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## Te Hautaka Mātauranga o Waikato

**Special Section**

**General Section**

## Ph.D Abstracts

# Developing a resource for teachers: Theory, practice, possibility

**Elizabeth Anderson**
Faculty of Education
The University of Auckland

## Abstract

*Producing an officially commissioned curriculum resource calls for expert pedagogical and content knowledge and the application of theory. From the viewpoints of developer, teacher and teacher educator, all involved in the design and use of a selected resource, this paper reviews the layers of theories which underpinned the shaping of a drama education video intended to support teacher professional knowledge and practice. Multiple layers of theory are evident: the theory guiding developers, the theory behind content area and pedagogy, the theory for action of the participating practitioners, and critically informed theory for teacher education. The paper examines how theorising informed the preparation of the resource and influenced its outcome, and reflects critically on future possibilities for effective design and use of resources. It discusses how the particular resource has continued to be used in teacher education, validating the original aim that teachers could innovate with the material to suit context. Finally, the author argues that from such educational initiatives, valuable knowledge may build capacity for further teacher development, and that, as an act of research, such theorising can contribute to the scholarship of teaching.*

## Keywords

Theory practice relationship, resource materials, drama curriculum, teacher education, reflective teaching

## Introduction

*Telling Our Stories: Classroom Drama for Years 7–10* (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2003) was prepared for the Ministry of Education as a drama teaching resource for teachers, one of a suite of arts education resources to support the newly released curriculum document *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2000). I directed the project, having been closely involved with the development of the arts curriculum, and as someone working in teacher education. I have continued in my own work to

refine parts of the resource. In this analysis of theory underpinning its development, I examine the intersecting layers of theory, consider how clear those concepts were made for users, and ask how the whole enterprise of development could point to more effective ways that similar resources could be written and used. The commissioners' intentions, the developer's ideals, and the users' needs all came from differing positions, and, while they appeared to have been accommodated purposefully, I wondered to what extent tensions among them might have influenced the outcome. This scrutiny of theoretical perspectives provides a framework for considering how professional learning resources could be designed to better assist teachers.

I acknowledge my own positioning at the outset. I am a drama educator, a teacher educator, and the resource developer. Teacher educators are often in a position to develop curriculum resources, being experienced, having contact with teachers and schools for trialling, and having a sense of accountability to the profession and the Ministry. The implementation phase of *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (MOE, 2000) identified newly introduced areas such as drama as priorities for resource development. At the time, I was senior lecturer in drama education at a college of education, and won a Ministry of Education contract to develop the handbook and video resource for teachers of classroom drama, years 7–10, for national distribution. Seven years on from its release in 2003, *Telling Our Stories* is still useful, and it is time to step back and review the process through a lens of theory and of experience.

## The context for theories of policy, planning and practice

In 2002, the New Zealand Ministry of Education set specifications, contractual guidelines and budget for a video and handbook for teachers of drama, years 7–10 (students in their seventh to tenth years at school). At the time, there were few resources available with a New Zealand context for any level, and the needs of middle years teachers were pressing because they had to provide a continuous path towards already established senior secondary drama. A handbook and video was considered the most cost effective and 'broad spectrum' package to help teachers upskill rapidly, and the Ministry of Education's specifications and budget called for units for each year level, closely tied to curriculum and showing what students and teachers might be expected to do. Units of work for each of the four years were required, to be demonstrated on video and explained in the handbook, with links to curriculum. They needed to be appropriate for the country's diverse schools and students.

The commissioners' view, necessarily guided by ministry policy, was that a video and handbook was the most timely way of distributing practical examples of how the new curriculum document could be delivered. Their intention to provide a successful model was based in theories of imitation learning. The Ministry worked from the principle too that resources for new subjects would be used for professional development in social learning situations such as facilitated staff development sessions where discussion of materials could take place. Functional principles and economic rationale drove requirements concerning budget and completion dates, and accountability governed the expectation that the resource should demonstrate achievable, assessable, observable outcomes that school and classroom programmes could use as a model. The Ministry reasoned that employing experienced educators with classroom contacts would ensure that the contracted product would be accessible to classroom teachers. Rightly, this exerted pressure on the execution of the project

plan, and the developer's theoretical stance had to accommodate those views. Personal theories, however, also included ideals and aspirations reflecting a wider longer term vision of the place of drama and arts education.

