappy experiences of students with disabilities during their own school days. One student wrote that the stories had for them stirred up a sense of shame in ‘painful memories and feeling guilty for those memories’.
An additional surprise comes in the realisation that a person with an intellectual disability is able to articulate these experiences so well. This realisation disrupts any previously held limited view of person with a disability. The first of these two shocks is an understanding about some of the obstacles to inclusion experienced by students with disabilities and the second serves to open a space for thinking of a person with a disability as being self aware, reflective and able to communicate effectively. The stories told within the context of the drama workshop provided insights into the lived experiences of disability, opened a space for re-thinking disability as possibility and ignited thinking about how to work with students with disabilities. For many students the stories provided an additional and greatly appreciated opportunity to better get to know and learn from the Fusion Theatre members:

*The most enjoyable part was getting to know Alex, Katrina, Vicki and Andrew and hearing about the experiences they’ve had in education. All of them provided a great insight and opened my eyes to a world of possibilities working with students with learning disabilities.*

Research reviewed in chapter two suggested some ways that coming to understand the lived experiences of people with disabilities, through personal narrative in autobiography, literature, film and art, can provide a student teacher with insights that may enhance their ability to teach inclusively (Thompson 2012; Biklen 2000; Biklen & Burke 2006; Mercieca 2011). Narratives can be powerful affective agents but, although there are few examples in the research, narratives told by the person themselves provided a richer experience (for example Mullen 2001). I argue that the experience of listening to the narrative is made even more potent when the telling occurs in the wake of drama activities that are physical and collaborative and develop a level of intimacy and a relationship of trust. Through the activities in which everyone participates equally, the Fusion theatre members are less likely to be considered ‘other’. We are all in this together and a shared space of ‘us’ has been created.

Mercieca invites us to read writings of disabled people using Deleuze’s (1994) concepts of difference and repetition; that is to consider ‘difference-in-itself’ rather than ‘difference-from-same’. He explains a ‘difference-from-same’ view involves considering what is expected in order to understand or interpret – ‘one refers to that
which is expected in order to understand that which is happening’ (p.7). A ‘difference-in-itself’ view ‘refers to that thinking which disturbs us, where our safe boundaries are questioned and shaken’ (p.7). Difference-in-itself is not about differences ‘between’ or difference ‘from original’, but rather, ‘difference is the power that over and over produces new forms’ (Colebrook 2002, p.123). Although the student teachers might come to the workshop with a ‘difference-from-same’ view, thinking about how students with disabilities differ from a perceived ‘norm’ and holding pre-conceived ideas about their needs and limitations; this is disrupted in the workshop. It is disrupted by the drama activities that bring bodies together in unusual ways, especially as five of those bodies are people with disabilities who have rich and varied lived experiences to share. The pedagogical encounters of the workshop promote a more positive ‘difference-in-itself’ view, moving participants beyond a limiting able-bodied/disabled dichotomy to recognise difference as ‘differing’ or a constant process of change in relation to the other that is not negative. This is a positive opening up to difference that is not about a fixed sense of being but a continuous process of becoming different, or differenciation in Deleuzian terms (Deleuze 1994). Allan (2008) describes Deleuze’s politics of difference as affirmative and suggests that this ‘more affirmative conceptualisation of difference could be useful for inclusion, possibly reducing the fear of difference or reverence for those who present differently’ (p.66). Davies explains that in a Deleuzian pedagogy ‘all subjects and objects are open to becoming different from themselves’ (2009, p.19). Thinking in terms of difference-in-itself is not easily planned for, because as Mercieca suggests, ‘it is composed of experiences that are unexpected and which astonish us with their unpredictability and opening up of possibility’ (p.7). The space of the workshop allows for this kind of differenciation or becoming as participants move fluidly through categories – throughout the workshop participants, students, lecturers and Fusion Theatre actors are becoming student and teacher and actor and audience and leader and follower and expert and one who needs to know. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, it is not a matter of ‘instead of’ but rather ‘and...and...and...’ (1987, p.27). This ‘logic of the AND’ (p.29) and the notion of ‘becoming’ rather than ‘being’, have strong resonances within the project of inclusive education.

The workshop involves participants in an hour of drama activity before we come to the education stories. It is after the building of relationships and connections through
collaborative activities that involve the whole body, the focussed gaze, synchrony, risk, vulnerability and laughter that we come to pause, to listen and to ask questions of Alex, Katrina, Andrew, Vicki, Jean-Marie and David. In the post-drama re-assemblage of tellers and listeners, we have a heightened awareness of bodily presence including facial expression, gesture and breath and flows between those who listen and those who tell, and intensities that gather around questions and answers (see figure 26). It is perhaps not surprising then, that for some student teachers, the experience of listening to these stories provided a kind of epiphany or a shock to thought that provoked responses such as:

_The stories... made me realise the kind of teacher I want to be._

![Figure 26: Asking questions face to face](image)

**The thought tunnel: how might a teacher think?**

Arts-based research makes use of affective experiences, senses and emotions. Its practitioners explore the bounds of space and place where the human body is a tool for gathering and exploring meaning in experience. (Finley 2011, p.444)

In the discussion of my research methodology in chapter five, I outlined the ways that through my reflection on practice and commitment to a participatory action research process, I have come to value the ways that the drama workshop activities are
simultaneously action-oriented inclusive education and a way of exploring and researching questions and ideas about inclusive education. Already in my discussion of the drama activities I have indicated the ways that some insights and ideas about teaching inclusively and teaching others to teach inclusively have been revealed in the affective experiences offered by the drama activities. I understand this active and dialogic space to be arts-based research, in which diverse participants further their understanding of themselves and others as thoughts are revealed and considered through the art form of drama.

While I believe that many of the activities within the workshop involve participants in exploring meaning through experience, in this section I focus on one activity to explicate this idea.

In the second last activity of the workshop a reference is made to one of the case-studies from a reading (Sigafoos & Arthur 2005) in the students’ reader for this unit. I do not read from the reading, but simply explain that in this case, a teacher has been told by the principal to expect a new student in her class and that this student has multiple disabilities. The student teachers, Fusion team members and lecturers are invited to move into two lines facing each other (see figure 27). The lines are a thought tunnel and they represent the teacher’s mind and speak what they imagine might be her many varied inner thoughts at this moment of being told the new student will be coming into her class. The right hand side represents thoughts that are inclined towards the positive and the left hand side represents the thoughts inclined towards the negative.
Figure 27: The thought tunnel

Figure 28: The teacher listens to her thoughts
A student is selected to represent the teacher and is invited to walk down the tunnel stopping to listen to each comment, one from the positive side and one from the negative side alternately until the end of the line (figure 28). The following is a representative selection of comments offered in this exercise:

- I haven’t been trained for this!
- This could be a great learning experience.
- Crap! I don’t have time for this.
- It will be fine, I can do this.
- I don’t get paid enough for this!
- I have the opportunity to make a difference.
- Why don’t they just send him to a special school?
- The other students will learn from this too.
- All the other students will fall by the wayside.
- I might be able to try out some new ideas.
- Now I’m going to really have to plan my classes!
- Great, I like a new challenge.
- Oh shit! Why me?
- I could use some of the things I learned at uni.
- What if I don’t know what to do?
- I could get some resources to help me.
- Why couldn’t they put him in the other class?
- I’ll have an opportunity to learn something new.

As each thought is articulated there are spontaneous vocal gestures, most commonly expressed as laughter from the others in the line. I understand these to be a response to the recognition of small traces of truth in the fiction. The negative thoughts are the loudest and the most extreme are those that get the biggest laughs, such as: ‘Oh shit!
Why me?’ and ‘I don’t get paid enough for this!’ and as Jean-Marie commented from the negative side, ‘That’s it! I’m resigning right now!’ We laugh to soften the brutal edges and we laugh because we recognise a small ring of truth in these negative thoughts and although they may cross our minds, we would be unlikely to ever speak them out loud. As teachers we know what we should be thinking and what we are expected to say but by creating the fictional teacher within the convention of the drama exercise, there is a kind of role protection, allowing participants in the tunnel to express the unspeakable thoughts – this is not what I think, this is what the imaginary teacher of the exercise is thinking. In this exercise we are laughing at the mean spirited and self-centred thoughts of the imaginary teacher but we might also be laughing at ourselves. We laugh self-consciously as we recognise how we are implicated in the existence of barriers to inclusion. As one student commented in an interview:

...when I was listening to all the negative comments I was thinking I hate to admit this but probably half those would have crossed my mind like ‘extra work’, ‘challenge’, ‘don’t know how to deal with it’ ... Yeah, I felt a bit embarrassed. I think it was really valuable because it made me self-reflect and say ‘Ok I see the positive side now and I see that the negative is not helpful’.

Being able to express the negative thoughts was in some ways comforting, as one student explained, ‘it made me realise I was not alone in my concerns’. It was also cathartic for others who felt that negative thoughts needed to be acknowledged in order to move on and this was what made this exercise most useful according to the student quoted below:

For me, the activity I liked best was the one where we were the thoughts of the teacher. I liked it... because it didn’t gloss over the realities of having a special needs student in your class – yes, you’ll have to work harder etc. It allowed these to be acknowledged and aired, but it also helped you to see the many benefits that a special needs student could bring to your classroom.

Exposing the negative thoughts, the teacher’s worries and fears, is important because these attitudes exist, and ought to be acknowledged. While such concerns might be conquered at times, they are bound to return. Allan (2008) suggests that acknowledgement of the impossibilities that teachers face ‘could go some way to according them respect for how they manage the struggle of inclusion’ (p.118). It is a
matter of fronting up to the task rather than ‘gloss[ing] over the realities’ as the student teacher quoted above suggested.

I noticed that the positive thoughts were a little quieter and more tentative and a little less speedy in their delivery but nevertheless were voiced and heard. Not nearly as funny as their negative counterparts, the positive thoughts seemed, in contrast, considered and sincere. At the conclusion of the exercise, when the student who was representing the teacher reached the end of the line, he or she was asked to consider all that they have heard and to provide a summary thought. The following are two examples of the concluding remarks from the end of the exercise in two separate workshops:

*It seems like it is a lot easier to come up with negative thoughts. Because as soon as we hear we’ve got another child in the class or more work its ‘Oh no the world is going to end!’ But the biggest thought that came out of the positive side was ‘Wow, what a great challenge for me! It gives me a chance to extend my learning’.*

*I think it is really clear that we can make a decision about how to think about things. It is really easy just to take the negative side. You can be really lazy and there are so many options and so many ways that you can be positive about what is a new classroom experience.*

These comments are similar in that both acknowledge that it is often easier to take the negative view but this is not useful. Both also suggest that with a little more effort in thinking, a positive view can be taken – and ‘there are so many options’. By inviting a range of thoughts to be expressed the thought tunnel exercise seems to play an important part in animating and agitating thinking and opening up possibilities for thinking differently about teaching students with disabilities. It allowed the student teachers to understand that there are many ways to look at an issue and to some extent we can choose how we think. One student summed up her response to the exercise in a post-workshop interview in this way:

*I liked it. It made me realise what it was possible to think, that others had similar ideas and thoughts and that we can choose how we think.*
Finding the negative thoughts easier to express reveals a pervasive individual medical view of disability where teaching students with disabilities is understood by student teachers as being about an individual’s problems, limitations and needs. Some radical reprogramming is required to shift this view so that student teachers can more readily see solutions, potential and opportunities. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, it is necessary to ‘Find your black holes and white walls, know them... it is the only way you will be able to dismantle them’ (1987, p.208). The thought tunnel exercise exposed the kinds of thinking that can limit and constrain us in the project of inclusion and allowed the voicing of views that can liberate and open us up to viewing disability as possibility.

The literature on preparing teachers for inclusive education, reviewed in chapter two, reveals many examples of studies that conclude that teacher attitude towards people with disabilities is critical because of the ways it can impact upon the teacher’s ability to implement successful inclusive practice. Although student teachers may express concerns about a lack of practical skills and training, attitude must come first because ‘if commitment exists then it will facilitate desire to acquire knowledge and skills, but... knowledge and skills are insufficient in isolation’ (Marshall, Ralph & Palmer 2002, p.213). In other words, ‘If trained teachers have the will then they will seek out the competence’ (Forlin 2006, p.273).

This idea, it seems, is not lost on the student teachers, as the thought tunnel exercise helps to make clear that it is possible to choose how to think and in the end, a positive attitude is everything. In a comment that resonates with the research quoted above, one student explained how the thought tunnel exercise had prompted an epiphany moment when he realised the importance of having the right attitude:

*It is important because in the end it doesn’t matter how many strategies you might have, if you haven’t got the right attitude you can’t do anything.*

The conclusions we collectively draw from this drama activity amount to understandings that are important to us as inclusive educators and teacher educators – whether we are university students, academics or people with disabilities. In the project of inclusive education, attitude is everything and we can choose how to think.
**Arts-based research – a people’s pedagogy**

The potential exists for arts-based research to enact inquiry in the social world as one feature of a people’s pedagogy... Emancipation from colonizing human research that objectifies its participants (casting them as subjects) is not possible unless research is democratized and brought under the control of people in their daily lives. (Finley 2011, p.444)

I began this section by reflecting on the drama pedagogy as being, in this particular context, a kind of arts-based research. Arts-based research can, in Finley’s terms, be a people’s pedagogy – a social, embodied, aesthetic, affective, active and dialogic space. Pedagogy becomes research when student teachers come together with teacher educators, who are both university academics and people with disabilities, and who work together to better understand what the needs of teachers might be in order to enhance their ability to teach for inclusion. This process of understanding begins in the drama activity and the dialogue that immediately follows. A further layer of analysis has occurred after the pedagogic/research event in the form of written reflections by student teachers, and comments in interviews and post-workshop tutorials by Fusion team members, lecturers and critical friends.

