Influence of a drama based education program on the development of empathy in year 10, Western Australian students

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Influence of a drama based education program on the development of empathy in year ten, Western Australian students

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the degree of

Master of Education

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Edith Cowan University
School of Education

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Declaration

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to understand which elements of the drama processes are most conducive to increasing empathy in adolescents. Empathy can have a significant impact on situational and dispositional pro-social behaviour in adolescents. It is positively related to moral development, healthy relationships and problem-solving skills; and negatively related to bullying behaviour, aggression, and victimisation. The practice of Creative Drama, in particular the work of Dorothy Heathcote and Bruce Burton, has informed drama programs that foster empathy in participants. This process, combined with the Actor Training system of Constantin Stanislavski, and the Forum Theatre model developed by Augusto Boal, was tested for its efficacy in increasing empathy in adolescents.

This study took the form of a ten-week drama-based program intervention (The Empathy Program) conducted at one secondary school in the Perth metropolitan area with a group of Year 10 students. A constructivist, mixed-methods approach was utilised to frame the study. Data was collected through structured self-response surveys for students in both experimental and control groups, as well as semi-structured written reflections completed by students in the experimental group after each week of the intervention.

Findings of this research showed a significant increase in participant empathy, which highlights the potential for drama to improve student empathy. Results also detailed six key elements that were effective in the development of empathy amongst participants, including explicit instruction and the importance of imagination and role-play.

This research reflects the important role that drama can have in the social and emotional development of young people and recommends strategies for inclusion in current drama pedagogical practices.
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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Chapter Overview
In this introductory chapter, a contextual basis for empathy in education is presented. The current field of drama education is introduced and contemporary thought on empathy as a phenomenon is discussed. This is followed with an overview of key links existing between drama process and the phenomenon of empathy, which forms the basis of this research project. Finally, the two research questions that guide the study are presented.

The purpose of this study was to assess the potential for a drama-based program, *The Empathy Program*, to develop empathy in Year 10 students through the use of Actor Training, Creative Drama and Forum Theatre processes. Literature highlights the potential for drama processes to support adolescents in their development of social and emotional skills, including empathy (Deasey, 2002; Eriksson, Heggstad, Heggstad, & Cziboly, 2014; Fiske, 1999; Goldstein, 1985; Hammer, 2001; Kalliopuska, 1992; Okoronkwo, 2011; Sinclair, 2011; Terret, 2013; Waite & Rees, 2014). Through an analysis of core components of empathy, relational links can be drawn between empathy and drama processes, informing effective pedagogy in developing empathy in adolescents.

Empathy is meaningful as it can have a significant impact on situational and dispositional pro-social behaviour in adolescents (Barrio, Aluja, & Garcia, 2004; Dolby, 2014; Hay, 1994; Kalliopuska & Tiitinen, 1991; Sherman, 1998; Strayer, 1987). It is a social phenomenon that is complex, being made up of distinct parts, classified by literature in many different ways. Empathy is positively related to moral development, being an “essential component of adequate moral development” (Strayer, 1987, p. 220) that “is an intrinsic good, constitutive of the perfection of the species” (Sherman, 1998, p. 90); whereas empathy is negatively related to bullying behaviour, aggression, and victimisation (Geng, Xia, & Qin, 2012; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; Salmon, 2003; Waal, 2007).
Why Empathy?

In the opening line of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) *The Future of Education Skills: Education 2030*, the Director of Education and Skills writes “We are facing unprecedented challenges – social, economic and environmental” (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018, p. 2). This opening statement reflects a growing sentiment amongst education organisations and researchers that, in a world of rapid technological growth our educational systems need to prepare students for an ever-changing future. To achieve this, the OECD report proposes “…students will need to develop curiosity, imagination, resilience and self-regulation; they will need to respect and appreciate the ideas, perspectives and values of others…” (2018, p. 2). Empathy rests as a central tool within these skill sets and emerges as an essential skill for success in the future.

With current Year 1 students graduating in 2030, our education systems must adapt to prepare students for a new and changing world. In reflecting on success, Professor Thomas Hoerr proposes “Our students need to be prepared to succeed in life—and an important piece of that is the ability to work with and appreciate others” (Hoerr, 2018, p. 86), emphasising the importance of empathy. This sentiment is echoed in an article published by the Centre for Creative Leadership, with their research suggesting that “…empathic emotion plays an important role in creating this paternalistic climate of support and protection to promote successful job performance in these high power-distance cultures (Gentry, Weber, & Sadri, 2016, p. 4). In their research on empathy in leadership, Gentry, Weber and Sadri found that “empathic emotion as rated from the leader’s subordinates positively predicts job performance ratings from the leader’s boss” (2016, p. 4). Complimentary to this research on job performance and leadership, Kolko suggests that empathy is fundamental in creating efficacious products, proposing that “In the world of design-led product innovation, pursuit of empathy is the key to success (Kolko, 2014, p. 1).

The corporate world is calling out for employees and graduates that are able to connect with others, build positive relationships, use their imagination and understand those that are different to themselves. Within secondary
education, this need is starting to be met. In his review of existing Social Emotional Learning programs for adolescents, Yeager found that “…adolescents especially need social emotional help” and that “social emotional learning programs can transform adolescents' lives for the better” (Yeager, 2017, p. 78). In his meta-analysis, Yeager highlights that programs which focus on creating opportunities for building new perspectives and exploring alternative mindsets were the most effective in creating change. The Empathy Program focuses on the potential that exists within drama practice to develop these prosocial skills in the form of empathy.

The importance of empathy in future graduates is well articulated across a variety of industries. The question of how we best achieve this learning within a Western Australian high school context still remains, and therefore drives the focus of this research.

Drama in Schools

Trends within drama education pedagogy have ebbed and flowed between approaches that favour different elements and outcomes of the subject. Arguments are made for a ‘Product Drama’ approach that focuses on the creation of theatre works (Foreman, 1999) and a ‘Process Drama’ approach that explores the potential of the subject to teach through creative play and imagination-powered processes (Bolton, 2007). Sitting outside of pedagogical assumptions of drama practitioners exists a wider framework of educational goals and epistemological debate on the purpose of education as an industry.

Contemporary education discourse has recently seen a focus on wellbeing and social emotional learning taking a more prolific role within educational structures. This has been reflected in influential publications such as the Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008), highlighting the goal of “creating confident and creative individuals” (p. 8) as well as “active and informed citizens” (p. 9). The Australian National Curriculum saw the introduction of the General Capabilities which, although not mandated to be taught, places a focus on social emotional education of Australian students alongside their academic development. Additionally, the ‘Through Growth to Achievement Report’ (Department of Education and Training, 2018) (more colloquially known as Gonski 2.0) proposes a greater
implementation of the General Capabilities and the importance of personalised learning. Indeed, the role education systems and institutions have to play in the development of these foundational skills amongst adolescents is growing.

Empathy is one aspect of social emotional education that may prove to have a positive influence on students’ general capabilities. Current literature explores how empathy can be developed within a variety of contexts, reflecting the plasticity of the brain and potential for social emotional learning growth on a neurological level (Kzinaric, 2015). The majority of current research in empathy development exists within medical and nursing fields, focusing on university students and early childhood students and how skills of empathy can be included in their training. Within this body of knowledge are programs and research interventions that have explored the role that acting and role-play have on the development of empathy within participants. These fields of research supported further investigation into the role that drama education, as a subject for adolescents, could play in the development of their empathy.

**Empathy as a phenomenon**

Positive benefits of empathy are widely documented within current literature as empathy has seen a recent spike in popularity within the current zeitgeist. The phenomenon itself is based in evolutionary dispositions but has strong contemporary benefits for human adolescents, beyond essential evolutionary traits.

Strayer (1987) suggests that empathy is an essential component of adequate moral development and Kalliopuska (1992) highlights benefits for the self, observing that empathy correlates positively with mental health and positive self-esteem. The skill of empathy is thought to reach its full development in late adolescence and it is potentially beneficial to be taught early in formative education (Deloney & Graham, 2002; Hoffman, 2001; Marcus, 1999). Empathy helps adolescents establish and maintain friendships (Barrio, Aluja & Garcia, 2004; Hay, 1994), playing an essential role in social functioning and competence (Sallquist, Eisenberg, Spinrad, Eggum, & Gaertner, 2009; Yoo, Feng, & Day, 2013). This social functioning also supports adolescents’ family relations (Guerney, 1988) and supports young people in their interactions with adults (Geng et al., 2012; Jollife & Farrington, 2004).
The practice of empathising with another has three main domains: affective, cognitive and communicative empathy (Gery, Miljkovitch, Berthoz, & Soussignan, 2009). These domains are activated concurrently to support the practice of empathy (Stueber, 2013). For the purpose of this study, the researcher worked within a three-factor model of cognitive, affective and behavioural empathy (King, 2011), as it allows a distinction between internal (affective and cognitive) and external (behavioural) components (King, 2011). The three-factor model includes the third domain of the phenomenon, making it a more inclusive and detailed model to inform the processes of The Empathy Program. The breakdown of domains is in line with Singer and Lamm’s model, stating that empathy begins with “…affect sharing, followed by understanding the other person’s feelings, which then motivates other-related concern and finally engagement in helping behaviour” (Singer & Lamm, 2009, p. 84). Each domain of the empathic process can be linked to drama processes of Creative Drama, Actor Training and Forum Theatre, forming the theoretical base of The Empathy Program developed in this study.

**Drama Processes**


The core set of skills and processes explored within The Empathy Program to develop affective empathy are that of Creative Drama, the process of imaginative play. Creative Drama acknowledges the power of play and the natural instinct within people to explore through play. Creative Drama focuses on functional pedagogy and active role-play (Okoronkwo, 2011) that is inherently student-centred and engages imaginative transformation.

Complimentary to these drama processes, the second element of The Empathy Program rests on teachings of acting theorist Constantine Stanislavski and his research in Actor Training. Concentration, focus, imagination, affective memory and physical action are key skills that Stanislavski’s system develops and relate directly to the skills required to engage in the empathic process (Goodwin & Deady, 2012).
The final element of The Empathy Program that was included in the intervention was that of Forum Theatre, an interactive problem-solving base theatre style developed by August Boal in Brazil. Forum Theatre’s pedagogy is influenced by Paulo Friere’s dialogic philosophy of education, where Rodríguez, Rich, Hasting, and Page (2006) suggest that, Boal’s vision is embodied in dramatic techniques that activate passive spectators to become spect-actors (engaged participants rehearsing strategies for personal and social change).

Whilst a myriad of drama skills and processes exist, many with correlation to the empathic process, selected topics were chosen for their strong correlation to each individual stage of the empathic process. They were also chosen for their commonality within drama pedagogy, and current trends in curriculum development.

**Drama as a Pedagogy for Empathy**

Existing literature supports the use of these key practitioners in contemporary drama classroom (Deasey, 2002; Eriksson et al., 2014; Fiske, 1999), highlighting many social and emotional benefits for adolescents. Benefits of drama skills and processes have also been explored within a variety of research areas, highlighting the role they play in the development of empathy. Commonalities that exist between medicine and nursing research, along with psychology and early childhood education, in the area of connections between drama and empathy again highlight the potential for drama to increase student empathy (Chatterjee, Ravikumar, Singh, Chauhan, & Goel, 2017; Decety & Meyer, 2008; Hojat, Vergare, Maxwell, Brainard, Herrine, Isenberg, Veloski, & Gonnella, 2009; Mood, 2018). These existent connections between the two fields supported the basis for this study and guided the development of The Empathy Program curriculum. (Hojat, et al., 2009).

**Research Methodologies**

This study adopted a design research, mixed-methods methodology within a social constructivist ontology, by implementing a 10-week drama program intervention with Year 10 students from a local Perth high school, Autumn Hills College (pseudonym). The study collected quantitative data in
the form of pre-test post-test participant self-response surveys, as well as qualitative data in the form of weekly participant journals.

The design research method informed the creation and evaluation of the drama-based intervention, the ‘Empathy Program’, that was the focus of this study. Collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, the study was able to present a detailed empirically based review of curriculum generated and propose how drama can be better used as a tool for the development of empathy amongst adolescent students.

**Researcher Profile**

The profile of the researcher is relevant for the framing of this study, due to the active role they played in delivering the intervention to participants. The researcher for this project is a high school drama teacher with a background in theatre in education program management and theatre production. The researcher has had the privilege of teaching classes and workshops in a large variety of schools across Western Australia, focusing on social emotional learning. The body of this work was focused on a reactive strategy in response to social issues faced by school communities, such as bullying behaviour, substance abuse, domestic violence and racism. The researcher used theatre as a medium to explore these issues with adolescents, aiming to develop positive strategies to combat them. Through this work, the researcher’s focus on empathy emerged. Through gaining a unique perspective on the types of challenges that young people in the twenty-first century are facing, the researcher was able to identify an empathy deficit. The role that empathy could play in empowering the adolescents to combat these challenges emerged from the work.

The role of the researcher within this study was as the facilitator of the intervention. The participants’ classroom teacher was present during the delivery of the intervention yet the researcher was the instructor in the room. It is important to acknowledge the function of the researcher in this project due to the essential role that student-teacher relationships play in developing safe learning environments. This notion of safety emerged in the results of the intervention and is credited in part to the practices established by the researcher. With a different researcher facilitating the intervention, or perhaps
an intervention of the same content led by the classroom teacher, would most likely have yielded different results.

**Significance of the Research**

Limited research currently exists that identifies a correlation between the empathic process and drama processes, in particular for adolescents. This study addresses this deficit by focusing on ways drama can best be utilised to improve empathy amongst adolescents. Through this, the study has supported evidence that exists to promote drama as a useful tool in the development of social emotional skills within high school students. The study also highlights key areas of drama and empathy research that could be considered in the future to extend existing knowledge within this field.

This research provides critical and empirically based information that provokes much needed discourse around primary learning objectives of drama as a high school subject. The quantitative data was able to present a robust argument for the potential of the subject, and the process explored directly within the study, to be implemented as tools for the improvement of adolescent empathy. The qualitative data uniquely presents an authentic student voice of reflection on how adolescents participate in drama and the pedagogical structures that supported their learning. The study proposes six elements for consideration as pivotal components of The Empathy Program that should be implemented within future interventions, generating a starting point or framework for best practice in this important field of education.

**Research Questions**

The study will address the following research questions in order to determine the potential of The Empathy Program, to improve empathy amongst adolescents:

1. Does the application of Actor Training, Creative Drama, and Forum Theatre increase the development of empathy in adolescents?
2. What do adolescent participants identify as the key experiences of The Empathy Program? Which were most beneficial to their development of empathy?
Thesis Overview

Chapter One has provided a rationale for the current study. The rationale highlighted the importance of social emotional learning within a drama context and a correlation that exits between drama pedagogy and the empathic process. The chapter positions the research within contemporary practice in drama education and details where the genesis for the hypothesis emerged. The research questions were presented and the significance of the research was explained. Finally, the identity of the researcher is discussed and the role this has on the research project was explained.

Chapter Two reviews relevant literature pertaining to central ideas of the study. Two main areas of research that guide the study are presented: empathy education and development and contemporary drama pedagogy. Correlations between the two bodies of literature are highlighted and form the basis of the theoretical underpinnings of The Empathy Program research project.

Chapter Three presents the research design used to shape the research project and answer the research questions. The social constructivist philosophical framework is discussed as well as the mixed-methods methodology. The data analysis is also presented, including quantitative self-response pre- and post-survey, as well as qualitative reflection journals. The chapter concludes by detailing the procedure that was undertaken to complete the research project.

Chapter Four outlines data collected from the quantitative and qualitative phases. Quantitative data is discussed first, identifying results relating to the first research question regarding increases in participant empathy. Then qualitative data is presented through the structure of six key themes that emerged from the data, in response to the second research question.

Chapter Five positions the results within the current body of literature. Quantitative data is discussed first, with a focus on the effectiveness of The Empathy Program. This is followed by a discussion of the qualitative data which is again structured according to the six key themes that emerged through coding of the data.
Chapter Six is the final chapter and presents a summary of key findings from *The Empathy Program*. Implications for future practice are presented, limitations of the study outlined and finally, recommendations for further research are presented.
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Chapter Overview
This chapter reviews existing literature that relates to areas of research explored in this study, aiming to position The Empathy Program within contemporary practice. Due to limited research that currently exists focusing on the specific area of empathy development using drama processes for adolescent participants, a wider scope of literature was reviewed. This includes disciplines where empathy development amongst participants was set as a goal of the research intervention. As such, medicine, nursing, psychology and early childhood education research was reviewed, as well as adolescent education studies.

Empathy
Empathy first emerged in Western literature as a translation of the German word ‘einfühlung’, which suggests the word means “literally to feel one’s way into another” (Sherman, 1998, p. 90), emerging at the turn of the twentieth century within the psychological literature (Sherman, 1998). The term ‘einfühlung’ was coined by Robert Fischer in reference to experiencing art, later translated into English by Edward Titchener (Verducci, 2000). Since then, the term has been defined by a number of leading experts in diverse fields. Tichener, for example, explores the original Greek root, empatia, whose adjectival form means to be deeply affected by a thing (Verducci, 2000). Carkhuff’s visual description suggests empathy is the act of “crawling inside another person’s skin and seeing the world through his/her eyes” (1969, p. 57), which highlights empathy’s strong relationship to the drama processes explored in this study which are driven by perspective-taking. This definition led towards a more contemporary understanding suggested by Corradini and Antonietti (2013), stating that empathy is the act of figuring out the propositional attitudes that are at the basis of another’s deciding, planning, and acting.

There are various models of empathy debated in the literature (Corradini & Antonietti, 2013; Feshbach & Lipian, 1987; Gery, Miljkovitch, Berthoz, & Soussignan, 2009; Gilet, Studer, Grühn, & Labouvie-Vief, 2013;
Holmgren, Eisenberg, & Fabes, 1998; Jabbi, Swart, & Keyser, 2007; Jollife & Farrington, 2004). Empathy was previously defined in both affective, the ability to comprehend the emotions of others (Bryant, 1982), and cognitive elements: observation and mental processing (Rogers, 1957). Researchers identified a distinct separation between the phenomena of sympathy and empathy, towards a continual segmentation of key elements of empathy. Patterson (1974) extended on work defined in previous literature highlighting the four components of empathy as the moral component, the cognitive component, the communicative component and the relational domains. Whereas, Kalliopuska (1990) proposed an alternate set of domains, highlighting a focus on affective, motivational, cognitive, and kinaesthetic domains.

The literature explores two-factor models and three-factor models which have been the basis for understanding the complexities of the construct and tools for measuring a person’s ability to experience, and act with empathy in this study. Much knowledge has been gained about empathy as a phenomenon through the implementation of these definitions. However, understanding the complexity of empathy as a phenomenon is imperative to develop effective empathy improvement programs.

For the purpose of this review, the three-factor model of cognitive, affective and behavioural empathy (King, 2011) will be utilised, as it allows a distinction between internal (affective and cognitive) and external (behavioural) domains (King, 2011). The three-factor model includes the third domain of the phenomenon, making it a more inclusive and detailed model to inform the discussion. The breakdown of domains is in line with the model presented by Singer and Lamm (2009) stating that empathy begins with “...affect sharing, followed by understanding the other person’s feelings, which then motivates other-related concern and finally engagement in helping behaviour” (Singer & Lamm, 2009, p. 84). Empathy is a distinctively different phenomenon to sympathy, empathic concern and compassion (Jabbi et al., 2007; Kalliopuska, 1992; Singer & Lamm, 2009; Stueber, 2007). Sympathy, empathic concern and compassion are actions of the affective domain, whereas empathy also requires actions of the cognitive domain and communicative function.
**Cognitive and Affective Empathy.** Empathy can no longer be viewed in recent literature as a unitary component, but rather a multifaceted phenomenon (Decety & Meyer, 2008); an understanding of individual domains is required to better understand the construct. The primary drive of empathy is the affective domain, which allows a person “...the ability to comprehend the emotions of others” (Bryant, 1982, p. 420) and “the ability to feel and read mental states of others” (Overgaauw, Güröğlu, Rieffe, & Crone, 2014, p. 213). Mazza and colleagues suggest an important element of ‘resonance’ of another’s feelings in affective empathy, whilst still recognising distinct separation between personal emotion and that of others (Mazza et al., 2014). Affective empathy is a central domain of the process of empathy, which is driven by cognitive empathy.

Cognitive function of the phenomena is the ability to understand these emotions and reason about affective states (Overgaauw et al., 2014), which requires complex cognitive functions, including perspective taking and mentalising (Shamay-Tsoory, 2011; Zaki & Ochsner, 2012). Mezza et al. suggests that cognitive function is “the ability to understand what others are thinking or feeling, without necessarily ‘resonating’ with that feeling state” (Mazza et al., 2014, p. 791), and Blair (2005) proposes that the cognitive function is essential and closely related to the communicative and help-giving functions of the phenomena. These definitions of the cognitive function suggest that the phenomenon of empathy requires all of its three functions to lead towards positive behaviour.

The two key domains of affective and cognitive empathy are distinct from each other and function in different capacities with the practice of empathy. For example, adolescents with Autism-Spectrum Disorder, show a very low level of cognitive empathy but demonstrate a strong level of affective empathy (levels differed depending on the type of emotion; positive or negative) (Mazza et al., 2014). Adolescents who are perpetrators of bullying behaviour often have high levels of cognitive empathy (their ability to understand their target’s emotions) but have reduced affective empathy, removing the understanding of consequence of their behaviour (Jabbi et al., 2007). Another example of this split skill set between affective and cognitive empathy is found in prisoners. Wastell, Cairns, and Haywood’s (2009) study in
New South Wales assessed the effectiveness of empathy training with prisoners convicted of child molestation. The prisoners involved in the program recorded an increase in cognitive empathy but still failed to recognise affects such as terror and fear in others, destabilising their empathic process (Wastell et al., 2009). This distinction of an unbalanced level of affective and cognitive empathy, emphasises the need for intervention and measurement tools that are specifically targeted for both domains.

**Communicative Empathy.** The third domain of the process of empathy is communicative empathy, the practical domain of the process that is tangible. Communicative empathy is behaviour and action taken in response to the understanding gained about another’s emotional state from the cognitive and affective processes. This behavioural domain of the empathic process involves functions such as ‘empathic listening’ (Gery et al., 2009; Jollife & Farrington, 2004), empathic responding (Lubusko, 1996), relational empathy (Patterson, 1974) and kinaesthetic empathy (Kalliopuska, 1990). These processes allow a person to respond in accordance with others’ emotional states. The response generated by these processes is not necessarily positive, whereas Mason (2014) suggests inaction and even targeted cruelty aimed at exacerbating a victim’s distress are also possible reactions. It is when both cognitive and affective domains are involved in the process of informing empathic responses, will the actions have an altruistic quality (Geng, Xia, & Qin, 2012).

King (2011) proposes that this third domain of the empathic process, which is viewed as the expression of empathy to another, is outwardly directed and demonstrates “functional aspects of the concept and its concrete applications within helping relationships” (p. 690). This communicative empathy is reflective of altruism, which has been defined as a behavioural indicator of empathy (Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neurberg, 1997), which acts as a behavioural vehicle for the direct expression of empathy (King, 2011).

As is evident through the analysis above, a myriad of definitions exist for the phenomenon of empathy. Whilst some models have been disproven, the literature presents a variety of models that use different language to address the key domains of empathy. Unlike other models, the selected breakdown of empathy into three domains provides a simple scaffold for which the
intervention can be based upon and linked to drama processes. King’s model provides an empirically based, yet simple structure for the adolescent participants to engage with and develop a practical understanding of the phenomenon. Finally, the model.

**Measures of Empathy**

The construct of empathy is complex and multifaceted (Corradini & Antonietti, 2013; Stueber, 2011) which makes the task of quantifying a person’s ability to empathise a difficult task. Literature highlights several key measures or scales of empathy that have been created, critiqued and changed over several decades. Psychologist Robert Hogan is credited with developing one of the first empirically supported systems to measure empathy, the Hogan Empathy Scale (Hogan, 1969).

Each scale gives a clear insight into key domains of the construct and behaviours linked to the process. Other notable scales found in the literature is the ‘Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy’ generated by Mehrabian and Epstein (1972), as well as the ‘Interpersonal Reactivity Index’ built by Davis (1980). Also utilised within more current academic studies is the Jefferson Scale of Empathy, which focuses on the health care sector. A more contemporary scale, the Basic Empathy Scale (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006), was developed out of critique of the aforementioned scales (Andreasson & Dimberg, 2008; Geng et al., 2012; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). A critique of previous scales informed rigorous testing of the validity of the Basic Empathy Scale, including a more detailed definition of empathy.

**Hogan Empathy Scale.** The Hogan Empathy Scale was developed by Robert Hogan in 1969 (Hogan, 1969) and focused on the measurement of what Hogan described as “...the intellectual and imaginative apprehension of another’s state or condition without actually experiencing that person’s feelings” (Hogan, 1969). The scale has been analysed through a myriad of validity and reliability studies that suggest mixed results. No subscales were considered within the Hogan Empathy Scale and the differentiation between affective and cognitive domains of empathy is therefore not recorded.

**Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy.** The Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy was developed by Mehrabian and Epstein (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972) which focused on quantifying the phenomenon
of “...a vicarious emotional response to the perceived emotional experiences of others” (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972). The 33-item questionnaire focuses on responses to situational empathy whereby the target of the empathic behaviour is present in the situation.

**Interpersonal Reactivity Scale.** The Interpersonal Reactivity Scale was developed by Davis (Davis, 1980) and aimed to measure both affective and cognitive empathy as a response to the lack of reliability in existing measures. The Interpersonal Reactivity Scale is divided into four subsections; perspective-taking, fantasy, empathic concern and personal distress. The model developed by Davis considers the notion of sympathy in line with empathy, not identifying the differences that exist within these two phenomena.

**Jefferson Scale of Empathy.** The Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE) is a widely used instrument to measure empathy of participants in health care and medical studies. The Jefferson Scale, similar to the BES, is a twenty-item scale designed to measure empathy in health-care professionals. The scale has been translated into 56 different languages and utilised in a myriad of studies with confirmatory factor analysis having been completed to support the validity of the model (Ferreira-Valente, et al., 2016; Montanari, et al., 2015; Williams, Brown, Boyle, & Dousek, 2013).

**Basic Empathy Scale.** The Basic Empathy Scale presents a measure of empathy that is most current, with their validity supported by confirmatory factor analysis (Andreasson & Dimberg, 2008; Geng et al., 2012; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; Vossen, Piotrowski, & Valkenburg, 2015). The Basic Empathy Scale was developed by Jolliffe and Farrington (2006), who employed the definition of empathy from Cohen and Strayer (1996) “as the understanding and sharing in another’s emotional state or context” (p. 523), which allows for a focus on both affective and cognitive empathy. The Basic Empathy Scale generated items that have clear and unambiguous wording on distinct emotions felt by the responder, to ensure an overlap with sympathy is avoided. Items used are based on four of the five basic emotions (happiness, fear, anger, sadness) (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006), which created forty items with participants responding on Likert scale from one to five (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006).
The scale was, using factor analysis, reduced to a 20-item scale that aimed to measure affective and cognitive empathy. The scale was then tested through confirmatory factor analysis in a study with adolescents (n = 357), which recorded positive relationships between empathy and intelligence, extraversion along with openness. The study also concurred that students that reported helping victims of bullying, had higher levels of empathy (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). The scale’s validity has been tested several times in the literature and recorded high validity and reliability in most cases.

Analysis of the existing definitions of empathy combined with the selection of the most appropriate measures of empathy positions the study’s focus on the specific pro-social behaviours that will be examined. Having identified a position from which the study will view empathic behaviour, the need for these behaviours must be examined.

**Socio-political call for Empathy**

Empathy as a phenomenon is on the decline; or as former American President Barack Obama labelled it ‘an empathy deficit’ (Obama, 2006). The claim made by the then senator has been supported by a variety of research (Konrath, Chopik, Hsing, & O’Brien, 2014; Schumann, Zaki, & Dweck, 2014; Twenge, Campbell, & Freeman, 2012) identifying a decline in the prevalence of empathic behaviour in contemporary society. Conversely, current literature cites a growth in narcissistic behaviours (Krznaric, 2015). This shift in phenomena can be reflected in events such as the ever-growing wealth gap in Australia (Tapper & Fenna, 2018), rise of nationalism in international politics (Krznaric, 2015), the continuation of domestic and family violence crime (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018), and highly partisan domestic political landscapes.

In response to these the challenging shifts in public sentiment, educators across the globe are identifying a need to teach skills that breed connectivity and compassion. Grassroots initiatives have emerged in the literature, such as a school principal in Baltimore, US, who developed a “community citizenship course” (Bowie, 2017, p. 1) teaching empathy in response to her students starting a ‘Kool Kids Klub’ intent on ostracising African American students. On the other end of the scale there are well researched and established international programs such as the Roots of Empathy program based in
Canada, teaching empathy is schools. This focuses on the relationship between a class of primary school students and a new born baby (Santos, Chartier, Whalen, Chateau, & Boyd, 2011).

Within the Australian context, schools are seeking to address these areas of need through implementation of curriculum such as the General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum. Whilst this provides an official recognition for the implementation of empathy education within a high school context, the peripheral nature of the capabilities fails to create effective and consistent curriculum. The programs or initiatives focused on the development of empathy within a school context provide evidence of the possibility of change, however limited research exists that is empirically-based and specifically designed for adolescents.

The majority of literature around empathy education comes from nursing and medical research, targeted towards tertiary students. Whilst a university setting provides opportunities for profession-specific empathy training, high school presents a chance to increase situation and dispositional empathy at a time of significant emotional development for adolescents.

**Why Adolescents?**

The focus of this research is placed within a high school context, working with participants that are fifteen to sixteen years of age. Whilst there is a multitude of social emotional learning programs that are targeted towards elementary school students, adolescence is a time a significant change and thus requires targeted learning.