The developer's views had their source in experience as teacher, curriculum developer, drama educator, and teacher professional development leader, and these theoretical perspectives guided the design and direction of the resource. Personal theoretical views were shaped by belief in arts education and aspirations for drama's potential for education. The developer's pedagogical theory was shaped by principles of social and collegial learning and, from a core belief in the value of reflective practitioner theory; a mentoring structure was included in the project in the hope that opportunities for inquiry and feedback with an expert would extend the social learning model. Two teachers worked on each unit for each year level, varying approach to suit school and class context. Each pair of teachers was matched with an experienced mentor who helped both with adapting the unit for context and with observing the trialling and teaching sessions, a relationship which lasted over the four months of preparation and filming. This structure both supported participating teachers and modelled providing reflective feedback as a process for improving practice. The experience of developing the project arguably confirmed these espoused theories towards what Bereiter (2002) would describe as being more confidently formed.

The teachers' practices in drama aligned with the teaching approaches later described in the New Zealand Curriculum's (MOE, 2007) Effective Pedagogy section, and the project structure supported them in extending their theories of practice. These were built around the values and knowledge they themselves brought to practice, a generalised theory about the socially constructed value of learning and, in addition, incorporated the drama pedagogy theory they had absorbed during their courses for a drama education qualification.

Each of these theories—commissioners', developers', teachers', and teacher educators'—will be examined, showing how theories supported the project structure, and how the intersections between them prompted tentative and emerging theories to strengthen. Working in a supportive mentoring partnership, for example, prompted one teacher to evaluate her own teaching more rigorously, and assisted her in improving practice, with evidence captured on camera. The contention of this paper is that this model for resource development demonstrates theoretical strength, and that analysis has brought to light ways in which similar processes might be improved to enhance the potential use of the end product.

## Specifications—the policy view

The Ministry as commissioner of the resource operated from a structural and functional point of view—they required a resource with a prescribed purpose to deliver curriculum, and to influence instruction by providing teachers with an efficiently modelled example that could be easily accessed. From the commissioning body's point of view, the required transaction could be described as resource-as-object to supply information to teacher-in-need, suggesting a view of knowledge as something to be acquired.

The video was expected to give evidence of what drama looked like at this level, and demonstrate to teachers how they could meet curriculum requirements with

experiences such as those shown in the filmed examples. To show close curriculum fit, the resource development team ensured that the learning experiences they designed matched an appropriate learning example already included in the curriculum document. The example discussed in this paper, *The Miner's Wedding*, matched a listed learning experience, and on the video, the teachers' spoken instructions and comments to their classes modelled the language and terminology of the drama curriculum. To support teachers in introducing a new subject, a sustainable model for teacher development ideally would help teachers to understand the learning intended by the tasks, develop their autonomy in use of the materials, and prepare them for student response. Teachers needed to understand theory and practice, to adapt their existing theories and accustomed practices to new approaches. The commissioners intended that a model of situated practice shown in a real classroom would be accessible and user-friendly for teachers who had little experience in drama education.

There were challenges of time and limits to funding. In retrospect, insufficient provision was made for professional development to accompany the release of the resource. Ministry accountability ceased once the published product was distributed to schools, and the task of circulating and introducing the completed resource would fall to those involved in the implementation phase. Official specifications did not cover the provision or preparation of professional development, and this would have greatly strengthened product reach and extended the scope of teacher awareness. The need for ongoing long-term support for professional development has been widely discussed (Davis & Krajik, 2005; Hargreaves, 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000), and I contend that this limited the uptake of this resource.

Unfortunately, at the time the resource in question was made, other cuts of time and funding and the looming curriculum review meant that implementation of all new arts resources was cut short. By 2003 a nationwide curriculum review had been launched, and the Arts, already the seventh learning area to have its curriculum developed, was swept into the next phase of change. Reprioritisation of Ministry policy led to a reduction of advisory support services in subsequent years. From anecdotal accounts of experience from teachers seeking professional development courses, and from observations of school programmes, I infer that drama has never been embedded sustainably enough in teachers' practice in the years since it was introduced into the curriculum, and that the pressure of policy demands (the scheduled review) and limited funding for implementation have been major contributing factors to this failure. This chain of events, however, has highlighted more strongly the need to ask how resources might be better designed to assist teachers and improve practice, regardless of the changing situation.