It is through reflection on practice that I come to recognise the drama strategies in the workshop as being a kind of liminal space that shimmers at the borders of art, pedagogy and inquiry. The drama strategies illuminate spaces in which we can consider inclusive education beyond set texts and privileged assumptions. Finley (2011) proposes arts-based research as a revolutionary, critical, and aesthetic pedagogy that represents a performative turn in qualitative research. ‘Performativity’, she explains, ‘is the writing and re-writing of meanings to create a dynamic and open dialogue that continually disrupts the authority of meta-narratives’ (p.442). In the workshop activities described in this section, all participants have recognised, and frequently commented on, the importance of direct contact with people with disabilities. They have appreciated the authenticity of these embodied voices that so many have explained are more meaningful than anything you could read in a text or gain in a tutorial. The involvement of the Fusion team members as leaders, experts in their own lives, participants in the drama activities and co-researchers in the workshop, disrupts any previously held views of a person with a disability as limited, helpless or tragic. In the data they are described by the student teachers as ‘warm’, ‘funny’, ‘generous’, ‘capable’, ‘confident’ and...
‘beautiful’. The participants, as a collective of arts-based researchers, also recognise the ways that the drama strategies allow us to ‘use the body as a tool for gathering and exploring meaning in experience’ (p. 444). They allow us to draw upon the imagination and provide a chance to consider other ways of thinking and acting towards the ideal of better inclusive education. These are the kinds of outcomes that Finley credits to arts-based inquiry:

From within the liminal openings that are created by the performance/practice of arts-based inquiry, ordinary people, researchers as participants and as audiences can imagine new visions of dignity, care, democracy, and other decolonizing ways of being in the world. Once it has been imagined, it can be acted upon, or performed. (p. 443)

In the next chapter I turn my focus to what happens in those liminal openings and consider the impetus to act that follows the affective embodied pedagogy of the workshop that I have argued causes disruption and allows for imagination of possibilities. I take up Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) concepts of smooth and striated space to understand that the workshop opens up smooth spaces of becoming as well as striated spaces of progress. I also focus on what happens after the workshop, in both the teaching and research that attempts to reorientate thinking and could potentially further that progress towards becoming inclusive educators.
CHAPTER NINE

Spaces for Progress and Becoming

Perhaps we must say that all progress is made by and in striated space, but all becoming occurs in smooth space. (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p.537)

To disrupt is one thing, but what then? Chapter seven described the disorientation that can occur when participants in this workshop encounter learning within unfamiliar spaces, through unfamiliar methods and with unfamiliar others. I proposed the metaphor of the storm in the forest that allowed for some old assumptions and ideas to be disrupted or challenged. In chapter eight I turned my focus to what happened in the spaces that were opened up within the pedagogical encounters of the workshop – the somewhat smoother spaces where sunlight finally reaches the forest floor. I described how concerns about inclusive education were illuminated through the activities of the workshop allowing participants to collaborate towards an understanding of what it might mean to become more inclusive as educators. In this chapter I take time to survey the forest and take stock of new growth – the learning that has occurred in the workshop and what participants might take away from the experience. I consider the strategies I built into the workshop and added after the workshop to allow participants to move from the embodied, aesthetic and affective encounters toward cognitive understandings. I turn now to consider what occurs both within the workshop and following it, to re-orientate participants after disorientation, and to consider how the affective experience of the workshop can translate into understandings about what is required of an inclusive educator.

The workshop as smooth and striated space

I have often referred to spaces of learning in the workshop in terms of physical spaces as well as metaphorically; as aesthetic space, disruptive space and spaces of possibility. I will return to a discussion of physical spaces later in this chapter. I now pick up a thread, introduced in chapter seven, of space conceptualised as smooth and striated (Deleuze & Guattari 1987) and draw upon the concepts as intellectual tools to help me think about space differently and beyond the physical.
The combined works of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) offer various notions of space as smooth and striated, territorialized, and deterritorialized. I have already introduced some of the vocabulary of these concepts in chapter seven in my discussion about the ways that the some of the workshop activities serve to create a smooth, deterritorialized space for disruption of hegemonic views. In unsettling the usual routines of location, leadership and teaching method, I argue that the workshop opens up some smooth spaces of learning. The aesthetic experiences of the workshop heighten learners’ sensory capacities and increase their capacity to respond to others around them (Davies 2009). A workshop that involves drama as method and people with disabilities as leaders interrupts the usual striations of lecture and lecturer, tutorial and student that are norms in a higher education context. Furthermore, the activities of the drama workshop allow for multiple ways of being with others including unusual and often up-close physical configurations and interpersonal relationships such as collaborating to complete problem-solving tasks with aesthetic dimensions. Hickey-Moody and Malins (2007) explain that ‘Smooth spaces are those in which movement is less regulated or controlled, and where bodies can interact – and transform themselves – in endlessly different ways’ (p.11). The workshop activities provide the freedom for participants to use their imaginations to re-imagine inclusive education. The activities are also liberating both physically and mentally (see figures 29 & 30). In Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, the smooth spaces that open up allow for different ways of becoming.
Figure 29: Bodies move through space

Figure 30: Bodies connect in space
By comparison a striated space is one that leads to progress; it is more organised and rigidly structured. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to the striations as ‘molar lines’ that colonize or territorialize consciousness presenting a hierarchical structure as well as boundaries and barriers.

In order to illustrate this concept of space I now put it to work on the idea of disability. If we consider a person with a disability from the perspective of the medical model, we are likely to bring to consciousness diagnoses, defects, disorders and pathologies, rules and recommendations as well as hierarchies that include doctors, therapists and patients. If we consider a person with a disability within the special education context, we will also think about labels of conditions and syndromes as well as curriculum expectations, specific and recommended strategies, learning plans and interventions and hierarchies of teachers, aides and students. These are both examples of striated spaces – the territories of medicine and special education and all of the structures and hierarchies they entail. If we are able to encounter a person with a disability outside of such models, in a smooth, ‘detterritorialized’ space, we see them as a person, not with fixed ideas about what they are and are not, and what they can and can’t do but open to discovery and therefore possibility. One kind of space is not necessarily better than the other – each offers different potential.

Although smooth and striated space are presented as alternatives, Deleuze and Guattari remind us at the outset that ‘the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space’ (1987, p.524). Even in the territorialized spaces of the medical and special education models, there are of course times when a person with a disability is viewed beyond limitations and constraints. Deleuze and Guattari refer to a ‘dissymmetrical necessity to cross from the smooth to the striated, and from the striated to the smooth’ (p.536). They suggest that smooth space provides the inspiration and ‘the metrics of striated spaces (metron) is indispensable for the translation of the strange data of a smooth multiplicity’ (p.536). In other words we need the inspiration that occurs within a smooth space but a striated space is necessary for extending and producing something from that inspiration.
While in the previous chapters I have described disruption, disorientation and stirring to new understandings occurring within the workshop – the ‘strange data of a smooth multiplicity’ – I now take a closer look at what occurs both in the workshop and the follow-up sessions that might be considered as striated spaces of progress in learning. I do this in order to try to understand something about how inspiration, rather than being allowed to fade away, can translate into learning that may make a difference for future inclusive educators.

**Reorientation of thought**

Genuine learning involves an engagement with such problems, a reorientation of thought following its initial disorientation, such that thought may comprehend something new in its newness, as a structured field of potential metamorphic forces rather than a pre-formed body of knowledge to be mastered. (Bogue 2004, p. 341)

Bogue’s mention of disorientation echoes Mezirow’s (2000) disorienting dilemma, the first in ten phases of Mezirow’s approach to transformative learning (previously listed in chapter seven). Subsequent phases proposed by Mezirow involve self-examination and a critical assessment of assumptions. A reflective discourse stage recognises that it is important to engage fully and freely in discourse to validate one’s beliefs. Mezirow suggests supportive relationships and environments play a crucial role in ‘making possible a more confident, assured sense of personal efficacy, of having a self – or selves – more capable of becoming critically reflective of one’s habitual and sometimes cherished assumptions, and of having the self-confidence to take action on reflective insights’ (Mezirow 2000, p. 25).

While Mezirow’s phases are useful in laying out a spectrum of stages, my analysis of the data, together with the concept of smooth and striated space, made me doubt the likelihood that learning from an affective experience could be such a neat staged process. To some extent both these processes of critical reflection and reflective discourse begin and are recursive in the workshop. Just as there is shifting between smooth and striated space, the participants, in their own ways, and in their own times, will make their own rhizomatic connections and make sense of the affective experience. There are moments throughout the workshop that foster this kind of connection-making, such as when the student teachers reflect in and on the short scenes showing obstacles to inclusion, and again in the thought tunnel exercise as they collectively voice the
thoughts of the fictional teacher and then sum up in conclusion. The next section describes the concluding activity of the workshop that was designed with the intention of harnessing some of the ideas that were emerging about teaching inclusively.

Capturing thoughts: bits of advice on little pieces of paper

We require just a little order to protect us from the chaos. Nothing is more distressing than a thought that escapes itself, than ideas that fly off, that disappear hardly formed, already eroded by forgetfulness or precipitated into others that we no longer master. (Deleuze 1994, p. 201)

The final activity of the workshop was designed to collect some of the ideas about considerations for effective inclusive educators that have been raised during the workshop and to restore, as Deleuze describes, ‘just a little order’ by capturing those thoughts that are ‘hardly formed’ to be followed through and harnessed so they are not easily forgotten. In small groups of three or four all the workshop participants are asked to talk about and then write words of advice for the fictional teacher of the thought tunnel exercise or for teachers in general, to encourage what they believe would be good inclusive practice. To encourage a broad spectrum of advice they are asked to consider advice along the lines of what a teacher should think about, should do, who they should talk to and so on (a full description of this activity is provided in chapter six). The pieces of advice were written on sticky notes and posted onto corresponding rostra blocks around the room (see figure 31).

Some of these pieces of advice were read out and later a summary list was posted as a resource on the Teaching for Diversity unit web site. Some students commented on this exercise as being one they found particularly memorable and useful. One student explained in an interview:

*I liked that... we kind of got to sit there and go OK as student teachers what have we learnt and what do we need to do from here? But I think most of the groups had one or two of the Fusion people in it. [It] gave you that time to ask them more questions if you wanted and ask ‘what would you have preferred to have seen at school?’ or whatever. So it was a good kind of time to reflect and then also go ahead with what needed to be done further.*
Taking stock (‘what have we learnt?’) and considering the implications for future practice (‘what do we need to do from here?’) are valuable elements of this exercise for this student. However, it seems that the reflection time, especially in the presence of Fusion Theatre members, allowing for more time for the students to ask them questions about their personal views about what makes good inclusive education is just as important. Analysing the pieces of advice indicates that a very common and important learning for the student teachers was that students with disabilities themselves should be involved in the conversation about what helps them learn (see figure 32). Continuing this conversation is what the student quoted above seems to now desire. Having experienced the workshop as opening up the conversation between teacher and people with disabilities, she expresses her appreciation for an opportunity for that conversation to carry on even in the final moments of the workshop. I recognise in this comment, and through my observations within the workshop, reluctance amongst students to let go of the affective experience of the human interaction for the set task – a cognitive process of writing advice. I had chosen a pedagogical turn from ‘affect’ to ‘effect’ in order to eke out some kind of concrete learning outcome from the embodied and seemingly ephemeral drama experience in the form of words of advice on little bits of paper. The resources available to us meant that the Fusion team members were only able to spend one day in the university so this two hour workshop is the limit of the time available for them to spend with each class of students. In every instance of the workshop the majority of Deakin students have been slow to leave. Once the workshop had concluded, some students engage in one on one conversation with the Fusion members. Others cluster in small groups around Fusion members indicating a desire to linger and continue the dialogue.
Figure 31: Sharing pieces of advice

Figure 32: What should a teacher do?
In light of the data I now reflect on the dubious wisdom of spending the final precious minutes of the workshop trying to tie down ideas through some kind of cognitive process. Learning, according to Thompson (2009) ‘is an affective, felt state – comprised of many elements of awe, fear, love and intrigue’ and it is possible to diminish the power of this learning when we subject it to rational processes (p.130). While I agree with Thompson that powerful learning does occur in the affective, felt state, I also believe it is a part of a natural process, if not always an inevitable process, for experience within the affective domain to propel us towards critical reflection within the cognitive domain. I am therefore more inclined to agree with Bennett (2005) in her suggestion that in learning ‘a jolt... does not so much reveal truth as thrust us involuntarily into a mode of critical inquiry’ (Bennett 2005, p.11). I recognise the impulse generated through the affective experience and then ask myself ‘what are some ways that I might be able to follow the trajectory and facilitate the progress of learning from the workshop rather than allow it to diminish or fade away?’

I was aware that although the workshop would provide possibilities for learning, there needed to be something to follow the workshop. If the workshop served to disrupt or disorientate then something more sustained was required to allow students to reorder their thoughts and ideas. As Greene (1997) described it, the students need to ‘reconstitute meaning, to close the gaps, to make sense once again’ (pp.141-142). This is taken up in the next section.

A space for critical reflection and reflective discourse

The research process was designed to provide a structure for student teachers to reflect on the experiences of the workshop through the writing of responses immediately following the workshop and then one week later reflecting in response to questions in the questionnaire. The post workshop tutorial provided another opportunity for the tutorial group to collectively reflect and share thoughts and ideas emerging from the workshop experience. This post-workshop reflection phase was developed and refined through the participatory action research process.

In the pilot year and in the first formal year of this project, the Fusion Theatre workshop was a one off experience followed up only by some class discussion with regular tutors
and a short visit from me to administer the second questionnaire and to respond briefly to any questions. Although the Fusion Theatre members would not be available for this subsequent session, they also agreed that it would be valuable for me to follow-up on some of the issues they raised in the workshop.

Following feedback from students and my consultation with the teaching team, it was decided that it might be beneficial for students to have a follow-up session with me to further unpack some of the experience of the workshop with them and to tease out some of the ideas about inclusive education that were raised. Andrea, one of the lecturers, explained:

*I think it is a really powerful thing... I actually think we need to do more with it. As a one off we are not doing enough with it – making the connections and using it as a rich text.*

In particular, the improvised scenes based on obstacles to inclusion seemed to be a rich source of discussion and learning that was not fully able to be realised in the time of the workshop. The teaching team agreed that it would be useful to video record these scenes and then review them during a subsequent tutorial. When the next round of workshops was being prepared I collaborated with the teaching team to build in an additional reflection phase. This involved me coming to each tutorial in the week following the workshop for one and a half hours which represented half of the allocated tutorial time. This amount of time was considered to be as much as the tutors could afford to spare given the content that they felt they needed to cover in what little time remained in the unit.

In the second iteration of the workshops I attended each tutorial group and showed the video recordings of each scene which was followed by small group and whole class discussion. The students found watching themselves and each other acting on screen highly amusing with some staying beyond the finishing time of the tutorial to view scenes again. However, although students were engaged, I felt that the video somehow flattened the scenes and they no-longer seemed as potent and as open to interrogation as they were in the moments when they were performed during the workshop. While there was some thoughtful reflection on obstacles to inclusion, I felt the tutorial time was not
well spent, with the DVD viewing proffering more entertainment value than educational value. Two students in an interview described it this way:

A: I quite liked seeing the DVD again because it’s one of those things, everyone likes to see themselves perform I think. Oh well I do!