Tan, Sinha, Shin and Wang, in their research on social learning needs amongst high school students, state that “Transitioning into high school involves rich socio-emotional experiences resulting in social-self and identity development” (Tan, Sinha, Shin, & Wang, 2018, p. 217), which is a crucial time in a person’s development. The changes in learning environment, hormonal shifts due to puberty and ongoing brain development of adolescents highlights that social emotional learning specific to adolescents is required to prevent what Yeager terms ‘disastrous outcome’ (2017) from their high school career.

The adolescent brain is subject to greater affective consequences of social isolation, ostracism and peer conflict, than that of an adult (Sebastian,
Viding, Williams, & Blakemore, 2010). Coupling this with the significant role that the adolescence period plays in developing our social emotional capabilities as an adult (Blakemore & Mills, 2014), we can see that being an adolescent is both a sensitive and pivotal time. As such, delivering effective and engaging social emotional learning for adolescents can play an essential role in developing positive and capable adults. The point of targeted programming for adolescents is an essential consideration in the development of social emotional curriculum. Whilst the neurological and physiological changes that occur during adolescence provide a positive opportunity for social learning, they demand unique teaching and engagement strategies to be effective for adolescent participants.

To be considered is the ‘problematisation’ of the adolescent development period that results from the emerging focus on social emotional interventions. The expanding need for a sense of independence that arises during the adolescent phase, presents a particular challenge for educators when attempting to ‘fix’ or ‘change behaviour’ of adolescent participants. In reviews on effective intervention programs, Yeager noted that programs that work well with children, often have a poor track record with adolescents, whilst effective programs for teenagers focus on mindset and ensure the participants feel respected by adults.

With many challenges to face, and many skills to develop, adolescents arguably have a great need for social emotional learning. One essential skill within this framework that supports adolescents to manage the social challenges they face, is empathy.

**Empathy and its Benefits for Adolescents**

Empathy is a term often listed amongst essential positive social traits, as there are strong empirical relations between pro-social behaviour and empathy (Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade, 1987). Empathy has strong evolutionary benefits, seen across mammalian evolution, where females who responded to their offspring’s needs out-reproduced those who were cold and distant (Waal, 2007). Mason (2014) infers that the communication of affective and emotional states between individuals is essential to social cohesion, citing a seminal work by Harry Harlow in the 1950s, proving that mammals raised “with diminished social contact became fearful, anxious adults with impaired social
and parenting skills” (Kanari, Kikusui, Takeuchi, & Mori, 2005, p. 47). The empathic process has strong contemporary benefits for human adolescents, beyond its essential evolutionary traits.

The skill of empathy is thought to reach its full development in late adolescence and it is potentially beneficial to be taught early in formative education (Deloney & Graham, 2002; Hoffman, 2001; Marcus, 1999). Empathy helps adolescents establish and maintain friendships (Barrio, Aluja & Garcia, 2004; Hay, 1994), playing an essential role in social functioning and competence (Sallquist, Eisenberg, Spinrad, Eggum, & Gaertner, 2009; Yoo, Feng, & Day, 2013). Waite and Rees (2014) highlight a key benefit of the process of empathy, proposing that empathy does increase our awareness of the ‘other’, supporting adolescents to socialise with those who are different.

The majority of adolescence is spent in formal education, a system where one in four students are likely to be exposed to bullying behaviours from their peers. Empathy is negatively related to bullying behaviour (Geng et al., 2012; Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoè, 2007; Jollife & Farrington, 2006; Miller & Eisenberg, 1988). Seminal research by Feshbach (1975) into empathy proposes a central model of combating anti-social behaviour, finding that perpetrators of anti-social behaviour who comprehend negative emotional reactions (e.g. fear, distress) are less inclined to continue with these actions.

Research from Salmon (2003) into empathy highlighted that the empathic process can prevent aggression and teach important interpersonal and work skills. Miller and Eisenberg (1988) suggest that empathy is negatively related to aggression and disruptive behaviour, and is a central process that informs adolescents’ decision-making process when presented with an opportunity to perpetrate anti-social behaviour. Conversely, higher levels of empathy are directly and positively related to active assistance of victims of bullying behaviour (Gini et al., 2007; Jollife & Farrington, 2004). In Geng, Xia, and Qin’s (2012) research, adolescents with a strong command of the affective and cognitive functions of empathy were more likely to intervene and demonstrate positive bystander behaviour. This prosocial, altruistic behaviour from peers is an effective method of combating bullying behaviour in formal educational settings (Burton, 2010).
Research led by Dranoff and Dobrich (2003) into empathy, suggests that low levels of empathy increase a person’s risk of victimisation. Empathy plays a key role in socialisation, meaning that a failure to employ the process leaves an individual isolated and at a higher risk of becoming a victim of antisocial behaviour (Davis, 1994; Ding & Guo, 2010; Endresen & Olweus, 2001).

Empathy has a strong relationship with social capability meaning that adolescents can manipulate the process of cognitive empathy. Ding and Guo (2010) found in their research on secondary school student empathy, that perpetrators of bullying behaviour continue this behaviour when they feel no affective responses to their antisocial behaviour. The situation is common amongst adults as well, whereby only one of the empathic processes is engaged and an anti-social behaviour results. Joliffe and Farrington (2004) conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of ‘Empathy and Offending’ found that the relationship between low empathy and offending was relatively strong for violent offenders. Empathy has its most effective relationships with prosocial behaviour when cognitive, affective and communicative factors are engaged, making them all essential in empathy development (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2004).

The literature also presents a critique of empathy as a desirable and moralistic phenomenon that should be striven to in all instances. Paul Bloom, proposes that “Empathy has serious limitations, particularly when it comes to moral decision-making in the modern world” (Bloom, 2017, p. 24), arguing for a much more reserved engagement with empathy. Bloom argues an even stronger critique of the phenomenon, suggesting that “…it can also spur cruel and irrational actions, including atrocities and war” (2017, p. 24). Prinz echoes these critiques, postulating an argument that empathy is not needed to make moral decisions. Bloom argues that instead of empathy being used as a tool to guide decision making, “a utilitarian cost–benefit calculus” (2017, p. 25) would be more effective. The critique presented against empathy rests on the concept that it does not serve as an effective tool to make large moral decisions due to the innumerate and biased nature of the phenomenon. The examples presented to argue the position are built around moral dilemma, highlighting the difficulty in ‘feeling with someone’ when there are more than a few people affected by a choice, or when the victim is invisible. Whilst these
moral dilemmas prove challenging, they required complex decision-making skillsets, beyond that of just empathy. The positive benefits of empathy discussed above, focus on the role the phenomenon can play in individual relationships and connection building tasks. Whilst empathy isn’t the sole antithesis to immoral choices, it does provide an improved capacity to reduce conflict and seek positive relational outcomes within person to person conflict.

Pinker presents the analogy of a small child scared by a “yipping dog” and a man coming over to comfort the child. He suggests that the man can comfort the child through compassion and a desire to help without the need of empathy. However, when considering the domains of empathy, they are clearly at play within the scenario. Cognitive empathy provides the man the ability to read the physical cues of emotion (crying, shaking, calling for help, curling into a ball, backing away etc.) spurring him to provide help. His affective empathy allows those physical cues to be processed into an understanding of what the child is feeling (sadness, fear, isolation). Whilst, he himself is not scared, through the empathic process he is able to make a decision on how best to help the child – communicative empathy. Perhaps semantics becomes the point of argument, with Pinker proposing that compassion is the tool to inform behaviour, it can be argued that without empathy, compassion would not occur.

Whilst the critiques of empathy are arguably hyperbolic in the connotation that empathy creates war, it does highlight the importance of other social emotional skills in making ‘good’ choices. Arguments could be presented that resilience, compassion, critical thinking or perhaps “utilitarian cost-benefit calculus” would be equally, if not more beneficial for young people becoming positive and productive citizens.

The myriad of pro-social behaviours that exist present a challenge for educators; what do we focus on and for how long do we focus on it? Arguments could be made by proponents of the many skills required for pro-social behaviour, however this study has chosen to focus on empathy due to three key factors:

1. the overwhelming body of literature that highlights positive correlations between the level of empathy and pro-social behaviour:
2. the new challenges that adolescents face in this stage of development and their links to empathic behaviour; and
3. the strong correlation between drama process and the domains of empathy.

Developing Empathy with Drama

Empathy is a phenomenon that occurs naturally in varying capacities amongst adolescents but which can be improved through training of related skills. Literature on empathy training in the arts is limited, with most studies appearing in the field of medical science, focused on training of health care professionals. Another common focus for empathy development in the literature is found in prison systems with offenders, aiming to reduce the rate of reoffending. Some literature (Goodwin & Deady, 2012; Hojat, Axelrod, Spandorfer, & Mangione, 2013; Winkle, Fjortoft, & Hojat, 2012) has explored the role of social emotional learning amongst secondary school students including the importance of empathy. One study explored the role of drama (specifically Actor Training) in developing empathy for medical students at university (Goodwin & Deady, 2012). Whilst another longitudinal study focused on Creative Drama and its negative relationship to covert bullying (Burton, 2010).

Hojat et al. (2013) conducted a study with a large class of medical students (n=248), exploring how drama processes, such as Actor Training and performance critique, can be utilised to develop empathy. Hojat et al. engaged participants in two short interventions, utilising the Jefferson Scale of Empathy to collect data that showed statistically significant increases in empathy amongst participants in both interventions, compared to those in the control group (Hojat et al, 2013). This result suggests that key practices to develop empathy amongst students included “interpersonal skills, exposure to role models, role-playing, shadowing a patient, hospitalization (or pseudo-hospitalization) experiences, studying literature and the arts, improving narrative skills, watching theatrical performances or movies…” (p. 998). These skills and practices are essential elements of adolescent and secondary school drama programs, which suggest a link between drama practices and the development of empathy.
Role-play has been found to develop empathy in medical students (n=149) in a study conducted by Lim, Moriarty, and Huthwaite (2011). Their study engaged half of the students in ‘how to act in role’ training, with the other half used as a control group. The intervention group developed their empathy in self-reported measures as well as their competence in consultation skills, which were assessed in a practical exam (Lim et al., 2011). In another study, Magee and Hojat (2010) noted an increase in empathy for students who volunteered to build rocking chairs for their patients that were mothers of newborns.

Kleinsmitha et al. (2015) explored the potential of empathy development for medical students, through the use of virtual patients. Their study also employed the Jefferson Scale of Empathy (Hojat, 2016) and recorded increases in empathy for students who participated in role-play based activities with the virtual patients. Kleinsmitha et al. found that role-play, communication skill building and repeated practice were key activities that supported the development of empathy amongst the medical students.

Similarly, Goodwin and Deady (2012) conducted a study into the role Actor Training can play in developing empathy amongst medical students. They proposed that an understanding of drama techniques and Actor Training practice can develop a medical practitioner’s understanding of the construct of empathy and how it can be used in their work (Goodwin & Deady, 2012). The study focused on the work of influential actor trainer Constantine Stanislavski; breaking his system into two distinct parts, “work on the self and the work on the role” (2012, p. 128). Research highlights strong links between key elements of Stanislavski’s ‘System’ and the process of empathic development, with specific interest on relaxation, concentration and affective memory (Goodwin & Deady, 2012). The study also investigated links between Stanislavski’s successors Lee Strasberg (1988) and Michael Chekhov (1953), demonstrating strong links between the process of an actor and the empathic process (Goodwin & Deady, 2012).

Wastell, Cairns and Haywood (2009) investigated developing empathy amongst sex offenders, which focused on group work and hot seating improvisational techniques (an actor being interviewed as if they were their character). The researchers noted that empathy, along with self-awareness,
has been highlighted in literature as being central to reducing re-offending by sex offenders (Prentky, 1995; Ward, Keenan, & Hudson, 2000) and that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy was a dominant paradigm in training practices. (Winton, 2005). The results indicated that many prisoners had low levels of affective empathy and struggled to recognise affects in other people (in particular, their victims) (Wastell, Cairns, & Haywood, 2009). The Normalisation, Education, Training and Treatment program at the Junne NSW Correctional Facility was the focus of the study, which employed theoretical bases from a wide array of sources including Prentky (1995) and Clair and Prendergast (1994) as well as the model of psychological change of Prochaska and Di Clemente (1992). This empathy program saw a substantial increase in empathy scores on the Empathy Scale for Adults (Feshbach & Lipian, 1987).

A seminal longitudinal study by Bruce Burton (2010) into covert bullying in Australian secondary schools examined the potential of Creative Drama and peer teaching in combating anti-social behaviour. The program utilised direct teaching about bullying, Forum Theatre practice (examined later in this review) and improvisation to develop pro-social behaviours and combat bullying behaviour. The program was implemented over several years, consistently adapting its practices to support the needs of the participants, and continually recorded strong negative relationships between participants in the program and bullying behaviour. Research by Burton highlights a link between Creative Drama practices and its role in developing pro-social behaviours, including empathy.

Current literature positions empathy as a phenomenon that is positively related to pro-social behaviour, as well as a social skill that can be developed in adolescents. The potential to improve the levels of empathy in adolescents, can be qualitatively and quantitatively measured, thus underscoring the opportunity for empathy-based education in secondary schools. Empathy accommodates strong links to the practice of drama education, that position the research to argue a drama-based education program has the potential to increase empathic practice amongst adolescent students.

Drama in Education

The purpose of Drama as a subject has been debated since its emergence as a subject at the end of the 19th Century (Bolton, 2007). Two
main schools of thought existed in the debate, one arguing that drama should be utilised to train actors and theatre makers by creating theatre works in school (commonly referred to as ‘Product Drama’) (Foreman, 1999). The other view was that drama should be used as a student directed form of learning to develop social and emotional skills, such as empathy through drama processes (commonly referred to as ‘Process Drama’) (Heathcote, 1985). This disagreement of Drama’s aims as a subject still causes much contest amongst practitioners and policy makers.

Early drama education practitioners such as Winifred Ward (1884-1975), Viola Spolin (1906-1994) and John Dewey (1859-1952) have influenced the development of Drama as a formal subject studied in schools in Europe, American and Australia (Conrad, 2004) exploring its potential to teach a myriad of topics and skills. Amongst literature, some seminal studies and reviews stand out as key texts that reflect the body of knowledge regarding arts education and its benefits to students who participate in them.

One such study by Fiske, a prominent American education writer, compiled a seminal paper, ‘Champions of Change’ (1999) that culminated a selection of key studies proving the positive relationship between arts education and academic success. The paper by Catterall, Chapleau, and Iwanaga (1999) is of particular interest to the current research, as it focuses on involvement in drama, along with music, and the learning that this can create. Catterall et al. (1999) postulate that, from their analysis of the National Educational Longitudinal Survey sample of adolescents (n = 25,000), sustained involvement in drama can provide gains in reading proficiency, self-concept, motivation, and higher levels of empathy.

Richard Deasey developed a compendium, ‘Critical Links’ (2002), of 62 key studies in arts education and is a critical insight into the commonalities between disciplines, highlighting strong academic and social benefits for ‘arts-rich’ students. The 20 papers included in the drama section of the compendium, present arguments for the myriad of benefits for adolescents participating in drama based programs; from academic and literacy skills to cognitive development and emotional fluency. Many of the studies and analyses reviewed in Deasey’s compendium focuses on academic benefits of drama participation, in particular literacy skills (oral, written and
comprehension). The large majority of studies focused on pre-adolescence, with early years education being the common focus. There is a notable lack of focus on the social, emotional and psychological learning that can be generated by participation in drama.

Fink (1976) established an early study into the role of imaginative play in cognitive development, which prompted education academics to analyse potential learning gains from drama-based activities. The study focused on the cognitive functions of ‘conservation’ (attributes may remain constant, even when change occurs) and ‘perspectivism’ (sustained understanding of kinship in social situations), amongst kindergarten students (Fink, 1976). The results of Fink’s study suggest that coached imaginative play contributes to important social development in children (Deasey, 2002), and that increased skills in imagination can be taught through teacher directed imaginative play.

The ‘Reviewing Education and the Arts Project’ by Hetland and Winner (2001) is an extensive synthesis of 188 quantitative studies from the second half of the twentieth century, that look into academic benefits of the arts. The analysis of 80 texts related to drama-based education supported the position that a causal link was found between classroom drama (enacting texts) and a variety of verbal areas (oral understanding, verbal recall, oral language, reading readiness, writing). Hetland and Winner (2001) suggest that arts-based programs are not guaranteed to improve academic ability, but highlight its potential to increase the required skills for academic achievement. Hetland and Winner (2001) proposed that researchers should continue to look for, try out, and specify whether the arts can serve as vehicles for transfer of knowledge from one subject to another. Educators could then exploit this relationship, which gives good direction and justification for further study into specific disciplines of art education, including social and emotional learning.

The continued analysis of arts-based school education reveals data that demonstrates significant relationships [positive] between exposure to arts-rich school curricula and “creative, cognitive, and personal competencies needed for academic success” (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 1999, p. 36) as well as improvements not only in self-esteem, but also in positive attitude, increased sense of responsibility towards others, and discipline (Heath & Roach, 1999). Catterall and Waldorf (1999), who have reviewed a variety of studies into
drama and theatre arts, propose that exposure to arts rich education programs provide improved self-concept and motivation, empathy, tolerance, and interest in school.

‘Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competences in Education’ (DICE, 2008 – 2010) was a two-year cross-cultural research study within European Union’s (EU) Lifelong Learning Programme, investigating the effects of educational drama and theatre on five of eight Lisbon Key Competences in Education (Eriksson, Heggstad, Heggstad, & Cziboly, 2014). The study engaged 4475 young people aged 13–16 years, from 12 countries, involved 111 different drama programs (continuous as well as one-time interventions), and is the most comprehensive quantitative study to date that is statistically significant (Eriksson et al., 2014). In their analysis of the DICE study, Eriksson et al. (2014), suggest that drama can support students in their development of social and emotional competencies including empathy, creativity and cultural engagement.

These studies provide a strong indication of the positive relationship between Drama and social emotional learning, with a particular focus on empathy. Through implementation of a combination of drama processes, the studies were able to improve participant empathy, highlighting the potential for an empirically based empathy program for adolescents.

**Drama Processes**

There are three areas of drama education: Actor Training, Forum Theatre, and Creative Drama, that have been utilised for this study. Importantly, each have clear links to the development of empathy and pro-social behaviours. Actor Training (Constantin Stanislavski: 1863-1938), supports students to develop their self-awareness, emotional memory, concentration, relaxation and imagination (Goodwin & Deady, 2012). Creative Drama supports the development of perspective taking (role taking), imaginative play, emotional production and communication (Dunn, 2011). Forum Theatre provides a process to practice help-giving, problem solving, emotional and contextual analysis, imagination, perspective taking and emotional disconnection (Burton, 2010). Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that a drama program that combines techniques from each of these approaches,
has the potential to improve a student’s skill to practice and embody empathy.

**Actor Training**

The process of professional Actor Training forms a large part of the current drama curriculum (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority, 2015) and the basis of the working actor’s knowledge and practice. Constantin Stanislavski (1863-1938), a prolific acting trainer and theorist, is credited with developing the first formal system for training actors (Blair, 2008; Carnicke, 2010; Goodwin & Deady, 2012; Merlin, 2001). Concentration, focus, imagination, affective memory and physical action are key skills that Stanislavski’s system develops and relate directly to the skills required to engage in the empathic process (Goodwin & Deady, 2012). Stanislavski’s objective was to create truth on stage and developed techniques including Observation, Concentration, Subtext, Imagination, Affective Memory and the Method of Physical Action. Stanislavski postulated that his system was nothing more than natural laws of biology and behaviour being transposed to the stage (Stanislavski, 1988). Goodwin and Deady (2012) suggest that this process of ‘getting into character’ reflects the empathic process, and therefore developing students’ skills in the process will work to improve their empathy.

The work of Michael Chekhov, student of Stanislavski and leading actor trainer (Chamberlain, 2010), also focuses on skills with strong links to the empathic process. Imagination and concentration were central to Chekhov’s practice arguing it was the task of the actor to control the imagination and bring the imagined world of emotions on to the stage.

**Focus, Concentration, and Observation.** Focus and concentration are key skills in both Stanislavski’s System, and in the empathic process. Stanislavski argues that performance is the practice of assuming a new emotional perspective, requires a state of physical relaxation and teaches his actors exercises such as yogic breathing and progressive relaxation to achieve this state of emotional readiness (Bosch & Bow, 2013; Carnicke, 2010; Merlin, 2001). Stanislavski proposes that concentration begins with sharpening the senses through observation (Stanislavski, 1923), and only then can an actor be able to understand the emotions of a given character. Stanislavski would train his
actors observation skills in all five senses, from sight to taste, exploring the sensations and responses these observations would generate.

The skill of observation for an actor was twofold: to observe the world around them (with as many senses as possible), and to observe the reaction and sensations created from these sense-based observations. The observation process was moved from the cognitive, to the affective, to inform the behaviour and action of the actor, directly mirroring the empathic process (Carnicke, 2010; O’Brien, 2011).

Subtext and Imagination. Subtext is anything that a character thinks or feels, but cannot express in words (Richards & Ричардс, 2013). Stanislavski believed that this subtext was a central part of communication, both on and off stage, and that actors can infer these subtexts by noticing inconsistencies between what is said and done. It is this complex level of observation that is essential for cognitive empathy, one’s ability to understand through dialogue or action, what another is feeling (Carnicke, 2010).

The system values an actor’s ability to treat the fictional world of the performance as if it were real, where Stanislavski argued that, everything we do must be done with imagination (O’Brien, 2011). The ‘Magic If’ was the key terminology Stanislavski used to encourage the imagination to engage (Dacre, 2013). He would ask actors to develop a series of alternative options and then imagine ‘what if’ and from that question that actor would imagine the result and create the truth on stage.

Affective Memory versus Method of Physical Action. ‘Affective Memory’ and the ‘Method of Physical Action’ are two prolific techniques to achieve Stanislavski’s ambitious aim of creating true emotion on stage. Affective Memory uses the actor’s memory of an experience to then generate an emotion to inform physical action. In his later writing, Stanislavski had moved towards a technique that began with the physical action to generate emotion. Through this technique the actor would develop a physical score of actions (both physical movement and psychological tasks to achieve and objective) that reflect the key moments of the scene. Through the rehearsal and refinement of this physical score that is appropriate to the given circumstances of the scene, the actor will develop the appropriate affective response.
Michael Chekhov. Another influential acting practitioner and student of Stanislavski, Michael Chekhov, developed a variety of techniques to enhance the training of actors. For Chekhov, imagination and concentration were the keys to developing an actor’s skill in sensation or feeling present emotions. One of Chekhov’s key techniques was referred to as ‘atmosphere’, which is seen as a dominant mood given by a person, place or object (Chamberlain, 2010). Chekhov argued that every person and situation gives of an ‘atmosphere’, much like an aroma, that will inform the emotions and actions of those exposed to the atmosphere. In the theatre, ‘Atmosphere’ is created by actors, and then informs both the emotions and physical actions of the scene. It is through this exposure to atmospheres of emotion that actors can develop their ability to comprehend the emotional states of others and inform their behavioural empathy by developing a score of action from within an appropriate and supportive atmosphere.

In summary, it is through the techniques of these systems, actors (or students) can develop their ability to experience, control and observe emotions in their daily lives. The Actor Training techniques presented by Stanislavski and Chekhov, along with other key practitioners, reflect skills mirrored in affective and emotional empathy. It is this connection between the core skills of emotional comprehension and emotional experience that link Actor Training and empathy. These Actor Training techniques, develop students’ ability to participate effectively and truthfully in a variety of other drama processes that further link to the core skills of affective, cognitive and behavioural empathy.

Creative Drama

Creative Drama is an example of the drama processes that students can engage in through Actor Training techniques that allow them to further develop their empathy. Creative Drama acknowledges the power of play and the natural instinct within people to explore through play. Creative Drama focuses on functional pedagogy and active role-play (Okoronkwo, 2011) that is inherently student-centred and engages imaginative transformation. Further, Creative Drama acknowledges that dramatic play is a natural way of learning for young children (Dunn, 2011) and aims to reengage this ability with students in school contexts. Dunn (2011) and Sawyer (2006) in their studies on drama
educators and creativity, propose that Creative Drama is socio-dramatic play that requires students to create dramatic worlds, allowing students to become ‘other’, experiencing alternative roles and views outside of their lived experience.

Winifred Ward is often credited as one of the first academics to introduce Creative Drama process into the classroom and into academic literature in the early 1900s in America (Goldstein, 1985; Siks, 1998). This pedagogical approach to drama moves away from the notion of ‘Product Drama’ presented by Hornbook (Foreman, 1999) and engages in processes that do not necessarily culminate in a performance product. The work in Creative Drama is centred on students being given the opportunity to explore ideas themselves and take on perspectives of others, expanding their vision beyond their own lived experience.

Creative Drama processes have evolved throughout the 20th and 21st Centuries, being utilised in a myriad of subjects to support creative education in both primary and secondary school settings (Eratay, 2005; Peter, 2003). A study by Rubin and Merrion (2011) into creative music education found that discovery, surprise, and fun are fundamental to a meaningful education, acknowledging a global shift with technological, economic, and industrial forces valuing the power of creativity (Rubin & Merrion, 2011). This desire to develop creativity along with other moral education phenomena, has led to researchers utilising Creative Drama techniques to support young people’s education.

One popular technique amongst drama teachers interested in Creative Drama was the Mantle of the Expert developed by Dorothy Heathcote (Heathcote & Herbert, 1985). The ‘Bronze Age Project’ by Heathcote (Heathcote & Herbert, 1985) documented how the Mantle of the Expert technique could be used to enhance primary school aged students understanding of the Bronze Age. Similarly, Terret (2013) explored a Mantle of the Expert intervention action research study into gender identity and challenges of gender diverse youth, titled ‘The Boy in the Dress’. The study was coordinated by the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama with year five and six students, based on the events of David William’s novel ‘The Boy in the Dress’. Students worked in a variety of roles investigating the disappearance of
a young boy, Denis, who happens to wear a dress, which was based on events from William’s play. The project helped students to empathise with Denis, and understand his experiences of being gender diverse in an Australian school (Terret, 2013).

Creative Drama techniques have been utilised in drama programs to support the learning of both curriculum content as well as social and emotional learning. These learning processes provide an opportunity for students to engage their creativity, their cognitive and affective domains simultaneously, and create options for dialogue with their wider community. The work of Augusto Boal (1931-2009) in his development of ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’ (Etmanski, 2014) is another key drama process that utilises drama’s potential to create learning through play, imagination and emotions.

**Forum Theatre**

Forum Theatre aims to empower communities to engage in critical and effective discourse to develop strategies that will support them in combating oppression. The Forum Theatre process sits within the practice of Theatre of the Oppressed. This style of theatre is a collection of tools, games and techniques developed by Brazilian theatre maker Augusto Boal, driven towards combatting oppression and creating options for social change. Boal’s work originated from his passion to combat the oppressive government of Brazil in the 1950’s and 60’s through cognitive empowerment of the people. Boal was heavily influenced by socialist ideology and the work of Paulo Freire in his seminal text ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed’ (Freire, 2000). Boal believed that theatre was a weapon that can be used to combat the oppressions faced by minority groups, with the stage serving as a rehearsal for life, empowering communities to take action against imbalances of power (Boal, 1979).

Within the Theatre of the Oppressed tool kit, is Forum Theatre, which is an interactive style of theatre that provides opportunity for its audience to influence characters’ behaviour and change the outcomes of the play. Forum Theatre’s pedagogy is influenced by Paulo Friere’s dialogic philosophy of education, where Rodriguez, Rich, Hasting, and Page (2006) suggest that, Boal's vision is embodied in dramatic techniques that activate passive spectators to become spect-actors (engaged participants rehearsing strategies for personal and social change).
The devising process Boal envisaged for the development of Forum Theatre projects is referred to as the ‘Rainbow of Desire’ (Boal, 1995). The Rainbow of Desire is a strategy of theatre devising and exploration utilising the activities Boal recorded in his seminal work ‘Games for Actors and Non Actors’ (Boal, 2002), outlining strategies for supporting communities to explore their oppressions.

Hammer (2001) investigated Graeae Theatre Company’s professional tour of ‘Playback’ a Forum Theatre performance for secondary school students in Britain. Graeae Theatre Company is a professional theatre company in Britain for disabled actors and their work ‘Playback’ aimed to supporting young people’s awareness and empathy towards disability and diversity. The study examined four performances at four different secondary schools for students aged 14 – 18 years, collecting data through detailed field notes, critical reviews of the performance and student feedback surveys. The study by Hammer found that the presentation of ‘Playback’ was an engaging medium for the students and created a learning environment that engaged both their cognitive and affective domains, supporting their empathy towards disability and diversity (Hammer, 2001).

Rutten, Biesta, Dekovi, Stams, Schuengel, and Verweel (2010) investigated a pilot study to examine possible effects of a Forum Theatre intervention performance on moral team atmosphere, moral reasoning, empathy and on- and off-field antisocial and prosocial behaviour in male adolescent soccer players from 10-18 years of age (n= 99) (Rutten, et al., 2010). The study presented Forum Theatre performances to soccer club members then engaged in interactive discussion and problem solving through a series of sports related moral challenges, collecting data through the use of a pre- and post- test participant self-response survey. Small changes were found in moral atmosphere and on/off field anti-social behaviour; however, the results suggest a more intensive, long-term intervention would wield more statistically significant change.

Day (2002) developed a study titled ‘Putting Yourself in Someone Else’s Shoes’, using a 90-minute Forum Theatre performance run by professional actors for 11-15 year olds (n=60) exploring issues of homelessness and refugees. Data was collected through descriptive observations and semi-structured
interviews with the students. The research revealed that engaging in Forum Theatre performance supported students’ ability to engage emotionally with topics as well as reflect on their own context and behaviours. Whilst change in participant empathy was observed, the inability to follow up with the participants after the study limited the growth that was possible.

The literature reflects the range of disciplines that Forum Theatre can be used as a pedagogical model for education. The literature suggests that Forum Theatre is an engaging practice that provides an enjoyable and new platform for students to learn complex constructs such as professionalism and homelessness support, as well as its potential to develop empathy.