This particular resource was built on a connected base of three theoretical stances (commissioners', developers', teachers'). As the development process proceeded, principles filtered between the components, deepening and reinforcing each layer, and analysis reveals that, though starting points may have been different, an essential alignment existed. The teacher strand is worthy of note. Using a resource builds a theory of content (drama) on to a teacher's existing theory of practice, and a developer would be wise to recognise that existing theory as a dependable basis, and help teacher-users make connections across pedagogy as well as deeper into content. The exploration of theories showed me how very capable teachers are of articulating those shifts in understanding and practice, and the stories of the developer and the teachers best

illustrate the intersections and the deepening of theories. The next sections examine their theories and aspirations, to draw examples from their experiences for improvements in resource development. To give coherence to this paper, one unit of the resource and its filmed representation is used as a case of practice and documentation. *The Miner's Wedding* is a process drama whose initial stimulus is an old photo of a miner's 1906 wedding party on a railway line on the West Coast of the South Island of New Zealand (a remote mining area). The extract was chosen because it is typical of the approach adopted for all units; because it demonstrates a wide range of the possible drama teaching adaptations; and because it is a unit which I have since refined and questioned in my practice as teacher educator.

## Drama and pedagogy—the developer's theory

The developer's concept for the project, accepted by the commissioning body, supplied a theoretical support base, and a motivating vision. Those theories were derived from two fields—that of drama and education, and of teacher professional development. At the time, responsibilities and ideals as arts and drama educator were uppermost for the developer, and the task became a challenge of meeting specifications while incorporating and maintaining the integrity of personal and professional theoretical stance. There was a pressing need to fill the gap for intermediate-junior secondary years, where delivery of dama was inconsistent and resources few. Drama had long been taught in New Zealand secondary schools, and the introduction of the subject into the curriculum for all students in the first eight years of schooling was the opportunity to show that drama would demand serious and relevant work of that age group, and be more than just a watered-down version of drama in later secondary years.

In planning meetings, the developer and team of mentors and teachers theorised that modelling well-structured, rich drama work following a process drama approach (O'Neill, 1995) would let the teachers see that the curriculum requirements could be competently met by this method of teaching. Process drama was not the only approach to drama in classrooms set out in the curriculum, but we knew from the frequency of questions and confusion at in-service courses that it was a method in which teachers lacked confidence. New Zealand educators who had introduced and practised drama pedagogy had used the approach for many years, following best international practice in Australia, Britain and Canada. New Zealand's drama has always drawn on a range of influences—drama as a medium for learning traditions (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995); features of role drama (Booth, 1994); approaches aligned to literacy (Morgan & Saxton, 1988); elements of practice and communication (Haseman & O'Toole, 1987); the approach that Neelands (1993), writing to extend teachers' range of strategies, had termed a conventions approach; and O'Neill's (1995) description of process drama. The drama work at time of development and modelled in the resource was planned to draw from each of those approaches, to have a New Zealand context, and to have sound process drama as a strong core. Contemporary influences from our own country, which have since informed both teaching and theorising about use of the resource in teacher education (described in section four of this article), have included the work of Greenwood (2001, 2005), who writes of third space research, and O'Connor (2010, 2011), who asserts drama's role in critical thinking.

Theories from drama, pedagogy and curriculum supported the process features of the drama units written and tested for the resource. The developer held that, in line with

drama pedagogical theory (Neelands, 1984; O'Neill, 1995; O'Toole & Dunn, 2002), shaping and developing an engaging drama over several episodes would show teachers that drama can be a rigorous subject, relevant and challenging for students in years 7–10. Drama pedagogy has a close fit with Doll's (1993) curriculum theorising. Doll's four Rs recommended for a curriculum—that it should be rich, recursive, relational and rigorous—align with the intent and strategies for process drama. The resource dramas were all rich in cross-curricular links and in purposeful progression shaped over time. Drama's recursive way of learning is shown in the way that both the ideas and the strategies practised reappear with deepened understanding (illustrated in the teacher story in the next section), and in the reflective procedures built into each unit. The drama work caught on video demonstrated the relational pedagogy (Aitken, Fraser, & Price, 2007) in place in the classrooms, and in the student-teacher power relationship where responsibility for the direction of the drama work is shifted to the students. Themes were sufficiently challenging for students in those years—readily acknowledged by both teachers and students in their recorded stories.