B: Everyone likes to hate it at least! [laughs]

In the third iteration of the workshops I attended each tutorial and opened by asking the students to raise the questions they now had about teaching students with disabilities. Instead of DVD recording I brought in a series of still images from the workshop. I also brought with me a list of questions posed by the Fusion Theatre team to the student teachers. The following are some of the questions asked by the Fusion Theatre team members:

*How did you feel before coming?*

*What was your first impression of us?*

*What is your lasting impression of us?*

*Do you feel any different?*

*Do you think any different?*

*What are you learning?*

*What do you write on your notepads?*

*What did you like and not like?*

*Is it useful for your future teaching?*

*How can you use this?*

*Would you recommend it to other student teachers?*

I began by projecting the series of still images from the workshops and these served to prompt memories of the activities and provoke some interesting discussion about the teaching methodology. It was the questions posed by the Fusion team that served to continue the conversation and even though they were not there in person, it once again cast them in a proactive role, this time as researchers desiring to engage in constructive discourse. They wanted to know what the student teachers had to say about the workshop in order to understand how it was working and what they might do to make it better. The student teachers were once again reminded that people with disabilities,
represented by the Fusion members, are interested in and concerned about playing a part in influencing and ensuring effective inclusive education. It is as if people with disabilities are saying, ‘We are here and we care about inclusive education’ and asking, ‘What do you think of what we are doing, what do you think about the way we are doing it and what are you going to do to become a good inclusive educator?’

The tutorial provided a communicative space where students and lecturers, secure again in their usual learning environment, could process what had occurred in the workshop. This coming together as a group to talk about the experience, and raise and respond to questions and concerns aligns with Mezirow’s fourth phase when learners recognise that their ‘discontent and the process of transformation are shared’ (2000, p.22). Mezirow draws upon theories of critical consciousness raising and dialogic pedagogies proposed by Freire and Giroux, when he suggests transformative learning depends upon participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to challenge assumptions, and provide insight and information.

While this study does not extend to understand how student teachers’ actions have changed over time, the data does indicate that for many the workshop was disorienting and disrupted previously held beliefs and attitudes about teaching students with disabilities, including fear of the unknown and doubts about how they would manage. They were left with a new intent, or as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) would describe it, an inspiration generated in smooth space that for some, precipitated a new line of flight, as described by this student:

*I was able to gain enormous perspective on how important it is as a teacher to never make assumptions about what my students may or may not be able to do. Rather, today’s session has brought into sharp focus my need to be flexible, supportive, innovative... and to be willing and open to the idea of incorporating more physical activities into my teaching with the aim of developing students’ self-esteem!*

Mezirow’s work has been criticised for focussing too much attention on critical reflection in transformative learning and giving too little attention to the role of affective learning (Taylor 2000a; Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner 2007). I began my discussion in this thesis by drawing on Deleuzian notions of affect and de-emphasising effect. There is a tension for me in the desire on one hand to focus my
attentions to understand something about the affective aspects of the learning – the
opening up – and the desire to see where the learning fits within the curriculum of the
Teaching for Diversity unit – the following up – comprising the learning effects and
outcomes of the workshop. I feel I am subject to a kind of conditioning of the system to
check the boxes of learning outcomes, to be able to say this is how the learning in the
workshop can be translated into key knowledge and skills and into classroom practice.
In Deleuze and Guattari’s terms I am returning here to a safe striated space, a desire to
snatch some ideas before they disappear into the ether and stick them down on boxes.
My desire is to show progress and to follow any new awareness that has opened up in
students through to practical ideas for application. I act out of concern that without this
the learning experience would have less value. While it is, according to Deleuze and
Guattari, necessary to find smooth space, it is also inevitable that this will again become
processed and organised towards some sense of progress.

The physical spaces of the project
I now return to focus on the physical spaces within the project. One of the key aims of
the workshop at the centre of this project is to provide the pre-service teachers with an
experience that might enhance their understanding of teaching in inclusive classrooms
through providing an experience which is different from the usual tutorial learning
experience that makes up the majority of class time in this unit. As described in chapter
seven, the physical space in which the workshop takes place is revealed as significant in
the data. This project explores what is possible in these very different physical spaces.

The two physical spaces of learning I focus on are the tutorial classroom and the studio
space of the workshop. At first I consider the physical space of the university tutorial
classroom. The room, pragmatically named with a code such as ‘he2.001’, is precisely
the size it needs to be to seat a class of up to thirty students (see figure 33). It is filled
with tables and chairs typically arranged with each facing to the front where there is a
large fixed desk housing a computer and other technology for use by the tutor. On the
wall behind are a large white screen and a white board. This is a space where the
students normally sit in chairs behind rows of tables and the tutor is located at the front.
As this is a generic tutorial space, the walls are unadorned except for a few notices that
explain some requirements about the use of the space. There are both written and unwritten codes of behaviour for those who use this space.

By contrast, the space of the workshop is large and mostly empty of furniture. It is a designated teaching space and the sign announces it as the ‘Performing Arts Education Studio’. There are two tables pushed to the side and the chairs are normally stacked or moved to the edges to reveal an expanse of carpeted floor (see figure 34). The only immovable object is a baby grand piano in one corner. On the walls are displays of student works and photographs of student teachers in action, a ‘second psychic skin’ (Davies & Gannon 2009, p.7) that documents and makes present the pedagogical journeys of other learners who have also inhabited this space.
While Deleuze and Guattari conceive of space in ways well beyond the physical, I believe the physical spaces of the project deserve attention and analysis in relation to the concepts of smooth and striated space. Davies and Gannon explain, ‘Deleuze and Guattari emphasise that space is far more than a passive backdrop to human action. Space as they conceive it is active in shaping what is possible. (2009, p.8). I now put to work the concepts of smooth and striated space as a way of analysing and further understanding both the literal (physical) and metaphorical spaces for learning in this project.
Smooth is not comfortable

Smooth spaces, Deleuze and Guattari explain, are not in themselves ‘liberatory’, but rather ‘the struggle is changed or displaced in them, and life reconstitutes its stakes, confronts new obstacles, invents new paces, switches adversaries’ (1987, p.551)

By contrast, the rules and regulations of a striated space, in both a literal and metaphorical sense, suggest how we should behave and what we must do. In a way such rules can be comforting because they provide guidance and assurance about how one should be in that space. In a smooth space, without such rules dictating to us, there may be uncertainty about what is expected or required. It is this uncertainty that the student teachers express at the outset of the workshop when they talk about entering the physical space of the workshop and finding it to be ‘strange’, and talk about feeling ‘uncomfortable’ and of not knowing what to expect.

One student described a feeling of discomfort upon entering the workshop after it had already begun:

*I entered the room late during Fusion Theatre to find everybody standing in a circle, immediately I knew this meant I would have to participate ..[This] made me initially uncomfortable, as I am sure it did many.*

The experience of walking into the room for this student was to encounter, in Bogue’s terms, ‘the disorienting jolt of something new’ (2004, p.327). When a student recognises and comments that in the studio space they ‘would have to participate’, I wonder if something about the regular tutorial space with its rows of tables and chairs suggest that participation and engagement are optional. Could it be that the standard tutorial room replicated throughout the university as the default teaching space is a safe space that can make it easier for a student to choose the level at which they wish to engage and participate, or even not to participate at all? I have often resented the ways typical university teaching and learning spaces of lecture theatre and tutorial room prescribe and restrict the ways it is used rather than promoting a wider range of possibilities. Jamieson, Dane and Lippman (2005) suggest such spaces reinforce traditional and narrowly defined roles and power relations between teacher and student. I wonder, do these physical spaces dampen and reduce the possibilities for learning by
limiting the participation and dulling the senses of learners? I also share Davies’s wonder about how it is the case ‘that one space opens up particular intensities and becomings and another does not’ (2009, p.20).

**Struggles in the tutorial room**

The tutorial room might be seen by the above quoted student as a preferred safe space, striated by certain rules and expectations. It is the common teaching space for most units, and as such is for some both familiar and comfortable. The positioning of tables and chairs, mostly facing forward to a desk and screen, the signified place of the ‘teacher’, suggests requirements and hierarchy. There are familiar patterns of organisation and ways of relating and being – typically a student enters knowing that they will likely sit, listen, watch, take notes and discuss.

Many students quoted earlier in this chapter remarked that they were pleased to experience the workshop as a class in a space that provided a different kind of learning experience. With this in mind I visited their tutorials in the week following the workshop for the follow-up session. I thought, given their growing willingness to become involved in the drama workshop, that I might be able to transform the regular tutorial space to take an active approach along the lines of the drama workshop even within the limitations of the physical space. This would be something like a coda to the workshop that would in some ways be reminiscent of it and something that I was looking forward to. The following account, taken from my field notes, describes my experience in attending the first of these follow-up sessions.

*There is a small window in the tutorial room door and I peek in to see if it is a good time to enter. Alison, the tutor, is speaking to the class. I am suddenly aware that the mood seems serious and I don’t want to interrupt so decide to wait outside for an appropriate moment. Alison sees me through the glass and beckons me in. They are discussing the group presentations which are their main assessment task and they are focussed. Assessment seems to be a powerful driver for these students in their final semester of the course. I feel like an intruder from the past, the workshop was one week ago, and it seems to me the class has already moved on.*

*There is a control desk at the front where I move to prepare the DVD while I’m waiting for Alison to finish. Despite having checked the technology earlier I find that the DVD will not play. I discover there are no fewer than three remote*
controls as well as a touch screen. Pressing all of the obvious buttons seems to do nothing to help display the DVD recording. It is a small consolation to discover I am not alone as neither Alison nor the students can find the right buttons to press to make the DVD play on this occasion. We are losing precious time. I call for IT assistance.

While waiting I decide to launch into a ‘walking statistics’ activity that I have prepared to begin the session. I have planned to ask the students to respond to some questions on the topic and to have them move according to where they would be on a continuum. This is meant to be a fast activity providing for comparing and analysing in a task that is both active and visual. It requires students to get up from their tables and make a line. There is much bumping and scraping of chairs and jostling about as each student reluctantly makes their way to the line at the back of the room. It is now clear there is not enough room to line up along one wall so the line curves around three walls. Having finally made it to the line as requested, the students then squeeze past each other and the chairs to take up their position on the continuum in response to question one. It is clear that the ‘walking statistics’ exercise is not going to work in this space and so I explain the reasons for abandoning the activity, that are already obvious to anyone, and ask the students to sit back down, much to their relief. It is, as far as I am concerned, a disastrous beginning to the session.

This story tells how the geography of the tutorial room and its arsenal of furniture defeated me, as did the technology on this particular day. I was forced to conform to the dictates of the physical space. I tried to subvert this with my ‘walking statistics’ activity, attempting to bring students and myself into relationship with each other in different ways. However, the striations proved too deep and I was channelled back into the molar lines of the striated space. The students resumed their positions in chairs and at tables and I conformed by taking up the tutor position behind the fixed desk at the front of the room where I was in position to control the technology, now working, in order to play the scenes on the DVD to continue the rest of the session. The boundaries and barriers that I experienced in this instance were not only physical: the presence of too much furniture; the complexity of the technology, but also barriers of attitude – there were expectations around how the space was to be used both by those who designed the tutorial room and the students who regularly inhabited it. The space was not neutral, it actively shaped what was possible and constructed us to teach and learn in particular ways. The same students who expressed enthusiasm for moving and learning the previous week now seemed content to be sedentary. I had entered an assemblage of this room, the students and their tutor, now transfixed on preparing for assessment tasks and
comfortable in their familiar tutorial space and found myself and my intentions at odds with it.

If I take up the concept of assemblage in viewing this event, I see the tutorial as a familiar space-time assemblage that Alison and the students have returned to. It is an assemblage made up of the relations between elements including tutor, students, the classroom and its particular furniture, technology, language, discourses, desires and intensities around assessment requirements. It includes practices of being quiet, listening, raising hands, asking questions and taking notes. It is an assemblage that draws a direct line towards fulfilling the requirements of their university degree. It is a learning environment, motivated by assessment, and one that they have experienced for most of their formal learning lives. Therefore it is not surprising that they should ease back into it. This assemblage claims a territory into which I enter, from a previous assemblage, one that was also about learning but not about assessment. The two hour drama workshop that occurred one week earlier now seems a short and distant memory. It is no wonder that my entering into this assemblage disrupts the flow and creates some turbulence and discomfort. However, the discomfort is mostly for me and I acquiesce to the forces of desires in this assemblage and the striations of the space. I only manage to momentarily deterritorialize the assemblage before it is reterritorialized once again.

The following year I moved the ‘walking statistics’ exercise into the workshop and decided not to attempt to subvert the nature of the tutorial but to adopt a style more in accordance to expectations. Not only was the space of the tutorial room not passive, it was as though the space had beaten me to submission and I was conforming to its dictates. However, I was struck by the way that Claire, a lecturer new to the unit, was in her own way attempting to subvert the space of her tutorial room in preparation for my arrival, as the following account describes:

*When I entered the tutorial room some students were already seated but Claire was busy dragging tables from rows to form a U shape. There were too many tables and students for one semi-circle so she settled for two, one inside the other. The first chairs to fill were those furthest from the front and about six students sat and opened lap-top computers in front of them. Throughout the discussion I sensed a growing frustration in Claire. Our discussion came around to the nature of the drama activities in the workshop and the how open space*
had facilitated this way of teaching and learning. Claire asked the students to consider how they might use space in their own education settings. We raised the question about how spaces of learning can restrict or create possibilities for learning. I pointed out how Claire had rearranged the space for this tutorial so as more people can see the faces of the other. ‘And yet’, Claire said, ‘some of you are hiding behind lap tops! That’s another factor in the space’. This is the thing that had been bothering her. ‘What are you looking at anyway? I have no idea what you are doing behind there! Well, I mean really, what are you looking at?’ This was not a rhetorical question. Claire wanted to know. There was a moment of silence as each and every person in the room took in the moment. Eyes darted around to see who would answer.

Claire’s question interrupted the conventional tendency to ignore the use of lap tops during a tutorial discussion. Her question was not confrontational but provided a shock to thought that challenged these students who would be teachers. They recognised a genuine desire in Claire to know and to understand the learners in her class. At this point we all wanted to know the answer to her question. Claire’s reaction/action in this moment triggered an affect that brought us all together, including those disparate subjectivities, the students behind screens, into a meaningful assemblage or what Deleuze and Guattari might call a desiring machine (Bain-King 2005, p.124). We were in a new space for learning, one that was smooth but not comfortable. In this moment, the physical space was irrelevant. The discussion about spaces, technologies and inclusive education continued with a new level of focus and intensity. The question, emerging from a genuine desire to understand, and challenging previously unchallenged behaviour, broke through the prescribed and predictable routine of the class and smoothed a space for new thought and evolving relations in a way that the efforts to rearrange the chairs had not.