**Summary**

In summary, existing literature breaks the phenomenon of empathy into three main domains; cognitive, affective, and behavioural. Drama processes of Actor Training, Creative Drama and Forum Theatre, have strong links to each domain of empathy, having been used as tools in existing literature to explore and train a person’s ability to practice empathy. Researchers in these fields found that engagement in drama processes positively influenced participant empathy.

Literature exists within a variety of disciplines to support the positive benefits of using drama processes in the development of participant empathy (Bell, 2017; Burton, 2010; Day, 2002; Deloney & Graham, 2002; DiNapoli, 2009; Goodwin & Deady, 2012; Waite & Rees, 2014). However, there is a lack of empirical evidence to inform drama-based programs that aim to develop empathy in adolescents within a school setting. The current study explores a range of drama processes in a teaching program that are effective in developing three domains of empathy in adolescents. The aim of the research is to address if the content developed can increase participant empathy, as well as identify which elements work best in achieving this goal. This is a step towards filling the gap within the literature and curriculum, informing current practice and provide a pathway forward for future research.
Chapter 3 - Method

Chapter Overview
This chapter outlines theoretical frameworks and epistemological assumptions of the research that guided its development and implementation. The importance of epistemological and ontological assumptions and philosophical position are discussed and the theoretical model for The Empathy Program intervention, detailing correlations between drama and empathy are presented. The methodology and procedure of the study are then presented, detailing the intervention and data collection process.

Theoretical Framework for Empathy
The structure developed by King (2011) (Figure 1) was used as a theoretical model to contextualise the findings of this study, as it provides a clear framework within which to present the complex phenomena related to empathy. The study utilised three key dimensions outlined by King to measure a change related to these domains of empathy.

![The Structure of Empathy](image)

Figure 1. The structure of Empathy (King, 2011)

King (2011) presents a model of empathy in social work practice that outlines the three key domains of the process and subset elements of each ‘dimension’. The affective dimension is comprised of emotional engagement and connection between subject and target, which require skills in perceiving
the emotional world of others. The cognitive dimension involves conceptual processing that requires a level of objectivity and distance from the emotional state of another and a careful assessment of the context presented (King, 2011). This dimension is comprehension and analysis section of the empathic process, using perspective taking to understand the reasoning behind another’s alternate affective state. The behavioural dimension involves interpersonal motivations and actions, which are outward directed and altruistic in nature (King, 2011). This final dimension reflects help-giving, pro-social behaviour that is resultant from affective and cognitive empathy, which is concrete and practical.

King’s model is designed for the field of social work, but draws on literature from a variety of disciplines that supports its validity in educational research. Subset elements of each dimension are related specifically to social work and worker-client relationships, and therefore do not transpose completely within a school environment. Due to this, as well as the limited scope of the study, research contextualised the analysis within the three core dimensions of King’s model, and not the six subsets presented.

**Philosophical Approach**

This study adopted a social constructivist philosophy to guide ontological and epistemological assumptions of the research. Social constructivist theory suggests "knowledge is seen as constructed by an individual’s interaction with a social milieu in which he or she is situated” (Airasian & Walsh, 1997, p. 445) and that students construct their understanding of reality and scaffold their learning as they go (O'Toole, 2006). This philosophy asserts that concepts such as gender, intelligence, or empathy are created not discovered, and that knowledge and learning is social in origin (Vygostsky, 1978). Nelson (1994) argues that social constructivism exists as a challenge to positivism and posits that the ‘facts’ generated by positivist scientists are in truth determined by the scientists themselves, rather than by objective reality (1994).

Drama is flexible and responsive (Boal, 1979) and a social constructivist approach to research allows the intervention to acknowledge the context of each participant and create learning from a position they are able to engage in. This approach allows for student voice to influence the direction of the
interventions and be collected as valid data which provides an otherwise unattainable insight into the learning process and experiences of the participants (Davie & Galloway, 1996; Wilson & Wing, 1999). Dewy (1990) suggests that a social constructivist pedagogy provides discourse communities that encourage students to explore and apply big ideas to real world phenomena that they can see in new perspectives, which is an identical objective to Creative Drama and Forum Theatre processes.

Paris (2011) suggests that knowledge can be seen as the collective generation of meaning among individuals and, as such, learning environments should embrace collaboration, interactivity, student-based learning, and diversity within the classroom. It is these elements of social constructivism as a philosophy that allows for the context of individuals, groups and emotions to inform pedagogy and shape learning, which is essential for social discourse, as well as drama and empathy, therefore making it appropriate for this study.

**Research Design**

The research was guided by a Design Research methodology (Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2004), which was created to carry out formative research; to test and refine educational designs based on existing literature. The study adopted a case study method within Design Research methodology, seeking to analyse the phenomenon of empathy within specific contexts of the participants’ class.

The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, a paradigm based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions of social constructivism, which allows flexibility in methods and methodologies to best support the study in question. The mixed-methods paradigm is appropriate for this education-based study as it acknowledges the complexities of education as a research area and accepts that “...there are singular and multiple realities that are open to empirical inquiry and orients itself toward solving practical problems in the ‘real world’” (Creswell & Clark, 2007, pp. 20-28). The mixed-method paradigm is based on the assumption that “many research questions can be answered using different theories, data sets, and analytic strategies” (Bergman, 2010, p. 173) allowing for the ‘mix’ of ‘methods’ to occur. Quantitative data provides evidence for statistically significant change in empathy amongst the students, whilst qualitative data provides evidence for
how this change occurred.

A case study design was utilised in the current study. A case study can be defined as the study of complexities and particularities of an individual case (e.g. one student, a single classroom, a specific school context) and coming to understand these activities within a broader context (O'Toole, 2006; Stake, 1995). The case study method is appropriate and valuable in drama education research as it allows for the agency of individual participants to be present in research, positioning them as experts and leaders rather than only data. The case study method also, as Leedy and Ormrod (2001) suggest, is helpful for learning more about poorly understood phenomenon, especially if the phenomenon is complex and hard to distinguish from its context, such as empathy in a classroom.

Denzin’s concept of ‘Triangulation’ (1970), is also an important element of mixed-method methodology, focusing on “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena” (Jick, 1979, p. 608), and was utilised in this study. This approach to methodology aims to produce a more complete picture by combining information from complementary kinds of data or sources and creating a broader scope of understanding (Denscombe, 2008). Collection of both qualitative and quantitative data allows the complex set of data required to measure the construct of empathy within a school context.

“Design Research”

“Design Research”, coined by Collins (1992) and Brown (1992), emerged as a new research methodology designed to support implementation of complex interventions in active school, real world contexts, based on prior literature and study. Design Research practice is similar to that of action research, but focuses on the development of new teaching material and curriculum, informed by a detailed synthesis of existing works (Collins, Joseph & Bielaczyc, 2004). Design Research methodology involves ‘progressive refinement’ (Collins et al., 2004), whereby, a ‘first concept’ is introduced to the real world (the school classroom) and tried, then the design is continually edited and adapted to best support the program in achieving its learning objectives.
Design Research theory is driven by a dual goal of refining or updating practice and theory, to ensure the best synthesis of both in future research. Brown and Campione (1996) suggest that the design should be seen as an integrated system within the school context, whereby an element of the design that is not working can and should be altered by the research to fit participants and the study. Collins, Joseph, and Bielaczyc (2004) propose that Design Research experiments “are contextualized in educational settings, but with a focus on generalizing from those settings to guide the design process” (p. 38), making the mixed-methods approach of triangulated qualitative and quantitative data appropriate for this type of study.

Design Research methodology is also appropriate for this study as it supports the development and exploration of the intervention design for this study and provides a strong guideline for analysis and adaption. The methodology allowed room for The Empathy Program to be tested in its current form and alterations to be made to fit real-world contexts that the study took place in. The focus on developing new teaching curriculum proposed by Collins, Joseph, and Bielaczyc (2004), mirrors objectives of this study and its research into the synthesis of drama process to develop teaching materials around empathy. The methodology guided the method and procedure of this study and acted as a theoretical base to inform changes made to the intervention.

**Quantitative Phase**

The first research question in this study, exploring a change in empathy amongst adolescents after the intervention, is best supported with quantitative data as it provides a model for objective empirical observation about change in participants’ empathy (Hoy, 2010; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Quantitative research is dedicated to scientific investigation that emphasise control and quantified measures of performance (Proctor & Capaldi, 2006). The quantitative researcher aims to identify patterns of behaviour in order to make generalisations about groups of subjects and wider communities (Hoy, 2010).

Quantitative data was collected with a self-response Likert-scale empathy measure, the Basic Empathy Scale (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006), and was implemented at the beginning of the intervention and immediately
following the intervention. Literature highlights several studies that have completed confirmatory factor analysis, proving the Basic Empathy Scale’s validity and reliability to measure a change in empathy (Andreasson & Dimberg, 2008; Geng, Xia, & Qin, 2012; Jollife & Farrington, 2004; Vossen, Piotnowski, & Valkenburg, 2015).

An Italian validation of the Basic Empathy Scale developed by Albiero, Matricardi, Speltri and Toso (2009), using confirmatory factor analysis, found “reasonable data fit with the two hypothesized Basic Empathy Scale domains of Cognitive Empathy and Affective Empathy” (Albiero, Matricardi, Speltri, & Toso, 2009, p. 393). The study with a sample (n=655) of Italian adolescents proposed that scale reliability was satisfactory and that the Basic Empathy Scale has good internal consistency.

A change in empathy cannot be measured with word data or qualitative methods, as the subjectivity of such an approach would negate the transferability and validity of the data. Therefore, a quantitative, structured survey that has a unified construct of empathy for all participants supports strong reliability and validity of the indication of change that was made from the data. Data collected by the survey is tentative due to the small size of the participant group and scope of the study.

**Qualitative Phase**

The second research question, exploring students’ voice in their experience of the learning, is well supported by the qualitative paradigm which focuses on the individual and their lived experience within their own context (Saldana, Leavy, & Beretvas, 2011). Qualitative researchers seek rich, deep interpretations of human experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and avoid generalising too grossly with the aim of highlighting important differences surrounding personal experiences of complex ideas (Pring, 2010). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) suggest that behaviour can only be understood by the researcher sharing the frame of reference of their participants, underscores a need for participants to contribute personalised data. This study explored participants’ personal opinions and experiences, which had an influence on direction of the study, making it an essential set of data for this study.
When involved in drama, students are able to generate learning within their own ‘fertile contexts’ (O’Neil, 1995) and new ways of knowing emerge, which is best articulated by the students themselves. Thus, including participants’ voice is essential to understanding this learning. Use of participant reflection journals supports the generation of personalised data, allowing for context to influence reasoning (Hammersley & Campbell, 2012). This element of the research allows an insight that is otherwise unattainable, if only a quantitative methodology was employed.

Student journals provided rich data and triangulate well with quantitative data provided by the self-response surveys, which makes it an essential component of this study. Drama is a subject that focuses on a personal journey, working through an individual’s context to generate opportunities for learning, which can only be examined when student voice is generated as a set of data within the study.

Literature suggests that journaling is a useful process for linking theory with practice, and developing the skills of a reflective practitioner Ruthman et.al. (2004), but highlights the importance of clear structure and strong scaffolding for adolescent participants when reflecting (Epp, 2008). Therefore, this study chose the ‘see, think, wonder’ Visible Thinking Routine (Lowe, Prout, & Murcia, 2013), used in the form of a learning journal. The reflection journals used the following three questions as the basis for the semi-structured responses form participants: 1) What did I see/do?; 2) What did I think?; and, 3) What did it make me wonder?

Mallik (1998) proposes that journaling is more effective when dedicated time is given to the process. Therefore, students completed their reflections in class with support from the researcher and classroom teacher where needed, and were allowed to complete their reflections at home if desired.

**Intervention Design**

The Empathy Program attempts to mirror the empathic process, from affective, to cognitive, to communicative empathy. Figure 1 outlines links highlighted in the literature between drama processes explored in the study and the process of empathy. Figure 2 details three units that made up the 10-week program, and domains of empathy that were explored during that unit. The Actor Training unit developed skills related to affective empathy and a
readiness to begin the empathic process. The Creative Drama unit focused on
cognitive empathy and perspective taking, creating a variety of imaginative
role-play settings for students to explore emotions of characters in worlds
different to their own. The final unit on Forum Theatre created a platform for
students to practice both affective and cognitive empathy, along with trial
communicative empathy in real time situations – all within the safety of a
drama classroom. Appendix L outlines links between the activities within The
Empathy Program and current literature.

Figure 2: Theoretical Construct for a Drama Based Education Program
Data Analysis

**Quantitative Phase.** Data from the 20-item self-response survey (Basic Empathy Scale) were analysed using a pair-samples t-test to compare means, using SPSS software. This analysis indicated if *The Empathy Program* was effective in creating a change in participants’ empathy through exposure to the selected drama processes. The means of the control group and experimental group were compared in pre- and post-tests to determine if there was a significant change after the intervention.

This null hypothesis for this study was that there would be no statistically significant change in participants’ empathy scores on the Basic Empathy Scale after the intervention.

**Qualitative Phase.** Qualitative data analysis involved analysis of reflective journal summaries provided by participants at the end of the ten weeks. Data was analysed using processes outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). Analysis of qualitative data involves exploration of similarity-based and contiguity-based relationships within the data (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014). Similarity-based relationships are based on identification of common features within the data, whereas contiguity-based relationships involve juxtaposition of items within the data to identify connection, rather than just similarities and differences (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014; Maxwell & Miller, 2008).

Similarity-based relationships within the data were explored through coding, which is viewed as a categorising strategy to analyse qualitative data (Maxwell & Miller, 2008). Coding synthesised the data down into three distinct streams of organisational, substantive and theoretical categories (Maxwell, 2012) that guided the coding process and supported further analysis. Contiguity-based relationships were identified through analysis of coded data categories collected from the journal summaries. The journal summaries were then analysed through the use of NVivo software (QSR International, 2011) that was used to code reflection data for common themes. This category based coding and analysis system for interpreting data is appropriate for the case-study style intervention of this design research study as coding occurs across one particular case, rather than many different contexts (Yin, 2003). Use of categorising and connecting strategies to analyse qualitative data allowed
a strong framework to organise data as well as the flexibility to discover new understandings and relationships to the phenomena being explored.

**Rigour**

**Quantitative Phase.** Rigour of quantitative data collected in this study is supported by the validity and reliability of the empathy scale being used. Literature highlights several studies (Andreasson & Dimberg, 2008; Geng, Xia, & Qin, 2012; Jollife & Farrington, 2004; Vossen, Piotnowski, & Valkenburg, 2015), which have completed confirmatory factor analysis, proving the Basic Empathy Scale’s validity and reliability to measure a change in empathy. Content, construct and concurrent validity of the scale have been tested by confirmatory factor analysis conducted within the literature, positioning the Basic Empathy Scale as a rigorous instrument to use in data collection for this study.

**Qualitative Phase.** Standards of quality and rigour within qualitative research are not set and standardised like quantitative data analysis, however, quality of qualitative research, trustworthiness or rigour of any study should be addressed as thoroughly as possible (Gray, 2009). The researcher addressed the following criteria, adapted by Gray (2009): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, by collecting adequate and appropriate data within the clear guidelines outlined below. The research also considered a variety of rigour assessment points suggested by Barbour (2014), including ‘patterning’ and ‘refining codes’.

Credibility, Gray (2009) argues, is the collection and processing of adequate data. Journal summaries as initial data, along with completed 10 week journals as additional data if required, were adequate to analyse the participants’ opinions on, and learning from The Empathy Program. The semi-structured journal reflection questions were clear and specific, taking care not to lead participant responses or openly support or reject potential participant views (Gray, 2009), further contributing to the credibility of the study.

Miles and Huberman (2014) discuss the importance of diversity within sampling and participants, as a key measure for internal generalisation. The scope of this study meant that it could only engage with one class of students, limiting its diversity. However, a demographic survey was conducted with the
students to gain an insight into the diversity within the small sample size and support the internal generalisations.

Transferability involves the generalisation of findings from one study to a wider populous than the individuals studied, supporting the validity of the findings. Maxwell and Chmiel (2014) propose that transferability does not require the discovery of the general conditions under which a finding or theory is valid; instead, it involves a transfer of knowledge from a study to a specific new situation. Therefore, this study aimed to produce a set of knowledge about The Empathy Program intervention that can be, assuming the definition from Maxwell and Chmiel, be transferred to different contexts (classrooms).

Dependability refers to the trustworthiness of the process used to reach conclusions. This was met by providing an audit trail, including field notes and reflections on coding and analysis.

**Participants**

The participants in the study were recruited from a Year 10 drama class (aged 14–16) in a metropolitan secondary school in Perth, Western Australia. In total, 15 students participated in the intervention, all Year 10 students aged either 15 or 16. Six of the participants were male and eight of the participants were female. 17 students participated in the control group, all of whom were Year 10 students, aged 15 or 16. Of the control group, eight were male and nine were female. Participants were engaged as ‘co-researchers’, working with the teacher/researcher to explore the concept of empathy and how it can be developed through the intervention. The ‘co-researchers’ were engaged as critical practitioners, continually reflecting on the process of the intervention, as well as their learning during the 10-week program.

Hoy (2010) suggests that a control group should be used in quantitative research, whereby an experimental group receives the intervention and the control group does not. Use of a control group allows for a comparison between participants that have received the ‘treatment’ and those that have not, comparing the effect on the dependent variable, in this case, empathy. Therefore, a control group was utilised in this study, whereby they were taken from another class from Autumn Hills College, selected randomly and asked to complete the self-response survey at the same time as the experimental group. This control group then continued with their planned program led by
the classroom teacher and had no involvement in the intervention conducted by the researcher. Once the intervention was complete, both experimental and control groups completed the post self-response survey. The Empathy Program was then offered to the control group after the experimental group had completed the intervention.

No restrictions were placed on criteria for the participants, other than their enrolment in an Autumn Hills College drama class. The data utilised the individual student voice of the participants but was unable to consider any other perspectives (e.g. teachers, parents, different year levels) due to the small scale of the study.

**Materials**

Materials required for this study included a memorandum of understanding (MOU) (see Appendix A) between the researcher and Autumn Hills College Principal (and potentially the Catholic Education Office if they required), information forms (see Appendix C and E) and participation consent forms (see Appendix D and F) were provided to participants and their parents/guardians. These letters detailed the purpose of the study and the nature of participant involvement, as well as contact details for the researcher, supervisors, and an independent person from the Edith Cowan University Research Ethics Team.

Forms were signed by participants and their parents/guardians and held by the researcher. A full 10-week program (including curriculum links, see Appendix B), was included in the MOU signed by the school Principal. This program was provided to the classroom teacher and be available to any participants or their parents/guardians if required.

Data collection materials included the pre- and post- structured self-response survey (see Appendix G and I), SPSS software for quantitative data analysis, as well as NVivo software for qualitative data analysis.

Blank A5 art journals were provided by the research to participants to use as their reflective journals. Other miscellaneous materials were used for the activities within the intervention (paper, balls, and chairs) and were provided by the researcher.
Procedure

Prior to commencing data collection, ethics approval was obtained from Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee and the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia (16070 CORBETT).

Once ethics approval was granted, the Principal of Autumn Hills College was contacted, along with the classroom teacher, to confirm the involvement in hosting the study. The meeting included a detailed overview of the purpose, process, requirements and expectations of the study and clarification of which students would be involved as participants. A positive response was followed up with a MOU (see Appendix A) sent to the school co-signed by the researcher, the classroom teacher and the Principal. The MOU included a detailed 10-week overview of The Empathy Program (see Appendix B) for the Principal and drama teacher. If the school was unable to agree to the demands of the study, three alternative schools had expressed interest in hosting the study and would have been contacted individually if required. All schools would have been thanked for their interest in the research to maintain a positive and respectful working relationship.

Once the MOU had been co-signed by all parties, the Principal was provided with a copy of the information form (see Appendix C) and participation letter (see Appendix D) that was distributed to all parents of students in the selected class. The students were provided with their own information letter (see Appendix E) and consent form (see Appendix F). Forms were signed and returned before the beginning of the study and students who did not complete and return both forms were not able to participate in the study and were not included in the data collection.

When all participating students were confirmed, an Intervention Schedule was created and signed by the researcher, classroom teacher and Principal, confirming times the researcher would be working with participants. Appropriate workshop space was booked at the school in accordance with times agreed to on the schedule. The first lesson of the intervention began with all participants completing the Pre-intervention Self Response Survey (Basic Empathy Scale) (see Appendix G). The control group, was also administered the Pre-intervention Self Response Survey at a time as similar as possible to the
experiment group. Data was collected anonymously and not analysed until after the intervention was completed.

An Initial ‘meet and greet’ lesson was conducted on the first day of term. The lesson outlined objectives and processes were explored, as well as types of data that were to be collected (self-response survey and weekly written journal reflections) and the participants’ roles as co-researchers. Lessons were conducted at agreed times over the course of the term according to the intervention schedule. The classroom drama teacher was present at all times during sessions and held duty-of-care responsibilities. Lessons were conducted in a safe and supportive manner that encouraged and supported participation, providing an ‘opt-out’ area if a student felt uncomfortable or needed to take a break from the session. All sessions began with a ‘check-in’ process assessing students’ energy and emotions, and finished with an anonymous ‘check-out’ process where students described how they were feeling as a result of the session. Students were reminded of the opportunity to seek appropriate support (follow up discussion with classroom teacher, school psychologist, another appropriate staff member) if so required.

Lessons were run according to The Empathy Program, with warm ups subject to change as appropriate to time/weather/space/other conditions provided. As per the Design Research methodology adopted for this study, The Empathy Program was continually reviewed through short meetings between the researcher and classroom teacher at the end of each week of the intervention, to allow for ‘progressive refinement’ (Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2004). Meetings took place in the classroom and sought to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the program as it was running. Changes to the program were informed by observations and field notes (Gray, 2009; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) from the researcher, along with group consultation with participants. These refinements to the program, as Brown and Campione (1996) suggest, worked to fit the program into the context of the school, and as such, context appropriateness was the catalyst for making such refinements.

Reflection journals were completed by the participants after each week of the intervention and were a series of unstructured responses, based
on focus topics provided by the researcher. The list of focus topics (see Appendix H) supported the students’ analysis of their learning, with a key drive to reflect their own voice and understanding of the topics explored. Weekly reflections were completed outside of class-time to maximise content delivery during sessions. If, however, students were struggling to complete reflections outside of the sessions, time was allocated at the end of each week for reflections.

It was planned to culminate The Empathy Program into a live public performance, devised and performed by participants, and directed by the researcher. The performance would not have been used as data collection, however, it was to be used as a focal point of The Empathy Program to increase engagement and achievement for students. Due to limitations in delivery of the program and based on advice from consultation with the classroom teacher and participants, the public performance outcome was abandoned. Instead, the participants were engaged in the process throughout the intervention and did not require the motivation of a public performance. This missing element of the program did not affect the results of the study as the performance was planned as a separate addition, outside the data collection process.

Seidman (2013) suggests that consideration should be given to time and other resources, especially for participants. As such, the study only engaged with participants during their normal class time as not to interrupt the rest of their learning experiences. Consideration was given to Autumn Hills College and the hosting drama teacher to ensure the intervention fitted within curriculum requirements of the specific class. In order to meet this consideration, assessments were conducted by the classroom teacher based on the work generated through the intervention. The research also acknowledged and upheld the values, ethos and practices of Autumn Hills College.

The final session of the intervention included a debrief session for students to reflect on the process as a whole class, as well as to resolve any issues or conflicts that may have arisen during the program. This final session was also used to conduct the post-survey (see Appendix I), which was used for final data collection. Students and classroom teacher were thanked for their
participation in the research and informed about the next stage of the study. The students were then given one week to complete the semi-structured journal summary, based on focus questions provided (see Appendix J). Summaries were collected by the researcher and used for data analysis.

The quantitative data was analysed with statistical analysis SPSS software, and the qualitative data was analysed through coding using NVivo software.
Chapter 4 - Results

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of data collected throughout the intervention. The data is presented in two sections, first examining quantitative data collected through the pre- and post-survey responding to the first research questions. Second, the qualitative data is presented in response to the second research question taking the form of participant journal reflections.

1. Does the application of Actor Training, Creative Drama, and Forum Theatre increase the development of empathy in adolescents?
2. What do adolescent participants identify as the key experiences of The Empathy Program, which were most beneficial to their development of empathy?

Overview

The experimental group and the control group completed the Basic Empathy Scale survey at the beginning of the intervention and then completed the Basic Empathy Scale survey at the conclusion of the intervention. The BES was completed by all participants in both the experimental group and the control group. The BES was completed by 14 of the 15 participants in the experimental group and 14 participants from the control group post-intervention. The participants also completed a weekly reflection after each session and a final reflection at the end of the intervention, generating qualitative data, following the structure outlined in Appendix H and J.

Quantitative Data

Participants answered the 20 questions, in the Basic Empathy Scale before and after completing the intervention (Joliffe & Farrington, 2006).

For analysis, group and participants’ pre-and post-intervention survey results were compared. Questions with a low value response reflecting a more
empathic answer were inversed in analysis for ease of interpretation. For example, in question 1.a: “My friend’s emotions do not affect me much”, a lower score represents a higher level of empathy, so the answers have been reversed to reflect a higher score demonstrating higher empathy.

**Intervention Group**

On the BES, a score of 5 is the highest possible level of empathy that can be recorded by the scale, and a score of 1 is the lowest possible empathy score that can be recorded. The overall empathy means, standard deviation, and standard error of mean from the intervention group from the Basic Empathy Scale (allowing for low score positive answers being reversed) are in Table 1.

Table 1

*Repeated measures t-test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Std. error mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>13</td>
<td>.47147</td>
<td>.13151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4.0077</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>.29920</td>
<td>.08298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data reflected a 0.33-point increase in the average empathy scores for the intervention group over the course of the intervention. This is an increase of 6.6% from the pre-survey to the post-test survey for the intervention group.
Results showed participants had a higher level of empathy after the intervention (mean= 3.68, SD = 4.01) than before the intervention (mean = 2.80, SD = 2.54). A repeated measures t-test found this difference to be significant, $t(12) = -4.04$, $p < 0.002$. Together this suggests that the Empathy Program intervention increase empathy in this group of participants. The effect size for this analysis ($d = 0.83$) was found to exceed Cohen’s (1988) convention for a large effect ($d = .80$).

**Control Group**

The control group completed an identical survey (BES), with the means, standard deviation, and standard error results reported in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Std. error mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>14</td>
<td>.47388</td>
<td>.12665</td>
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<tr>
<td>time 2</td>
<td>3.5107</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.49776</td>
<td>.13303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This data reflects a 0.13-point decrease in the empathy score for the control group over the time of the intervention. This represents a decrease of 2.78% from the pre-survey to the post-test survey for the control group.

Figure 4. Control Group Empathy Averages

Repeated measures t-test. Results showed participants in the control group had a lower level of empathy (mean= 3.68, SD = 4.01) than after the ten-week time period (mean = 2.80, SD = 2.54). A repeated measures t-test found this difference to be significant, $t(12) = -4.04$, $p < 0.002$. The effect size for this analysis ($d = 0.83$) was found to exceed Cohen’s (1988) convention for a large effect ($d = .80$).

Demographic Information

Pre- and post-test survey collected simple demographic information about the participants, including age, gender, years they have studied drama and years they have attended Insert school’s name.

Age. The intervention group had nine participants aged 15 and five participants aged 16 at the pre-survey time point, whilst it had seven participants aged 15 and six participants aged 16 at the post-survey time point. The control group had 10 participants aged 15 and seven participants
aged 16 at the pre-survey time point, whilst it had eight participants aged 15 and six participants aged 16 at the post-survey time point.

During the pre-survey, participants aged 15 scored an average of 3.55 in the intervention group, and 3.29 in the control group. Participants aged 16 scored 3.99 from the intervention group and 4.01 from the control group in the pre-survey. The post-survey saw 15 year olds from the intervention group score 3.9, with 15 year olds from the control group scoring 3.2. 16-year-olds from the intervention group scored 4.04 and participants of the same age in the control group scored 3.85. On average, students aged 16 scored higher than students aged 15 in both surveys. Students aged 16 also saw a larger individual increase between the two surveys than students aged 15.

**Gender.** Literature surrounding empathy in adolescents suggests that female participants have a much higher level of empathy than their male counterparts at similar ages. This study observed similar results between male and female students.

The intervention group had six male and eight female participants during the pre-survey, with six male and seven female participants at the post-survey time point. The control group had eight male and nine female participants during the pre-survey, and six male and eight female participants at the post-survey time point.

The pre-intervention survey saw male participants in the intervention group score an average of 3.45 out of a possible five, with a high score indicating a higher level of empathy. Males in the control group scored a similar average empathy with 3.39 out of five. Female participants in the intervention group and control group performed, as the current research suggests, at a higher level than their male counterparts. The intervention group’s female participants scored an average of 3.99 whilst the control group female participants scored an average of 3.87 at the time of the pre-survey. The post-survey saw male participants in the intervention group score an average of 3.88, with males from the control group scored 3.43. Females from the intervention group scored 4.04 on the post-survey, whilst females in the control group scored 3.81.

**Years Studying Drama.** Participants were asked to record how many years they had studied drama, prior to participating in the intervention.
Participants from both the intervention group and the control group had studied drama between two and four years at the time of the pre-survey, and between two and five years at the time of the post-survey. The years that participants had studied drama saw a slight increase in empathy with every additional year. The pre-survey saw participants who had studied drama for two years score an average of 3.45, three years score an average of 3.49 and four years scored an average of 3.94. The post-survey reflected an increase amongst all groups of participants, and continued the trend of a positive correlation between years studying drama and empathy. Participants in the post-survey who had studied drama for two years scored an average of 3.5, participants having studied for three years scored an average of 3.95, 3 years scored an average of 4.02 and four years saw an average score of 4.15.