In these ways, the extended process of drama work planned for and captured in the resource shows a model for learning that differs from a traditional view of teacher transmitting content to student. Learning in drama invites imagination, thinking and feeling in an engaged way. In their 2004 report on student learning in the arts, *Like Writing Off the Paper*, Holland & O'Connor describe learning in the arts as "engagement in different iterative cycles of learning" (p. 3), not necessarily sequential or linear. *The Miner's Wedding* episodes discussed in this paper shifted the narrative in time and space, from the perspective of the historic events (1906 and 1914) to a view from the present day, and between action set in the space imagined for the drama (West Coast New Zealand) to a setting distanced in both space and time. In every session, however, the drama returned to the reality of the classroom for reflection.

Another related drama feature of the resource development deserves further mention. Again, from experience in leading professional teacher education, we were determined that we would include teacher in role, an integral part of a process drama, and would show it working in classrooms. The strategy, one of the most effective in drama education, is still very challenging to teachers, as Balaisis' (2002) research found. Balaisis admits that "process drama does upset the apple cart of traditional learning" (2002, p. 5) and emphasises that teachers need to participate, teach, analyse, deconstruct and reflect on this "courageous and indispensable" (p. 7) practice. In the project, mentoring support was built in to help teachers work with this approach, and one story in the next section attests to how valuable it was, particularly for working in role. The success of the mentoring structure emerges as one of the indicators for future improvements in the way resources are used.

The mentoring structure referred to was based in developer theorising, drawing strongly on thinking from the field of teacher professional development. An experienced teacher-mentor was matched to the two teachers for each unit, to help tailor the work for context, to guide and advise, and to be available for reflective conversations. Fullan (2001) refers to "capacity building" and to the "collective ability" and the improved skills and motivation for positive change developed when people work together in a community of practice. These recent understandings about how particular contexts, especially those that are situated, interdependent, and social, assist people's learning have contributed to theories about situated learning (Putnam & Borko,

2000; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). At the time of designing the project, the developer drew on principles outlined by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990), and a personal conviction that the reflection in action and on action that is an integral part of drama teaching is more effective when done in the company of an experienced other.

Theories shaped by professional teacher education also drove a pedagogical principle that work offered to teachers as a model must be thoroughly tested. The project therefore trialled each unit in two schools with different contexts, with the one mentor working alongside both teachers for support. Trialling in two settings was to show adaptation to context (both specialist drama and classroom settings), and possibilities for variations in planning to suit setting. In one school trialling *The Miner's Wedding,* the drama's theme of change incorporated the outbreak of World War One to accommodate the school social studies programme, while the other classroom looked at how change threatened the ties binding a community. The design elements referred to proved valuable and will feature in later recommendations, but how these ideas were put into practice is the topic of the next section, where the evidence is best seen in the work and the voices of the teachers.

## Classroom context—teachers' theories of action

This section describes the intersection of the developer's theories regarding teacher professional development, with the teachers' own theories in use. The developer theorised that a mentoring structure would support the teachers as they taught and documented their units, and would model the collaborative practice and shared understandings that would be a basis for sound professional development and teaching practice. The teachers (assisted by the mentor) enacted a reflective cycle of theory shaping practice and practice, in turn encouraging further theorising. Participating teachers began with their own theories in use—they modelled classroom shared learning experience where students and teachers learned together, reflecting a social constructionist theoretical perspective on education. This accommodated their existing awareness of drama education theory, and fitted what they wanted the drama experience to deliver. The teachers' theories aligned well with the Effective Pedagogy approaches described in the New Zealand Curriculum (MOE, 2007, p. 34) and, as the examples will show, with the cyclical process of inquiry into their own and their students' learning. Two examples are used, drawing on the voices of the teachers and their students. Their recollections and reflections were captured on video, and in journals and records kept by the teachers and the mentors over the four-month project (including eight weeks of teaching and filming the exemplars.) The voices of the teachers, on video and recorded in their journals, demonstrate the value of the strategy, and the strength of the model for assisting teachers to use drama as a teaching method.

The first example demonstrates the benefits of mentoring partnership in an example of improved teacher practice. In the second example, a teacher talks through his theory of action, revealing that claims made for drama pedagogy's value in making cross curricular links relevant is justified. On the video, the students' spoken reflections bear out the teacher's theory of action, and the sequence could be said to have strengthened that teacher's individual theory of practice.