I wondered whether Claire had been provoked by recognition of the stark contrast between the embodied learning of the drama workshop session of the previous week and the learning made possible in the tutorial space that allowed students to hide behind screens. As images of the workshop were being projected into the tutorial space the contrast was particularly apparent to me. In an interview that followed the tutorial Claire said it had been in her mind.
I think... that is probably what I like about things like [the workshop] is that it sort of constructs or configures a different kind of relating to the other people in the room... Having forms of technology like lap tops or whatever in classrooms does construct that differently to how it is constructed in this kind of [drama workshop] space. It is not that one is bad and one is good but they are different.

When I said I felt we had not yet got the follow-up tutorial right, Claire provided a provocation by asking whether it was really necessary to deconstruct the learning experience or attempt to have students articulate their learning experience. She recognised an impetus in teachers to want to control learning and to be able to measure it or recuperate it into a framework. She explained:

... we have all these mechanisms as teachers for trying to judge [learning] and assess it and tick it off or whatever, and control the subjects that these people are becoming, and we actually can’t do that, and I guess I am wondering if that is what we actually need to be doing.

I explained to Claire that many students had also commented on the value of following up on the workshop experience and to reflect on implications for their teaching practice. She continued to suggest that the workshop experience might be enough in itself.

...even though they might fret and say well, what does this mean for my practice, even just the fact that they have had this experience... will to some extent have some meaning for their practice and probably more meaning than if I had had some slides talking about the issues.

Claire’s view seemed to fit with critics of Mezirow’s theory in suggesting that although his theory acknowledges the role of feelings in response to the disorienting dilemma in the transformative learning process, ultimately, it relies too heavily on rationalisation of these feelings (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner 2007). Claire’s provocation also caused me to reflect on whether I was being drawn back into a territorialized and striated space in my efforts to create a follow-up learning experience that would attempt to round out or pin down some learning for the student teachers.

Unlike Claire, Alison felt a strong desire to follow-up on the learning experience. She described the importance of bringing the two experiences of workshop and tutorial
together. She wanted ‘a more structured connection and stuff that they take forward with them’ into their practice. She explained that the workshop had been a most intense experience for her and for her students: ‘it is that tactile thing and being really close to people and sharing and working things out together in a very concrete way that makes it so much more than sitting in a classroom’. However, she added, ‘I think it is necessary to take the thoughts of the student teachers back to the classroom, specifically back to the classroom... but it wouldn’t be anywhere as powerful if it didn’t have the drama aspect... you can’t get that sort of intensity in a classroom’. She reflected further:

*I just wonder how much more we can help them to bring the... intense experience into a rational framework as well... Those learnings are really important at a personal level and I think that is the most important thing, and then you have to take that personal feeling into professional practice but how do you actually really pin point that... to consolidate more.*

While they differed in the degree to which they thought it was necessary to follow-up on learning, both Alison and Claire agreed that the workshop itself was crucial. While Alison was concerned about making more structured connections she also wondered, ‘how we can do that without killing it? We don’t want to kill it off because I think the key thing is that intense feeling that comes through and the desire to do something for these kids in the classroom’. Claire also recognised this desire and the powerful impetus:

*I know that the students find it really powerful and I am sure... that for a number of them it will shape how they interact with people like this in the future.*

The data suggests that students felt this was worthwhile because they were able to reflect on the experience in the tutorial space where their more formal learning took place. One student commented that ‘The workshop definitely gave a lot of food for thought, particularly around attitude’, which suggests that more time for thinking and processing ideas was required. In an interview following both workshop and tutorial, students commented on what they believed was important about the tutorial experience:
It followed things up again. It was good in a way that it was back to our normal sitting around in [the tutorial room], it was like we’ve done all this activity let’s now reflect and discuss.

I think the reflection and discussion was good because otherwise it would be like ‘Oh yeah, [we] did this activity it was good, now it’s over and we move on’... And people had had a week to go home and think about it and come back and have some new perspectives.

These comments suggest that the learning experience of the workshop was valuable because it was activity that offered rich experience. However, the students suggested that the potential of that experience to impact on future practice was enhanced by providing a period of time for subsequent reflection and discussion in the more familiar environment of the tutorial space – ‘the normal sitting around’. The ‘new perspectives’ referred to by the student are sounded out within the communicative space of the tutorial. The gaining of new perspectives suggests the transformation that Mezirow’s model of transformative learning aspires to. In this space student teachers and lecturers come together in constructive dialogue to talk about the workshop experience, to share the ideas they now have and raise the questions about inclusive education for which they still seek answers.

**Shifting between up-close and distant**

In this chapter I have discussed the ways that the workshop and the follow-up written reflections, tutorial and opportunities to engage in the participatory research, involve a return to the striated space when the up-close, personal and affective experiences of the workshop can be translated and folded into practice. There are constant shifts between smooth and striated space and I understand that both workshop and tutorial comprise mixes of the two. In the workshop, smooth space is constantly being striated as new orders are being applied, for example the implicit and explicit rules of play in games and exercises. The territorialized, normalised and striated space of the tutorial can be disrupted and transformed into a smooth space as exemplified in Claire’s provocation about the lap tops. However, the nature of the workshop offered more opportunity for the kinds of intense, tactile, up-close and personal interactions that Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe:
It seems to us that the Smooth is both the object of a close vision par excellence and the element of a haptic space (which may be as much visual or auditory as tactile). The Striated, on the contrary, relates to a more distant vision, and a more optical space.

The reflection phases that included the written responses by students, the tutorial experience and the follow-up interview, for those who participated, provided the opportunity for stepping back to take a more distant perspective, gain an overview and perhaps a vision for moving forward. These processes allowed for making the most of the possibilities for learning that opened up in the smooth spaces of the workshop by allowing the kinds of critical reflection that seem necessary for any lasting change to participants’ meaning schemes and perspectives (Mezirow 1991). ‘Becoming occurs in smooth space’ suggest Deleuze and Guattari, but ‘progress is made by and in striated space’ (1987, p.537). Understanding space as being active, rather than passive, allows us to understand how space contributes to progress and becoming. Through the participatory action research process, participants as co-researchers reached an understanding of how the two main experiences, drama workshop and follow-up tutorial, opened both physical and metaphorical spaces that made different kinds of learning possible and served different purposes towards the overall aim.

Deleuze and Guattari remind us of ‘the necessity to cross from the smooth to the striated’ for the ‘translation of the strange data of a smooth multiplicity’ (1987, p.536). This is what Mezirow might call constructive discourse and critical reflection and what Bogue suggests is to ‘explicate those signs, to unfold the differences they enfold’ (2004, p.327). I have put to work the concepts of smooth and striated spaces, recognising that smooth space, in the absence of the striations of normal regulations and codes, can be disorienting. Although smooth space is not comfortable it is a space of becoming in which individuals may conceive of other ways of being in the world. I propose that smooth spaces can be found even in the over coded space of the tutorial room but are more often found by participants in the experience of the drama workshop.

**Affects that live on**

On a reflective note, as a teacher educator instrumental in bringing into being this workshop as a kind of intervention, I now feel inclined to let go of my concerns to be a part of a follow-up process. I give up on what Allan (2012) describes as an ultimately
unhelpful ‘quest for certainty which has been a feature of inclusion’ and my need to see ‘that all learning is tied down and rendered visible’ (p.20). No doubt critical reflection is important for transformative learning and following the workshop students will need to process learning into their meaning schemes and seek further information and insights. Something I now understand is the extent to which this progress in thinking is already beginning to occur within the workshop. Most importantly, I understand that the aesthetic, embodied, up-close human interactions within the workshop precipitate affects that linger so that students may make connections, not only in the following week’s tutorial, but at other times in their future. Deleuze (1994) writes that art preserves blocs of sensations and ‘Even if the material lasts only for a few seconds it will give sensation the power to exist and be preserved in itself in the eternity that coexists with this short duration’ (p.166). This is what Thompson (2009) refers to as the lingering effects of the aesthetic experience and Greene (1995) refers to as a sustained wondering and questioning precipitated by arts experiences. I argue that the aesthetic experiences in the workshop produce compounds of affects, which can live on in participants, and influence them in conscious and unconscious ways into the future. The following account and data enabled me to understand the potential for ongoing influence precipitated by the workshop.

Five of the students from an interview group in the first year of data collection agreed to give me their email addresses so that I could email them a year later. My email asked some questions about whether they ever thought about the workshop and whether it had any influence on their teaching practice. I received replies from four of them who were in full-time teaching positions. All four said that throughout their first year of teaching they had thought about the workshop from ‘occasionally’ to ‘many times’, particularly in relation to teaching the diversity of students in their own classes. All of them remembered key points mentioned by Fusion leaders in their stories and throughout the workshop and some even quoted them. All wrote about their struggles at times to do their best for the students with disabilities in their classes and recounted classroom experiences. ‘I still don't feel I've got it quite right’ explained one. There was an awareness of what they needed to do but teaching inclusively was a constant work in progress. The following quotes, one from each of the four emails, indicate how these teachers had drawn a direct line from their experience of the workshop to their practice.
The workshop did not give them the answers but rather opened them up to what they needed to be mindful of as inclusive teachers so that they could find their own ways.

**Teacher 1:**

*I taught one particular student who has autism...* I thought back to the workshop many times when teaching this student, mainly to remind myself of the importance of changing my perspective on the teaching situation. The workshop taught me to ensure that I change my teaching style and expectations when working with students with additional needs, particularly ensuring that each student is treated absolutely individually.

**Teacher 2:**

*It definitely had an influence. I feel that my perception of students with disability has changed and that it is really important for me to understand the disability of the student and modifying it so that it suits the students, rather than just ‘dumbing down’ the work for them. These kids need to be challenged too. I am so appreciative of the people involved in this workshop as it has influenced my perception and approach to teaching people with a disability.*

**Teacher 3:**

*I think it has made me really think about how I relate to students and how I can always do something different to make sure that the student’s educational experience is a positive one. I also learnt that it is really important to know the students ‘story’, personality and abilities...and the importance of focusing on the positives... as I would do with any other student.*

**Teacher 4:**

*The Fusion workshop was incredibly valuable to me as a teacher, particularly when members of Fusion recalled stories of their teachers and classroom experiences. I would like to see how this workshop can be run in schools with young people as I believe there are a lot of lessons that can be learned from it. The workshop cemented my ideas that everybody has something important to say, we all just say it in a different way. I think children particularly would benefit from a chance to understand that.*

This final comment, also echoed in two of the other responses, indicates that thinking as educators, they could now appreciate the workshop as an experience that they would like to be able to offer their own students.

This extension to the research project allowed me to see that the effects of the workshop had been lasting for these participants and they were continuing to think about what the
experience meant for their practice. I was also surprised by the generous responses from the new teachers who seemed as desirous as I was of an opportunity to reconnect and share reflection on practice and dialogue about teaching inclusively long after the event of the workshop. In a small way this research tangent is a manifestation of Freire’s ideal of learners who are teachers, and teachers who are learners, engaged in continual collaborative enquiry. Together we are seeking knowledge through invention and re-invention, ‘through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other’ (1970/2011, p.72).

**Significant spaces of learning**

Allan (2012) proposes a re-orientation for teacher educators concerned with inclusive education in relation to ‘three significant spaces – the ontological, the aesthetic and the epiphanic’, and argues that ‘operating within these spaces could enable new practices of teacher education to emerge’ (p.12). The workshop transpires as a result of a unique constellation of experiences, the ontological space of my own self with others, as I draw upon my experience as a teacher and a teacher educator, my experience as a drama and theatre practitioner, and my long-term commitment to Fusion Theatre, encompassing the field of disability and the arts in general and the individuals who are co-leaders of the workshop in particular. The workshop, rather than the tutorial, is my preferred domain. The most important thing I can do is to continue to orchestrate the workshop experience, bringing the participants together. At the same time, I remain attentive to the power of the aesthetic and facilitate sensory and sensual affects as I develop the workshop experience for future participants. This is the attention to the space of the aesthetic to which Allan refers.

I have reflected on my practice and the data with my attention focussed on understanding the nature of experience that seems to disrupt, shock and generate sensations of surprise and wonder. This is the ‘opening of eyes’ that has so often been referred to in the data. Allan calls upon inclusive teacher educators to create learning spaces that allow exposure to ‘epiphanies of the everyday’ which are ‘a sudden bringing into presence that which is otherwise inaccessible’ (p.20). The workshop brings together students, lecturers and people with disabilities in dialogue and in fully embodied and aesthetic ways, opening smooth spaces of possibility and becoming; the kinds of spaces
that are useful for ‘calling epiphanies into presence’ (p.20). I have referred previously to the surprising realisations described by student teachers, but the experience also had for Alison what she describes as ‘a mind-blowing’ effect for herself, as well as her students. In an interview Alison explained the way she believed that the workshop transformed its community of learners, both teacher educators and student teachers:

*I think it’s deeply personal. I think many of these mostly fairly young people will have had no experience of or have deliberately avoided people with disabilities. This is a personal thing. They think ‘Wow these people are really interesting’. They are all people. To some extent it is the same with me. I was a school principal. I was responsible for big integration programs we worked closely with an autistic school and I grew to really know and love those students but this workshop does something more... I would change my whole way of dealing with disabled students if I was back in a school having been in this workshop... I would tell the teachers to forget the disability and get to know the person and ask them what they need. I think that came across again and again. They are quite capable of saying what works for them. It was a bit of a mind blowing thing for me... It was like they hadn’t really seen them as human beings with human needs. I am being frank here but...they see them with ‘educational’ needs and ‘learning’ needs but to see them with ‘human’ needs is another dimension....If only every teacher in the state could experience that workshop the whole way we work with kids would change. I’m absolutely convinced of it.*

With this transformed view comes the understanding that this kind of realisation in itself, while potent, is not enough. It amounts to a major excursion of beliefs that needs to be brought home again. Here Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) concept of the territorialization of space comes in useful. Elements of the workshop have served to disrupt familiar habitual territories, creating what Deleuze and Guattari would call deterritorialized space. As I have argued previously, this departure from familiar home grounds is what creates a sense of discomfort for many participants in the workshop – smooth space is not comfortable. After this excursion into strange new territory, it is productive to return to the familiar and safe home territory. Hickey-Moody and Malins (2007) explain:

*Territories create a safe or familiar space, within which bodies can gain the necessary strength or resolve to head out into the world. Territories are not, in other words, themselves productive of becomings, but provide bodies with a stable base from which to launch becomings. (p.11)*
The affective aesthetic experiences in the workshop create the smooth and deterritorialized spaces that help shift and shape student teachers' attitudes towards becoming better inclusive educators. Returning to home territory, the safe, striated space is also essential for processing what Deleuze and Guattari describe as the strange data of a smooth multiplicity. Learners will no doubt return to their own safe spaces, but I also recognize that there are spaces created in the workshop that may return them to a stable base; such as in the discussions, in writing the pieces of advice and in making connection to theory and set readings that are part of their regular studies. There are also opportunities for returning to safe spaces beyond the workshop when the students reflect in written responses, when they return to the tutorial space or participate in an interview. In the process of preparing better inclusive educators I understand that it is the interplay of these spaces that make both progress and becoming possible.
CHAPTER TEN

Realms that are yet to come

Writing has... to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come. (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p.5)

This final chapter continues as a mapping of interconnected ideas emerging from the project that I consider are important for inclusive education. It does not attempt so much to draw neat conclusions or provide a packaged summary of everything that has been said so far. Instead I consider each topic of discussion as a node of intensity, a vital coming together of thoughts in response to the central question of this thesis – what are the ways that we might better prepare inclusive teachers? These nodes of thought are still active and continuously developing – ‘coming and going rather than starting and finishing’ (p.28). The ideas are part of a continuous process of reflection on my practice; they are intensities of thought brought to the fore in this study while connecting, like lines in a map, to influences from my past and to my practice in the future. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, such a map may serve ‘realms that are yet to come’ (p.5).