**Figure 5. Years Studying Drama**

**Years Attending Autumn College.** The final question participants were asked during the pre-and post-survey regarding demographic information was ‘How many years have you attended Autumn Hills College?’. Participants in both intervention group and control group had attended the college for either three or four years at the time of both surveys. The data does not suggest a correlation between years attended at the same school and empathy.
Affective and Cognitive Empathy

The Basic Empathy Scale used in the pre- and post-intervention survey has a balance of questions for the two key domains of empathy; affective and cognitive. The survey has 11 questions relating to affective empathy and nine questions relating to cognitive empathy.

The intervention group saw an increase in both cognitive and affective empathy from the time of the pre-survey to the post-survey. Cognitive empathy increased from an average of 3.9 across the nine questions to an average of 4.2. Affective empathy increased from an average of 3.45 to an average 3.75.

In both pre- and post-intervention surveys, female participants scored higher in both domains of affective and cognitive empathy. The most notable difference was between the male and female affective empathy during the pre-survey, where male participants scored an average of 3.11, whilst female students scored an average of 3.71. The difference between male and female participant scores decreased in the post-survey. Male participant’s’ affective empathy saw the largest increase as a result of the intervention, increasing from 3.11 to 3.7.

Figure 6. Cognitive and Affective Empathy
School Connectedness

The final set of questions that participants were asked in the survey focuses on their sense of connectedness to Autumn Hills College. Participants’ answers have been inversed during analysis so that a higher score indicates a higher level of connectedness.

The pre-survey score for the intervention group was an average of 3.31 out of a possible 5, for a sense of connectedness, with a range from 1.6 to 5. The control group scored a similar average of 3.27 at the time of the pre-survey. The post-survey saw an increase for the intervention group to an average of 3.97, with a range of 3.2 to 5, and a slight decrease to 3.21 for the control group. Data for both the pre- and post-intervention surveys do not suggest a correlation between school connectedness and empathy.

Individual Participant Case Studies

Data collected from the two surveys were collected confidentially, but each students’ pre- and post-survey answers were connected, so that individual student cases could be analysed.

The majority of participants scored within a small standard deviation of the averages, however, some students were outliers who saw a significant increase in either cognitive or affective empathy during their participation in the survey. For example, Student 2 saw an average increase in their empathy score of 0.85 (17%), moving from a pre-survey score of 2.65 to a post-survey score of 3.5. Similarly, Student 2 saw a large increase of 1.56 points (31.2%) in their affective empathy moving from a pre-survey score of 2, to a post-survey score of 3.56. Student 11 also had a significant increase of 0.75 points (15%) in their average empathy score, moving from 2.9 to 3.65 during the course of the intervention. Student 11 had a similarly large increase in affective empathy as Student 2, seeing an increase of one point (20%) moving from 2.36 to 3.36.

Two participants in the intervention group saw a slight decrease in their average empathy score, a decrease of 0.1 and 0.15 points respectively. The two participants who saw this decrease were the two students who had missed 3 of the intervention sessions, whereas, all other participants attended all sessions or only missed one session. These negative results reflect the role that social desirability have in the collection of quantitative data, especially with young participants. The timing of the pre-survey, being at the beginning
of the intervention may also have influenced the response of these two participants. Time had not been taken at this early stage in the process to create a safe learning environment that allowed for honest responses in the survey. If the pre-survey was administered by the classroom teacher who already held a relationship with the participants, the answers may have changed slightly. The third consideration is the role that learning can play in our self-perception. When first engaging with the intervention, the participants’ level of explicit empathy education was limited, and they completed the survey based on prior assumptions. Through engaging with the intervention, and being exposed to a more detailed analysis of the phenomenon, the participants’ self-perception of their use of empathy may have shifted. The detailed and practical understanding of the process allowed the participants to become more critical of how they use empathy within their daily lives and therefore shift their response to the survey questions.

Qualitative Data

Overview.

Ten participants completed and returned their weekly journal reflections. After each session, participants completed reflection questions (see Appendix H), in their own time, about the content of the lesson. Students also completed a final reflection at the end of the program that used the questions outlined in Appendix J. This qualitative data was collected to answer Research Question 2:

2. What do adolescent participants identify as the key experiences of The Empathy Program, which were most beneficial to their development of empathy?

The focus was on finding student voice within the research and gaining insight into which elements of the program that students felt were most useful. Participants responded positively to the program and all recorded a self-reflected increase in understanding of empathy. Participants identified that their understanding of empathy was lower at the start of the program than it was at completion of the final reflection. Many of the participants identified that they were able to not only understand the complex concept of
empathy, but take it forward into their daily lives and practice it with their friends and family.

This was evident in their final reflection; the participants were asked to respond to the question “How has your understanding of empathy developed over the term?” In this question, participants identified their own personal growth within the skills, with Student 4 stating “At the beginning of the term I did not understand much about empathy but now I feel as if I know a lot more about it,” and Student 7 suggesting that:

My understanding of empathy is a lot stronger now. It has developed through the various activities Scott gave us this term. I understand what it is, how I use it, when I should use it, and how effective it is, not only on stage by in real life

Through this final reflection, students identified that they had developed the confidence to practice empathy in their daily lives, with Student 1 sharing that “My understanding of empathy has developed over the term because by studying empathy I now have a desire to try and understand what the people around me are feeling...”. Student 3 identified that their awareness of emotions in self and others had increased by reflecting “I became more aware of emotions that I had and others had through the activities we did because they made us feel certain emotions.”

Only one student (Student 9) felt that their empathy did not improve during the process because their initial understanding of empathy was already very strong, suggesting “My understanding of empathy didn’t really develop as I already had a pretty good understanding.” Interestingly, Student 9 recorded one of the most significant increases in both cognitive and affective empathy in the quantitative self-response survey discussed earlier.

Through analysis of weekly reflections and, in particular, Question 2 of the final reflection (What were the most effective elements of the program in developing your understanding of empathy?) participants identified a set of key elements of the program that supported their understanding of empathy. The data collected was synthesised down into three ‘key themes’ that were influential in the participants’ learning.
The key themes that emerged from the analysis have been grouped into three overarching domains as follows:

1. **Drama Skills and Process** - specific drama, theatre, and Actor Training techniques that formed the content of the program.

2. **Teaching Strategies** – pedagogical practices that guided the day-to-day practice of the intervention.

3. **Conceptual Understandings** – cognitive and academic understandings of central themes related to empathy that were taught throughout the intervention.

Each domain contains key program elements that were identified by participants as useful in developing their understanding of empathy. Key elements outline specific content or practices that the intervention delivered and explore how they were useful in supporting students in their understanding of empathy. Key program elements are attached to one of three domains and can be seen in the following conceptual model:
Figure 7. Key Themes
Domain 1 - Drama Skills and Processes

**K1:** Imagination – a central skill in the process of cognitive and affective empathy that was used as a central skill across many activities within the intervention.

**K2:** Role-play – perspective taking is an essential process of empathy and a core skill within drama. Role-playing characters in complex settings with a variety of emotions was reported as a highly useful practice.

Domain 2: Teaching Strategies

**K3:** Check-in – each lesson begun with a short check-in asking participants to rate how they are feeling on a scale of 1 – 10.

**K4:** Reflection – many participants recorded that the task of group discussion and personal written reflection after each session was invaluable in developing their understanding of empathy.

**K5:** Explicit Discussion – the nature of discussing empathy directly, both as a conceptual model and as a practical skill was a highlight for many students in their learning.

Domain 3: Conceptual Understanding

**K6:** Empathy vs Sympathy – participants consistently reflected on using the difference between empathy and sympathy as a reference point for understanding the skill.

Domain 1: Drama Skills and Processes

Domain 1 emerged from analysis as a set of key Actor Training and drama processes that participants identified as highly beneficial in their understanding of cognitive and affective empathy. Several different practices were noted by the students but the two key themes of ‘imagination’ and ‘role-play’ were the most common among the reflections by the participants.

**Key Theme 1: Imagination**

The practice of using imagination is a central theme in drama practice, and links strongly to the empathic process. The *Empathy Program* used the technique of imagination throughout the intervention in relation to the
development of cognitive empathy. Participants consistently identified the skill of imagination as an important part of the empathic process and a technique that supported their learning.

Through creative acting tasks and discussion based analysis tasks, participants engaged their imagination consistently during the intervention. Student 9 identified a very simple link between empathy and imagination, stating “Imagination is connected to empathy because we think of outcomes for the situation” which is in reference to creating narrative structures for short scenes. Student 9 found a connection between the predictive nature of imagination and the task of perceiving consequences of an action and how they will affect others. Student 4 highlighted the importance of imagination in empathy through her observation that “...if you can imagine how someone might be feeling you can empathise with them.” This learning was echoed by Student 8 in his reflection, suggesting that “I have learnt ... in order to empathise with someone you need to imagine what they are feeling.” Participants were able to connect their existing ability to imagine others and new environments with their potential to practice empathy in their daily lives.

Participants connected the role of imagination to both the task of practicing empathy in their daily lives, as well as using it as a tool to create truthful and believable characters on stage. Student 1 identified the similarity of skills required to do this both on stage and in real life by stating “Imagination is connected to empathy because we need to imagine what one’s feeling in life or how those in the scene were feeling.” Developing an understanding of the strong connection between imagining what a character in a scene is feeling and practicing empathy in real life, supported the students in building their confidence around the skill of empathy. Student 2 highlight this learning though their reflection, positing that “the program helped me feel more confident to do empathy because it’s just like imagining how my character in drama is feeling.”

Participants saw the integral nature of imagination in the process of empathy through their participation in The Empathy Program. Student 5 summarised the importance effectively, suggesting: “When you feel what someone else is feeling, you cannot do this unless you imagine what they are
going through and then imagine yourself in that position. Therefore, without imagination you cannot feel empathy.”

Through participating in the program, students made the connection to underlying skills that enable someone to practice empathy. Student 4 made a poignant observation, reflecting that the program helped her to see that “imagination put empathy to work.” She continued to reflect on the importance of empathy, theorising “We have to imagine what another’s feeling and put it to work. Or draw on emotions to put the idea/feeling to work.”

The Empathy Program supported students in practicing imagination within a variety of personal, real world, and fictional settings. Participants also reflected, after completing the intervention that they were able to connect the skill of imagination with empathy and see how they can use their known skill of imagination to practice empathy. Participants reflected a balanced amount of comments for both seeing imagination as a tool for drama and as a tool for their daily lives.

**Key Theme 2: Role-Play**

Central to the three domains of The Empathy Program, Actor Training, Process Drama, and Forum Theatre, is the task of taking on a role and playing within those given circumstances. There is connection between the task of playing a role in drama and that of taking another’s perspective, or theory of mind, essential in the practice of empathy.

Participants engaged in a variety of role-play based activities that included short form warm-up activities, that take a few minutes, as well as long form structured improvisations that require the creation full length scenes, as well as whole class role-plays. Participants responded positively to these activities and reflected upon them as highlights of the program. Student 5 reflected on long form improvisation lesson suggesting “This was a very good exercise I really enjoyed it” whilst Student 7 reflected that “This was one of my favourite lessons because I felt happy and enlightened and still feeling an 8 out of 10 [a reference to the ‘check-in’ process discussed in key theme 3].”

Overall, the majority of students enjoyed these activities because, as Student 5 stated in his weekly reflection “I enjoyed this week’s activities because we got to act.”
Through engagement in role-play based activities, participants were able to take the theory they were learning, combine it with activities on cognitive and affective empathy that they had been working on so far, and put it all into practice. Student 4 summarised this succinctly in her final reflection, sharing that “I feel the most effective aspects were the acting games because we were able to take the things we had learnt and put them in a practical environment.” Participants enjoyed the opportunity of practising the third empathic domain, behavioural empathy, throughout role-play activities. Participants observed a challenge of how they can use empathy in a practical way, with Student 2 recalling:

…it was during the scene where I was an astronaut and we had to decide which person to leave behind on the planet where I realised that I was doing empathy. I was feeling bad for the characters and was feeling stressed about something I had no idea I could experience.

Through analysis of the reflections, role-play based activities supported the students in developing their empathy, through giving them the opportunity to experience new emotions. Student 7 recalls:

The activity we did in Week 6 where we made a scene and had to feel a feeling we have never felt before...We put down the wrong dog and neither of us have done/felt that so we had to imagine how we feel/react.

The concept of experiencing new emotions, or emotions participants did not think they could experience was a common theme. Participants felt that the opportunity to role-play within creative scenes provided opportunity to extend their empathy, and feel more confident in using the skill in their daily lives. Student 1 stated that “...playing a politician having to start a war was totally new but I could imagine how they might have felt” and Student 10 made the observation that “…we needed empathy to play these scenes.” Although participants did not make strong connections in their weekly reflections to the way that role-play activities extended their learning about
behavioural empathy, their final reflections at the end of the intervention consistently referred to the importance of the scene acting activities.

Participants also made connections between role-play based activities and the practice of using empathy to respond to their fellow actors. In weekly reflection, student 8 pointed out that “It [the role-play activities] connected to empathy because we connected with our partners and understood them on an emotional level to be able to do the task.” Participants saw the task of a structured improvisation (being supplied with given circumstances and context, then tasked with continuing an improvised scene) as a good test of empathy. They had to empathise with themselves, their character, other characters, as well as real emotions of their group members. Sometimes participants’ emotional relationships with each other as group members was the most poignant part of the reflection. Student 8 also recalled that in one of the role-play based activities that “I didn’t really like this activity because of some people in my group. I tend to not enjoy when people cut off others’ ideas or reject them entirely,” whereas Student 7, in reflecting on the same activity stated “I absolutely loved this activity because my group worked together really well and we vibed well off each other. It was a useful activity.”

The relationships existent within the group at any given time was another set of emotions that participants had to understand, on top of their own and their characters. These pockets of emotion, real or fictional, presented opportunities for the students to apply their skills and practice their behavioural empathy in planned and sometimes unplanned contexts.

After engaging in one of the role-play based lessons, Student 5 developed a summary of empathy and how it is connected to those around us, proposing that: “Empathy is recognising someone else’s emotions. It is not just learning their story and then feeling sorry for them, it is actually putting yourself in their shoes and feeling what they are whether its pain or happiness.”

**Domain 2: Teaching Tools**

The second domain in which elements of The Empathy Program were most beneficial to their development of empathy focuses on specific pedagogical practices. Although not directly related to theoretical connections made during the literature review of this study, these techniques were of significant note to the participants. Techniques outlined in Key Theme
3 and Key Theme 4 are common drama pedagogies that were directly connected to how each of the content points were delivered. Key Theme 5, however, is not specifically a drama based pedagogy but is an underlying principle of The Empathy Program. The participants saw that the explicit and direct focus on empathy, as opposed to treating it as incidental learning, supported their development and understanding of the concept.

**Key Theme 3: Check-In**

The check-in process was a simple practice that was used to start each of the intervention sessions. The group would sit down in a circle answering the question “How do you feel right now on a scale of one to ten? Ten being that you feel really great, one being the opposite of that.” This process was run at the beginning of every session.

The check-in process was used to focus participants, establish a clear routine for the beginning of each intervention session and to understand the mood and energy of each participant. Participants in The Empathy Program engaged very well with the practice and reflected on it consistently in their journals. Participants found that the process was an opportunity to connect with “real world emotions” (Student 2) and practice their empathy with each other. Further, participants saw the check-in process as a chance to practise their behavioural empathy with emotions that their peers were feeling as opposed to only using it in fictional settings.

Student 10 reflected on the check-in process as an important activity, explaining that:

*The scale of 1-10 stood out. Being told by someone that they were a low number without me able to realise that. It also affected the way I was towards them. A low number helped me to try and be extra nice towards them.*

Participants found that the check-in process highlighted how complex emotions can be, and that it is not always a simple task to accurately understand the feelings of those around them. Student 7 articulated her experience of the process and why it was useful by suggesting:

*I found that at the beginning of the lesson where everyone said how they felt on a scale from 1 – 10 was important. Think this*
because it lets everyone know how you are and that you may or may not feel 100% and today might just not be your day.

As the process was repeated, participants began to develop an understanding of the importance of the check-in process and how it can be used for their learning, with Student 3 reflecting “…I did not understand the reflections in the beginning, on how we felt, but then I saw how useful they could be.” Participants began to connect the skill of observation, which was developing in the Actor Training component of The Empathy Program, to the task of practising empathy in real life. In completing her final reflection, Student 7 reviewed her weekly reflections and made the discovery of her learning, writing:

Reading back to my first week I did not enjoy Scott’s class, and did not see the point in the concentration game. But now I see; he tried to get us to concentrate and tune in to everything else. The smell would make us feel something (hunger). The birds would make us feel (peaceful.)

The check-in process also became effective as a shared language for participants in supporting their emotional literacy development. Participants were able to use the simple scale of one to ten as a discourse to discuss emotions during their participation in the intervention and in their reflections. One participant used the check-in scale each week in her reflection, reflecting on how she felt at the beginning of each lesson and how the activities changed her mood. The language of the check-in process supported the participants in understanding how to share and interpret different emotions and to extend their emotional literacy confidence.

Positive Learning Environments: Participants felt that this process was an effective tool in developing a positive learning environment. Previous reflections in Key Theme 2: Role-play, highlighted the importance of a positive working environment and the impact it could have on participants engagement in, and reflection on, an activity. Student 10 made consistent
observations about the energy of the room, reflecting on a particular lesson and the usefulness of the check-in process, sharing that:

*The flow of energy of the room amongst the class was good. It was very positive and made me feel very happy to be there and to learn as an individual as well as a class. The set of activities and instructions given certainly helped with that good positive energy*

Participants highlighted the importance of a positive working energy and a safe learning environment. The participants often highlighted in their reflections when they had a good experience with their group and connected this to a positive learning opportunity. Whereas when students recorded a negative experience in their working environment, they often did not reflect on the learning involved in that lesson. The check-in process was noted in the data as a useful opportunity to practice empathy with peers where the sense of safety and trust that was built through this task appears as a useful feature. One Empathy Program participant, when reflecting on the check-in process, felt that “*It was very positive and made me feel very happy to be there and to learn as an individual as well as a class*”, reflecting the role the consistent start to each intervention session had in creating a safe learning environment.

**Key Theme 4: Reflection**

‘Arts Responses’ forms one of the four main areas of the WA lower school drama curriculum and often takes the form of a written reflection journal, among more structured response based tasks.

Whilst engaging in *The Empathy Program* intervention, participants completed a weekly reflection in a provided journal that focused on questions outlined in Appendix H. These reflections were completed by participants in their own time during the week before the following session. Participants also completed a large final written reflection at the end of the intervention program, which was completed in class. All reflections were completed individually and confidentially. These journals were used as the instrument to collect qualitative data being discussed in this chapter. Through analysis of the data, the journals themselves and the task of consistently reflecting emerged
as an important part of the program, from participants’ perspectives, to support their understanding of empathy.

Participants noted three different types of reflection that formed the daily practice of the intervention and reflected that it was “very helpful” (Student 7) and “…always added to what I learnt in class” (Student 5). Participants discussed the independent written reflections in their journals as the most effective type of reflection they completed suggesting that it supported their learning. Student 10 shared in their final reflection that “Most effective elements of the program were the reflections after a session. This is because the reflection helped me to think or realise the importance of the activity.” The structured and familiar nature of doing a weekly reflection supported participants to use it as a learning tool for themselves, in addition to work completed during the intervention.

Participants also reflected about the second type of reflection that was conducted during the intervention, verbal discussion at the end of each session, used as a wrap up to finish the class each week. Student 8 recalled that “The time spent discussing at the end of class stood out, it helped set in what we learned” and Student 2, in their final reflection suggested that the most useful element of the program in developing their understanding of empathy was “Answering the questions and the end of the lesson and keeping it in a journal.”

Participants also saw the process of having a discussion with structured and semi-structured reflection questions briefly after different activities as a useful process for extending their learning. Student 8 felt that the “…reflection questions were most effective. It caused me to really think about the activities we did and how I can apply my knowledge to my life,” which was a sentiment echoed by many of the participants. The opportunity to constantly pause the rapid pace of action in the room and connect it to either theory or the real world, was a highlight for the participants.

Participants talked about the process of reflection as supporting their learning in a few different ways during the intervention process. Some participants felt that the reflection process helped them to “…remember what we did during the lesson” (Student 4) and consolidate what they had achieved. Other students felt that reflections supported them in being able to
make a connection between what was done in class and its relevance to what we were studying. Student 10 summarised this effectively in their final reflection when stating “[The] Most effective elements of the program were the reflections after a session. This is because the reflection helped me to think or realise the importance of the activity.” The final way that students felt the process of reflection was useful was through its ability to help them apply learning in the drama room to their real lives. Student 8 explained that the reflection “...caused me to really think about the activities we did and how I can apply my knowledge to my life” and Student 6 felt that the reflections “…helped tie together how what we experienced collectively.”

Key Domain 5: Explicit Discussion

Through engaging in the process, participants identified a final important pedagogical practice that supported them in developing their understanding of empathy. Several of the participants reflected on the simple process of directly discussing emotions and the skill of empathy as something that was useful to them and their learning. These participants felt that bringing the topic content of empathy to the front of the class and examining that directly, as opposed to “just assuming we know about it already...” (Student 3) was very helpful in shaping their understanding. Student 1 shared during their final reflection that “The most effective elements that helped me understand empathy was when our class came together to brainstorm empathy which helped me think about times I experienced when my friends were upset and I could not understand their emotions.”

Explicit discussion on empathy supported each participant in applying the skill to their own life, as well as developing their conceptual understandings. Participants felt that being able to have explicit learning on the skill of empathy was different to what they were used to but very beneficial. Participants responded positively to the explicit instruction on the topic of empathy and were able to see the connection between the theory and the practice. Other participants felt that explicit discussion on emotions was very effective in extending their understanding and confidence in practicing empathy. Student 5 felt that

Throughout the program I found that elements that were the most effective was when we did activities where we brainstormed
emotions and spoke in a group about how we were feeling. These were the most effective because sometimes you think you know how someone is feeling, but it is not until they actually tell you then you know how they are feeling.

These discussions provided opportunities for participants to practice their behavioural empathy in a real-world context and apply what they had learnt. The concept of sharing personal feelings in a group context seemed new to participants but was always an effective base for discussion. Student 6 connected these discussion around emotions to their learning, proposing that “When we would do an activity, and talk through the emotions we felt during the activity. It helped tie together how what we experienced collectively, even though some people would have different emotions and feelings about.”

Domain 3: Conceptual Understanding

Conceptual understandings were elements of The Empathy Program that were covered throughout the intervention and were consistently reflected upon by the participants. Key Theme 6 formed a small part of the intervention program content, but emerged as a common frame of reference for the participants to articulate their learning.

Key Theme 6: Empathy vs Sympathy

An initial section of the explicit discussion on empathy during the beginning weeks of The Empathy Program focused on introducing the participants to the difference between empathy and sympathy. Participants explored the difference between the two processes and the importance of both cognitive and affective empathy. During the intervention program participants consistently reflected on how their understanding of empathy has developed through their ability to differentiate between empathy and sympathy. Juxtaposition between the two skills, along with the participants’ perspective of the unexpected nature of the difference, allowed the distinction to resonate with the participants.
Student 3 reflected on the difference between the two skills, using it as a reference point of understanding for their learning. In their final reflection, they highlighted this distinction and shared a unique way of explaining that:

> When learning empathy, it has given me an understanding of the difference between empathy and sympathy. At the beginning, I did not know the difference. And that difference is; when feeling empathy, you feel what they are feeling as for sympathy you hear what they are feeling and you feel sorry for them without their emotions in your heart.

Although participants did not continue to use the language of cognitive and affective empathy, they had developed individual ways of articulating differences and identifying their learning. Student 4 discussed her perspective, proposing that “I think empathy is similar to sympathy but it goes one step further because you want to help the other person not just feel bad for them then forget about it.”

Participants identified that they had made progress in their understanding about empathy, by using the distinction between empathy and sympathy as a reference point. Student 1 shared that “My understanding has also developed because I now know the difference between empathy and sympathy.” Student 5 shared a similar sentiment about observing their own learning, when reflecting

> Over the term I have developed an understanding of empathy. This is because of Mr Corbett – I did not know the difference between empathy and sympathy and now I know because of these lessons that they are completely different. Through the activities I learnt how to recognise empathy and the ways it is shown...

Using this point of reference, the students were able to articulate their understanding of the process of empathy and share a valuable point of learning. The discussions on empathy and sympathy resonated with many of the participants and appears as a useful tool for supporting the understanding of the process.
Suggestions for Change

In the final journal reflection, the participants were also asked “What part/s of the program did you not find affective in developing your understanding of empathy?” as well as “If you had the opportunity to redo the program, what elements of it would you change?”

Key responses to this final section of the journal reflection are presented here to provide an honest and transparent view of the intervention program. In the spirit of acknowledging the important role that student voice has played within this research, the reflections are presented to best represent the experience and learning of the participants.

Overall, the participants suggested that they enjoyed the program and that most elements were valuable from their perspective. Some participants indicated they would not change anything and felt the program was consistently effective in supporting their learning. For example, Student 2 shared “[I would change] nothing, I found it all quite useful and enjoyable” and Student 4 commented that “I found all parts of the program usefully, so no parts were not useful.” Other participants had some suggestions for how the program could be changed or improved.

Some participants identified that they would have liked for the program to be longer. Student 4’s idea for a change in the program was to “…make the program longer so we could have more time to really understand empathy and how to use it in society.” Other participants felt that they would have benefited from more time engaging in the program and exploring more domains of empathy. Whereas some participants felt that the program would have benefited from more acting based work, such as Student 9 who proposed “The change I would make is that we do more acting.” Others felt that some of the activities or warmups were not effective or directly related to the goal of developing empathy. Student 1 shared “I found some of the games not really helpful as by playing some games such as chasey I didn’t see the education or learning elements behind it,” and Student 8 struggled with some of the focus based activities, suggesting “I didn’t really find the meditation exercises useful. It was hard to focus because of the background noises and other distraction.” Student 5 also felt that some of the activities were not very helpful and that they would rather have spent more time
discussion as a group, sharing that “I found that sometimes we should have spoken to each other more rather than doing games that weren’t very educational.”

Other participants took these questions as an opportunity to reflect on themselves and suggested how they could better improve their own involvement in the program. Some of these participants identified that they would have liked to increase their attendance, with Student 3 answering the question “If you had the opportunity to redo the program, what elements of it would you change?” with “do it more often.” Student 1 also shared that “If I had the opportunity to redo the program I would like to be in the lesson more as I had a lot of dentist appointments during drama.”

The final type of response to these questions centred around the participants’ personal attitudes towards the program and activities they participated in. The research was new to the participants at the beginning of the research intervention. This meant that time was taken to developing a safe and trusting work environment, within the ten weeks of intervention. If the participants already knew the research (perhaps as a regular classroom teacher) this may have affected the results. Some participants felt that they could have been more open to the new ideas and engaged more willingly in the activities. Student 5 reflected that, if given the chance to participate in the program again “I would appreciate each of our activities more, so therefore I would prioritise and sleep more so I can appreciate the activities more.” Student 7 had a similar reflection at the end of the program, focusing on how their attitude had changed and how they could have participated more effectively, sharing that

I would change my attitude towards the program for the first two sessions. I did not enjoy them because I felt it was unnecessary and I simply felt stupid participating. But now I feel confident and understand a lot better what Scott was trying to teach.
Chapter 5 - Discussion

Chapter Overview

The discussion chapter provides an analysis of data collection from The Empathy Program and places it within the context of the existing literature. The discussion is presented in two sections: first, a review of quantitative data and analysis of the first research question and, secondly an analysis of qualitative data in relation to the second research question. This chapter compares the pedagogies and conventions of previous empathy intervention programs with the current Empathy Program through comparison with the existing body of research. The discussion presents an argument for the potential drama processes have in developing empathy and then recommends how a best practice model can be developed for drama based empathy interventions.

The Empathy Program intervention study was driven by a desire to understand how drama processes could be best used to develop the skill of empathy. This study exists as a culmination of research around the empathic process and contemporary arts education pedagogy, seeking to contribute additional knowledge around the positive benefits of participation in drama education. Through the synergy of drama practice and explicit empathy education, the study examined the effects of The Empathy Program in relation to how it can develop participants’ empathic capacity.

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. Does the application of Actor Training, Creative Drama, and Forum Theatre increase the development of empathy in adolescents?
2. What do adolescent participants identify as the key experiences of The Empathy Program, which were most beneficial to their development of empathy?
Quantitative Discussion

Program Effectiveness

Quantitative data was gathered through the Basic Empathy Scale to evaluate whether or not The Empathy Program had an impact on the participants' level of empathy. The data revealed a statistically significant change with a 6.6% increase in empathy over the ten-week intervention trial period, with the control group showing a statistically significant decrease in empathy. This suggests that The Empathy Program had a positive effect on the development of empathy in these participants. However, caution needs to be taken in interpreting these results due to the small sample size.

Within existing literature there are a variety of short studies on interventions that have been successful in increasing empathy scores amongst a range of participants using strategies including role-play, film and novel analysis, explicit instruction, and mindfulness (Bell, 2017; DiNappoli, 2009; Gibson, 2006; Smithbattle, 2012; Waite & Rees, 2013). The Empathy Program draws on elements of these existing studies as well as ideas taken from drama and empathy training literature not currently used in empirically based programs.

Results of The Empathy Program are congruent with existing literature; however, the unique nature of the study suggests that these pedagogical practices can be applied to adolescent education. The distinctive focus on adolescent participants places The Empathy Program study into a small group of research that informs practice on high school based empathy interventions. As such, there are no directly comparable studies that match key elements of The Empathy Program (i.e., targeted adolescents, utilised the specific drama process in The Empathy Program and aimed to improve empathy). Hence, studies that aimed to improve empathy for a variety of participant age groups and using a range of intervention strategies, have been employed to compare against The Empathy Program data.