## Collegial learning for teacher knowledge

*Revisiting failure to develop a theory of action*

This incident was recorded during the teaching of *The Miner's Wedding* unit, and illustrates a teacher's theory of action (Argyris & Schön, 1974; Timperley & Parr, 2005, 2007) being challenged and modified to improve practice, and to build knowledge of practice. The teacher, O, was partnered with a mentor whose experience included drama teaching and advisory work. O recognised in an early session that her students had not deepened their belief in the drama context sufficiently for the next stage to be introduced. The mentor recorded her dismay and discouragement—"She described the earlier session … as having been like pulling teeth and that … students hadn't taken it seriously."

The mentor helped O to revisit the drama. They discussed how to improve aspects of drama pedagogy—time spent in building belief, and commitment to the task in drama, both of which had been insufficiently established. They devised together a way of repeating the exercise—the mentor from experience was able to reassure the teacher that students were more likely to welcome the chance to improve their performance than resist the repetition. It was an example of a shift in practice achieved through taking a risk with a new strategy, and the benefit of a supportive mentor to encourage the step. In this instance, too, the mentor theorised drama work in progress—explaining the drama theory (Bolton, 1998; Neelands, 1993) behind commitment to task—and assisting the teacher to shape her own thoughts about her teaching. The teacher commented later, "It gave me the confidence and support to bring the unit alive."

O's interview on the video included her description of the incident, as a reassurance to other teachers that success might not necessarily be instant:

> … we trialled the tableau about four times—the last group came together beautifully. Each student took up the space silently … and I used my presence as a prompt to start them talking in role. This was a huge relief and pulled the activity together perfectly.

Later in the unit, with the mentor beside her, she experimented with teacher in role and again was better able to build commitment and engagement. The mentor recorded:

> She didn't feel confident … and [felt] concerned about whether she [would] do it correctly … gradually the roles … started to become more real for everyone … [and] before we knew it … the students as researchers were talking with authority and with a sense of purpose. Later O commented on how she was amazed at the belief that was built …

The mentoring partnership allowed observation, understanding, and reshaping of teacher behaviour. Revisiting, something the teacher might previously have been reluctant to do, had lifted student achievement of the task, and the modifying of her theory of action gave the teacher an explanation to this enhanced achievement which she shared in her recorded interview. The mentor partnership was the element that saw, understood, and then reshaped the practice. Simons (2003) would agree that "the professional craft knowledge" of the teacher will be built by working with another more experienced teacher and, over time, the mentoring relationship did grow in trust and

ease—giving her, as she said, "the confidence to bring the unit alive". Cochran-Smith and Paris (1995) also hold that the co-constructive nature of the mentoring partnership needs to be sustained over time with trust and mutual respect, an intertwined collaboration that Jipson and Paley (2000) also describe. Brookfield (2006) too advises allowing time for trust, power sharing and respect to develop. In this project, the mentoring structure provided different perspectives of experience to work together for advice, co-teaching and reflective discussions over the period of four months of preparation and teaching, and it remains a very successful feature of the end product.

## Reflecting and theorising

### ~'Are we doing history or are we doing drama?'~

Where the first teacher's modifying of practice helped her to revise her theories of drama and of pedagogy, in his spoken reflection on the video the second teacher shared his pedagogical theory about the values of drama teaching in the classroom, specifically the place of drama in exploring issues of human experience. The resource deliberately included examples of reflection to model the practice for teacher-users, showing teacher and students reflecting together on the theme (the impact of change on a community), and students reflecting on the ideas from within role.

A Year 8 student asked the question that prefaces this section of his teacher, M, who discussed the moment in his individual interview, included on the video as voice-over accompanying classroom footage background. M talks about how he welcomed the question, how for him the "line between the [history and drama]" in this case was hard to differentiate. The student's question, he said, had touched directly on the key question, the human connection that he had intended to be a central value in the work—the impact of change on a community. The video captures other moments which show how reflection time was built into the drama practice, and the high value the teacher placed on student thought about the significant ideas. Notably, students reflect in role. A boy speaking of the outbreak of war says, "I was afraid when war came and I didn't want to go", and a girl in role as a mother alone says, "I was scared because I didn't know how I'd manage my baby" as they imagine the predicament of the roles they have taken. The human question, coping with change, had been kept central to the process, and over the course of the drama, the students are given the chance to try out and think about the experience in safe distanced roles—a key aspect of drama education theory (O'Toole & Dunn, 2002).