This thesis could also be understood as an assemblage meeting other assemblages and ‘a flow meeting other flows’ (Deleuze 1995, p.9). I write in the hope that readers will connect with some of these intensities of thought about pedagogy and research in ways that may vitalise their own projects and practices. I present this research as a contribution to the discussion and body of knowledge on preparing pre-service teachers and professionally developing teachers in general to teach in inclusive classrooms.

I have argued that the drama workshop led by the Fusion Theatre actors is transformative pedagogy. However, this project is not just about pedagogy, it is also about research methodology. On one hand it seeks to explore and articulate the experience of the Fusion Theatre led drama workshop as a possible pedagogy for teaching teachers to be better inclusive educators. On the other hand it is an active research process that offers an inclusive model for researching how we prepare teachers for inclusive education. It is a model inclusive of student teachers, teacher educators
and, more unusually, of people with disabilities. In this project, these two areas of pedagogy and research methodology go hand in hand. In this final chapter I present some nodes of thought on pedagogy and research and ways these come together in the drama activities that are action oriented processes for inquiry.

Part 1 Pedagogy Matters

Pedagogy that exercises ‘the muscles, the mind and the heart’

One student wrote in a post-workshop reflection that the workshop was distinguished from other university learning experiences because ‘it exercised the muscles, the mind and the heart’. This quote captures the essence of my thinking about the drama workshop as an embodied, cognitive and affective pedagogical experience. These are elements of learning and teaching that as a drama teacher I have valued.

In chapter four I mapped my conceptual frameworks in the areas of experiential, aesthetic and embodied learning alongside experiences that gave rise to them. This mapping has continued throughout my discussion as I have drawn upon post-structuralist concepts to reflect upon practice and analyse the data. The opportunity to pay close attention to and reflect on practice throughout this project has allowed me to gain a deeper appreciation of these pedagogical elements, and to gain a deeper working understanding of some aspects of my teaching that are intuitive. Reflection on my practice has also allowed me to recognise both the opportunities and the limitations of the workshop.

Opportunities and limitations of the workshop as pedagogy

The focus of this thesis has been on the practice of drama as pedagogy in the preparation of inclusive educators. My focus is on the practice rather than the outcome. This single two-hour workshop might make a difference to a student teacher’s education in the course of a four year degree but the question remains of how this can be known. This is just one experience among many that will inform them as inclusive educators. However, through the surveys and written responses, the overwhelming majority of students have claimed the workshop has made a positive difference, and for many a striking difference, to their understanding of teaching students with disabilities. The post-workshop questionnaire revealed that ninety-six percent of students felt that the
workshop had instilled a positive attitude or affirmed their already positive attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities. Many also stated that while their attitudes had changed and they felt more positive about the possibilities, they recognised how much they still had to learn. The vision I held for this project of teachers and people with disabilities working together in drama to foster enhanced understanding of teaching for diversity seems to have been achieved. I see it as positive that so many students commented that they were aware that there was still so much they needed to learn. Indeed, the comments from the four beginner teachers who reflected on the workshop one year later suggested the workshop is an experience that provides the impetus for ongoing professional learning and reflection on practice.

My focus has been on the practice; the pedagogical choices I have made; and bringing to light from the data the key things that seem to be happening in this pedagogical encounter. In my discussion I have analysed and presented data and reflected on the practice to explain how I understand the ways the workshop, as an affective and embodied experience, serves to exercise the muscles, mind and heart, and as a disruptive aesthetic space serves to surprise and provoke thought and challenge and change attitudes. I am also conscious of possible limitations to the pedagogy and now turn my focus to them.

A healthy scepticism towards claims that drama can always transform beliefs and change attitudes for the better is held by a number of writers in the drama education community including Nicholson (2005) who asks whether participants ‘have been complicit in following the script of the workshop, or whether their change of heart indicates a positive but temporary identification’ (p.82) with what they understand to be the views of the presenters and the aims of the workshop. When analysing responses to the questionnaire I found only four percent of students admitted to holding a negative attitude towards teaching students with disabilities that they believed had not changed as a result of the workshop. With Nicholson’s warning in mind, I recognise that it is possible that some student teachers, when encountering people with disabilities in the context of the drama workshop, might have been left with the same entrenched doubts or negative views about teaching students with disabilities that they did not wish to
admit to, despite the survey being anonymous. I have been conscious of the need to listen for the negative voices.

Further limitations to the Teaching for Diversity workshop as a pedagogical model include limitations of resources and time. In the first year the project was funded by a small teaching and learning grant and the teaching team was committed to paying each Fusion Theatre member an honorarium of one hundred dollars for presenting the workshop as well as covering the costs of their transport and meals. No follow-up funds were made available to sustain the initiative beyond the first year. Each subsequent year has required some creative negotiating by the teaching team to acquire the funds to continue to pay the Fusion presenters. When the project was presented at a faculty seminar on equity and diversity, some course co-ordinators expressed an interest in the workshop being offered to other cohorts of students within the School of Education. They were advised by the faculty head of teaching and learning that there were no funds available for initiatives of this nature. When no financial support is made available development or even sustainability of the initiative becomes a problem.

Limitations of time included both the length of time and the number of opportunities to meet. The constraints of the program and the limits of funding meant that we had only one two hour workshop which was a very short amount of time to build a trusting environment and working relationships. There was so much that was new and different to accommodate in that time. It was too little time to build the basis of experience in drama that was necessary to allow for the introduction of more complex and interesting post-structuralist drama strategies and anti-naturalistic devices such as those employed by Cahill (2008; 2011) in her drama work in a similar university context. In Cahill’s project the participants, high school students and university student cohorts in medicine and education, met over three weeks and had the opportunity to build on the relationships, drama work and thinking of the previous weeks.

There are no doubt different and possibly better drama strategies to employ in the workshop and to some extent our ability to explore these was limited. Although the participatory action research approach called for reflection and action, any changes to the workshop strategies were slow to evolve. A desire to sustain confidence through
previous success for the Fusion Theatre presenters meant we avoided radical experimentation and making major changes to the basic structure of the workshop.

Questions also hang over whether this model would be easily replicated. My long-term relationship with Fusion Theatre, and especially the individuals involved in the workshop, is a significant factor in the process. We have developed ways of working in drama and theatre, in leading the workshop and in research over fifteen years. I have worked with them in various roles including drama teacher and theatre director. I have travelled with five of them to a conference overseas and we have come to know each others’ families and friends. I have brought them into the ambit of the world of the university and my roles as academic and teacher educator. In this world we have taken the roles together of conference delegates, co-presenters and co-researchers. Given the concurrence of factors that have got us to this project and its research and pedagogy, and the trust built over time, it seems unlikely that this model could be easily replicated by other practitioners in other contexts seeking to adopt a similar model without a comparable range of experience and investment of time in building relationships.

Viewed from another angle, these limitations can also be seen as opportunities. Perhaps the workshop works specifically because it is a one-off experience. I have already presented data that suggests that the surprising encounter with newness and difference is what makes it powerful. Perhaps the limited time made available for the workshop makes it all the more important to make the most of that time together. Perhaps it is because it is a relatively brief and intense encounter that it leaves a lasting impression – it provides a shock to thought. Maybe it is successful because it is unique and requires considerable effort to make it happen. It is possible that the struggle and desire of the university educators and the Fusion Theatre team to organise for it to occur, despite the obstacles, produces an energy that drives its success. It is not a taken for granted experience, but rather one that is motivated by desire and determination to make it happen. The extensive and intensive time required to develop relationships within the workshop team can be seen not so much as a limiting factor as a salutary reminder of the importance of such relationship building and consolidation in teaching and learning partnerships that involve people with disabilities and the non-disabled. This is an important area for further research.
This study serves to bear witness to negativity (Apple 2010) and to the educational experience of people with disabilities. In my discussion I have analysed and documented the pedagogic experience and the disruptive aesthetic space of possibility that is the Teaching for Diversity workshop. In doing so I take on what Apple (2013) describes as the task of the critical scholar/activist in education: ‘to point to... spaces of possible action’ and ‘the spaces in which more progressive and counter-hegemonic actions can, or do, go on’ (p.41).

**Pedagogy matters: challenges and possibilities**

In chapter two I surveyed the literature that described the challenges involved in educating teachers to teach inclusively and found there were many including the pressure of limited time, a need to shift unhelpful brought attitudes, and a lack of prior experience of people with disabilities. There is wide recognition that finding an effective pedagogy really matters and that many pedagogical approaches simply miss the mark (Forlin et al 2009; Forlin 2010; Slee 2011). Teacher educators are searching for better ways to prepare pre-service teachers to become better inclusive educators. This research project speaks into this space. In reflecting on the literature, my practice and the data generated in the project, I too recognise that there are major challenges in educating teachers to teach inclusively. What follows are descriptions of the major challenges and the kinds of pedagogies that I now understand are needed in response to these challenges and that are worthy of further exploration.

**An embodied pedagogy**

As I write this chapter the university in which this project is based has just announced ‘CloudDeakin’, a new name and look for the university’s well established on-line learning environment that is said to provide ‘premium cloud learning experiences’ for students in all units, those taught both on and off campus. Considerable resources are being channelled into on-line learning which is seen as the realm of the future. On-line sites provide a space for html files and links to libraries and resources including word-based texts and multimedia that are specific to the unit. It is the go-to place for all assessment – you can read all about it, access the relevant resources, up-load your assignment and download your feedback.
The workshop at the centre of this project seems to be an experience in stark contrast to *cloud learning*. It is an example of what the university’s strategic plan refers to as *located learning*, ‘face-to-face with educators and learners together’ either on-campus or in work places (such as schools) and supported by ‘Deakin staff, key industry and community leaders and others’ (Deakin University strategic plan 2012). According to the strategic plan, located learning is considered to be important for ‘enhancing’ cloud learning, at least for those students who choose ‘located’ units of study rather than solely on-line units. Meanwhile, on campus, I observe university resources being directed towards the building and maintaining of sites for located learning almost invariably in the form of lecture theatres and standard tutorial classrooms. These are the kinds of physical spaces that can limit and constrain possibilities for face-to-face teaching and learning as they situate students in chairs and behind desks as if it is only their head that matters. Such spaces are controlling when the style and arrangement of furniture and fittings resist subversion. They perpetuate power relationships by strongly orientating students in one direction, towards the front, facing the lecturer or ‘expert’ teacher who is also often located behind a control desk in a position to activate screens in order to present information in ways not altogether different from the ways students access and receive information in on-line learning.

In contemporary universities on-line learning seems to be a given, both as accompaniment to on-campus courses and as an alternative, as increasingly units of study are offered off-campus in response to student demand for access and flexibility. Already a large proportion of special education courses are delivered on-line (Jones 2010) and post-graduate students in particular seek the flexibility of off-campus learning (Ashman 2010b). If located learning is really going to enhance on-line learning then it needs to be re-imagined in ways that make the most of the face-to-face and embodied learning experience. If we make the efforts necessary to bring learners and teachers together physically within the same space then we need to do more with them than could be achieved if they were independently connecting with ‘cloud’ content through their computer screens at home. Achieving this will also require provision of more of the kinds of physical spaces that open up possibilities for alternative teaching strategies and for people to relate to each other in person, as embodied learners, and in many different ways.
In the project of preparing teachers as inclusive educators, we need pedagogies that bring teachers and people with disabilities together in the same space so that they actually confront the other, not just the idea of the other. This is what the philosopher and ethicist Emmanuel Levinas calls the ‘originality of the encounter with the face’ (Morgan 2011, p.68), with ‘face’ understood to mean quite literally one person’s being present to the other in a fully embodied way. A face-to-face encounter is, according to Levinas, a ‘primordial ethical event’ (Morgan 2011, p.70) because meeting face-to-face affects us; forcing us to recognise our commitments and responsibilities to the other. Levinas understands the face-to-face encounter as a kind of epiphany; ‘To recognize the Other is to recognize a hunger. To recognise the Other is to give’ (Levinas 1969, p.75).

We need models of practice that demonstrate the kinds of pedagogies which can activate a community of learners in their meeting face-to-face (see figure 35). These will need to be the kinds of pedagogical encounters that provide opportunities for participants to become attentive to each other, come to value each other and be compelled to act responsibly for each other.

Figure 35: Face-to-face
An affective pedagogy

Inclusive education, as Slee (2001, 2010) maintains, is not a technical problem, it is cultural politics, and yet many pedagogical approaches for preparing teachers are still caught up in attempting to teach knowledge, skills and techniques pertaining to inclusive education. Many information-based courses reflect a medical model of disability and are reliant on traditional approaches primarily involving lectures, tutorials and text-books, despite research that suggests that text books often provide limited perspectives (Smith 2006; Rice 2005) and that traditional pedagogies do little to change attitudes (Tait & Purdie 2000; Slee 2001). There have been a large number of studies that suggest teacher attitude is a crucial factor in successful inclusive education both in the literature on preparing teachers for inclusive education (for example Forlin, Fogarty & Carroll 1999; Marshall, Ralph & Palmer 2002; Campbell, Gilmore & Cuskelly 2003; Forlin 2006; van Kraayenoord 2007; Chambers & Forlin 2010) as well as in the field of drama education (for example Peter 1995; O’Connor 2003). What we need are pedagogies that can influence attitude and foster empathy and understanding of the experiences of children with disabilities and their families (Scorgie 2010). Such pedagogies will need to not only work on a cognitive level but on an affective level with the possibility of precipitating feelings, challenging assumptions and shifting attitudes. An armament of teaching tools and techniques will be of little benefit without the energy and drive of positive attitude and desire necessary to use them.