One such study designed to increase empathy, in the field of medical education by Lim, Moriarty, and Huthwaite (2011) focused on ‘how to act in role’ and the development of medical students’ behavioural interviewing techniques. Participants in the Actor Training course increased their empathy scores, as opposed to those in the control group (who did not participate in
the Actor Training course) whose empathy scores did not increase. This data reflects the unique proposition of The Empathy Program, that drama techniques can play a role in the development of empathy. Lim et al. (2011) highlighted the importance of taking on another’s perspective in the development of their participants’ empathy, which forms a central element of The Empathy Program.

Similarly, the Kleinsmith et al. (2015) study explored the concept of using role-play with virtual patients and the study by Anderson, King, and Lalande (2010) using mindfulness role-play found drama based techniques were able to improve empathy in participants. Kleinsmith et al. observed that the virtual patients provided a safe and low-pressure environment for participants to practise empathic responses. The study noted that the role-play and communication tasks with the virtual patients allowed participants to explore potential empathic responses, which increased their overall empathy scores.

Data collected from The Empathy Program study reflect somewhat similar results found in existing studies that utilised some elements of drama practice to improve empathy. The combination of selected processes within The Empathy Program worked effectively to engage participants and develop all domains of their empathy. Acknowledging the underlying assumption that an individual can increase their empathy levels, along with current literature, supports the proposition that drama can be used to develop empathy. The remaining question exists to establish what should be included in an empathy program, that can most efficiently increase participant empathy scores.

**Qualitative Discussion**

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework presented in the results chapter that outlines key themes to emerge from the qualitative data will be used to frame the discussion. Each of the themes that emerged reflect elements of The Empathy Program that were important to the participants in their learning about the phenomenon of empathy. Themes will be discussed in terms of their effectiveness in The Empathy Program and be compared to existing literature on empathy development programs.
The framework from the results chapter has been used instead of the framework presented in the literature review to better reflect learning gained from the study, rather than the original assumptions made in the proposal. The initial framework reflects the structure of The Empathy Program and the connections between drama theory and empathy theory that exists within current literature. The framework being used for this discussion however, reflects the essential elements of the program informed by the data, and better answers the second research question, aiming to identify useful program elements.
Figure 7. Key Themes

**DOMAIN 1**
Drama Skills and Processes
- K1: Imagination
- K2: Role-play

**DOMAIN 2**
Teaching Strategies
- K3: Check-in
- K4: Reflection
- K5: Explicit Discussion

**DOMAIN 3**
Conceptual Understandings
- K6: Empathy vs Sympathy
Domain 1 - Drama Skills and Processes

**K1: Imagination** – a central skill in the process of cognitive and affective empathy that was used as a central skill across many activities within the intervention.

**Imagination**

Activation of imagination emerged as a fundamental element of The Empathy Program and is a tool consistently utilised within existing programs to develop empathy. Participants in The Empathy Program identified the connection between imagination as a tool for acting and as a crucial element in the empathic process. Development of a person’s imagination is reflected in the research as an essential step in the training of empathy (SmithBattle, 2012; Wait & Rees, 2014). Drama education utilises imagination on a daily basis, be that in reading a script, developing a character in rehearsal, or engaging in a whole class role-play, and requires students to extend their capacity to imagine other people’s perspectives. The qualitative data emphasised the importance of imagination as a tool for supporting participants engaging successfully in empathy, with one participant suggesting “I have learnt ... in order to empathise with someone you need to imagine what they are feeling.”

Existing literature highlights connections between the use of imagination and development of empathy within participants. Waite and Rees (2014) investigated the development of empathy through imaginative play in Steiner kindergarten students and supported the hypothesis that imagination allows the exploration of emotional responses, proposing that these elements can be combined to develop empathetic ability. Waite and Rees found that the Steiner use of imagination allowed participants to practise creativity, social interactions and a variety of other skills just as participants in The Empathy Program were able to highlight the importance of engaging their imagination. Waite and Rees make similar observations to the participants in The Empathy Program, suggesting that imaginative play allows the participants to attempt to make sense of the world around them. Through the use of imagination, participants are able to trial assumptions they have made about the world...
around them, and explore the affective domain to their observation. Imaginative play allows participants to practise affective empathy with a myriad of people and contexts, forging understandings on what it could be like within that situation. The drive to seek answers to the ‘what if’ questions of an imagination task reflects the practice of empathy, developing participants’ ability to understand another person’s perspective.

In the field of tertiary education, SmithBattle (2012) explored the role of imagination and short play creation in the development of empathy for undergraduate nursing students. SmithBattle implemented studies into her course that required students to interview teens about their sexual behaviour and then develop a drama performance from the interviews. SmithBattle found interviews and the skill of imagination required in the development of the performances, supported participants to listen, engage in productive dialogue, and consider the perspective of others. Similarly, The Empathy Program focused on the connection between taking on roles and creating performances through the use of imagination, which then fostered the development of empathy within participants. This data suggests that providing participants the opportunity to utilise their imaginations within a structured environment increased their confidence to use imagination in real life. The activation of the imagination appeared as a strategy to expand participants’ experience of the world around them, giving them a suite of situations they now felt were easier to empathise with. Participants in The Empathy Program made similar observations about confidence and broadened horizons, sharing that “the program helped me feel more confident to do empathy because it’s just like imagining how my character in drama is feeling”, suggesting the importance of the constant inclusion of imagination tasks within a program that develops empathy.

Application of imagination based activities linked strongly to the practice of affective empathy, and participants reflected that this supported their ability to understand and ‘feel with’ another person. Therefore, imagination should be considered as a potential element in programs aiming to develop affective empathy. The central role that imagination takes within drama practice and pedagogy mirrors very efficiently the affective empathic
process, and through its repetition has the potential to improve participants’ empathic quota.

**K2:** Role-play – perspective taking is an essential process of empathy and a core skill within drama. Role-playing characters in complex settings with a variety of emotions was reported as a highly useful practice.

**Role-play.**

Role-play tasks became a central tool for *The Empathy Program* as developed as a common theme within the qualitative data that participants felt supported their empathy development. Current research surrounding empathic development suggests that continual practice of the task, doing empathy, improves an individual’s capacity to complete the task in future. Hence, the hypothesis exists that if participants are offered the opportunity to practise ‘putting themselves in someone else’s shoes’ they will develop their ability to use empathy within day to day life. Role-play emerged within the literature review as a safe and efficient way for participants to engage in empathy, existing as a strong link between drama practices and empathy development.

The use of role-play within the literature on existing empathy development programs is very common. The study by Hojat et al. (2013) investigated how a large class of medical students (n=248), using role-play practices through short term interventions with the goal of improving their empathy. Hojat et al. found that participants who engaged in the role-play based activities saw an increase in their empathy score on the Jefferson Physician Scale of Empathy as opposed to those who did not complete the role-play intervention. In the current study, the task of role-play was central to the teaching of *The Empathy Program* and participants reflected on its importance in developing their knowledge. Likewise, role-play has been found to develop empathy in medical students (n=149) in a study conducted by Lim et al. (2011). Their study engaged half of the students in ‘how to act in role’ training, with the other half used as a control group. Subsequently, this study saw that participants’ engagement with role-play increased their empathy scores in self-response testing.
In the field of psychology, role-play has been observed as a strategy to develop mindfulness and self awareness, these being central skills to affective empathy. Andersson, King, and Lalande (2010) investigated psychologists and their use of mindfulness based role-play, where participants engaged in a series of role-play activities and interviews about their experiences. Participants identified a variety of positive outcomes from role-play activities, including an increased sense of self and of empathy towards patients. Participants in The Empathy Program were given similar opportunities to practise empathy within a safe and curated space, providing them the chance to make empathic connections with others, focusing on the ability to recognise the affective domain. Participants from The Empathy Program identified role-play based activities as useful to their learning, developing their confidence to recognise how they feel at an affective level within a variety of new situations. Role-play’s ability to strengthen confidence and awareness of the self, observed in the study by Andersson, King, and Lalande, as well as in The Empathy Program, reflect the important nature of this element within empathy development.

Structuring role-play and setting up of the task should be considered as vital for the effectiveness of the activity, and its ability to increase empathy. Waite and Rees (2013) found clarity around instructions and information provided to participants was important for positive outcomes. Furthermore, Kontos et al. (2010), as well as Hicks, Clair, and Berry (2016), identified the critical nature of planning when developing role-play tasks, ensuring they are appropriate for participants and will engage empathy. Role-play tasks developed in The Empathy Program were carefully constructed to focus on contextually appropriate scenarios that required empathy for participants to successfully create the role. For example, participants explored a variety of role-play tasks that examined adult professions, taking participants outside their known circle of understanding, activating the imagination, and relying on their cognitive empathy to create a connection with the professional. Participants also explored a variety of role-play improvisations that explored emotions of joy and sadness that were beyond their lived experience. Reflecting on this, participants identified that these challenging improvisations demanded the use of cognitive and affective empathy to be successful.
Participants were able to identify that playing another character and imagining a new perspective supported their developing empathy. This data suggests that the task of role-play has been observed to improve participant empathy and could be considered as a useful tool in future drama based empathy development programs.

**Embodied Practice**

Practical and experiential pedagogical approaches that informed the role-play elements of *The Empathy Program*, were reflected on by participants as a useful part of their development of empathy. Within existing literature, the majority of studies exploring empathy interventions also involved a practice and experiential or practical component that was correlated to positive increases in empathy (Chatterjee, Ravikumar, Singh, Chauhan, & Goel, 2017; Decety & Meyer, 2008; Hojat, Vergare, Maxwell, Brainard, Herrine, Isenberg, Veloski, & Gonnella, 2009; Mood, 2018). These programs ranged from utilising role-play based activities, to poetry and play readings, through to Actor Training activities and viewing films. The element of embodied practice emerged as a common factor and made up a majority of activities built into *The Empathy Program* intervention. Positive benefits of embodied practice that exist within literature and *The Empathy Program* highlight the importance of experiential learning within social emotional intervention programs.

Research exploring embodied practice highlights that it is very helpful in the acquisition of skills and student engagement (Harmin & Toth, 2006; Maquivar & Sundararajaman, 2017; Nicholas & Ng, 2016; Roy, 2008; Whitley, 2012). Bierman et al. (2008) in their study on the ‘Head Start REDI’ program, found active learning played a pivotal role in participants’ development of social emotional skills. Braun, Cheang and Shigeta (2005) also found active learning within a professional training context was useful for the development of empathy amongst direct care workers. The opportunity to complete the task of the empathic process within a safe and structured environment supported participant empathy increasing, similar to what was observed in the current study. The importance of embodying empathy to support skill development was also observed in a study conducted by Whitley (2012) examining how embodied practice could improve empathy amongst pharmacy students. Whitley noted that the simulation active learning task had many positive
benefits for the pharmacy students and provided a unique way to develop empathy that would be otherwise challenging to do.

Common amongst many of active learning research interventions achieving an increase in participant empathy was the inimitable opportunity to experience a sense of active exploration and apply theory to safe practical environments. This benefit was observed in The Empathy Program data, with participants identifying the opportunity to try empathy as useful for their skill development. The practical nature of drama education highlights its relevance as a teaching tool for empathy, combined with a conscious focus on the visceral exploration of the phenomenon.

The age group of participants is an important consideration as the effectiveness of embodied practice may vary with differently aged participants. For university students, or kindergarten students, the practical nature of The Empathy Program might be less, or potentially more, effective than it was for adolescent participants of this study. Mueller, Knoblock, and Orvis (2015) found active learning as a beneficial pedagogical approach in supporting high school students engage in complicated scientific concepts. Their quasi-experimental study saw both student participants and teacher-facilitators had a more positive experience of the science unit when using an active learning approach than that of a passive learning classroom.

Studies also reflect positive benefits that active learning can have within a tertiary context for adult learners (Bierman et al., 2008; Braun, Cheang & Shigeta, 2005; Whitley, 2012. However, limited research exists in the area of comparing age appropriateness of active learning amongst differing levels of academic growth. The 2011 edition from Revan of the ‘ABC of Active Learning’, exploring the field of management research, articulates the hypothesis that ‘formal instruction is not sufficient’ and subsequently ‘learning involves doing’. Revan’s proposition supports the embodied practice that was central to The Empathy Program, however does not provide a distinction between age groups of participants that would gain more, or less, from an active learning pedagogy.
Domain 2: Pedagogical Practices

K3: Check-in - each lesson began with a short check-in asking participants to rate how they were feeling on a scale of 1 – 10.

Check-in

The ‘check-in’ process emerged within the data as an element of the intervention design that supported participant learning on empathy. The check-in process involved participants reflecting on how they were feeling at the beginning of the lesson and sharing this with the group. Sometimes participants were asked to share a number on a scale of one to ten, sometimes they used a word to describe how they were feeling, and sometimes more abstract concepts were used like colours or animals. The check-in process was not developed through analysis of current literature, rather it was included as a pedagogical practice the researcher has utilised in previous intervention programs. Although unique to The Empathy Program and not expected to be an influential element of the intervention, participants consistently identified the process as useful to their development of empathy.

Participants viewed the check-in process as a chance to develop their self-awareness and extend their affective capabilities – being able to resonate with and articulate their own feelings. They also found the check-in process an opportunity to practice real life empathy with their peers. Participants felt the process allowed them to connect with their peers and put into place what they had been learning, especially when one of the group members was feeling sad.

An example of a similar approach to check-in is evident in research by SmithBattle (2012) where her participants engaged in continual reflection and discussion on interviews and personal stories they studied. Smithbattle suggests that participants in her program reflected on the importance of sharing ‘real-life’ examples and, similar to The Empathy Program, the task promoted a stronger sense of teamwork amongst the class. The KooLKIDS program reviewed by Carroll et al. (2016) observed similar benefits of team work and safety through the use of sharing and group discussion based reflection tasks. The whole class activities that allowed room for individuals to express thoughts created a ‘positive peer-culture’ in the KooLKIDS program.
Safe Learning Environments

The check-in process developed a safe learning environment within The Empathy Program interventions by a structured routine, a moment of mindfulness and the opportunity to share openly without judgement. Gray, Wright, and Pascoe (2018) emphasise the need for drama teachers to create a safe environment for students. In their research, they propose this is achieved through the teacher modelling respectful behaviours, encouraging students to treat their peers respectfully and creating a sense of belonging. Qualities of being encouraging, approachable and supportive are further emphasised by Gray et al. (2018) who suggest these qualities are conducive to creating a safe, supportive atmosphere for students. The safe learning environment that was generated, empowered participants to engage in the learning with honesty and enabled full participation when exploring personal emotions and responses as a class.

This notion of safety appears throughout existing literature that review intervention programs aimed at developing emotion or similar social emotional capabilities. The study developed by Kleinsmith et al. (2015) using role-play with virtual patients, observed that the virtual patients provided a safe and low-pressure environment for participants to practice empathic responses. Similarly, the study by Anderson, King, and Lalande (2010) using mindfulness role-play noted that drama based activities provided a safe space for participants to explore and practice empathy, matching findings of the Kleinsmith et al. (2015) and Empathy Program studies. Both studies (Kleinsmith et al. and Anderson et al.) noted that role-play activities were engaging and enjoyable for participants which they felt allowed for a light-hearted learning process.

The Empathy Program participants made similar observations in their reflections, highlighting the importance of preparatory activities in creating a learning environment where they felt safe to explore emotions. Safe and fun learning environments appeared in these studies as an important factor in the development of empathy amongst the participants. This data suggests that the creation of a learning environment that fosters trust and confidence amongst all participants is essential for programs that aim to deal with topics based in emotion.
K4: Reflection - many participants recorded that the task of group discussion and personal written reflection after each session was invaluable in developing their understanding of empathy.

Reflection

The Visible Thinking routine “See, Think, Wonder” (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2009) was utilised in The Empathy Program to guide the reflections completed after each lesson. The structure was originally used to guide best practice research methodology to collect high quality qualitative data for the study. However, the method and modality of qualitative research appears to be helpful to participants, reflected in comments made during the weekly journaling. This data suggests that the role of well-structured and empirically based reflection instruments could be utilised in further drama education programs to support participant learning.

Reflection questions were completed after each session and provided participants the opportunity to discuss or write about what was covered in the lesson. The process of reflections is a common teaching tool in drama education (School Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2018) and used as a pedagogical tool in a variety of high school disciplines. Although participants in The Empathy Program highlighted the importance of reflection in the qualitative data, there is little research into the use of journaling in drama.

Within current research, a variety of studies utilised reflections and qualitative data analysis instruments within the intervention program, comparable to The Empathy Program (DiNappoli, 2009; Gair, 2010; Gibson, 2006; Jeffery & Jeffery 2015; Kempe & Tissot, 2012; Matharu et al., 2011; Mood, 2018; Oflaz et al., 2011; Smithbattelle, 2010). However, these studies did not use the data to assess changes in empathy. Of note is the potential that the completion of the reflection and qualitative data collection tasks may have informed, increased, or solidified the learning gained from the intervention. Data collected from The Empathy Program and the common use of reflection and responding tasks in arts education suggests that forms of reflection could be considered in future empathy development programs.

Although there is limited research that focuses on the use and effects of reflection as a tool for developing social skills or drama education, the Western Australian curriculum places a focus on the task of ‘responding’ (School
Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2018) throughout drama and arts syllabus. Reflection based tasks are a requirement from kindergarten through to Year 12 in all Arts based subjects, although notably with a smaller weighting than performance until Year 11 and Year 12. Inclusion of responding tasks within the curriculum, which is mirrored by all other Australia State curriculums, including the Western Australian Curriculum (Schools Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2018), suggests that it is an important element of drama learning and should be considered in future drama based programs.

Similar to the responses from The Empathy Program participants, White (2012) found that reflection routines were beneficial in consolidating learning for her participants developing leadership skills. White observed that participants were able to make deep connections between content delivered and their learning through the reflection process. Complementary to the findings of White (2012), Belvis, Pineda, Armengol, and Moreno (2013) found reflective practices highly beneficial in teacher education and professional development. The teacher participants achieved higher levels of achievement in program objectives, identifying opportunities to reflect on their practice and learning as a useful strategy. Similarly, participants in The Empathy Program found the opportunity to consolidate their learning, and the dedicated time to do so, very useful in learning about empathy. Other participants in The Empathy Program also reflected that journaling and group discussions provided additional opportunities to develop an understanding of content explored in class, or to make links between practical activities and theoretical underpinnings.

The amount of time allocated to the process of reflective practices within The Empathy Program intervention should be considered. Contemporary classrooms can be very fast paced, with large amounts of content to be taught within short spaces of time to meet strict deadlines. The Empathy Program was developed with very specific structures that included the need to collect qualitative data, which meant that time allotted to reflections and journaling at the end of the lesson was prioritised. Participants reflected on the usefulness of this process, suggesting that the use of allocated time for reflections should be considered a useful pedagogical tool in drama education.
K5: Explicit Instruction: The nature of discussing empathy directly, both as a conceptual model and as a practical skill was an important factor for participants in their learning.

**Explicit Discussion**

An underlying hypothesis of *The Empathy Program* was that explicit instruction on empathy, as well as exploration of the phenomenon, is important to participants’ learning. This hypothesis was reflected in the data, with participants in *The Empathy Program* identifying the explicit nature of the program in addressing the phenomenon of empathy as an important element of learning. Reflections suggest that the explicit and cognitive teaching on empathy was complementary to experiential learning examined in previous sections of the discussion.

This concept of explicit and clearly visible learning is not a new phenomenon to education research. The theory of Direct Instruction (DI) and Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI) is a widely practiced pedagogy, especially in the field of English and reading (Rupley, Blair, & Nichols, 2009). These pedagogical frameworks are developed on the theories of many education academics positing that explicit explanations, demonstrations, and guided practice are central to effective teaching. ‘Visible Learning’ by Hattie (2008) is a pedagogy that focuses on making learning visible (Hattie, 2015), proposing that learning should be made clear and observable.

The effectiveness of teaching social skills explicitly to young people has been observed in many existing studies into social skills education (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011; Carroll et al., 2016; Duncan et al., 2016; Kempe & Tissot, 2012; McDaniel, Bruhn, & Troughton, 2017) which was mirrored by data collected in *The Empathy Program*. Discussion in these studies highlight the importance of directly addressing the skill that facilitators want participants to acquire, as well as the role of explicitly demonstrating what these social skills look and feel like in practice.

Positive learning outcomes of explicit education in the field of social emotional learning can be seen in a study by Ashdown and Bernard (2012) who completed a study that reviewed the ‘You Can Do It! Early Childhood Education Program’, a program designed to increase wellbeing and social skills in young children through explicit instruction. Their study observed a
significant improvement in social and academic skills amongst participants in the explicit instruction program. The data reflected, in line with The Empathy Program data, the importance of directly discussing with participants the concepts and phenomenon being explored in the acquisition of the skill.

Similarly, a study with an explicit instruction program for students with emotional and behavioural disorders by McDaniel, Bruhn, and Troughton (2017) highlighted benefits of directly teaching social skills, in their review of the Stop and Think program (Knoff, 2001). McDaniel et al. (2017) noted that the program utilised an identical pedagogical structure for each different phenomenon being taught. The program implemented a routine of teaching the desired skill, modelling the five-step approach, role-playing, providing performance feedback, and applying the skill. This study, like The Empathy Program study, reflected that the opportunity to learn explicitly about a social skill or phenomenon prior to actively engaging in role-play or applying the skill supported their learning.

Success of explicit and direct education on wellbeing and social skills, along with the pedagogies of Visible Learning and Explicit Direct Instruction reflect the importance of having clear educational goals and making them perspicuous to students. Within a drama education context, this data from The Empathy Program suggests a need for educators to reflect on their pedagogies and paradigms and make them clear for their students. The constant debate between different paradigms of thought within drama education (Bolton, 2007) is brought to mind when considering what should be shown as explicit learning objectives in drama. Shifting the focus to be overtly about the exploration of social emotional learning within the drama classroom, as was done within The Empathy Program, promotes the ‘process drama’ ideology. Consideration should be made by drama practitioners to reflect on contemporary trends in the explicit teaching of social emotional learning and how this affects the educational goals placed at the forefront of drama classrooms.

This data suggests that a combination of both experiential and cognitive teaching is useful for development of empathy amongst adolescents. A variety of studies examined in the literature utilised both experiential and cognitive learning in their empathy interventions with positive
outcomes (Froeschle, 2006; Gair, 2010; Jeffery & Jeffery, 2015; Kontos, Mitchell, Mistry, & Ballon, 2010; Lenz, Holman, & Dominguez, 2010; Scroggs, Bailey, & Fees, 2011). Although presented data does not identify if participants felt the combination of experiential and cognitive learning were effective, the success of the programs in improving empathy suggest it may have been beneficial. Further research is needed to compare different teaching pedagogies and how they influence the learning of participants.

Domain 3: Conceptual Understanding

K6: Empathy vs Sympathy – participants consistently reflected on using the difference between empathy and sympathy as a reference point for understanding the skill

Empathy vs Sympathy

Participants engaged in the exploration of defining empathy and unpacking key domains of the phenomenon. Many participants were familiar with the concept of ‘feeling sorry’ for someone and understanding how they were feeling. This is how they described empathy at the beginning of the program. Through exploration of affective and cognitive empathy, as well as the phenomenon of sympathy, participants developed a new understanding of empathy. Use of the sympathy and empathy dichotomy appeared in The Empathy Program data as a useful way to introduce and explain the theoretical element of the program. Participants used sympathy as a point of reference in order to explain empathy. It is evident that understanding these models surrounding the phenomena, gave participants a theoretical base to explore the concept from. This highlights the role that a theoretical framework plays in a participant’s learning of complex phenomenon such as empathy.

Although the teaching of the differences between these two phenomena does not appear in literature surrounding programs that aim to develop social emotional competencies, it does exist as a feature of studies aiming to define empathy as a construct (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; Singer & Lamm, 2009; Svenaeus, 2014; Vossen, Piotrowski, & Valkenburg, 2015). Inclusion of the teaching of conceptual models of empathy support and guide explicit cognitive instruction of the phenomenon. This data from The Empathy Program suggests that the teaching of sympathy, and perhaps similar phenomenon
such as compassion and kindness, support adolescent participants in developing their cognitive understanding of empathy.

**Program and Study Design**

This section of the discussion analyses elements of *The Empathy Program* design, which appear to have had a positive influence on the empathy development. Similarities and differences between existing studies and *The Empathy Program* highlight areas of the intervention that could be considered for future interventions and indicate the need for further research to better inform the most effective model for drama based empathy education programs.

**Duration**

*The Empathy Program* was delivered through one 60-minute session per week over ten weeks (less than originally planned and will be discussed in limitations), with the program replacing a standard drama lesson. Time allocated for the intervention, allowed the phenomenon to be explored in detail through engagement in core drama processes outlined in the theoretical model of the study. The timeline for delivery and the amount of teaching time that was used in *The Empathy Program* study, appears to fit within a common range of existing studies (Hicks et al., 2016; Kempe & Tissot, 2012; Lenz et al., 2010). The current literature reflects interventions that range from a 1 hour session, up to 20 weeks’ worth of weekly sessions. However, the nominal amount of teaching time for adolescents is not discussed within the literature. The results of *The Empathy Program* will be discussed in comparison to three lengths of studies: (1) similar length as *The Empathy Program*, (2) longer than *The Empathy Program*, (3) shorter than *The Empathy Program*.

*Similar to The Empathy Program.* Unique amongst Social Emotional Learning studies reviewed, the study by Ashdown and Bernard (2012) into the ‘You Can Do It! Early Childhood Education Program’ also followed a ten-week teaching program of one hour of teaching per week for Year 1, mirroring the time from *The Empathy Program*. The program aimed to teach a variety of social skills including resilience, confidence and organisation. Ashdown and Bernard (2012) found the program made statistically significant improvements in participants’ social skills development with the ten-week time frame,
comparable to that of *The Empathy Program*. The Hojat et al. (2013) study discussed in the previous section of this chapter, followed a similar ten-week data collection timeline, but had a significantly reduced amount of teaching hours compared to *The Empathy Program*. Hojat et al. (2013) observed increases in empathy scores of participants which may indicate less time is necessary to develop empathy in participants.

The following studies discussed below (Hicks et al., 2016; Kempe & Tissot, 2012; Lenz et al., 2010; Macneill, Glimer, Tan, & Samarasekara, 2016) were targeted at adolescents and utilised similar teaching time to that of *The Empathy Program*. The intervention by Hicks et al. (2016) to combat cyber-bullying behaviour ran an 8-session intervention of one hour per session. Kempe and Tissot (2012) examined students with autism over 12 sessions, each one hour long. Similarly, Lenz et al. (2010) ran seven ninety-minute sessions for adolescents aimed at developing social skills. Macneill et al. (2016) ran an eight-hour intervention with health care workers in Singapore utilising similar drama conventions based on Stanislavski’s System. Their study found a small increase in empathy and supporting a similar conclusion that Actor Training and the empathic process has strong connections and can be utilised in training. The success of these interventions suggests that the length of intervention similar to *The Empathy Program*, may be effective for adolescent empathy intervention programs. Participants were given enough time to develop an understanding of the skills as well as practise implementing the process of empathy.

**Shorter than The Empathy Program.** Some studies in current literature utilised short-term interventions, ranging from a few hours to a few days, and also observed some increase in participant empathy (Anderson et al., 2010; Chatterjee et al., 2017; Decety & Meyer, 2008; DiNappoli, 2009; Gair, 2010; Hojat et al., 2009; Kleinsmith et al., 2015; Lim et al., 2012; Macneill et al., 2016; Matharu et al., 2011; Mood, 2018; Oflaz et al., 2011; Tonkin & Michelle, 2010; Waite & Rees, 2013; Webster, 2010; Whiteside & Barclay, 2016).

Mood (2018) created a comparatively short intervention using poetry and creative processes to develop empathy in undergraduate students. This intervention consisted of a seminar with readings completed prior to and a reflection completed afterwards. Although participants recorded an
increased understanding of empathy, Mood did indicate more time was required to strengthen the ability to practice empathy.

Different groups of students may require longer intervention time to achieve this stipulation of a positive increase in empathy. For example, Waite and Rees (2014) conducted one day interventions with kindergarten students in Steiner Schools to observe and analyse empathy in practice, however, they noted the importance of space and time to play. Positive increases observed in the Steiner students were credited to “the prioritisation of space and time for children’s play” (Waite & Rees, 2014, p.4) that would enable greater success of the intervention. Likewise, DiNappoli (2009) used role-play activities, similar to sections of The Empathy Program, in just one session, to develop emotional aptitude with his undergraduate business students, but noted the importance of continuing the practice to increase empathy levels. The participants developed an interest in applying empathy to the case studies examined within the unit and engaged in role-play activities to explore them further. Although engagement in using the phenomenon of empathy was recorded, no follow up data was collected to assess if the short intervention increased empathy levels beyond the initial and only session.

To be considered is the longitudinal impact of these shorter programs. Qualitative and quantitative data collected within studies reviewed relied on self-response measures of empathy, be that in the form of a quantitative survey or an interview or a journal reflection. These data collection methods are subject to social desirability and subjective personal interpretation to some level, even with rigorous analysis that has been conducted on instruments utilised with the studies. With the new understanding of the empathic phenomenon gained or perhaps with the concept being brought to the forefront of participants’ thoughts, the short-duration interventions may collect data that captures an initial peak in empathy levels. However, the longitudinal effect and sustained duration of the increase may not be reflected in the data.

**Longer than The Empathy Program.** Other studies utilised intervention periods longer than The Empathy program, half of which were designed for university students and adults, and half designed for children and adolescents (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011; Cain & Carnellor, 2008; Graziano & Hart, 2016;
Gibson, 2006; Hicks et al., 2016; Kempe & Tissot, 2012; Kontos, 2010; Lenz et al., 2010; Scroggs et al., 2016; Smithbattle, 2010; Wastell et al., 2009). The large majority of the longer studies focused on the use of Actor Training and theatre making tasks, as opposed to script analysis or poetry reading and writing utilised in shorter interventions.