The sense of reality conveyed by the teachers talking about their own practice is a strength of the resource, and is a practical demonstration of practitioners engaged in the act of reflection on practice. From journal records of this experience from both sides of the mentoring partnership, effectiveness on the part of the mentor is marked by preparedness to make time for observation and discussion, ability to give clear advice and support, and positive disposition. From the mentee's perspective, openness to receiving feedback, resilience and willingness to make changes are desirable qualities. By using and modelling the mentoring relationship, the resource team wanted teachers to see the real benefit and improvement to practice for the participating teachers of advice and feedback from an experienced mentor, so that teachers using the resource alone or in staff groups would be encouraged to seek out expert advice and set up support systems when launching into an untried teaching approach. One conclusion to

emerge from this review will be that, in line with findings about learning in professional communities (e.g., Fullan, 2001; Spillane et al., 2002; Timperley & Parr, 2005), teachers unfamiliar with drama who work in a professional group to process meaning about new learning can be more confidently expected to develop skills and knowledge and so improve their practice sustainably—and to an even greater extent, I would propose, if expert support and feedback were provided.

Using the video for teaching in the years since it was made, I have employed it as a site of inquiry for modifying drama approaches and for bringing different ideas to the fore to challenge student teachers' thinking. As Bereiter (2002) maintains, subjecting theoretical concepts to questioning and challenging helps consolidate ideas into knowledge. This is the subject of the next section.

## Teacher educator's theory—applying a critical lens for change

In my work in teacher education, I have continued to use the resource and this unit, and have continued to theorise my own work as I have experimented with practical pedagogical delivery methods, and endeavoured to ensure the validity and wider relevance of the underlying questions. The resource—and this unit in particular—has become therefore a site for research and for reflective practitioner study.

As a teacher educator, I believe that student teachers must be challenged to think critically about ethical, social and historical issues that influence the social and cultural landscape of the society they will teach in. I could see how critical thinking might be fostered by adapting *The Miner's Wedding*'s drama context so that students might explore assumptions and be provoked into confronting other perspectives on the central ideas about change. An incident from my use of *The Miner's Wedding* unit with pre-service teachers serves as illustration. Part of the process was to encourage commitment to the place where the drama was set, so a name had to be decided. Naming a place carries a responsibility—yet I noted that students took the task lightly. Without difficulty they came up with topographical features (gully, peak, creek) that fitted the mountainous location, and readily added suitable names (Coalman's - , Smith's - or Black-). Disconcerted by their hasty conclusions, I devised a way of challenging their decision while maintaining role (to preserve commitment and engagement within the drama) and increased tension with an unsettling challenge regarding the original place name and land ownership. They recognised their comfortable assumptions, and looked again at the power relations in the community they had created. On another occasion, a class built a strong bond with their imagined community before the drama shifted to the present day, to find that their families' land had been taken over for a government-backed opencast mining venture—a plausible circumstance prompting authentic consideration of current environmental and economic concerns. *The Miner's Wedding* has demonstrable value for drama as well as for the social studies curriculum, where it could shape the context for examination of not only power structures, but also workers' rights, immigrant workers (the arrival of miners from overseas), land ownership, and conservation of resources, and the current mining situation in this country.

The story of the drama unit and its changing application is a reminder that, though at the time of the project the task was primarily resource production, the practitioner can use the materials creatively and innovatively to investigate contemporary concerns. If I look at my recent work and the theories that guide me now, seven years since the resource was made, I recognise a more thorough obligation to my own reflective

practitioner stance, which has meant a rigorous examination of my own teaching. Earlier consciousness of the commitment that drama education has to social justice has strengthened with a sense of responsibility for student teacher preparation and thinking. Teacher education should encourage critical thinking and questioning, assessing of attitudes and assumptions, and a search to understand alternative viewpoints. I look at how, in schools, drama's potential goes unnoticed or is reduced to token coverage, and am more convinced than ever that drama must, as Dorothy Heathcote said, depict matters of significance (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984, p. 131). As developer and as teacher educator, my personal theories held at the time the resource was made have been reviewed and re examined. Reflective re-working and questioning and arguing about purpose and potential have consolidated what was undoubtedly a determined set of principles into a firmly held theoretical stance.