Becoming an inclusive educator requires not only disciplinary knowledge, pedagogic skills and inclusive dispositions but also the ability to identify the manifest and insidious ways in which exclusion in schools occurs (Slee 2010). In order for teachers to ‘interrupt the constancy of exclusion they ought to be acquainted with its character and operation’ (p.19). We need pedagogies that require us to identify, recognise and explore barriers to inclusion and allow us to feel what it might be like to experience them. When such pedagogies generate an empathic understanding of the impacts of these barriers then they will be more likely to propel a teacher into action. Empathic understanding may also come through conversation with people with disabilities whose story of education allows for a view of education from their eyes. Such stories are likely to have greater resonance for listeners when they are attuned to listening after a relationship has already developed between listener and teller. This was seen to occur in the workshop in
the wake of drama activities that are physical and collaborative and develop a level of intimacy and a relationship of trust. A felt recognition of barriers to inclusion can also occur in drama when groups identify and act out short scenes that reveal obstacles to inclusion and the ways teachers can be complicit in it. When this activity extends into interrogating the situation and doing the problem-solving work of imagining alternatives, then student teachers are beginning the work of becoming the cultural vigilantes that Slee (2010) suggests inclusive educators need to be.

**A disruptive and aesthetic pedagogy**

Commitment to the philosophy of inclusive education is necessary for successful inclusive practice (Bradshaw & Mundia 2005; Lambe & Bones 2006; Angelides 2004, 2008; Symeonidou & Phtiaka 2009; Forlin, Cedilla, Romero-Contreras, Fletcher & Hernandez 2010; Ben-Yehuda, Leyser & Last 2010) and such philosophies are formed through consideration of what we value. Therefore, nurturing a sense of the value of inclusive education in pre-service teachers is important (Garmon 2005; Baglieri 2008; Moran 2009). Research has revealed that student teachers are often subject to socially pervasive views and lived experiences in less successfully inclusive settings (Lambe & Bones 2006). For many student teachers, learning to value inclusive education requires the disruption of years of reductionist and positivist indoctrination that has led to the formation of limited clinical views. Ware (2008) reminds us of ‘how mindlessly’ student teachers can read disability as ‘tragedy, sadness and anger’ (p.578) and the importance of confronting unexamined attitudes, assumptions and narrow constructions of disability.

In order to prepare inclusive educators we need pedagogies that take into account pre-service teachers’ often limited or negative prior experience of people with disabilities. We need pedagogies that provoke and trigger a shock to new thought and that disrupt such hegemonic views of disability, even if this is at times uncomfortable and disorienting. In order to achieve this disruption, we can draw upon arts-based pedagogies that tap into the rich potential of the aesthetic, such as the art of drama and activities that include movement, music, image and voice. These kinds of activities involve working creatively together; with fully embodied people responding to other fully embodied people, in ways that involve careful listening, watching and contact.
These will be pedagogies that allow for moments of beauty and grace that will generate an openness to the other for those who share them. Should they occur, such moments of beauty ought to be appreciated for their power to disturb and surprise, to inspire awe and wonder and to disrupt and shift thinking. When old assumptions have been disrupted and dislodged, we require pedagogies that will allow for imagining new possibilities and new ways of thinking and acting, to take their place. Drama as pedagogy can provide an aesthetic space for the imagination to do this creative work.

We need pedagogical approaches that understand space not as passive but active in shaping what is possible. As an educator I have found it helpful to use the concept of space as smooth and striated in order to appreciate what each makes possible because even ‘a small alteration to a socio-spatial assemblage can affect ethico-political changes’ (Hickey-Moodie & Malins 2007, p.11). The disrupting of normal expectations (striations) helps to create the smooth spaces of becoming that can give rise to affective learning experiences which make transformation possible.

**A collaborative and democratic pedagogy**

The research about educating for inclusive education also suggests that academics, those who teach the teachers, may hold underdeveloped philosophies of inclusive education and limited views of disability that will influence what and how they teach (Carrington 1999; Lambe & Bones 2006; Forlin & Dinh 2010). Teacher educators and practising teachers are often the products of education systems that have been less inclusive than those that many newly graduating teachers will be moving into (Forlin et al 2009; Berry 2011). Research also suggests that there is also little benefit when teacher educators promote inclusive practices through didactic lecture style teaching without ever modelling inclusive pedagogical approaches (Forlin 2010) or without modelling the kinds of collaborative professional practices that are so important in inclusive education (Nevin, Thousand and Villa 2009; Scorgie 2010; Wang & Fitch 2010). We need teaching and learning experiences that are not only about inclusive education but that are inclusive. We also need pedagogies that do not necessarily position teachers as ultimate authorities and experts but rather bring teachers and learners together, including teacher educators, student teachers and people with disabilities, so that they can learn with and from each other. This will provide a modelling of the kind of
collaborative practice that is so important in inclusive education. This is a democratic pedagogy that requires, seeks and values the contributions of educational professionals, families and students. It is ‘a pedagogy with empty hands’ (Biesta 2008; Allan 2012) when teachers come, not with ready answers, but simply with a readiness to listen and learn from students who they recognise may well have ideas about how they learn best and strategies that help them to learn.

**A playful and positive pedagogy**

Much of the research suggests that affirmative and rewarding engagement with people with disabilities is the factor most likely to encourage inclusivity (Tait & Purdie 2000; Forlin et al 2009; Forlin et al 2010). While much research acknowledges the importance of contact with people with disabilities, many studies also acknowledge the difficulties in achieving this within the time and resource constraints of university courses (Richards & Clough 2004). Even when contact with people with disabilities is possible, research suggests that not all experiential learning is productive and not all direct experience with people with disabilities is going to be efficacy building (Lancaster & Bain 2007). Some encounters may serve to confirm and entrench negative views of disability (Rademacher et al 1998). We need pedagogies that provide positive encounters with people with disabilities and pedagogies that break down fears of the unknown. Such pedagogies will bring together people with and without disabilities in ways that are non-threatening, playful and exploratory. We need playful pedagogies that allow spaces for shared humour and laughter so the people with disabilities are seen as fully human – not pitiable or tragic – but insightful, witty and capable of appreciating humour and irony.

Better still will be pedagogies that bring people with disabilities together with non-disabled in ways that do not position people with disabilities as needy and powerless and the non-disabled as dominant authorities. We need pedagogies that turn the tables so that people with disabilities are able to present their expertise, their insights and their rich lived experiences. These are pedagogies that position people with disabilities as capable, competent and confident. Through experiencing people with disabilities as leaders and experts, teachers are able to understand the potential and capacity of students with disabilities that they may teach, and to shift their focus to what these
students can achieve and can do rather than maintain a limited focus on what they can’t do. Holding such a vision of hope, possibility and potential for any student is important in order to teach in a way that might enable that potential to be fulfilled.

Part 2 Research Matters

Research matters: transformative research
The research model adopted in this project has evolved out of many years of working with Fusion Theatre and building relationships with all its members and especially the team of six. In chapter five of this thesis I described the way that my earlier research evolved into a participatory project when participants effectively hijacked the research process by taking over the interviews, asking questions of each other and of me. I welcomed this transformation and knew that I could not undertake any future research without it also being participatory, with the Fusion theatre members, in particular, as co-researchers. Throughout this project this research partnership has continued and every recorded interview and discussion provides evidence that the questioning and investigation flows all ways.

Andrew has been a member of the company since it began as a drama group fifteen years ago. He explained his development within the company over this time and his journey from learning drama and theatre through to taking a teaching role:

*When I came to drama I did drama, I learned how to act and that, but now, with this, we are not just doing drama we’re helping people understand disability and that is something that I didn’t think I could ever do, ever have the courage to do, to actually get up there and teach or show people, especially fourth year students who are teachers, you know, how to deal with disability. There wouldn’t be very many disabled people in the world who would actually do that so it is a real achievement for me.*

While it is a necessary part of the action research process that I talked regularly with the Fusion Theatre members about their involvement in the workshop, we also talked about their thoughts specifically on the research process and whether the research matters to them. ‘It is important’ explained Jean-Marie, ‘because it is about us’. For Alex, the research is an opportunity to build an awareness of what the teachers are learning. ‘We can appreciate what the student teachers understand and we can be happy that we are
sharing the issues with them’, he explained. Katrina believes being involved in the research is an opportunity for personal transformation, allowing her to think more deeply about the issues. She explained it this way: ‘We grow, it makes our brain think. It makes us think further and makes good ideas come into our heads’.

In addition to presenting the workshops, the team has been involved in the presentation of the research at conferences. They have presented at a locally held international conference on the arts and inclusive education as well as a national conference and two state conferences for drama educators. These presentations have mostly included an introduction to the project with discussion and a short workshop to demonstrate some of the activities. In 2011 I was invited to present the keynote at a state drama conference encompassing the theme of inclusion. I agreed to present the keynote so long as the drama association could cover transport costs for the Fusion team members to attend as co-presenters. I wrote the main part of the keynote presentation with team input and feedback. During the keynote each member of the team chose to take the microphone to speak to the audience of over three hundred delegates. After the keynote they presented a workshop to a group of thirty teachers.

Alongside our thinking and discussions about the workshop, the team has co-authored a paper which we hope will be published. It provides background to the project, describes the processes of devising and researching the workshop and the aspects of the workshop that the authors believe are important in helping to prepare student teachers as inclusive educators and for themselves, as people with disabilities, in presenting the workshops. The paper endeavours to present, as authentically as possible, the voices and words of each of the contributing authors by drawing from comments recorded in group discussions and interviews over three years. It is deliberately written in plain language and drafts have been read aloud to the co-authors inviting verification, clarification, and elaboration. Their comments have been recorded and taken into account in further drafts. When jointly preparing this paper we were thinking about how we could make the work available and useful, not only to an academic community, but within the communities of the team members.
Presenting and communicating the research in all of these ways is important for the Fusion members and they not only accept with enthusiasm opportunities to present but they also seek out opportunities themselves. Katrina organised to present about the workshop at the annual general meeting of the Neighbourhood House in the municipality in which she lives. I helped her prepare a slide show with images of the workshop and key points. By all accounts she impressed them and returned to report to the team that co-ordinators at the Neighbourhood House would like to host the workshop.

Andrew, who understood that teaching was an extension on his original drama and theatre experience, recognises that the research is a further development. He sees that presenting research is another layer of teaching and learning, not only because of the way he believes sharing the research can inform others, but because of what sharing the research teaches him about himself. He explained, ‘We are teaching people something when we share the research and it lets us know where we are at too. It makes us understand where we were and how far we have come’.

For the Fusion Theatre actors, to present the research is a kind of performance; it requires preparation and an audience. Alex reminded me of the link between performance of theatre and the presentation of research when he explained:

My dream was to become an actor, I am an actor. I am an advocate, I show the world who I am. I am a human being as anyone else I am not just a plain Greek, or an Australian, I am just me.

When I asked him to explain this Alex drew the connecting lines between performance in the theatre, a presentation at a conference and the presentation of words for a written article. They are all, he suggested, part of the same story – his lifelong desire to be equal, to connect, to have a voice and to advocate. Through taking on roles as actor, workshop leader and research presenter, Alex finds possibilities to be recognised as a human being, rather than a label. Being involved in and presenting the research matters as much to the Fusion team members as being involved in the workshop and being an actor in the company. When you live your life as a person labelled as having an intellectual disability, you are frequently judged by your intellectual limitations. To be
an actor, a teacher and a researcher is an opportunity to draw upon and demonstrate skills and intellectual strengths.

**Research matters: challenges and possibilities**

‘Nothing about us without us’ is a motto taken up by the disability rights movement to highlight how important it is that people with disabilities should be involved in any decision making that concerns them. In advocating for more inclusive research towards more inclusive education Slee (2011) quotes academic and disability rights activist Mike Oliver, who provides a stronger motto advising people with disabilities ‘not to partake in research that does not fully involve them from the outset; there should be no participation without representation’ (p.82). The call for non-oppressive and more inclusive disability research has been made loud and clear (for example Oliver 1992; Allan 2008; Slee 2011; Mertens, Sullivan & Stace 2011; Byrnes & Rickards 2011). However, as outlined in my review of literature on the preparation of teachers for inclusive education in chapter two, I found some examples of people with disabilities being brought into contact with student teachers but very few examples of research projects that included the perspectives and voices of people with disabilities in regard to their involvement in these projects. I found fewer still in which people with disabilities were researchers or co-researchers.

According to Oliver (1992) the problem with research that includes people with disabilities as subjects only is that they are alienated while the researchers receive the benefit. Researchers take the experience of disability, render what they believe is a faithful account of it, and then move on to better things while the disabled subjects remain in exactly the same social situation they were in before the research began. He uses a phrase from Reinharz (1985) describing this as the ‘rape model of research’. As an alternative, Oliver proposed a new emancipatory paradigm for disability research. Some key elements of this approach include: addressing the power imbalance by positioning the researchers as those whose skills are placed at the disposal of the research participants with disabilities; focussing on the strengths of people with disabilities rather than the deficits; and examining and exposing the factors and structures that impede inclusion (Mertens et al 2011).
In response to some deficits in the emancipatory model, Mertens (2009) proposes a transformative model of research based on the axiological belief that:

... ethics is defined in terms of human rights, the pursuit of social justice, the importance of cultural respect, and the need for reciprocity in the researcher participant relationship. (Mertens et al 2011, p.231).

Such reciprocity will likely be based in a deep sense of trust, caring and mutuality between participants (Lincoln 1995). While the emancipatory paradigm has its basis in the social model of disability and draws from participatory action research models, the transformative model of research draws on multiple and mixed methods – whatever is likely to be most effective and culturally appropriate for participants. Unlike the emancipatory paradigm, the transformative paradigm is not focussed exclusively on disability but on a broad understanding of diversity associated with differential access to power and privilege. Within the emancipatory paradigm participants are conscious of the research situation and ready to take leadership (Sullivan 2009). However, the transformative paradigm is based on a team approach, in which partnerships are formed and capacity building is undertaken as necessary. The emancipatory paradigm sets up an ““us” against “them” tone’ while the transformative paradigm acknowledges ‘the need to work together to challenge oppressive structures’ (Mertens et al 2011, p.231).