In one study with a long intervention period, Wastell et al. (2009) investigated a 17-week intervention with male sex offenders whilst they were incarcerated. The Wastell et al. study used a variety of role-play, hot seating and group therapy aimed at improving the participant empathy. Data collected reflected a clear increase in affective empathy, but interestingly a limited increase in cognitive empathy. Male participants saw the largest increase in affective empathy, which mirrored results of The Empathy Program, with male participant affective empathy seeing the largest increase. This data suggests that other demographic factors and program content could be contributors to the success of an intervention and what the nominal length should be.

Another longer study, conducted by SmithBattle (2012), saw nursing students participate in a 15-week long verbatim theatre making program exploring adolescent perspectives on sexuality. The data collected reflected an increase in the participants’ perception of their empathy which the participants accredited to the role-playing elements of the program. Again, this data suggests that the program content was a central factor in the success of the program, and could be considered when selecting nominal teaching time.

Longer interventions appear to be effective, however, do incur potential logistical challenges than shorter interventions could avoid. The cost of a long duration intervention program, meaning financial output and time commitment of facilitator and participants, is obviously higher. Further, cost-benefit relationship or the dose-response relationship needs to be considered when selecting an ideal intervention. The Empathy Program, like the Wastell et al. (2009) and the SmithBattle (2012) intervention require large time commitments from both facilitators and participants, assumedly increasing the required financial outlay to run the intervention. Also to be considered is fidelity of the long-duration interventions and if they are maximising efficiency of time.
to develop empathy, rather than other (although potentially positive) skills. For example, SmithBattle (2012) noted that participants, whilst reflected on an increase in their empathy, also observed increases in their critical thinking and listening skills. If the objective of the intervention is to increase empathy, activities that increased these secondary skills may have taken away valuable learning time reducing the efficiency of the empathy intervention.

Existing literature highlights that an increase in empathy levels of participants is possible through intervention programs that are both shorter and longer than teaching time used in The Empathy Program. The large variety of intervention durations observed in existing literature suggests that a nominal teaching time for participants to increase their empathy has not been identified. In reviewing a variety of meta-analysis studies conducted in varying fields of social skills development research, the literature is still inconclusive as to the ideal duration of an intervention program. Wolstencroft, Robinson, Srinvasan, Kerry, Mandy, and Skuse (2018) observed a great effect size in longer intervention programs, in their meta-analysis of studies targeting students with autism spectrum disorder. Contrastingly, Gates, Kang, and Lerner (2017) concluded in their meta-analysis of social skills interventions, that duration does not appear as an influential characteristic of the intervention programs, and proposed further research is required.

Of note, is the longitudinal impact, or desired outcome of social emotional programs similar to The Empathy Program. None of the studies examined in the literature referenced above, collected data over a period longer than ten weeks. Future research should aim to highlight the long-term empathy development of programs with various teaching times. The more detailed exploration of the topic seen in The Empathy Program may prove to have longer lasting effects on participants and their empathy.

Also to be considered in relation to length of teaching time, is the common age and education level of participants in the studies reviewed, the majority of which are university undergraduate students or young children. This difference between age and experience in participants would likely affect the required optimal teaching time. Consideration should be given to participants’ developmental age and best practice pedagogical theory that exists for that learning age. University students would have the ability to engage in longer
term programs that involve high-order levels of thinking than a group of pre-
primary students who might require a much more experiential and concrete
style of intervention.

Participants

Program content for adolescent aged participants. The Empathy Program was targeted at adolescents, in particular 15 and 16 year olds currently attending high school. The majority of empathy and social emotional learning research reviewed focused on two age categories; pre-primary (3-5 years old) (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011; Duncan et al., 2017; Graziarno & Hart, 2016; Waite & Rees, 2014) and undergraduate university students (18 years old and over) (Ahrweiler et al., 2014; Anderson et al., 2017; Bell et al., 2017; Bernard et al., 2012; DiNappoli, 2009; Gair, 2010; SmithBattle, 2012; Haarhoff, 2018; Haley et al., 2017; Hojat et al., 2009, 2013; Lim et al., 2017; Mood, 2018; Suthakaran, 2011). There are some similarities that exists within the sets of programs aimed at adolescents of similar ages to The Empathy Program participants (Hicks, Clair, & Berry, 2016; Kempe & Tissot, 2012; Lenz et al., 2010). Although a variety of strategies and techniques have been used within empathy intervention programs, the programs targeted towards adolescents had some common factors.

The study conducted by Hicks et al. (2016) into cyberbullying utilised a weekly one hour session structure, working with smaller groups of 7 – 8 participants. The intervention focused on use of solution based role-play, where participants would create and enact experiences of cyberbullying. Following role-play task, participants would discuss how the situation could be changed and bullying behaviour be fixed. The style of drama processed utilised in the Hicks et al. study reflected similar pedagogical approaches to that of the Forum Theatre process explored within The Empathy Program.

Lenz et al. (2010) also employed interactive role-play performances within their study to develop social skills among adolescent boys. Their process again reflected very similar practices to the Forum Theatre component of The Empathy Program. Kempe and Tissot (2012) focused on use of Creative Drama, which was also utilised within The Empathy Program. Creative Drama was used to develop imagination and perspective taking skills in the study by Kempe and Tissot (2012) for participants with autism spectrum disorder.
Common amongst these three adolescent intervention studies were the weekly occurrence of sessions over a period of weeks, as opposed to a one-session intervention or a longitudinal study over several years. The three programs also utilised the convention of role-play as an integral part in the learning process. Although the length and methods observed in the adolescent interventions do appear in empathy development programs for other age groups, their commonality with the success of The Empathy Program intervention suggest their effectiveness for high school aged participants.

The student-focused and flexible nature of the interactive role-play activities were discussed by Hicks et al. (2016) and Lenz et al. (2010) as potential reasons for success for adolescent participants. The ability to include real world stories, and problem solve social issues in real time within a safe space appeared to be an effective element of their interventions. This flexibility and student focused pedagogy was also utilised in The Empathy Program and supported engagement and learning of adolescent participants. Kempe and Tissot (2012) discussed the importance of the imagination based tasked giving confidence to the participants to practice perspective taking in real life. Identical observations were made by the participants of The Empathy Program, highlight the confidence to use empathy that was gained through repeated practice during the intervention.

**Participants’ experiences of drama.** The Empathy Program collected participant demographic data that documented how many years a participant had been studying drama. Participants in this study had been studying drama (at high school) for between zero and four years. These demographics were included in pre- and post-intervention survey to collect information around the study’s key hypothesis that participation in specific drama processes can increase a person’s level of empathy. Results from The Empathy Program discovered a correlation between years a participant had been studying drama and their level of empathy: the longer the study period of drama, higher the empathy. This statistic was apparent through both the pre- and post-intervention data collection surveys. While studies examined in the literature, as discussed above, have trialled programs on a range of participants from kindergarten to university, none focused on participants that have previously, or are currently studying drama.
The engagement in drama could emerge as a strong correlation to higher empathy, supporting the hypothesis of *The Empathy Program* study. These results also suggest that *The Empathy Program* may have yielded a larger increase in empathy amongst participants, if delivered to participants who have not studied drama previously. The study of drama, or lack thereof, could be seen as a predictor of empathy levels and indicate adolescents with limited drama experience as ideal participants for empathy programs. Further demographic data could be collected to develop a more comprehensive profile of predictors for adolescents with low empathy and used to select further Empathy Program participants. Also to be considered are the potential commonalities amongst students who select drama as a subject in high school. Characteristics of drama students may align with predictors of adolescents with higher levels of empathy.

**Participant Gender.** Of particular note in the data of this study, is the occurrence of a gender difference within the participant empathy results. Common to that of existing studies (Chatterjee, 2017; Hojat et al., 2009; Singer, 2006), both those aiming to improve participant empathy as well as those aiming to measure current levels of empathy, the data reflects that female participants have a higher level of empathy before and after the intervention. Although male and female participants saw increases in empathy within *The Empathy Program*, male participants started at a lower level of empathy and retained a similar difference in empathy after the intervention. These results are in line with existing literature that has reflected female participants consistently scoring higher levels of empathy (Clarke, Marks, & Lykins, 2016; Graaff, et al., 2014). This data suggests that although the male and female participants responded in a similar way to *The Empathy Program* intervention, more consideration needs to be taken to improve low baselines of male participant empathy. A broad range of factors such as genetic predisposition, the way in which children play, and contemporary gendered child rearing practices could be considered as influencers for the difference in empathy between male and females (Clarke, Marks, & Lykins, 2016; Graaff, et al., 2014).
Chapter 6 – Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter Overview
The final chapter of this thesis will provide a brief summary of the research project. Then, key findings of the research will be presented in reflection on the two guiding research questions. Next, recommendations for practice and further research are presented based on the outcomes of the study. This chapter concludes with the limitations of the current research project and a final concluding statement.

Introduction
The purpose of this research was to explore the connection between drama education and the development of empathy amongst one class of adolescents in a Western Australian school. Following a review of literature pertaining to empathy education, The Empathy Program was developed into a ten-week teaching program, based on specific content from the Western Australian Drama curriculum (Schools Curriculum and Standards Authority, 2018) and explicit teaching on the phenomena of empathy. The Empathy Program explored content with an explicit focus on empathy development, rather than the drama skills being the primary desired learning outcome. Based on the recognised connections between the empathic process and drama processes found in the literature, The Empathy Program aimed to assess the potential for drama’s role in empathy development. The study trialled a new teaching program and collected qualitative and quantitative data to show empathy development through engaging in the intervention.

The 10-week Empathy Program intervention was delivered in a Perth metropolitan high school to a group of Year 10 students. The intervention was delivered by the researcher with the regular classroom teacher present during each session. The study utilised a mixed-methods design research methodology within a social constructivist philosophy. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected throughout the study and used to answer the two research questions guiding the study:
1. Does the application of Actor Training, Creative Drama, and Forum Theatre increase the development of empathy in adolescents?

2. What do adolescent participants identify as the key experiences of The Empathy Program, which were most beneficial to their development of empathy?

Quantitative data was collected in the form of a pre- and post-intervention self-response survey where the Basic Empathy Scale (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006) was used as the data collection instrument. Quantitative data aimed to evaluate the participants’ empathy and assess if the first research question could be answered. Through collection and analysis of this data, an average of a 6.6% increase in empathy over the ten-week intervention trial period was recorded. The data reflected the hypothesis that this drama program, in particular the three processes used to create The Empathy Program, can influence and increase participant empathy.

Qualitative data was collected in the form of participant journal reflections completed each week immediately after engagement with the intervention. Reflections were guided by the ‘See, Think, Wonder’ model of student journaling (Lowe, Prout, & Murcia, 2013) as well as an extended final reflection completed at the end of the intervention. This qualitative data was analysed and coded to create key themes in response to the second research question, identifying which elements of the intervention were, from the participants’ perspectives, most useful in developing empathy. Through this data, six key themes emerged as effective program elements that supported the participants in their development of empathy.

This research adds to the existing body of knowledge that supports the use of drama as an effective strategy for developing empathy. Uniquely, this research reveals specific drama processes explored in The Empathy Program that are effective in developing empathy amongst adolescents within secondary school drama education classes. Furthermore, this study identifies key elements that further support empathy development. These will be discussed within the summary of key findings below.
Summary of Key Findings

Key Finding 1: Transformative Learning through Drama

A key feature of *The Empathy Program* was that it utilised existing drama curriculum content to explore social emotional learning. This theoretical framework, explored in Chapter 3, guided development of *The Empathy Program*, ensuring clarity around the learning objectives of the program. Although drama curriculum content points were covered, where Year 10 participants worked towards a group devised performance task, the direct focus on social emotional learning allowed for a richer learning experience. Through this, *The Empathy Program* intervention was able to increase participant empathy.

The transformational role of drama education and the propensity to learn key social skills is confirmed in the literature (Blair, 2008; Burton, 2010; Conrad, 2004; Day, 2002; DiNapoli, 2009; Kempe & Tissot, 2012; Tonkin & Michell, 2010; Waite & Rees, 2014) and recognised by stakeholders (teachers, students, parents and administrators). Confidence to speak in public, work and think creatively, and embodied ways of learning are often cited as reasons to support the inclusion of drama in a student’s timetable. This research supports these justifications for studying drama education in secondary school. However, it presents a case that drama in secondary school could be used as a tool for more than this; as a tool for the development of empathy amongst adolescents.

Empathy as a phenomenon is on the decline; or as former American President Barack Obama labelled it ‘an empathy deficit’ (Obama, 2006). The claim made by the then senator has been supported by a variety of research (Konrath, Chopik, Hsing, & O’Brien, 2014; Schumann, Zaki, & Dweck, 2014; Twenge, Campbell, & Freeman, 2012) identifying a decline in the prevalence of empathic behaviour in contemporary society. Conversely, current literature cites a growth in narcissistic behaviours (Krznaric, 2015). This shift in phenomena can be reflected in events such as the ever-growing wealth gap in Australia (Tapper & Fenna, 2018), rise of nationalism in international politics (Krznaric, 2015), the continuation of domestic and family violence crime (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018), and highly partisan domestic political landscapes. The consequence in this shift in dispositional attitudes trickles
down into secondary schools and adolescents. We see an increase in bullying behaviour, in social isolation, and in school truancy and learning disengagement (Gage, Sugai, Lunde, & DeLoreto, 2013). In opposition to these anti-social behaviours, empathy helps adolescents establish and maintain relationships (Barrio, Aluja, & Garcia, 2004; Hay, 1994), playing an essential role in social functioning and competence (Sallquist, Eisenberg, Spinrad, Eggum, & Gaertner, 2009; Yoo, Feng, & Day, 2013). Current research supports the proposition that empathy is negatively related to bullying behaviour and reduces the prevalence of anti-social behaviour (Geng et al., 2012; Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoè, 2007; Jollife & Farrington, 2006; Miller & Eisenberg, 1988).

The importance of empathy to support students develop meaningful relationships is reflected in a seminal study by Harvard University (Vaillant, McArthur, & Bock, 2010) that proposes one of the biggest predictors of longevity is having a meaningful relationship. The Empathy Program is able to support teachers in achieving the ambitious goal of improving student empathy.

Underpinning The Empathy Program intervention is the assumption that the more you practise empathy, the better you get at it. Hence, connections between drama practice and empathy process mean that if you practice drama, you are practising empathy. This assumption is supported by the data collected in the quantitative pre- and post-intervention surveys. Uniquely, The Empathy Program intervention study highlights the effectiveness of high school drama content in developing empathy for adolescents within a Western Australian context.

Whilst this study highlights the positive influence that drama interventions can have on individuals, consideration should be given to existing critique of applied theatre; theatre focused on social change. The critique within the literature identifies the need for honest and authentic data collection within applied theatre research; or as Belfiore puts it more bluntly, the ‘bullshit in contemporary public life’ (Belfiore, 2009). The commonalities identified in this study and the existing literature may only reflect a limited correlation of effective practice on a global scale. Insofar as articles with negative results, articles in foreign languages and those focused on economically or socially
disadvantaged communities are not included in the literature available. Omasta and Snyder-Young articulate this concern within the drama education research community as “...staying within our safe zones” (Omasta & Snyder-Young, 2014). This term reflects the tendency of educational arts research to conduct projects facilitated by tertiary academics within wealthy English-speaking countries, avoiding reporting on negative results. Omasta and Snyder-Young conducted a meta-review of educational drama and applied theatre research projects identifying that ninety percent of projects in the area report positive results. Comparatively, only two percent of articles reviewed presented negative results, and eight percent reporting mixed or neutral results. The overrepresentation of articles that reflect success in educational drama and applied theatre projects suggests that the literature might not reflect the real-world experience of practitioners and participants.

Demographic information of participants and researchers as well as the role that funding bodies and government agencies plays in influencing the content of academic papers should be considered.

An applied theatre project that reports high levels of positive influence on pro-social behaviours for a group of upper-middle-class metropolitan, Australian students (such as The Empathy Program) would likely garner different results in an underprivileged India school for similarly ages participants. The role of privilege and social economic standing is a factor in influencing the success of The Empathy Program as well as many other arts education research projects. The data presented in this study reflects the potential for the intervention in a Western-Australian context and additional research should be conducted before implementation in differing demographical contexts. How would a group of students who are at risk of educational delinquency in a low social economic standing community engage with the processes?

The Empathy Program joins the majority of articles in this field presenting positive results and whilst it avoids many of the pitfalls and critiques discussed above, the lens must be applied when considering its validity within new contexts. The Empathy Program focuses on the role that the practice of drama has on participant empathy levels, but does not posit a wide-reaching belief that all drama practice has transformational potential.
Key Finding 2: Key drama processes conducive to developing empathy

The aim of the second phase of research was to gain a unique insight into the participants' perspective on what was effective for their learning. Six key themes emerged within the data and guided the discussion presented in this research; (1) Imagination, (2) Role-play, (3) Check-in, (4) Reflection, (5) Explicit Discussion, and (6) Empathy vs Sympathy. Conclusions made will be guided by the same format of the six key themes and discussed below as important elements of effective drama based empathy interventions for adolescents.

**K1: Imagination**

Imagination is an essential skill explored in drama processes, and an important part of the empathic process. The strong theoretical connection was reflected in the realisation of the intervention and participant reflections. Imagination emerged as a useful element of the program that achieved two main goals; allowing participants to practise empathy, and to give participants confidence to use empathy in everyday contexts. The consistent practice of using imagination, especially that of situations far removed from the lived experiences of participants, developed participants’ confidence to do so. Participants reflected that they felt more confident to empathise with people through their continued practice of imagining themselves in roles beyond their lived experiences. The use of imagination based tasks appears consistently within the existing literature on interventions that have successfully improved participants’ empathy. The use of imagination enabled participants to practise using their cognitive empathy within a safe space, exploring a myriad of situations. In reflection on this process, imagination tasks appear to be a highly effective tool for empathy practice and development.

**K2: Role-play**

The Empathy Program included a variety of role-play based activities within each of the three units. These tasks involved participants taking on the role of a myriad of different characters and points of view, then improvising within the given circumstances of that context. The process of role-play emerged as a clear point of correlation between empathy and drama within
the literature review, and then appeared as an essential element of The Empathy Program for participants in developing their empathy. Opportunities to be creative and develop unique and interesting scenarios that required roles outside the participants’ lived experiences, provided opportunities to practise using empathy. The role-play tasks captured the embodied practice ideology of ‘learning through doing’, which the participants identified as very beneficial to their learning. Role-play and acting based tasks also emerged as the most fun and engaging elements of the program, with many students seeking opportunities to act whilst in their drama class. The acting tasks provided opportunities for participants to practise empathy and cement the role-play tasks as an essential element in the intervention process.

**K3: Check-in**

The check-in process that was implemented at the start of every intervention session was unique to The Empathy Program study, when compared to existing empathy interventions. Benefits of the check-in process were an unexpected result, not predicted in the program design phase of the research. Participants identified that the check-in task provided an opportunity to connect with peers and understand their emotions, which they identified as helping develop a safe learning environment and allowing them to participate in the program. Data collected on the check-in process reinforced the existing knowledge that a safe learning environment is important within the drama classroom, especially when dealing with emotions (Gray, Wright, & Pascoe, 2018). The unique result surrounding the check-in process was the fact that participants identified the process as a useful opportunity to practise empathy in real-life. Weekly routine allowed participants to practise empathy throughout each session, not just through the planned activities, but through the genuine interaction with their peers.

**K4: Reflection**

Similar to the results of the check-in process, data generated surrounding the reflection tasks provided unexpected benefits. Reflection tasks were included within the theoretical framework guiding the study and its mixed-methods methodology. Originally, weekly reflection tasks completed after each session were included to collect qualitative data needed for the
study, however the participants identified within that data, that the task of reflecting on their learning each week was very beneficial to building empathy. Participants felt that having dedicated time to completing structured reflections allowed them to connect theory they have learnt to practical exercises completed within the intervention. Thus, data collected from this study supports the continued use of reflections within a drama classroom as a supplementary tool to extend the learning from practical work. The use of qualitative data collection methods, that aim to capture student voice within the data, potentially has in itself educational benefits for participants.

**K5: Explicit Discussion**

Central to assumptions of *The Empathy Program* intervention was the concept of explicitly discussing the phenomenon. By placing empathy at the front of each intervention session and making it the primary learning objective, participants were better able to develop an understanding of the concept. This is in comparison to placing curriculum content and the front of the lesson, and assuming secondary learning around skills such as creativity or empathy are happening. *The Empathy Program* participants identified that explicitly discussing and practising empathy allowed them to develop the skill. Although a somewhat controversial topic, the data from *The Empathy Program* suggests that making clear decisions on what drama education is, or should be about, is essential for guiding curriculum structure and classroom pedagogy. Placing social emotional learning at the forefront of the lessons within *The Empathy Program* intervention, allowed curriculum content to be covered whilst also seeing an increase in participant empathy. Participant reflections on the benefits of the explicit instruction highlights the importance of deciding what is articulated to students as the learning intention, and what is left as assumed secondary learning, which may not be happening.

Secondly, the primary role that empathy took within *The Empathy Program* intervention allowed for detailed discussion and analysis of the phenomenon and provided clear cognitive learning which extended experiential learning given in other elements of the intervention. Participants identified that experiential learning was essential for their understanding and development of empathy, but they also reflected on the importance the
discussions, written work and reflections provided for a consolidation of theory and practice.

**K6: Empathy vs Sympathy**

Within explicit instruction given throughout The Empathy Program intervention, was the use of theoretical binaries to guide participant understanding. Within the structure of the intervention design, contrasts between affective and cognitive empathy were used extensively. Within intervention sessions, the use of empathy and sympathy as differing phenomena was utilised to teach participants about what empathy is. Participants reflected that this theoretical framework was helpful in building understanding of what empathy is and is not. Data suggests that the exploration of similar or contrasting phenomena can be a useful starting point in the exploration of a skill such as empathy.

Of note, is the central role affective and cognitive empathy played within the design and implementation of the intervention, yet it did not appear within the data as a useful element to support participant learning. Perhaps the fact that empathy and sympathy were terms already known to participants whereas the new language of affective and cognitive may be less familiar to them, reducing the likelihood they would be used within the reflections.

**Implications for Practice**

There are three significant points to highlight in considering the implications of these findings for developing empathy in adolescent students within drama education courses. First, at a time when Arts subjects are struggling for their place in the timetable amidst a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) driven curriculum, budget constraints and rapidly changing needs of contemporary workers (Ewing, 2010; Wyn, 2009) advocating to school leadership and other stakeholders of the valuable outcomes the Arts provides for students is important. The findings from this study adds to a wealth of research highlighting the value of the Arts in the education of young people (Ewing, 2010; Gibson & Anderson, 2008; Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010; Hetland & Winner, 2010; Wyn, 2009). Specifically, through explicit instruction on empathy, followed by exploring and workshopping ideas
through drama processes (Forum Theatre, Actor Training, Poor Theatre), improved empathy was observed in participants.

Second, a case can be made to bring the focus of social emotional learning to the forefront of the drama program, rather than focusing on knowledge of drama content such as theatre forms and styles. In this sense, students explore key life skills such as empathy ‘through’ the exploration of drama content. This approach would see the development of empathy as a conscious focus of a drama program, and furthermore, this focus should be made explicit to the students.

Drama can be utilised for a variety of purposes within secondary school settings. Neelands and Goode (2000, p. 112) propose four key areas of focus for drama education:

1. Instrumental objectives: Specific, measurable goals relating to skill development, conceptual development and knowledge.
2. Expressive objectives: Unspecific, indeterminate goals relating to the student’s development of attitudes and values which may, or may not, occur through involvement in the dramatic action.
3. Aesthetic learning: Skills, concepts and knowledge relating to the art form.
4. Personal and social learning: Skills, concepts and knowledge relating to self and the “self/others” areas of learning provided in both the symbolic and real dimensions of the drama. (p. 112)

Teachers develop teaching programs and engage with specific content based on their beliefs and ideas about which subject matter is important to teach (Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989). Schiro (2012) identified four ideological conceptions of teaching: (a) scholar academic; (b) social efficiency; (c) learner centred; and, (d) social reconstruction. For example, orientations towards drama teaching, determine to a large extent, which topics and texts are taught, which processes will be used, and how work will be assessed (Schiro, 2012). Within a drama education context, the amount of teaching time dedicated to empathy would be heavily influenced by the ideological belief held by the individual classroom teacher. This research adds to the growing body of literature that supports the use of drama within
secondary school contexts as a tool for the development of social emotional capabilities (Bell, 2017; Bolton, 2007; Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 1999; Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1999; Deasey, 2002; DiNapoli, 2009; Peter, 2003; SmithBattle, 2012). This research presents a case to drama teachers that Schiro’s social efficiency, learner centred, and social reconstruction ideological conceptions are possible and beneficial within a drama context.

Third, the unique features of The Empathy Program (experiential and cognitive pedagogy) could now be further developed into a professional development package for drama educators. In an educational world where teachers are consistently expected to accommodate new ideologies, the professional learning could support teachers in accepting change and include empathy within in their practice. Windschitl’s (2002) presents a framework of dilemmas surrounding change in educational contexts. The model proposed highlights four dilemmas: (1) cultural dilemmas emerge between teachers and students during the radical reorientation of classroom roles and expectations necessary to accommodate a new or modified ethos; (2) political dilemmas are associated with struggle from various stakeholders in school communities; (3) pedagogical dilemmas for teachers arise from the more complex approaches to designing curriculum and fashioning learning experiences and; (4) conceptual dilemmas are rooted in teachers’ attempts to understand the philosophical, psychological and epistemological underpinnings of the change in context. The development of a professional learning training course for drama teachers on the content and benefits of The Empathy Program could address the dilemmas of teacher change presented in the literature and support the teaching of empathy in drama.

The Empathy Program content is built from core elements of current curriculum, which enables teachers to cover their course requirements whilst also developing student empathy. With the growing demand for teachers and educational organisations to place focus on student wellbeing through the provision of social emotional skills (Department of Education and Training, Commonwealth of Australia, 2018) and still meet growing curriculum demands (Shields, 2012). The Empathy Program is a tool that could enable drama teachers to address both these requirements.
Empathy is a tool that empowers students to overcome challenges that impact on their school engagement such as social isolation, bullying behaviour, relationship conflicts and student teacher conflict (Burton, 2010; Krznaric, 2015). Through the implementation of The Empathy Program, teachers are able to meet their curriculum requirements, whilst also developing students’ ability to combat these obstacles to learning. Examining education from a needs based perspective, Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (2009) propose the Circle of Courage model that contains four universal needs for a student to engage in learning; (1) Belonging, (2) Mastery, (3) Independence, (4) Generosity. Empathy exists as a phenomenon that supports students in fulfilling these needs. With empathy, a student is able to understand others and connect with their community (belonging), engage openly in new concepts (mastery), develop an understanding of their individual emotions and boundaries (independence) and fulfil the needs of others (generosity). Contribution to the development of a students’ empathy becomes an investment in their future academic and personal success.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The following recommendations emerged through the analysis of the existing literature and the data generated from The Empathy Program intervention. The recommendations highlight areas of research within a variety of areas that are needed to extend the existing body of knowledge surrounding the development of empathy within adolescents through drama.

**Longitudinal Data**

The Empathy Program intervention was successful in improving participant empathy over a ten-week period. Further research is required to ascertain longitudinal effects of The Empathy Program. Interventions examined within the literature reflect a variety of program lengths, but do not show data that reviews participant empathy change any longer than the length of the intervention itself. Data is needed from longitudinal studies of several years in length, to identify which programs, if any, are able to increase and sustain participant empathy over a long period of time. This data could then be used to identify which program elements have longitudinal value as well as nominal intervention length to make long term positive change.
**Reflection on Useful Program Elements**

Data collected from *The Empathy Program* identified the six key themes of the intervention that were effective in improving participant empathy. Some of these elements are consistent with existing research, however, some of the elements (check-in, reflections, theoretical frameworks) appeared unique to *The Empathy Program*. These program elements supported the participants’ learning around the phenomenon of empathy and could be considered for use in all classes to support the learning on empathy. Future research could consider how these elements can be used within empathy interventions, how they match to existing theory around empathy development and if they emerge consistently as useful program elements. Identifying the role that tasks such as reflections and real-world moments of empathy provided through the check-in process would be useful data to assess if *The Empathy Program* participants were an anomaly or if these elements have validity within empathy interventions.

**Demographic Influencers**

Data collected within *The Empathy Program* intervention was consistent with existing research that identifies a majority of female participants have higher levels empathy than male participants within similar demographics. This consistency within the data implies that females are developing empathy at a faster rate than males. Future research should consider identifying potential causes for this difference. Understanding the reasons for a difference in empathy between male and female participants has the potential to identify genetic or child rearing and education practices that develop empathy. If future research is able to discover what learning experiences females have that males do not, the body of knowledge surrounding what develops empathy could be grown significantly.

Similarly, the participants in *The Empathy Program* had consistently lower affective empathy scores when compared to cognitive empathy. Future research could consider the implications of what it means to have lower affective empathy and aim to identify why this might be the case. Understanding which child rearing practices develop cognitive empathy more efficiently than affective empathy could have large implications for informing future empathy intervention programs. Also to be consider in future research is
the genetic difference between cognitive and affective empathy. Developing an understanding of whether one is innate in humans and develops without childrearing or educational practices or not, could influence the content focus on empathy intervention programs.

**Effective Implementation in Schools**

Implementation of effective empathy programs into a high school context can be challenging and is often influenced by a large variety of variables. Future research could consider the most effective ways in which high schools are able to include intervention programs into their curriculums, whilst still meeting curriculum, government and student needs. Viability of empathy intervention programs rests on the ability for curriculum authorities and schools to adopt the interventions and deliver them with the required amount of time and energy. Recommendations from Gonski 2.0 (Department of Education and Training, 2018) and the continued implementations of the General Capabilities from the Australian National Curriculum (Australian Curriculum, 2018) suggest there is value in interventions such as *The Empathy Program*. Future research could consider the long term social and academic benefits of social skills interventions to support their inclusion in state and national curriculum.

**Nominal Teaching Time**

Further research could identify how many hours of intervention are required to see a desired increase in empathy before the increase begins to plateau. To be considered is the fact that the time dedicated to *The Empathy Program* was a significant commitment for the school, students and facilitator. Perhaps, shorter programs have more potential to be implemented within the busy timetable of contemporary high schools. This suggests future studies could consider nominal teaching time for empathy intervention programs, finding a balance between the demands of high school timetables and having enough teaching time to achieve change.