## Conclusions—practical and theoretical

This article grew from my own story of creating a resource and questioning its usefulness. Looking back, I recognised the layers of theory that supported and were revealed in the process. I recognised that theories served at times a functional role, or acted as a source of inspiration, and at other times were formulated as competent explanations to guide practice. The video made links between theory and practice visible. My own use of the resource has continued to re-contextualise the materials, as had been intended, and my work has been informed by experience and a professional commitment to reflectively question values and assumptions to improve practice. Though it is likely that the units have been for the most part closely followed by teachers, it is rewarding to receive reports of practice where the space for innovation has been acted upon. At the time of writing, a former student teacher is reshaping the work with his own Year 6 class, in the fictional (but democratically named) [New Zealand] place 'He Maungahe Tane', (loosely translated as 'the high ground of Tane')—an island where land resources are being contested. Such an example does reinforce belief in the strengths of the resource, and in this final section I deal first with the practical recommendations that rise from the preceding analysis. The focus shifts then to the wider implications for the field of teacher education and for building capacity for knowledge sharing.

### Conclusions for practice

At completion, the resource met specifications successfully, and factors in the design of the development project contributed to its strengths.

First, the mentoring partnerships did help teachers improve their teaching practice. Both mentors and teachers attested to this shift in written and spoken reflective records, and the successful partnerships, built on principles of collegiality, support, trust and respect, assisted the teachers to construct their theories of practice. Support from an experienced other is especially helpful in a teaching area that is unfamiliar, and as a resource developer I hoped that wider communities of practice might have grown from partnerships to sustain teacher professional development. The strength of this resource therefore indicates that modelling this strategy can encourage teachers to work together to make better sense of new ideas and improve practice.

Second, the resource purposely replicated each unit in two settings to test the quality and practicality of the material. It was hoped that materials would be repeated again over time to give more dependable assurances of rigour, and to open alternative approaches and professional discussion. This remains a potentially valuable professional development approach.

A third strength was the resource's demonstration of potential for individual innovation. A theory was tentatively held that a useful resource would demonstrate adaptability to a variety of contexts and would encourage teachers to take responsibility for adapting it to their own programmes. By capturing two separate classroom contexts for each unit with variations in the learning experiences adapted for each setting, the completed resource supported the key principle of pedagogical theory that teaching approaches should accommodate local context.

The resource made clear links between drama education theory and classroom pedagogy, and demonstrated that drama could be substantial, demanding, and manageably sited in the classroom. It showed a collaborative, experiential participatory model for learning which engaged the interest and active involvement of young adolescents. The video portrays students working together to refine and shape tasks in the drama, and captures their voices as they plan, present, and reflect. Units were taught and recorded over four to six weeks, and the teachers over that time progressively step back and give students more control over the structuring of their own work. These pedagogical principles matched best practice for this age group—and as a reinforcement of arts-based pedagogy, typify the ways of working in all the four arts disciplines.

In hindsight, the implementation of the resource could have capitalized on these strengths to ensure better use, and three recommendations follow for any future resource development. First, though professional development theory underpinned the resource, it could have been practically built into the resource, in the form of tasks, questions, discussion topics for use in an emergent community of learners undertaking new teaching requirements. Cost prevented it at the time, but seven years later, technologies and websites offer many more immediate opportunities for collegial discussion and sharing, and could be simply incorporated into any current resource development. Second, mentoring proved its worth as a strategy in the venture described, and since that time has been more widely researched and pursued as a method for teacher support. The project adds to evidence supporting mentoring. Third, structured and official evaluation of new resources should be carried out as part of the process. This was not built into the specifications, nor was it officially instigated later, possibly because funds ran out and curriculum initiatives were reprioritised. Anecdotal accounts appear, but the funding invested warrants a systematic evaluation, which would provide feedback for developers and for the use of professional development facilitators.

## Theoretical conclusions

Reviewing the process has produced straightforward recommendations, and those listed above are commonsense practicalities for an experienced resource developer. The resource held a long-term ideal for improved practice, and it still models sound practice and worthwhile ideas for use in teacher and classroom education, opening a space for teachers and students to investigate matters of significance through strategies that will connect and extend understanding.