I recognise that the participatory action research layer of this research, combined with the arts-based methodology embedded in the workshop, have elements of the transformative research paradigm. It has evolved along the lines of the transformative paradigm in that it draws on mixed methods and involves partnerships and capacity building in the research process. Data has revealed that the research has the potential to change lives of the research participants and co-researchers – people with disabilities, student teachers, and lecturers. The comments of the Fusion Theatre actors suggest that they feel transformed and it has also had a transformative effect on me as researcher and within the wider educational context. This project contributes to what should be a growing body of research that explores methodologies that have people with disabilities at the centre. I strongly recommend that more research of this nature be undertaken.
Limitations and opportunities in the participatory research process

There are tensions in taking on a participatory approach. Sharing the researcher role becomes problematic when considering the contribution of this research towards my PhD. Control in the research process rests with me and while I might attempt to ensure that people with disabilities and student teachers have maximum involvement and that I am accountable to them, ultimately I have the most control in the research process. In terms of formal recognition, I also have the most to gain from it.

While all the Fusion Theatre team members were willing and regular co-researchers, the student teachers’ level of interest in being involved was varied. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, all students agreed to be involved but most only to the minimum extent by completing surveys, writing short reflections on the workshop and in the class discussions. Only eleven students attended follow-up interviews and an additional five sent additional comments via email. At least ten others came up to speak to me about the workshop in passing. I asked some of the students why they had made time to participate in the research process and responses were along the lines of one student, who said, ‘You all made an effort to give us an experience that was different and special so I wanted to give something back’. There was one student who could not attend any of the suggested interview times. However, he made a point of coming to see me at a time that suited him even though it was well beyond the end of the semester. He wondered if other students would have participated more in the research process had they not been, like him, stressed in the final weeks of their four year course. When we consider the drama activities of the workshop not only as pedagogy but as arts-based research, then we can appreciate the opportunity for wider participation on the research process by all participants in a way that does not make any additional demands on their time.

There is a tension around outsiders’ lack of expectations of the ability of people with intellectual disabilities to be a part of the research process. This became evident when my application for expedited ethics approval was questioned by the university ethics committee based on the understanding that people with intellectual disabilities are a ‘socially recognised group... with special vulnerabilities’, and therefore their ability to provide consent to participate on behalf of themselves was questionable. This essentialist view of disability seemed to disregard the role of the Fusion Theatre
participants as adults entrusted to leading a workshop for university students which was outlined in detail in the ethics application. I was required to provide additional assurance that the Fusion Theatre members were able to make their own decisions in regard to informed consent. I needed to explain that they would expect to give informed consent themselves rather than go through the potentially humiliating process of having a parent or carer provide consent on their behalf. While I was able to outline additional measures to satisfy the ethics committee and gain approval, this experience reminded me of how the measures put in place to protect vulnerable individuals can also be disempowering when they form barriers to their participation and might present disincentives to researchers to include them in the process. While protection of research participants is paramount, if a rigid and conservative view is taken by ethics committees then people with disabilities can end up being disempowered by the very structures that are set up to support them.

If assumptions about limitations of self-determination are being made about people with disabilities by academics in the ethics approval process, I wonder whether similar assumptions might be made by academic audiences of this research. Outsiders might question the ability of the Fusion team members to understand and contribute authentically to the research process, their capacity to make worthwhile comment and the validity of their contributions. I understand that the ethics process necessarily focuses on finding potential problems and ethical issues but when these concerns have been satisfactorily resolved, it is important to shift from what is a deficit perspective, focussed on problems and limitations, to one that recognises possibilities. If you frame a group in terms of its problems then the strengths in that community are unlikely to be recognised (Mertens 2009). It is my view that the Fusion Theatre members’ contributions are so valuable to this research project that to remove them would significantly reduce its validity.

Once again I take up Apple’s (2010) challenge to bear witness not only to negativity but to provide evidence of methodologies that are inclusive. In this project I have made use of my privilege as an academic to do what Apple (2013) implores: ‘to open the spaces at universities and elsewhere for those who are not there, for those who do not now have a voice in that space and in the “professional” sites’ to which I have access (p.43-44).
The task is not complete until I (we) have shared my (our) experience of this inclusive research practice and what I (we) understand to be important research matters.

This research reveals the Fusion Theatre members commitment to the research process and their call for more inclusive research in this area. We need more models of research that privilege the voices of people with disabilities rather than researchers continuing on as if they can and must speak for them. Such models will recognise that people with disabilities are able to draw upon their lived experience of disability and will have insights and understandings about what helps them learn, what they believe teachers should know in order to teach effectively as well as ways we might better prepare inclusive educators. We need models of collaborative research in which people with and without disabilities work together, acknowledge uneven power balances and seek to build in a sense of reciprocity so that researchers not only take but give and participants or co-researchers with disabilities are not only asked to give but will take something away.

We need models of research that recognise the potential of people with disabilities not only to contribute as participants, but to take some leadership and determine the direction. Such models are particularly important for people with intellectual disabilities who are too easily dismissed as being incapable of intelligent contribution or whose contributions are too easily mistrusted because of their intellectual disability. To this end we need models of research that expand on the usual research methods that are often reliant on reading and writing and academic language that can be alienating. A commitment to inclusive research methods, such as the arts-based drama activities in this project, will provide appropriate tools for people with intellectual disabilities to inquire, respond, interpret and present research.

**Arts-based research – the heart and core**

In the third layer of my nested research methodologies, the arts-based research, I find the heart and core. I recognise the drama workshop activities are action-oriented inclusive education and at the same time a way of exploring and researching questions and ideas about inclusive education. The drama activity is simultaneously pedagogy and a process of inquiry. Finley (2011) sees a place for arts-based research at the heart of a
revolutionary people’s pedagogy. In this project pedagogy becomes research when student teachers come together with teacher educators, who are both university academics and people with disabilities who are experts in their own lives. In this space of learning and inquiry, all participants are working together to better understand what the needs of teachers might be in order to enhance their ability to teach for inclusion.

This is a method of inquiry that has emerged out of the drama and theatre experience of the Fusion Theatre actors and my experience as a drama and theatre educator and as such it is an approach that is both relevant and useful for our purposes. Our collective experience has allowed us to shape the workshop as a playful space or a ‘field for play... a confluence of mind and body in efforts to understand’ (Finley 2005, p.686). This is a creative and generative research space. The workshop provides a liminal space in which hegemonic views and usual power structures are disrupted. The diversity of participants – student teachers, teacher educators and people with disabilities – invited into this space to share in the reciprocity of perspectives makes it more likely that no single perspective is privileged over others.

A critical arts-based research, according to Finley, ‘draws people into dialogue and opens the possibility for critical critique of social structures’ (2011, p.443). Dialogue occurs through the drama workshop such as in the thought tunnel activity analysed in chapter eight. It occurs when participants identify barriers to inclusion in schools and then create and perform short scenes that expose these barriers as described in chapter seven. We dwell in this space of investigation a little longer when we extend the drama further through questioning characters, listening to their thoughts and trying out different actions in the scenes. We engage in critical discourse as we discuss the barriers to inclusion in an effort to understand why they occur, and how they may be avoided.

While the drama strategies provide the space for critical thinking about barriers to inclusion, it is the ability of an arts-based approach to work on an affective level that makes it so valuable in this project. Arts-based research also ‘makes use of affective experiences, senses and emotions’ and practitioners ‘explore the bounds of space and place where the human body is a tool for gathering and exploring meaning in experience’ (Finley 2011, p.444). Engagement in the drama activities provides an
aesthetic space that heightens awareness and drama activities such as the ‘still image’ and synchronised ‘mirror exercises’ increase possibilities for close contact and face-to-face encounters that require co-operation and collaboration. An aesthetic research space creates the kind of intimacy that is so important for encouraging deep and careful listening and a close attention to the other. The aesthetic space draws upon the imagination and provides a chance to consider other ways of thinking and acting towards the ideal of better inclusive education. This is a research methodology that has the power to shift pervasive hegemonic attitudes and can move participants to positive, and perhaps even radical, social action. It is also a practical kind of inquiry when the doing of it can effect change and potentially transform the lives, both personally and socially, of those who are involved. As Finley suggests:

From within the liminal openings that are created by the performance/practice of arts-based inquiry, ordinary people, researchers as participants and as audiences can imagine new visions of dignity, care, democracy, and other decolonizing ways of being in the world. Once it has been imagined, it can be acted upon, or performed. (p.443)

The Teaching for Diversity workshop provided an opportunity for participants to listen, to act, to see, to feel and to imagine. As a result many student teachers expressed determination, hope and a desire to become better inclusive educators. I return now to this quote from a student’s written reflection encapsulates this desire and resolve:

The workshop made me want to be better and more inclusive. It made me want to educate myself and my students about disabilities and bring the knowledge into the classroom. I want to break down the wall of stigma and misunderstandings. I want my students to accept, not just tolerate. Anything less is really not good enough when you consider that a person’s or group of people’s well-being is at stake. I hope I can do it.

Future realms for Fusion Theatre
The Dandenong Community Arts Centre is the home of Fusion Theatre and it is to that place and to the voices of those within that I return to in these closing paragraphs. We have been debriefing the recent workshops and for the purpose of our research we are recording the conversation. Andrew is in a reflective mood: ‘Doing the workshops restores my faith in the school system’. He goes on to explain:
My experiences at school were not all good in what happened to me and how my disability was treated, so it sort of restores faith for me in doing what we’re doing. It restores faith to think that disability is getting this sort of recognition. I think it is important for people with disabilities in general to have us actually out there giving ideas to professional teachers. It is really putting people with disabilities on the map and it is really giving disability a real good look in.

Andrew then shifts our focus to the future: ‘We have come in leaps and bounds but I am wondering where we can go from here?’ It appears Andrew has already been thinking about this. ‘I would like to do this for parents,’ he explains:

I would really like to open parents’ eyes. I honestly believe some parents hold a certain amount of ignorance towards disability. Parents send their kids off to school and their kids are exposed to kids with disabilities but the parents haven’t had this exposure. We could do it for other teachers and students in schools.

Katrina makes her own recommendation: ‘We should be doing the workshop for other universities, and then maybe we can develop further than we have now.’ Alex casts the net even wider: ‘I reckon it would be interesting to do the workshop for lecturers or doctors and other professions. We could show them too.’ Jean-Marie has been listening intently. She takes the floor and her tone is emphatic:

This should not be just about people with intellectual disabilities. I want to see people with psych disabilities and all kinds of disabilities do what we do. If they don’t do what we do then it is not going to help. It’s a very, very high priority.

She bangs the table as she speaks.

It is that important because if we want the world to treat us with respect and if we don’t get out there and prove ourselves, we are not going to be seen and we are just going to be put on the side!

A moment of stunned silence follows, ‘Do you want me to calm down?’ she asks. ‘No keep going!’ they reply. Jean-Marie has struck a chord; what they have is a model for an inclusive way of teaching and researching towards not only preparing teachers for inclusive education, but potentially paving the way for a more inclusive society. Katrina
provides a reality check: ‘We’ve got the whole world to change though and it is all over the place. It is a big job.’

It is a job we are ready to undertake. Participation in the workshop and research has mobilised us, we have recognised the transformation in ourselves and in others and we have a desire to share it so that others may be similarly transformed. The ‘we’ that Katrina referred to encompasses the Fusion Theatre team, of which I am a part, as well as the student teachers and the lecturers. We, the multiple voices of the participants in this project, have described these experiences, both the possibilities and the challenges, in the hope that what we have come to understand about pedagogy and research in the project of preparing teachers as inclusive educators will be useful to others as it has been useful to us in the doing of it. We hope it will spark further inclusive research and inform future pedagogical encounters that will bring diverse communities of learners together, both students and teachers, for learning that is transformative within a disruptive aesthetic space. Ours has also been an ethical space in which interplay of vulnerability and responsibility generated a spirit of positive becoming – launching us on an on-going project of becoming more inclusive. The walls of the Community Arts Centre peel away to reveal a wide horizon when Andrew articulates a shared optimism engendered through this project: ‘The possibilities are limitless!’


Appendix 1: Plain Language Statements and Informed Consent

Plain Language Statement: Fusion Theatre Members

Date:

Dear Fusion Theatre Members,

You are no doubt aware that in addition to my involvement with Fusion theatre and my teaching at Deakin University, I am also undertaking research towards my PhD at The University of Melbourne in the Graduate School of Education under the supervision of Professor John O’Toole and Professor Johanna Wyn. I would like to invite you to consider participating in this research project, the details of which appear below.

My project is entitled The Disruptive Aesthetic Space: Student teachers are challenged into new ways of thinking when participating in drama workshops with adults with disabilities.

As you are aware increasingly throughout Australia, there has been a movement towards the inclusion of students with mild to severe disabilities in regular classrooms. The aim of this study is to find out about some ways that courses can prepare teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms. Last year we trialled some workshops with student teachers at Deakin University and this year we have again been invited to run workshops for student teachers along similar lines. The aim of the workshops is to explore issues of disability and inclusive education through practical activities involving group work, drama as pedagogy, reflection and analysis. My research is around the experience of this workshop for the student teachers and draws upon participatory research methods. This means that you along with the student teachers and their lecturers are invited as co-researchers to help build understanding in this area of investigation. To assist in the analysis of what occurs in the workshop, if all involved in the workshop agree to participate in the research, the workshop will be video recorded and some photographs taken for research purposes and these may be used in conference presentations and publications.

The students of EXC440 will be invited to participate in a pre and post workshop questionnaire, they will be invited to write a short reflection immediately following the workshop and some of them will have the option of participating in a focus group for a semi-structured group interview at a time that suits them.

I would like to invite you, as the co-creators and leaders of the workshop, to participate in the research by contributing your thoughts on the workshop planning and delivery. Some of you may choose to write down some of your thoughts and ideas in a reflective journal that will become data for the research project. I would also like to ask you to participate in an interview to be held at a time and place that is convenient to you. This interview will be audio-recorded and will take approximately forty-five minutes. This will be a semi-structured interview that seeks to find out what you believe is interesting...
about the experience of the workshop for the students, your observations about the
students involvement in the workshops and any observations you have about any
changes in attitudes or ideas you perceive in the student teachers in regards to teaching
students with special educational needs. I will also ask you about how the experience of
running the workshop was for you and what views you may have to inform the offering
of this kind of workshop experience for the future. When you answer questions like
these, I will probably ask for further details or examples, so that the interviews become
a conversation about your experiences and ideas around the research questions.

If at any time you become uncomfortable about the interview questions you have the
right not to answer them. Please note that participation in this research is entirely
voluntary and that you may withdraw your consent at any time during the study. If you
withdraw your consent, your participation in the study will cease immediately and any
information obtained from you will not be used.