**Experiential and Cognitive Pedagogy**

*The Empathy Program* data suggests that the combination of experiential learning with cognitive teaching and explicit instruction was beneficial for participants. Future research could consider if the combination
of both pedagogies is effective and how they can be included within empathy intervention programs. Developing an understanding of the ideal mix of experiential and theoretical learning for adolescent students would help shape best practice empathy interventions in the future.

**Reflection in Drama Classrooms**

The reflection tasks completed as a data collection tool within The Empathy Program intervention was identified by the participants as a useful element. Although ‘responding’ and ‘reflection’ tasks appear within all state drama curriculums, there has been an observed shift away from the use of extensive written reflection in drama education practice. Future research could consider how reflection is currently being used within drama education and how it can be best used to support and extend student learning.

**Limitations**

**Absenteeism**

The Design Research methodology centres on an intervention within a real-life school context, which is often uncontrollable and unpredictable in many ways. A key limitation that the study faced was student absenteeism, which is uncontrollable and unavoidable. The researcher ensured support was given to students when they were absent from class through peer follow up, whereby their peers would inform them of work completed in lessons they were absent. The research also ensured time was allocated within sessions, to support students in ‘catching up’ with sessions they had missed and how it influenced the activities in the current session. Attendance was recorded by the researcher at each session. This record was checked against the school’s class role and used in data analysis as required, by excluding participant’s responses that were absent for more than five sessions.

**Teaching Time**

Similar to absenteeism, the busy nature of a real-life school environment meant that throughout the ten-week intervention there were several interruptions to teaching time. Events such as sports carnivals, church services and excursions interrupted the amount of teaching time available for the intervention content. As such, limited amounts of the planned content were
not taught. This limitation is difficult to avoid and reflects the nature of how interventions would be run in real-world school settings outside of research environment.

**Social Desirability**

The study acknowledges the role of social desirability as phenomenon can be seen as “…a person responding to a test in a manner that he/she feels will present them in a positive light (faking good)” (Ventimiglia & MacDonald, 2012, p. 489), influencing honesty and validity of their responses, which may occur in this research. However, due to the small scope of the study and small number of participants, social desirability will not be analysed to exclude participants from the data analysis.

Data being collected for this study is participant driven and self-reflection from the participants in both quantitative and qualitative components. Students’ responses to both the self-response survey and journal reflections may be influenced by their understanding of their role as a co-researcher and relationship with the researcher. This limitation was acknowledged in analysis of the data and avoided wherever possible during the intervention and data collection. Participants were informed at the beginning of the intervention about the topic of the study; however, they were not told of the research questions nor the hypothesis being explored. Focus questions used to support participants in writing their reflection journals aimed to avoid bias and loading, as to not prompt participants to reflect in a favourable manner to the objectives of the study.

**Significance of this research**

The Empathy Program took existing curriculum content and synthesised it with empathy development theory, delivered within a standard class setting and improved the empathy of participants. This research supports the growing body of literature that posits the use of drama as a tool to develop a plethora of social and emotional skills. In particular, this research supports the contention that drama process can have a positive impact on the empathy levels of adolescents attending high school.

Increased empathy amongst adolescents holds significance at a variety of stages. Immediately, the increase in empathy empowers
adolescents to improve their ability to connect with those around them. High school can be a socially volatile time and the ability to build meaningful relationships and interact with those that are different from you is an essential survival tool. Empathy sits at the base of these tasks. As Brendtro et al. (2009) propose, when an adolescent’s universal needs (belonging, mastery, independence, generosity) are met, they are able to thrive. Empathy is a powerful tool in helping adolescents create a sense of belonging and fulfilling that quadrant of their universal needs. With this comes healthier, happier and more engaged students that are able to do their best in all endeavours. Empathy becomes an investment in future success. The Empathy Program’s significance rests in its ability to develop empathy and the many positive benefits this phenomenon can bring.

This research also provides a unique, adolescent specific program that can be implemented within existing high school structures. Many existing empathy interventions are not suitable for implementation in a traditional high school setting due to program length, resource requirements, or content suitability for adolescents. The Empathy Program has adapted existing curriculum content and fits within the demands and requirements of a high school context. The significance of the research is highlighted in the program’s transferability into real world contexts without a large impost on students, teachers, or schools.

If specialist training was to be provided to drama teachers, the nature of the program means it could be implemented in high schools across Western Australia. Providing training on the empathic process, the correlations between empathy and drama curriculum content, as well as the benefits of empathy for adolescents would enable the program to be delivered in willing schools. The significance of the research rests in the approachability of the program. Professorships and PhDs are not required to understand and deliver the program. Current drama teachers have a mastery over the required program content, and when supplemented with specialised empathy training, could independently deliver the program and improve empathy of their students.

In our VUCA world, our ability to connect with others, build safe and meaningful relationships as well as think critically and creatively about the
problems we face are essential. Empathy can achieve this. The Empathy Program provides a guideline for teachers to adapt existing curriculum elements and empower their students to develop the skills of imagination, creativity, problem solving, relationship building and compassion.

The research suggests that empathy can be a tool for positive change within individual, local and larger community contexts. The study aims to support the existing knowledge on the multiplicity of ways in which empathy can be developed, improving the understanding of the genesis of empathy in adolescents. Uniquely, The Empathy Program study contributes to the very limited body of literature that focus specifically on the development of empathy as a skill for adolescents using drama as the intervention pedagogy. Through this, the study has supported evidence that exists to promote drama as a useful tool in the development of social emotional skills within high school students. The study has also been able to highlight a variety of areas of drama and empathy research that could be considered in the future to extend the existing knowledge within this field.

**Final Conclusions**

The aim of this research was to identify if The Empathy Program had the potential to improve adolescent empathy within a Western Australian context through trialling a ten-week intervention program. The study also aimed to then pinpoint which parts of the intervention program were most effective in the development of empathy amongst adolescent participants. The Empathy Program research was able to collect data that supported the existing body of knowledge that suggests drama can be used to develop empathy. The data from The Empathy Program supports the hypothesis that explicit teaching of empathy through drama can improve empathy scores for adolescents.

The Empathy Program developed as the intervention for this research project exists as an example of how shifting our ideas on education's role in communities can open up powerful possibilities. It could be argued that if students step away from secondary education with more empathy, resilience and creativity, they will have more potential to succeed in the future. Harvard University's seminal study that tracked participants for as long as eighty years concluded that one of the most significant predictors of happiness and longevity – is relationships (Vaillant, McArthur, & Bock, 2010). Participants that
had meaningful and long-lasting relationships in their lives, reported to be happier and lived longer. The key factor in relationship building: empathy. Redirecting our education system to support to growth and promotion of empathy could create profound lifelong positive change for adolescents. The Empathy Programs captured the role that drama can play in achieving this aim and presents a potential structure to guide the pursuit of this goal.

This research highlights the power that exists within drama to develop in students the ability to become positive and productive members of society. With the explicit focus on the teaching of social and emotional learning, drama can support students to develop their ability to make positive change to their behaviour and increase their capacity for empathy.

To conclude, the real experts, the young participants of the study, should have the final word.

My understanding of empathy is a lot stronger now. It has developed through the various activities Scott gave us this term. I understand what it is, how I use it, when I should use it, and how effective it is, not only on stage by in real life

(Participant 7)

Empathy is understanding how someone else is feeling whilst having their feelings in your heart

(Participant 3)
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Memorandum of Understanding

This document represents an agreement between

Scott Corbett (The Researcher)

And

Mater Dei Catholic College (The School, The College, College)
107 Treetop Avenue
Edgewater WA 6027

Made on this day the 19th of February 2016.

1. Project Scope
A Masters by Research level study exploring the potential of drama processes, namely Actor Training, Creative Drama and Forum Theatre, to increase empathy amongst adolescents in a secondary school setting.

Project Overview
This project will engage students in a participative drama program as ‘co-researchers’ along with their classroom teacher and the researcher, in exploring the drama processes of Actor Training, Creative Drama and Forum Theatre, towards developing their situational and dispositional empathy.

Empathy can have a significant impact on situational and dispositional prosocial behaviour in adolescents. Empathy is positively related to moral development, healthy relationships and problem-solving skills. Whereas empathy is negatively related to bullying behaviour, aggression, and victimisation. The practice of Creative Drama, in particular the work of Dorothy Heathcote and Bruce Burton, has developed drama programs that foster the development of empathy. With this process, combined with the Actor Training system of Constantine Stanislavski, as well as the Forum Theatre model developed by Augusto Boal, drama can be utilised to increase situational and dispositional empathy in adolescents.

The purpose of this study is to determine which elements of the Creative Drama practices being explored will work to directly increase empathy in adolescents. The project will take the form of a ten-week intervention, with the researcher
leading a selected class during their term of drama lessons at the college. The project will follow ‘The Empathy Program’ (attached to this MOU) as the basis of the lessons. The Empathy Program will be run during normal class hours at the college, managed by the researcher. All workshops require the attendance and support of a Mater Dei Catholic College teacher or staff member.

The project will; -
- work with the selected Year 10 drama class through an in-school performance workshop program, supporting them in understanding of the key drama processes explored and in developing their skills within the empathic process.
- work within the drama and welfare departments of the school to run the program in an effective and efficient manner
- collect data from the students in the form of two self-response surveys, as well as weekly journal reflections.
- analyse the data collected from the program, to be presented as a part of the Researcher’s completion requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Researcher) at Edith Cowan University

2. Project Aims
This Research Project aims to achieve:
1. An increase in participating students’ knowledge and understanding of Actor Training, Creative Drama and Forum Theatre, as appropriate to the WA Syllabus and National Curriculum used within their normal drama program.
2. An increase in participants’ empathy, in both theoretical and practical forms.
3. An increase in the proportion of participating students who are able to perpetrate positive pro-social behaviours, including empathy, in other areas of their involvement at the college.
4. An empirical grounding for empathy based education programs through the data collection and analysis
5. An increase in knowledge, awareness and practical skills around empathy for both the participants and the wider college community.

3. Project Details
The researcher will facilitate the workshops over Term 3 and 4 of 2016, according to the project schedule to be created with the classroom teacher and researcher, once an appropriate class has been selected. All lessons will take place at the College, unless otherwise specified. Lessons will require a classroom or rehearsal room as venue. Rehearsals and performances will require a performance hall or theatre as venue.

4. Evaluation Process
The project will be utilised as the key research intervention for the Researcher’s Master of Education (Researcher) thesis, and data collected will be analysed in an academic manner, providing content for the thesis. The nature of the research engages both the students and the classroom teacher as ‘co-
researchers’, creating a continual opportunity for reflection and evaluation. Appropriate time will be allocated for a reflection debrief meeting with all involved staff members from the College and the Researcher, to evaluate the success or challenges of The Empathy Program. A final copy of the thesis will be sent to the College, once the thesis has been accepted as complete by the university.

5. Purpose of Agreement
The Parties acknowledge and agree that they have entered into this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide a framework by which the responsibilities for the Program outcomes may be shared by Mater Dei Catholic College and Scott Corbett (The Researcher), in the manner as set out in this document.

6. Principles
6.1 The Researcher;
The Parties agree that throughout the duration of the MOU, The Researcher as the lead partner will be responsible for and will carry out in a diligent and efficient manner the following obligations or responsibilities:

a) Administration of The Empathy Program;
b) Sourcing and contracting of professional artists to facilitate the workshops
c) Providing the school with a current ‘Working with Children Check” for all persons directly involved with project delivery
d) Undertaking evaluation of the program outcomes
e) Providing updates on the program as requested by Mater Dei Catholic College;

6.2 Mater Dei Catholic College
The parties agree that Mater Dei Catholic College will be responsible for and will carry out in a diligent and efficient manner the following obligations and responsibilities:

a) Identify a school class to participate in The Empathy Program, in consultation with the researcher
b) Provide an appropriate space within School grounds for workshops to be held that is safe for participants and trainers;
c) Promote the project to students, staff and parents through school bulletins and newsletters;
d) Provide feedback on the Program as requested by the Researcher;
e) Participate in evaluation processes to determine the effectiveness and benefit of The Empathy Program.

7. Period of this MOU
This MOU will commence upon signing of this agreement and will terminate at the conclusion of the project, after the final data is collected and analysed.

8. Recognition of Parties
The Parties recognise and acknowledge Edith Cowan University as the administering body of the researcher project.

8.1 The Parties recognise and acknowledge The Researcher as Project Managers and Producers of the program

8.2 The Parties recognise and acknowledge Mater Dei Catholic College as a Supporting Partner for the project

8.3 The Researcher retains ownership of all intellectual property and copyright developed as part of the project, but grants a license to the College to use the intellectual property derived from the project for non-commercial purposes.

9. Insurance and Indemnity
The Researcher;
   a) Warrants that all persons attending the college have undergone a Working with Children Check
   b) Warrants that the Researcher is covered by all appropriate insurances, including Public Liability Cover, through Edith Cowan University

Mater Dei Catholic College;
   a) Warrants that Mater Dei Catholic College premises are covered by up to date and relevant insurance.

10. Dispute Resolution

10.1 As producer The Researcher will be overseeing the project in its entirety with Mater Dei Catholic College as a Supporting Partner. Whilst every effort is made to work collaboratively, the Researcher retains final decision-making authority in all aspects of the project, to ensure the project is fulfilling the needs of the study.

10.2 In the event of a dispute to this agreement or if the circumstances or requirements of either party change so as to significantly affect the project, the Researcher and Mater Dei Catholic College Principal shall be informed and will meet in the first instance to attempt to resolve the issue.

10.3 Where agreement cannot be reached, the matter will be referred to supervisors of the research project and the appropriate governing bodies of Mater Dei Catholic College for consideration and resolution.
10.4 If agreement cannot be reached, the matter will be referred to a recognised community mediation service for conciliation or arbitration. The parties agree to be bound by the decision of the mediator.

11. Termination and Reduction

11.1 In the following circumstances, either Party may, by written notice of 30 days including the provision of appropriate documentation, terminate or reduce the scope of this Agreement:

   a) where a breach of this Agreement, at the conclusion of the disputes procedures, has failed to resolve the dispute;
   b) where negligence, default or omission of either Party, in respect of this Agreement, has impacted adversely on the viability of the Program
   c) by agreement between both Parties in writing.

11.2 This Agreement may be terminated immediately by either Party if a serious breach of this Agreement occurs which cannot be remedied. Where the breach is capable of being remedied, a Party must not exercise its right of termination under this clause, unless it has first given to the other Party notice in writing specifying the breach and requiring the other Party to remedy it within the time specified in this notice (not being less than 5 working days) and the default is not remedied within the time allowed.

11.3 Upon receipt of such notice of Termination or Reduction as set down in this clause the parties agree to:
   a) stop work as specified in the notice;
   b) take all available steps to minimise loss resulting from that termination; and
   c) continue work on any part of this Agreement not affected by the written notice.
Mater Dei Catholic College agrees to the division of responsibility as outlined in this document.

Signed on behalf of Mater Dei Catholic College Date

Print Name Position

Witnessed by

The Researcher agrees to the division of responsibility as outlined in this document.

Signed on behalf of The Researcher Date

Print Name Position

Witnessed by
Appendix B – The Empathy Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theatrical Response Group Intensive Program</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Sessions:</strong></td>
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**Focus Topic:**

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Lesson Activities</th>
<th>Curriculum Links</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students will:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop a working relationship with the facilitator centred around trust, safe spaces, drama skills and ideological discourse</td>
<td>Ice breaker games:</td>
<td>Critical and Creative Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will extend their feelings of safety and trust amongst their peers</td>
<td>- Check-in</td>
<td>Personal and Social Capabilities</td>
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<td>Students will develop their skills and process around performance devising and emotion</td>
<td>- Follow the hand</td>
<td>Ethical Understanding</td>
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<td>- Blind Leader</td>
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<td>- Zip Zap Boing</td>
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<td>- Category Balls</td>
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<td>- Name Tag</td>
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<td>- Zombie Chairs</td>
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<td>- Apple Bump</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- Points of Contact</td>
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<td>- Blind Leader Obstacle course</td>
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<td>Check-in and Out Process</td>
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<td>- Introduction to the check-in/check-out process and link to support networks at school and local community</td>
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<td><strong>Tableau Machine</strong></td>
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**Group Discussion**

- Students should continually have the opportunity to be critical practitioners and reflect and the work they create in each class. The discussion should focus on the students' beliefs, values and assumptions of empathy.

**Trust Activities**

Students will work through a variety of trust activities including:

- Blind partner leading and following. This involves students in pair taking turns at leading their partner (who is blindfolded) through the space and around obstacles.

- Blind Falls. Students work as a whole group walking around the room to ‘catch’ students who ‘fall’ on the spot.

These trust activities develop in stages of competency and will evolve as the students extend their ability to trust and support their peers.

**Project Overview**

- Students will be given a copy of this program and engage with a group discussion about the elements of the project.

- The researcher will discuss the nature of the topic, empathy, but not disclose the objectives of the study (to improve their empathy) as to not influence responses given and data collected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical and Creative Thinking</th>
<th>Personal and Social Capabilities</th>
<th>Ethical Understanding</th>
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</table>
### Students will:

- Extend their understanding of Actor Training and its relationship to empathy.
- Explore the concepts of Stanislavski’s System and Michael Chekhov’s techniques.
- Continue to develop a safe working environment with their class and the researcher.
- Develop a clear understanding of focus and concentration as practices and how it relates to empathy.

### Warm Up

- **21**
- Crows and Cranes
- Points of Contact (Boal)
- Silent Ball
- Breathing Exercises
- Bang

### Circles of Attention (Stanislavski)

Students will explore Stanislavski’s concept of the three circles of attention.

- **Inside the Self:** The circle of attention is on introspective thought, thinking inside the body and focusing on emotions, breath and thought.
- **Self in the Outside:** Focus on the self, present in an involved world. The focus is on the body, personal actions and personal objectives.
- **Others in the Outside:** Focus moves to others outside of the self, the environment and the world beyond.
- **Bus Stop based improvisations will be used to explore these different focuses**
- **A fourth circle of attention will be explored, looking at Dual Consciousness (Brecht, Chekhov) where the actor is aware both of their current circle of attention, as well as what they (and the scene on stage) would look like to the audience.**

### Atmosphere (Michael Chekhov)

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</table>

- **Critical and Creative Thinking**
- **Personal and Social Capabilities**
- **Ethical Understanding**
- Students will engage in long form individual focus activity expanding on their circles of attention and concentration, by controlling the energy (atmosphere) present in the space.
- Students will practice creating atmospheres of tenderness and horror within the classroom, using only imagination and focus
- Students will then improvise scenes and moments within these newly created atmospheres

Neutral Mask (LeCoq)
- Students will work individually in front of small groups to perfect a ‘neutral’ stance. The focus on concentration work moves to awareness of the body and the elements of character that are conveyed.
- The students will attempt to move through the space, in front of their audience ‘without character’/perfectly neutral’, with a focus on the body and what it is communicating.

Concentration
- Sight: Looking at stimuli for thirty seconds and then looking away, then giving an accurate description of that stimuli.
- Sight: Partner Mirror exercise, following one partner as a mirror and directly reflection exactly what they are doing
- Touch: Touching an item for thirty seconds with your eyes closed and then describing what you have experienced
- Smell and Taste: Focus on what you can smell/hear in the room with your eyes closed, then recall what you experienced

Empathy Link
This week of the program extends students skills in concentration, focus and self-awareness. The empathic process is complex and requires a
person who is relaxed and physically able to analyse and feel another’s emotional state. This stage of the program develops students’ ability to practice affective empathy.

Students will:
Continue to extend their understanding of contemporary Actor Training practitioners and their activities relating to empathy.

Develop their skills in observation, awareness and physical control, and adapt the skills to the empathic process.

Gain a clear understanding of emotional literacy and its importance in the empathic process.

Warm Ups
- Chinese Mime
- Laugh/Scale
- Status Walk
- Yoga
- Colour Touch
- Group Line Performance

Observation
- Students work in a variety of rooms and spaces observing new things and categories of things. For example, students will observe all blue things in the room, all the safety hazards in the space, all the different temperatures, smells, etc. Students will work in a variety of spaces on the school campus, and be asked to map new spaces, both by drawing and by describing.
- Students work in small groups to describe the emotions and actions of others. Groups will be given a scene or context, separate to one member of the group. The group will engage in the actions/emotions of the scene without talking and the individual has to describe all the emotions present and guess the context of the scene.
- Students work in pairs through simple objective based improvisations where one person has a simple objective (e.g. get your partner to leave the room) and the other has to describe constantly the actions being played against them (e.g. you are intimidating me, you are threatening me etc.)

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Critical and Creative Thinking
Personal and Social Capabilities
Ethical Understanding
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<th>Physical Control</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Students will explore Laban’s ‘Effort Actions’, gaining a language and discourse to break down different types of movement. They will explore the four elements that create each effort action and develop real world contexts where each action occurs. They will then devise a ninja fight using each of the actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students will engage in a variety of Suzuki training activities to extend their capacity for ‘energy production’, ‘breath calibration’ and ‘centre of gravity control’. Activities include ‘Ten Ways of Walking, Talking Statues, Marching’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students will work in pairs and run objective based improvisations using only the body. Each person will have an objective to achieve but must use the body to communicate with their partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students will work in small groups to devise two short scenes, one a celebration, one a commiseration. They will rehearse the scenes and master the dialogue and movements. They will then swap the dialogue from each scene and perform it on top of the movement/blocking from the alternate scene</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Literacy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Students will work with the researcher to develop a class list of emotions on sheets of butcher’s paper to leave hanging in the classroom for the rest of the term.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Emotional Charades. Students will play with charades with the whole class but use emotion words given by the researcher. Students will have to guess what emotion is being represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Students will work in small groups to devise a scene based on a set of emotional reaction pictures as stimulus. The images will depict a series of emotional expression that the students have to label and then use as character constructs to devise a scene appropriate to all the emotions.</td>
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</table>
Empathy Link

This week explores affective empathy and the students’ ability to describe, analyse, feel and represent emotions. The activities focus on physical communication and body language, control over the bodies expression and physical manifestations of emotions. These skills are central to understanding and feeling emotional states, engaging both cognitive and affective empathy.

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<tr>
<th>CREATIVE DRAMA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students will:</strong> Gain an understanding of creative drama and practice participating in whole class role-play Develop their perspective taking abilities and extend their capacity to engage with roles and characters outside of their lived experience Extend their skills in imagination, in particular their emotional imagination and its relationship to their body and actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warm Up</strong> 21 Breathing Activities Yoga</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group Scene Devising</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Students work in small groups to devise a short scene based on the following stimulus:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Astronomers that have discovered a new planet and have to decide who amongst them will call the Prime Minister to tell him</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Monster Truck Drivers who have to decide who gets to go first for the time trial race</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Vets who have to plan how to tell an old lady they accidentally put down her poodle instead of someone else’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Students will be put in small groups. Asked to choose their scenario, assigned roles as appropriate to their scenario, and taken through a</td>
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Critical and Creative Thinking
Personal and Social Capabilities
Ethical Understanding
Continue to explore drama’s relationship to empathy with a focus on imagination and perspective taking.

Focus meditation to create the world/characters they have to play. They will then enter into a long form improvisation with their group. - Groups will debrief after the role-play as to the successes and challenges of the task, and its relation to the empathic process.

**Whole Class Role-plays**

**Murder Mystery**

- Students will engage in a whole class Murder Mystery style role-play. Students will be given a character profile at the beginning of the lesson, which is kept secret. They will then be taken through a focus briefing to create the world/characters they have to play. They will then be split into appropriate groups where some will be inside a mansion (main space) and others on a train (separate room).
- The researcher will be ‘in role’ as the housekeeper, directing the action and creating action stimulus as the role-play progresses. Once all the characters have entered the main space, they will be tasked will solving a murder. They will have to work with the housekeeper and their peers to solve the crime within the time limit.
- The students will debrief once the role-play is finished as to the successes and challenges of the activity.

**Scottish Highlands**

- Students will participate in an individual whole class imagination role-play, working on the same scenarios, but separate from their peers.
- Students will be taken on a journey through the Scottish Highlands in the 1300’s. They will be given the role of a Scottish farmer and parent, during an English invasion. They will be taken through an
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Students will:</th>
<th>Mantle of the Expert</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue to master their skills to engage in whole class role-play and assume roles beyond their lived experience</td>
<td>Whole Class Role-play</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explore their ability to problem solve within a large group and use dialogue to solve social issues</td>
<td>- Students assume the role of school teachers/Principals within a school community and are tasked with developing a whole school approach to combating bullying. They have 3 x 40 minute meetings to create a clear document on how they will reduce bullying in their school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop an ability to combat oppressions (bullying) through drama role-play and creative discussions</td>
<td>- Some students will assume the role of a parents, or different subject teachers, some as Heads of Department and one student will be the Principal, leading the meeting</td>
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<td>- Researcher will be out of role, introducing new stimuli when required.</td>
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<td>- Before each lesson, students will engage in a meditation warm up, reminding them of their roles, context and task</td>
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<td>- The students will have to combat a variety of ‘obstacles’ involving a bullying crisis at the school, negative media attention and internal disagreements.</td>
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<td>- Their aim is to develop a clear policy document (template to be given by researcher) full of strategies to combat the issues their school faces</td>
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**Empathy Link**

This week’s work explores perspective taking and supports students developing their ability to engage in new perspectives far different from their own. It practices emotional congruence and emotional resonance, along with detailed imagination and focus. The section develops students cognitive and affective empathy.
| Practice help giving strategies and behavioural empathy through utilising their skills in cognitive and affective empathy | - The final meeting will involve a press conference where the Principal and some of the teachers will address media to explain their approach to bullying  
  
**Discussion**  
Students will debrief after the activity and the challenges of the task and the learning they received from the activity. The discussion will focus on how they would act next time they have to make group decisions in the future.  

**Empathy Link**  
This section extends students' perspective-taking ability and offers an opportunity to engage in behavioural empathy strategies, both through the task of group problem solving, and through combating bullying. |

### ACTOR TRAINING

| 6 | **Students will:**  
Extend their understanding of Stanislavski’s system and how emotions manifest both physically and psychologically.  
Develop a practical understanding of how to generate emotions | **Warm Up**  
- Tail tag  
- I love you/please leave  
- $10 game  

**Action/Objectives**  
Students will discuss the definitions of an ‘action’ and an ‘objective’. Objective being something a character wants, an action being the way in which a character will get what they want. Through short paired improvisations, students will explore examples of objectives and how they drive drama. They will explore physical actions, how the voice and body move and how they communicate.  

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</table>
| Critical and Creative Thinking | ""
outside of their lived experience and current context
Grow their capacity to control their emotions and recognise similar emotions in others
Practice perspective taking with honest emotional resonance with fictional characters and contexts

can be manipulated to achieve something from someone else. They will develop short scenes based on a simple objective and a series of different actions represented both physically and verbally.

**Magic If**

Students engage in short group improvisations through the process of imagining how they would react IF they were in that situation. Scenes will explore:
- Marriage
- Witnessing a Crime
- Divorce
- Winning an Oscar
- Losing your job

**Affective Memory verses Method of Physical Action**

Students will work in small groups and devise a short scene based on a set of key emotions that the characters are experiencing (anger, fear, sadness, joy). Once they have created and memorised their scenes, they will then experiment with two acting techniques to support their performances in becoming more emotionally accurate.

**Affective Memory**

- Student will practice Stanislavski’s technique of Affective Memory, using the memory of a past experience to generate an appropriate current emotion for a scene.
- Students will be given a variety of stimuli (verbal instruction, images, songs, video clips) and asked to analyse the key emotion being
represented, then exploring a moment when they felt that emotion or something similar.
- They will then use these memories and feelings to playback their devised scene with more emotional connection

Method of Physical Action

- Students will take the key emotions that their character experiences from their scenes and assign 5 physical traits for each of those feelings (clenched fists, gritted teeth, hunched shoulders, pacing, heaving breathing = anger) and practice holding each of these traits and generating an emotional response
- They will then perform their original scene again, using these physical traits rather than the affective memory

Discussion

Discussion will focus on which methods supported the understanding/generation of the emotions and which version of the scene was more authentic. Which of the methods was easier and which translated better on stage?

Empathy Link
Students are developing the affective empathy and experiences with a variety of core emotions. They are developing a strong emotional literacy that engages both the mind and the body, to both recognise and experience different sets of emotions.
**Students will:**

Combine their ability and knowledge in cognitive and affective empathy to create truthful and resonate scenes.

Practice cognitive and affective empathy through script analysis and character development.

Extend their performance skills of written texts.

Continue to explore emotions and contexts beyond their lived experiences and their capacity to empathise.

**Scene Work**

Students will work in small groups to analyse, rehearse and perform given scenes from the following classical texts:

- Hamlet
- Antigone
- The Cherry Orchard
- Waiting for Godot
- The Glass Menagerie

Students will be given a brief overview of the play, its plot and main characters. Students will complete the following tasks for their scene:

- Break script into objectives and actions
- Analyse key points in character’s emotional journey
- Use both affective memory and MOPA to develop emotional connection
- Block the scenes appropriately

**Hot Seating**

Once students are comfortable with their character they will work with another group to ‘Hot Seat’ their characters. Students take turns at being interviewed by the group as their character, answering basic personality questions to complex interrogations. Questions will be provided by the researcher. The students should practice remaining in character and imagining their responses to the questions asked.

**Performance**
Students will have further time to rehearse their scenes after the hot seating activity, then each group will present to the class.

**Scene Analysis**

Whilst watching, the audience will analyse the scenes and engage in a discussion with the researcher and performers after the presentation. The discussion will focus on:

- what were the character’s emotional journeys in the scenes?
- How could you analyse these emotions?
- How did it make you feel?
- How can you relate to the characters from the scene?
- How did the acting techniques we have explored help your performance?