As resource developer I did aspire to build teacher knowledge, and to extend the limits of the learnable, not just provide a recipe. I depend on anecdotal reports of its use, but I do know that the units captured on film and documented in the handbook, and *Miner's Wedding* in particular, remain workable and embody worthy ideals. In making the resource I wanted to provide other views (teachers', mentors' students') to show alternative adaptations and possibilities. The resource exemplified situated learning, and the video let teachers identify with the particulars of the situation. It was piloted, and the teachers developed their own theories in action. It is explicit, and it provided for contextual adaptation. The resource aimed to offer more than skills to be acquired and prescribed plans to be followed. Teachers had space to develop their own ideas and in doing so, collaboratively construct ideas about teaching and drama. I maintain that the recorded interview with O, who taught the unit described in the paper, reveals a growth in teacher learning and judgement, and a developing theory of action that enabled her to manage and extend drama in her classroom. It is an example of a teacher building her own theory of action—evidence that the resource and its structure, including mentoring, did contribute to teacher knowledge, and so could match what Bereiter (2002) describes as a conceptual artefact. Bereiter holds that productive knowledge work in the form of questioning, arguing, and improving can be done with conceptual artefacts to add value, and this seems to be exactly the work that should be done with educational resources to improve their use and extend teacher thinking and scholarship. This very act of writing and analysing has brought a critical and questioning dimension which I claim adds to the theory of resource development.

Three theoretical principles emerge from this review as conclusions which may be relevant to educational resource development. First, the development of resources has the potential to be a process and a product which bridges the theory-practice gap in accessible ways, and could result in enhanced possibilities for teachers to enter practitioner research. Second, resource developers need to be alert to the unanticipated contributions that participants may make by revealing unexpected insights from their individual perspectives. Third, a resource for teachers should in the best of possible situations be shaped to allow for an exploration of moral and political dimensions of teaching as well as content and pedagogy. This urges teachers and teacher educators (in drama and in other curriculum fields) to problematise and share their work. As teacher educator I see an urgent need for building capacity for drama teaching, in both pre-service and professional teacher education. As this paper has shown, resources exist with potential to extend and improve practice, and a community of practice would support teachers undertaking this teaching approach.

The latter section of the article has dealt with my role as teacher educator and my use of the resource in that work. On one level it resembles just another story about practice, something that might fall within the bounds of self-study of teacher education practices, and runs a risk perhaps of sounding like self-justification. Loughran (2006), an advocate for the discipline of self-study, acknowledges that risk in his work on self-study in teacher education but, more importantly, insists on the pressing necessity to continue to question and challenge our own work in order to improve practice. Publication of such study, he says, should challenge personal theories in ways that allow both researcher and audience of educators to see further possibilities. Shulman (1999) says that writing about one's teaching must become public, must become an object of critical review and evaluation, and must be built on and developed by others to achieve a level of scholarship of teaching. As the resource might be tested in

classrooms to strengthen its qualities, so the replication and documentation of teacher education approaches could over time test and share promising ideas to contribute to the scholarship of teaching.

Writing this article I held a provisional theory that the act of theorising could contribute to a body of research, in the same way that the resource might have contributed to a teacher community of practice. Just as the resource modelled autonomy and variation in innovation in the hope that drama teachers would build knowledge for the wider field of drama education, so this paper theorised the activity of resource development and application in the hope that educators might reconsider practice and use of resources to shape and reconceptualise their own knowledge to enhance the scholarship of teaching.

The paper has shifted from considering the theories behind resource development for drama towards the field of teacher education, encouraging the growth of a more robust scholarship of teaching, and concluding comments address the opening up of practice for evaluation and dissemination. Zeichner (2007), writing about self-study in teacher education, argues that studies across a number of fields may together illuminate particular issues, and so accumulate collective knowledge. The issue in this case is the need for teachers and teacher educators (in drama and in other curriculum fields) to problematise, reconceptualise, and share their work. As a teacher educator I see an urgent need for building capacity for drama teaching, in both pre-service and professional teacher education. As this paper has shown, resources exist with potential to extend and improve practice, and a community of practice would support teachers undertaking this teaching approach. Knowledge shared contributes to capacity building, a distributed concept, and capacity will be built more effectively by amassing a collective distributed wisdom, practical and theoretical, disseminated through scholarship.

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