Unless you choose to be identified, no findings will be published that will identify you.
The data collected in this project will be stored securely according to University of
Melbourne regulations and access to this data is restricted to my supervisors and me.

The overall findings of this project will be written up as a PhD thesis and may be
published in professional journal articles and presented at teacher education
conferences. The findings are unlikely to be completed before 2012; however, if you
would be interested to receive a summary of the findings please let me know.

If you have any further questions regarding this study please contact me

Jo Raphael

jo.raphael@deakin.edu.au

Ph:

This research project has received clearance by the Human Ethics Research Committee.
If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project please contact the
Executive Officer.

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Thank-you for your time and I look forward to working with you.

Jo Raphael
Consent Form: Fusion Theatre Members

I, ______________________________

Herby consent to participate in the study entitled *The Disruptive Aesthetic Space: Student teachers are challenged into new ways of thinking when participating in drama workshops with adults with disabilities* being conducted by Jo Raphael within the Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne under the supervision of Professor John O’Toole and Professor Johanna Wyn.

I have read the ‘Plain Language Statement for Participants’ relevant to the research study and I understand that the purpose of the research is to further understandings of some of the ways that student teachers might be prepared to teach students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

I acknowledge that:

- The aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible hazards of the research study, have been explained to me.
- I understand I voluntarily and freely give my consent to my participation in the research project
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.
- I understand my decision to be involved or not to be involved as a participant in the study will have no bearing on my ability to participate in the work of the company
- If all involved in the workshop agree to participate in the research, the workshop will be video recorded and photographs taken for research purposes and these may be used in conference presentations and publications.
- The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed
- I will not be personally identified in any reporting of the data unless I choose to be.
- Individual results will not be released to any person
- I understand that findings will be used for research purposes and may be reported in journals and conference papers.

Signature:

Date:
Plain Language Statement: Student Teacher Participants

Date:

Students of EXC440 Teaching for Diversity, Deakin University,

My name is Jo Raphael. Some of you will know me in my role as lecturer in Deakin University’s School of Education. I am also undertaking research towards my PhD at The University of Melbourne in the Graduate School of Education under the supervision of Professor John O’Toole and Professor Johanna Wyn. I would like to invite you to consider participating in this research project, the details of which appear below.

My project is entitled The Disruptive Aesthetic Space: Student teachers are challenged into new ways of thinking when participating in drama workshops with adults with disabilities.

As student teachers, you will be aware that increasingly throughout Australia, there has been a movement towards the inclusion of students with mild to severe disabilities in regular classrooms. The aim of this study is to find out about some ways that courses can prepare teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms. As part of your involvement in EXC440 you will have the chance to participate in a drama workshop with members of Fusion Theatre, a community-based theatre company involving people with intellectual disabilities. This workshop is part of your normal class work for the unit and will explore issues of disability and inclusive education through practical activities involving group work, drama as pedagogy, reflection and analysis.

My research is around the experience of this workshop and draws upon participatory research methods. This means that you are invited as co-researchers to help build understanding in this area of investigation. To assist in the analysis of what occurs in the workshop, if all involved in the workshop agree to participate in the research, the workshop will be video recorded and some photographs taken for research purposes and these may be used in conference presentations and publications.

I invite you to participate in two short anonymous questionnaires to be held in class time at the beginning and end of the unit, and to write a short reflection immediately following the workshop. Time for the questionnaires and written response will be provided in class and should take no more than thirty minutes in total over the semester. Some of you might also like to participate in a focus group for a semi-structured group interview to be held on campus at Burwood a time that is convenient to you. The group interview will be audio-recorded and will take approximately forty-five minutes.

Some of the questions that will be included in the interview are:

- What was it like for you to participate in the workshop?
- What activities were the most/least interesting and why?
- Has participating in the workshop changed your attitudes and ideas toward people with disabilities and if so how?
- Has participating in the workshop changed your understandings about teaching students with disabilities and if so, how?
- What are the questions and concerns that you still have about teaching students with disabilities in your classroom?
• When you answer questions like these, I will probably ask for further details or examples, so that the interviews become a conversation about your experiences and ideas around the research questions.

If at any time you become uncomfortable about the questionnaire or interview questions you have the right not to answer them. Please note that participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that you may withdraw your consent at any time during the study. If you withdraw your consent, your participation in the study will cease immediately and any information obtained from you will not be used. Please note also that choosing either to participate or not to participate in this study will have no bearing on your results for this unit.

No findings will be published that will identify you. The questionnaire will be anonymous and pseudonyms will be used for those participating in the group interview. The data collected in this project will be stored securely according to University of Melbourne regulations and access to this data is restricted to my supervisors and me.

The overall findings of this project will be written up as a PhD thesis and may be published in professional journal articles and presented at teacher education conferences. The findings are unlikely to be completed before 2012; however, if you would be interested to receive a summary of the findings please let me know.

If you have any further questions regarding this study please contact me

Jo Raphael
jo.raphael@deakin.edu.au
Ph:

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Thank-you for your time and I look forward to working with you in EXC440.

Jo Raphael
Consent Form: Student Teacher Participants

I, ______________________________

Hereby consent to participate in the study entitled *The Disruptive Aesthetic Space: Student teachers are challenged into new ways of thinking when participating in drama workshops with adults with disabilities* being conducted by Jo Raphael within the Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne under the supervision of Professor John O’Toole and Professor Johanna Wyn.

I have read the ‘Plain Language Statement for Participants’ relevant to the research study and I understand that the purpose of the research is to further understandings of some of the ways that student teachers might be prepared to teach students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

I acknowledge that:

- The aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible hazards of the research study, have been explained to me.
- I understand I voluntarily and freely give my consent to my participation in the research project
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.
- I understand my decision to be involved or not to be involved as a participant in the study will have no bearing on my results for this unit
- Involvement in the Fusion theatre workshop will be part of normal course work, however, if all involved in the workshop agree to participate in the research, the workshop will be video recorded and photographs taken for research purposes and these may be used in conference presentations and publications.
- If I choose to participate in the focus group interview that it will be audio recorded and transcribed
- I will not be personally identified in any reporting of the data.
- Individual results will not be released to any person
- I understand that findings will be used for research purposes and may be reported in journals and conference papers.

Signature:

Date:

☐ I would be interested in participating in a focus group interview to be arranged for a mutually convenient time.

Email address:
Dear _____________________,

You are no doubt aware that in addition to my teaching at Deakin University, I am also undertaking research towards my PhD at The University of Melbourne in the Graduate School of Education under the supervision of Professor John O’Toole and Professor Johanna Wyn. I would like to invite you to consider participating in this research project, the details of which appear below.

My project is entitled **The Disruptive Aesthetic Space: Student teachers are challenged into new ways of thinking when participating in drama workshops with adults with disabilities.**

As you are aware increasingly throughout Australia, there has been a movement towards the inclusion of students with mild to severe disabilities in regular classrooms. The aim of this study is to find out about some ways that courses can prepare teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms. We have already negotiated together in planning for EXC440, to provide students with the opportunity to participate in a drama workshop with members of Fusion Theatre, a community-based theatre company involving people with intellectual disabilities. The aim of this workshop is to explore issues of disability and inclusive education through practical activities involving group work, drama as pedagogy, reflection and analysis. My research is around the experience of this workshop for the student teachers and draws upon participatory research methods. This means that you along with the student teachers are invited as co-researchers to help build understanding in this area of investigation. To assist in the analysis of what occurs in the workshop, if all involved in the workshop agree to participate in the research, the workshop will be video recorded and some photographs taken for research purposes and these may be used in conference presentations and publications.

The students of EXC440 will be invited to participate in a pre and post workshop questionnaire, they will be invited to write a short reflection immediately following the workshop and some of them will have the option of participating in a focus group for a semi-structured group interview at a time that suits them. The students have been made aware that their decision to be involved or not to be involved in this study will have no bearing on their results. I would appreciate it if you could also assure them of this.

I would also like to invite you, as lecturers in the unit, to participate in an interview to be held on campus at Burwood a time that is convenient to you. This interview will be audio-recorded and will take approximately one hour. This will be a semi-structured interview that seeks to find out what you believe is interesting about the experience of the workshop for the students, to what extent it met your learning aims for the students, your observations about the students involvement in the workshops and any observations you have about any changes in attitudes or ideas you perceive in the student teachers in regards to teaching students with special educational needs.

When you answer questions like these, I will probably ask for further details or examples, so that the interviews become a conversation about your experiences and ideas around the research questions.

If at any time you become uncomfortable about the interview questions you have the right not to answer them. Please note that participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that you may withdraw your consent at any time during the study. If you withdraw your consent, your participation in the study will cease immediately and any information obtained from you will not be used.
Unless you choose to be identified, no findings will be published that will identify you. The data collected in this project will be stored securely according to University of Melbourne regulations and access to this data is restricted to my supervisors and me.

The overall findings of this project will be written up as a PhD thesis and may be published in professional journal articles and presented at teacher education conferences. The findings are unlikely to be completed before 2012; however, if you would be interested to receive a summary of the findings please let me know.

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<td><a href="mailto:jOTOOLE@unimelb.edu.au">jOTOOLE@unimelb.edu.au</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:j.WYN@unimelb.edu.au">j.WYN@unimelb.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ph: 8344 8339</td>
<td>Ph: 8344 9643</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Thank-you for your time and I look forward to working with you in EXC440.

Jo Raphael
Consent Form: Lecturers

I, ______________________________

Herby consent to participate in the study entitled *The Disruptive Aesthetic Space: Student teachers are challenged into new ways of thinking when participating in drama workshops with adults with disabilities* being conducted by Jo Raphael within the Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne under the supervision of Professor John O’Toole and Professor Johanna Wyn.

I have read the ‘Plain Language Statement for Participants’ relevant to the research study and I understand that the purpose of the research is to further understandings of some of the ways that student teachers might be prepared to teach students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

I acknowledge that:

- The aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible hazards of the research study, have been explained to me.
- I understand I voluntarily and freely give my consent to my participation in the research project
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.
- If all involved in the workshop agree to participate in the research, the workshop will be video recorded and photographs taken for research purposes and these may be used in conference presentations and publications.
- The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed
- I will not be personally identified in any reporting of the data unless I choose to be
- Individual results will not be released to any person
- I understand that findings will be used for research purposes and may be reported in journals and conference papers.

Signature:

Date:
Appendix 2: Questionnaire 1 (pre-workshop)

**Questionnaire 1**

Thank you for agreeing to fill in this questionnaire. Your responses will contribute to our understanding of the experiences and needs of student teachers in relation to teaching students with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms.

As you are aware this questionnaire is anonymous but I would like to be able to compare your responses to this questionnaire with those you make in a second questionnaire at the end of the semester. Please select a code name or a five digit number that you will remember and write it here.

**Code name/ number:**

1. The following table lists the categories used by schools to gain funding for Special Needs in mainstream classrooms. Tick the box that best represents the level of experience you have had of teaching students with different special education needs in your teaching practice so far.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>None at all</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Comment (optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical disabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Severe language disorders</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe behaviour disorders</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing impairments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual disabilities</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual impairments</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please explain)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Have you had opportunities to associate with people with disabilities in your broader life experience? If so, please describe the context or situation.

3. How confident do you feel in regard to teaching students with special educational needs at this stage of your teaching practice?

4. Can you describe a time when you felt confident or didn’t feel confident to teach students with SEN?

5. What would you like your university course to offer you in regard to teaching students with special educational needs?
6. Use this space to write about anything else you'd like to say about the topic.

<p>| | | | | |</p>
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</table>

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire.
Appendix 3: Questionnaire 2 (post-workshop)

2009 version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for agreeing to fill in this questionnaire. Your responses will contribute to our understanding of the experiences and needs of student teachers in relation to teaching students with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. As you are aware, this questionnaire is anonymous but I would like to be able to compare your responses to this questionnaire with those you made in the first questionnaire. You were asked to select a code name or a five digit number for the first questionnaire, please write it here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code name/number:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The following table lists the categories used by schools to gain funding for Special Needs in mainstream classrooms. Which of the special education needs categories have you learned more about in this unit? Additionally, please indicate what (if anything) in particular, helped you to learn?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I learned more about...</th>
<th>What helped me to learn more about...? Please name (readings, presentations, workshops, tutorial activities etc...)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical disabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe language disorders</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Severe behaviour disorders</td>
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<td>Hearing impairments</td>
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<td>Intellectual disabilities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Visual impairments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Recalling the Fusion Theatre workshop (please indicate if you did NOT attend); what new understandings did you gain from this experience? How or why do you think this occurred? (What helped you?)

3. Do you believe this workshop confirmed or changed your attitude towards teaching students with special educational needs in any way? Please explain.
4. Do you think your experience in this workshop will influence your inclusive teaching practice in the future? If so, in what way?

5. What aspects of the workshop or activities do you think were most beneficial and why?

6. What aspects of the workshop were most ineffective and why?

7. What are your thoughts about the use of drama as a way of exploring issues of diversity?

8. Has this workshop changed your attitudes and understanding in general to people with special educational needs, or disability? If so, how?

9. Has the workshop broadened your understanding of ways to engage with or relate to people with disabilities in any way? If so, how?

10. What concerns do you still have in regards to teaching students with special educational needs?

11. What suggestions can you make for the teaching of this unit in the future, and in particular for enhancing understanding of teaching students with special educational needs?

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire.
2010 version

Questionnaire 2

Reflections on the Fusion Theatre Workshop

1. Recalling the workshop in general, what new understandings (if any) did you gain from this experience and how, when and why do you think this occurred?

2. Do you believe this workshop confirmed or changed your attitude towards teaching students with special educational needs in any way? Please explain.

3. Please describe some of your thoughts and feelings, and the factors contributing to these at the following stages:

   Leading up to the workshop

   At the start of the workshop

   During the workshop

   After the workshop

4. Please describe a moment in the workshop that was memorable and/or meaningful to you and explain why.

5. Please describe a moment in the workshop that amused you or made you laugh.
6. Please comment on these aspects of the workshop:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The activities (many of them drama based) - which were most and least beneficial and why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The participants and leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching and learning space (the studio and how we used it)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The future**

7. What kind of teacher do you hope to become in relation to teaching students with special educational needs?

8. What concerns do you still have in regard to teaching students with special educational needs?

9. Do you think this workshop will influence your inclusive teaching practice in the future? If so, in what way?

10. What suggestions can you make for the teaching of this unit in future to enhance understanding of teaching students with special educational needs?

Are there other comments you wish to make about the topic?

*Thank-you for completing this questionnaire.*