**Empathy Link**

This section of the program allows students to practice cognitive and affective empathy in both analyse and creation processes. Students extend their ability to practice affective empathy through script analysis, character development and performance, whilst also practice cognitive empathy when analysing performance and decoding emotional states and relating that to personal context.

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**FORUM THEATRE**

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<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>Students will:</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop an understanding of Forum</td>
<td>- Follow The Hand</td>
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<td>- Chair Race</td>
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Theatre, its conventions, terminology and effectiveness in combating oppressions

Extend their ability to devise short pieces of theatre within a given context, using empathy to develop honest and believable scenarios

Develop their capacity to problem solve and combat oppression through the use of behavioural empathy

Continue to extend their understanding of Forum Theatre with a focus on the ‘playback’ convention

- Assume the position with the most power
- Sculpting

**Forum Theatre Devising - Playbacks**

- Students will use the sculpting technique in small groups to create tableaux based on an experience they have had where a lack of empathy created conflict (e.g. bullying, aggressive teacher, relationship conflict etc.).
- Each student in the group will create a tableau using the other group members and then the group will present each to the rest of the class. The class will select the most evocative or resonant image. The class decides on the setting they feel fits the image presented (e.g. workplace, school yard, bedroom etc.).
- The group will then work with their selected image to add an emotion (adjective) and an objective (I want sentence) to each character. The sculptor of that image should add themselves into the scene
- Students then use this information, along with the given setting, to improvise a short scene that ends with a negative solution to conflict.
- Groups then work to discuss what the conflict is and what an ideal world would look like without that conflict present. They are to improvise this ideal world in contrast to the conflict
- The students will then present these two scenes to the class

**Jokering Playbacks**

- After each group presents their scenes, the researcher will act as ‘Joker’ and facilitate a problem solving based discussion, where

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**Critical and Creative Thinking**

**Personal and Social Capabilities**

**Ethical Understanding**

ACADRM047

ACADRM050
| 9 | **Students will:**
   - Extend their understanding of the problem-solving strategies related to empathy
   - Develop the capacity to engage in discussion regarding their work and utilise the Forum Theatre model to extend their capacity to combat oppression using empathy
   - Explore oppressions faced in their lives and the possibility to combat them using empathy |
| --- | --- |
| **Warm Ups** | **Forum Theatre Intro**
   - Researcher will lead a lesson exploring the theory behind Forum Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed and what makes a good ‘playback’ scene.
   - Exploration of oppression, what it looks like in a contemporary setting and how we can combat it.
   - The information will support students in creating their performance at the end of the term and shaping the scenes they devise |
| **Small Group Devising** | - Students will work in small groups, extending on the work from the previous week, and devise a playback scene that explores a key oppression faced in their lives, that could be combatted by using empathy.
   - The scenes should involve a clear protagonist/s, clear antagonist/s, clear conflict/oppression and an unsolved ending. The characters in the playback need to demonstrate negative behaviours, creating... |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will:</th>
<th>Final Rehearsals</th>
<th>School Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage in a public performance of the show they have created and participate in the formed discussion with their community</td>
<td>Students will work closely with the facilitator to prepare their performance for the public. They should engage with elements of drama and design, ensuring the work is engaging and of high quality</td>
<td>Students will perform their work during class time to their peers and other students at the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rehearsal – Group Jokering

- Students will work with another small group to present their scene so far and joker the scenes themselves, supporting the discussion around problem solving and creating options for change using empathy.
- Students will provide feedback to their partner group and support them in developing strong playback scenes that create options for using empathy to combat oppression.

Final Rehearsals

- Students devising will be scaffolded through a similar process as in the previous week, first creating tableaux, identifying the characters and their objectives, creating clear conflict, then extending the images into a full scene.
- These scenes will form the basis of the public performance in the final week of the program.
| Extend their performance making skills to a professional standard. | - The performances will be ‘jokered’ by the facilitator focusing on options for social change using empathy to combat the oppressions explored. |
| Develop their capacity to be reflective practitioners and review the learning generated through the process | **Public Performance** |
| Solidify their understanding of empathy and how to combat the oppression in their community | - Students will have the opportunity to present their work to their parents, teachers, friends and wider community |
| | - This performance will be ‘jokered’ by the facilitator and focus on the audience attempting to use empathy to combat the oppressions explored |
| | **Debrief** |
| | - Following the performance, students will participate in both a written and aural debrief of the performance as well as the process as a whole. |
| | - Students will discuss how empathy was used in the public performance play backs to combat the oppressions explored. |
| | - Students will discuss the strengths and weakness of the program as a whole, and reflect as a group on their learning |
| | - Students will be given the post-intervention survey to complete in class, as well as the reflection journal summary questions to complete at home. |

**Personal and Social Capabilities**

**Ethical Understanding**
Appendix C – Parent Information Letter

Information Letter
Developing Empathy through Drama

Dear Parent/Guardian [Change as appropriate]

My name is Scott Corbett and I am a postgraduate drama teacher, studying a Master by Research degree at Edith Cowan University. The year 10 Drama class at Mater Dei College will be asked to participate as co-researchers for my study if they want to. This research aims to explore the role drama can play in developing empathy amongst adolescents. It is expected that the results will help develop education programs to support other young people in developing empathy.

What does participation in the research project look like?
The sessions will look and feel just like a normal drama class, with the focus topic of empathy. The only difference between a normal drama class, and this research project, is that some data will be collected from the students during their participation in the sessions. The data will be collected in two forms: a self-response written survey and a summary of journal reflections completed over the course of the term.

Does my child have to participate?
Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and participants may withdraw from the project at any time. There will be no consequences for yourself or your child if they do not participate. Appropriate alternate work will be given to students who do not choose to participate in the study. The work will be given and facilitated by the classroom teacher.

What will happen to the information collected?
The data collected will be presented in my final thesis and may be used in presentations following the completion of my degree. All identifying features of the participants and the school will be removed.

Is this research approved?
The research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University and is approved by Catholic Education Western Australia.

If your child ever feels uncomfortable or upset during the process, we ask that they talk to an adult they know and trust about how they are feeling; including but not limited to their classroom teacher, their parent/guardian, another school staff member. If you would like to talk to an independent person regarding this project, please contact the
Research Ethics Office (+61 8) 6304 2170 or research.ethics@ecu.edu.au.

Student Researcher: Scott Corbett
Shean
Telephone number: +
Email: spcorbet@our.ecu.edu.au

Supervisor: Dr Mandie Shean
Telephone: +61 8 6304 6888
Email: m.shean@ecu.edu.au

If you have had all questions about the project answered to your satisfaction, and are willing for your child to participate, please complete the attached Consent Form at your earliest convenience and return it to the college.

Thank you for your time.

Scott Corbett
Appendix D - Consent form for Parents/Guardians

[Insert ECU Letterhead]

Participant consent

- I have read and understood the information letter about the project.
- I have taken up the invitation to ask any questions I may have had, and am satisfied with the answers I received.
- I understand that participation for my child in the project is entirely voluntarily.
- I am willing for my child to become involved in the project, as described.
- I understand my child is free to withdraw that participation at any time without affecting their, or my, relationship with Mater Dei College or the research team.
- I understand that this research will be presented as a thesis and may be published in a journal, provided that my child or the school is not identified in any way.
- I understand that I can request a summary of findings once the research has been completed.

Name of Participant (printed):
________________________________________________________

Name of Participant's Parent/Guardian (printed):
________________________________________________________

Signature of Parent/Guardian:
________________________________________________________

Date ______/______/_______

Contact Number: ________________________________
Appendix E – Participant Information Letter

Information Letter
Developing Empathy Through Drama

Hi There,
Thank you for considering helping me with my research. My name is Scott Corbett and I attend Edith Cowan University. This research is a part of my Master of Education degree.

Why do I need your help?
I want to work with a class of young people and explore the concept of empathy with them. Through this term long exploration of empathy, if you choose to participate, you will be asked to help me to better understand how to support other young people in developing empathy whilst at school.

What do you have to do?
This research will be run through your normal drama class. I will work with your teacher in each of your drama lessons to run a variety of drama based activities and exercises that explore empathy. The term will end in a performance of a show that we will devise together, with me as the director and you as the actors.
If you choose to help me with this research, I will be working with you as ‘co-researchers’. This means you will be encouraged to help me explore our topic of empathy and share your thoughts throughout the term.
If you choose to participate in the research, you will be asked to help me collect two sets of data. The first will be a self-response survey that you will complete before and after the 10-week program. The second will be a set of weekly reflections, based on the work we do in class.

Do you have to participate?
You do not have to participate in this research and there will not be any consequences if you choose not to participate. Appropriate alternate work will be given to you if you do not choose to participate in the study. The work will be given and facilitated by the classroom teacher.

Who will see what I say?
The research is confidential, which means only myself, your teacher and your classmates will know what you said/did/wrote during the term. All of the information I collect with be anonymous, which means no one outside of our class will know who said/did what.

Is this research approved?
The research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University and is approved by Catholic Education Western Australia.

If you ever feel uncomfortable or upset during the process, talk to an adult you know and trust about how you are feeling. If you would like to talk to an
independent person regarding this project, please contact the Research Ethics Office (+61 8) 6304 2170 or research.ethics@ecu.edu.au.

If you would like to participate in the ‘Developing Empathy Through Drama’ program, please fill out the consent form attached and return it with your Parent/Guardian consent form, to the college reception.

Thank you,

Scott Corbett | School of Education | Edith Cowan University
Appendix F - Consent form for Parents/Guardians

Participant consent

• I have read and understood the information letter about the project.

• I have taken up the invitation to ask any questions I may have had, and am satisfied with the answers I received.

• I understand that participation in the project is entirely voluntarily.

• I am willing to become involved in the project, as described.

• I understand I am free to withdraw that participation at any time without affecting my relationship with Mater Dei College or the research team.

• I understand that this research will be presented as a thesis and may be published in a journal, provided that I, or the school is not identified in any way.

• I understand that I can request a summary of findings once the research has been completed.

Name: ______________________________________

Signature: __________________________________

School: _____________________________________

Date _____/_____/_______
Appendix G - Pre-Intervention Self Response Survey

Edith Cowan University

Master of Education (Research) Project

Self-Response Survey

To be completed before the intervention

1. What is your age in years today? (please write your age in the boxes below)

   
   Years

2. Are you male or female? (please circle ONE NUMBER only)

   Male 1
   Female 2

3. How many years have you studied Drama at school?

   
   Years

4. How many years have you attended Mater Dei Catholic College

   
   Years

5. For each sentence, choose the answer that shows how much you agree or disagree. (please choose one answer for each statement)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1. My friends’ emotions do not affect me much.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. After being with a friend who is sad about something, I usually feel sad</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I can understand my friend's happiness when she/he does well at something.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I get frightened when I watch characters in a good scary movie.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I get caught up in other people’s feelings easily.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I find it hard to know when my friends are frightened.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I do not become sad when I see other people crying.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Another people’s feeling does not bother me at all.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. When someone is feeling ‘down’ I can usually understand how they feel.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I can usually work out when my friends are scared.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I often become sad when watching sad things on TV or in films</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I can often understand how people are feeling even before they tell me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Seeing a person who has been angered has no effect on my feelings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I can usually work out when people are cheerful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I tend to feel scared when I am with friends who are afraid.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I can usually realise quickly when a friend is angry.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I often get swept up in my friend’s feelings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>My friend’s unhappiness does not make me feel anything.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I am not usually aware of my friend’s feelings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I have trouble figuring out when my friends are happy.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **How do you feel about your school?**  (please choose one answer for each statement)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I feel close to people at this school</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>I feel like I am part of this school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>I am happy to be at this school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>The teachers at this school treat students fairly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>I feel safe at this school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

If answering questions in this survey raises any issues or feelings that concern you please talk to an adult you trust (e.g. parent, teacher, school counsellor, school nurse, or chaplain).

**You can also phone or contact online the Kids Help Line.**

They provide a free, confidential, anonymous 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for young people aged between 5 and 18 years.

Appendix H - Weekly Reflection Topics

At the end of each week, students will be given the information listed in the ‘REFLECTION TOPICS’ column that corresponds to the appropriate week, from which to write their journal reflections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>Lessons</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>Lesson Content (TBC)</th>
<th>REFLECTION TOPICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Actor Training</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. What did you see/do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. What did you think?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. What did it make you wonder?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Actor Training</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. What did you see/do?</td>
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<td>2. What did you think?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. What did it make you wonder?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Actor Training</td>
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<td>1. What did you see/do?</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. What did you think?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. What did it make you wonder?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Creative Drama</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. What did you see/do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. What did you think?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3. What did it make you wonder?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Creative Drama</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. What did you see/do?</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. What did you think?</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Creative Drama</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. What did it make you wonder?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Forum Theatre</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. What did you see/do?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|14|   |   | 2. What did you think?  
|   |   |   | 3. What did it make you wonder?  
|8 | 15| Forum Theatre | 1. What did you see/do?  
|   | 16|   | 2. What did you think?  
|9 | 17| Forum Theatre | 3. What did it make you wonder?  
|   | 18|   | 1. What did you see/do?  
|10| 19| Performance/Debrief | 2. What did you think?  
|   | 20|   | 3. What did it make you wonder?  

Appendix I - Post-Intervention Self Response Survey

Edith Cowan University

Master of Education (Research) Project

By

Scott Corbett

Self-Response Survey

To be completed after the intervention

1. What is your age in years today? (please write your age in the boxes below)

   Years

2. Are you male or female? (please circle ONE NUMBER only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How many years have you studied Drama at school?

   Years

4. How many years have you attended Mater Dei Catholic College

   Years
5. For each sentence, choose the answer that shows how much you agree or disagree. *please choose one answer for each statement*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>My friends’ emotions do not affect me much.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>After being with a friend who is sad about something, I usually feel sad</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I can understand my friend's happiness when she/he does well at something.</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I get frightened when I watch characters in a good scary movie.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>I get caught up in other people’s feelings easily.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>I find it hard to know when my friends are frightened.</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>When someone is feeling ‘down’ I can usually understand how they feel.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I often get swept up in my friend’s feelings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>My friend’s unhappiness does not make me feel anything.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I am not usually aware of my friend’s feelings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I have trouble figuring out when my friends are happy.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. **How do you feel about your school?** *(please choose one answer for each statement)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>I feel close to people at this school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>I feel like I am part of this school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>I am happy to be at this school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>The teachers at this school treat students fairly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>I feel safe at this school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thank you for completing this survey.**

If answering questions in this survey raises any issues or feelings that concern you please talk to an adult you trust (e.g. parent, teacher, school counsellor, school nurse, or chaplain).

**You can also phone or contact online the Kids Help Line.**
They provide a free, confidential, anonymous 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for young people aged between 5 and 18 years.

1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelp.com.au
Appendix J - Final Journal Summary Focus Questions

Final Reflection Journal Summary

Thank you for your time, energy and commitment over the term, and for your dedication to the project. Thank you for joining me on my research journey and fulfilling your role as a co-researcher.

Over the term you have compiled a series of reflection that summaries your thoughts on each week of the project, and reflect your learning. I would like you to take the time to read over what you wrote, what you have learnt and how your opinions have changed.

Once you have had the chance to reflect on each of the entries in this journal, I would like you to complete a summary of the journal, responding to these focus questions as well as anything else you wish to discuss.

Focus Questions

1. How has your understanding of empathy changed since beginning of The Empathy Program?

2. How has the program help developed your current understanding of empathy?

3. What was the most effective part/s of the project in extending your understanding of empathy?

4. What part/s of the program did you not find affective in developing your understanding of empathy?

5. If you had the opportunity to redo the program, what elements of it would you change?

6. Is there anything else that stood out to you as an important part of the program? Why?

Please complete a 1-2-page reflection, responding to each of these questions and any other important thoughts you wish to share from your analysis of the program. Please be honest and as critical as you feel appropriate when responding to these questions.

Thank you again for your time and contribution to this study.
## Appendix K - Research Timeline

### Research Project Timeline

Scott Corbett

2016/2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2016 | 1        | Draft proposal  
Present proposal  
Make appropriate revisions  
Submit application to Human Research Ethics Committee  
Sign MOU with The School |
|      | 2        | Make appropriate revisions  
Complete Intervention Timeline with classroom teacher  
Complete intervention  
Analyse data  
Draft Literature Review  
Draft Method Chapter |
| 2017 | 1        | Write up Results  
Draft discussion chapter  
Draft Complete Thesis  
Review and Finalise Thesis |
## Appendix L - Program Links to Empathy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>LESSON</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>RELATED SKILL</th>
<th>LINK TO EMPATHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Week one activities are centred around developing a working relationship with the students to support ability and desire to engage with the researcher in the project.</td>
<td>Drama Skills</td>
<td>- “an understanding of theories and techniques used in drama can aid the practitioner in gaining a greater understanding of empathy and how this understanding can aid practice. (Goodwin &amp; Deady, 2012)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2    | 4      | Circles of Attention | Concentration, Focus, Self-reflection | - Relaxation, Concentration and Affective memory are key techniques that link to empathy (Goodwin & Deady, 2012)  
- Stanislavski’s work is appropriate to examine as it has an empirical basis (Strasberg, 1988)  
- “The actor develops a theatrical sense of self by learning to control the skills of concentration, imagination and communication. (Carnicke, Stanislavsky’s System: Pathways for the actor, 2010)  
- Self-awareness, therefore, is a prerequisite to empathy (Wiseman, 1996) |
| 5 | Neutral Mask | Focus, Concentration, Physical communication | - “these practices [focus and concentration], incorporated, and fully explored in education in order to allow for an appreciation of the creative state of mind and its impact on the empathic process. (Goodwin & Deady, 2012)
- “Self-awareness, therefore, is a prerequisite to empathy” (Wiseman, 1996) |

| 3 | Observation Exercises | Emotional, physical and special awareness | - “…empathy as having three domains affective (sensitivity), cognitive (observation and mental processing), and communicative (helper’s response) “ (Rogers C., 1957)
- “Through imaginative play the child acts out their own observations and ‘tries out’ different ways of being” |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Control</th>
<th>Emotional Control, Emotional Expression, Emotional Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Literacy</td>
<td>Describing emotions, emotional awareness, emotional communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Role-play</td>
<td>Perspective Taking, Role taking, Imagination,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Waite & Rees, 2014)  
- Self-awareness, therefore, is a prerequisite to empathy  
(Wiseman, 1996)  
- “…the body arouses the imagination, which then activates the emotions” (Merlin, 2001)  
- “Self-awareness, therefore, is a prerequisite to empathy” (Wiseman, 1996)  
- “Self-awareness and the development of empathy have been highlighted by a number of authors as being central to reducing re-offending” (Prentky, 1995; Ward, Keenan, & Hudson, 2000). (Wastell, Cairns, & Haywood, 2009)  
- "One of the reasons I have come to concentrate on imagination as a means through which we can assemble a coherent world is that imagination is what, above all, makes empathy possible. (Greene, 1995)  
- “...seed of this process lies in the imagination (Verducci, 2000)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>Mantle of the Expert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Perspective Taking, Cognitive Empathy, Behavioural Empathy, Problem solving through empathy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>- “Through imaginative play the child acts out their own observations and ‘tries out’ different ways of being” (Waite &amp; Rees, 2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “The ability to emotionally react to and to experience a corresponding emotion as do another person has been proposed to be an important aspect of emotional empathy” (Andreasson &amp; Dimberg, 2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “fantasy and perspective taking represent cognitive aspects” (Gilet, Studer, Grühn, &amp; Labouvie-Vief, 2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “Socially based, draws its structure from the matrix of society, it is seen as a communication system” (Heathcote &amp; Herbert, 1985)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Socio-dramatic play that requires students to create dramatic worlds, allowing the students to become ‘other’, experiencing alternative roles and views outside of their lived experience (Dunn, 2011) (Sawyer, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>Magic If</th>
<th>Imagination, Perspective Taking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Self-awareness and the development of empathy have been highlighted by a number of authors as being central to reducing re-offending (Prentky, 1995; Ward, Keenan &amp; Hudson, 2000). (Wastell, Cairns, &amp; Haywood, 2009)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The ability to emotionally react to and to experience a corresponding emotion as do another person has been proposed to be an important aspect of emotional empathy” (Andreasson &amp; Dimberg, 2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being able to imagine another’s perspective, to ‘stand in someone else’s shoes’, builds empathy (Waite &amp; Rees, 2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…being able to take the perspective of another was essential for both care-based and justice-based moral reasoning. (Juurvári, Myyry, &amp; Pesso, 2010)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>17</th>
<th>Affective Memory vs MOPA</th>
<th>Emotion generation,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…the body arouses the imagination, which then activates the emotions” (Merlin, 2001)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 7 | 19 | Scene Work | Practice of combing affective and cognitive empathy. | - “Empathy is said to involve both knowing and feeling what another experiences” (Levenson & Ruef, 1992) (Wastell, Cairns, & Haywood, 2009)  
- “Emotional contagion is an automatic replication of another person’s emotion (Bensalah, Stefaniak, Carre, & Besche-Richard, 2015) (Iacoboni & Dapretto, 2006)  
- “[affective empathy is] the sharing of another’s emotional state” (Geng, Xia, & Qin, 2012)  
- “The ability to emotionally react to and to experience a corresponding emotion as do another person has been | 18 | Emotion comprehension.  
Emotional communication.  
Affective empathy, emotional analysis in others | - “Relaxation, Concentration and Affective memory are key techniques that link to empathy” (Goodwin & Deady, 2012)  
- “Self-awareness and the development of empathy have been highlighted by a number of authors as being central to reducing re-offending” (Prentky, 1995; Ward, Keenan & Hudson, 2000). (Wastell, Cairns, & Haywood, 2009)  
- “Empathy is said to involve both knowing and feeling what another experiences” (Levenson & Ruef, 1992) (Wastell, Cairns, & Haywood, 2009)  
- “an automatic replication of another person’s emotion” (Bensalah, Stefaniak, Carre, & Besche-Richard, 2015) (Iacoboni & Dapretto, 2006)  
- “[affective empathy is] the sharing of another’s emotional state” (Geng, Xia, & Qin, 2012)  
- “drama focuses on the affective domain, stressing personal development and values clarification” (Conrad, 2004) |
emotional congruence proposed to be an important aspect of emotional empathy” (Andreasson & Dimberg, 2008)
- “…fantasy and perspective taking represent cognitive aspects (Gilet, Studer, Grühn, & Labouvie-Vief, 2013)
- “Being able to imagine another’s perspective, to ‘stand in someone else’s shoes’, builds empathy” (Waite & Rees, 2014)
- “being able to take the perspective of another was essential for both care-based and justice-based moral reasoning. (Juurväri, Myyry, & Pesso, 2010)
- “…improvisational phase employ[s] the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains in conjunction” (Goldstein, 1985)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>Forum Theatre</th>
<th>Devising</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Forum Theatre</td>
<td>Rehearsal/Jokering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Forum Theatre</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Rehearsal/Jokering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Forum Theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Forum Theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Forum Theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Forum Theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Forum Theatre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- “…being able to take the perspective of another was essential for both care-based and justice-based moral reasoning. (Juurväri, Myyry, & Pesso, 2010)
- “Through imaginative play the child acts out their own observations and ‘tries out’ different ways of being” (Waite & Rees, 2014)
- “Through maturation, peer-level experience and social interaction – one was able to … see things more and more from other people’s perspective” (Piaget, 1932, p 11)
- “Role taking is pivotal in moral education” (Conrad, 2004)
- “…improvisational phase employ[s] the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains in conjunction” (Goldstein, 1985)
- “role-taking ability is the key variable in social and moral development” (Mead, 1934)
- “[help giving is] a behavioural vehicle for the direct expression of empathy” (King, 2011).
Appendix M - Parent Information Letter

(Control Group)

Information Letter
Developing Empathy Through Drama

Dear Parent/Guardian [Change as appropriate]

My name is Scott Corbett and I am a postgraduate drama teacher, studying a Master of Education by Research degree at Edith Cowan University. This research aims to explore the role drama can play in developing empathy amongst adolescents. It is expected that the results will help develop education programs to support other young people in developing empathy. The year 10 Drama class at Mater Dei College will be the participants and coresearchers for my study. Your child is in the class that has been chosen as the control group for the research.

What is a ‘Control Group’?
A control group is a group of participants in a study that only engage in the data collection elements of the study, and not the experiment itself. The control group supports the validity and reliability of the data for the study by acting as a standard measure to compare and contrast the experimental group results with.

What will my child have to do?
Your child will be asked to complete two short written self-response surveys, one at the start of the study and one at the end. The survey asks the students to reflect on themselves and respond to questions related to empathy. The survey will be conducted during their normal class time and will only take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Does my child have to participate?
Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and participants may withdraw from the project at any time. There will be no consequences for yourself or your child if they do not participate. Appropriate alternate work will be given to students who do not choose to participate in the study. The work will be given and facilitated by the classroom teacher.

What will happen to the information collected?
The data collected will be presented in my final thesis and may be used in presentations following the completion of my degree. All identifying features of the participants and the school will be removed. Results of the research will be presented to the participants in the form of an executive summary of the final thesis, printed and given to each participant. The researcher will also give a short presentation about the findings of the study to the participants at
their school during school hours. The full final thesis will also be made available on request.

**What happens after the study?**
If the results of the study show that the program I run with the year 10’s is effective in developing empathy and beneficial to their education, I will offer the study to the members of the control group. If the results of the study show that the program was not beneficial, I will not run the program with your child until I have developed it to a point where it is beneficial for your education.

**Is this research approved?**
The research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University and is approved by Catholic Education Western Australia.

If your child ever feels uncomfortable or upset during the process, we ask that they talk to an adult they know and trust about how they are feeling; including but not limited to their classroom teacher, their parent/guardian, another school staff member.

If you have any questions about the research or require further information you may contact the Research Ethics Officer at Edith Cowan University on (+61 8) 6304 2170 or research.ethics@ecu.edu.au, or;

Student Researcher: Scott Corbett                      Supervisor: Dr Mandie Shean
Telephone number: +                                  Telephone: +61 8 6304 6888
Email: spcorbet@our.ecu.edu.au                       Email: m.shean@ecu.edu.au

If you have had all questions about the project answered to your satisfaction, and are willing for the school to participate, please complete the attached Consent Form at your earliest convenience and return it to the college.

Thank you for your time.
Scott Corbett
Appendix N - Consent form for Parents/Guardians (Control Group)

[Insert ECU Letterhead]

Participant consent

- I have read and understood the information letter about the project, or have had it explained to me in language I understand.
- I have taken up the invitation to ask any questions I may have had, and am satisfied with the answers I received.
- I understand that participation for my child in the project is entirely voluntarily.
- I am willing for my child to become involved in the project, as described.
- I understand I am free to withdraw that participation at any time without affecting my, or my child’s relationship with Mater Dei College or the research team.
- I understand that this research will be presented as a thesis and may be published in a journal, provided that I or the school is not identified in any way.
- I understand that I can request a summary of findings once the research has been completed.

Name of Participant (printed): _________________________________________________

Name of Participants Parent/Guardian (printed): ____________________________________

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _________________________________________________

Date _______/_____/________

Contact Number: __________________________________________
Appendix O - Participant Information Letter

Information Letter (Control Group)
Developing Empathy through Drama

Hi There,
Thank you for considering helping me with my research. My name is Scott Corbett and I attend Edith Cowan University. This research is a part of my Master of Education degree.

Why do I need your help?
I want to work with a class of young people and explore the concept of empathy with them. I will be working with the Year 10 drama class for one term to explore empathy through drama. To make sure my data is valid and reliable, I need a control group to support me in my study.

What is a ‘Control Group’?
A control group is a group of participants in a study that only engage in the data collection elements of the study, and not the experiment itself. The control group supports the validity and reliability of the data for the study by acting as a standard measure to compare and contrast the experimental group results with.

What do you have to do?
You will be asked to complete two short written self-response surveys, one at the start of the study and one at the end. The survey asks you to reflect on yourself and respond to questions related to empathy. The survey will be conducted during their normal class time and will only take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Who will see what you say?
The research is confidential and anonymous, which means no one will know what you gave as answers in the survey. This information will always remain anonymous during the research and presentation of the thesis.

Do you have to participate?
You do not have to participate in this research and there will not be any consequences if you choose not to participate. Appropriate alternate work will be given to you if you do not choose to participate in the study. The work will be given and facilitated by the classroom teacher.

Results of the Study
Once the study is complete, I will give you a written summary of my thesis that explains the results. I will come and give a short presentation in your class to explain it all and answer any questions. You will also be able to read my entire thesis if you wish, once it is written.

What happens after the study?
If the results of the study show that the program I run with the year 10’s is effective in developing empathy and beneficial to their education, I will offer the study to the members of the control group. If the results of the study show that the program was not beneficial, I will not run the program with you until I have developed it to a point where it is beneficial for your education.
Is this research approved?
The research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University and is approved by Catholic Education Western Australia.

If you ever feel uncomfortable or upset during the process, talk to an adult you know and trust about how you are feeling.

If you would like to talk to an independent person regarding this project, please contact the Research Ethics Office (+61 8) 6304 2170 or research.ethics@ecu.edu.au.

If you would like to participate in the ‘Developing Empathy Through Drama’ program as a member of the control group, please fill out the consent form attached and return it with your Parent/Guardian consent form, to the college reception.

Thank you,

Scott Corbett | School of Education | Edith Cowan University

e: spcorbet@our.ecu.edu.au
m:
Appendix P - Consent form for Participants (Control Group)

Participant consent

- I have read and understood the information letter about the project, or have had it explained to me in language I understand.
- I have taken up the invitation to ask any questions I may have had, and am satisfied with the answers I received.
- I understand that participation in the project for is entirely voluntarily.
- I am willing to become involved in the project, as described.
- I understand I am free to withdraw that participation at any time without affecting my relationship with Mater Dei College or the research team.
- I understand that this research will be presented as a thesis and may be published in a journal, provided that I, or the school is not identified in any way.
- I understand that I can request a summary of findings once the research has been completed.

Name: __________________________________________
Signature: _______________________________________
School: _________________________________________
Date _____/_____/_________