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I see a spark and blow on it: Drama practice in Year 1 and the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts

Christine Lovering
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I see a spark and blow on it:
Drama practice in Year 1 and the new Australian
Curriculum in the Arts

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Cert. Ed., Grad. Dip Mod Lang.

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters of Education by
research in the Faculty of Arts and Education, Edith Cowan University

Supervisors: Professor Caroline Barratt-Pugh
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ABSTRACT

New educational directives have an effect on the practice of teachers in schools. This study is propelled by the introduction of a national Australian Curriculum and subsequent changes to the Arts curriculum. As one of the five arts subjects, drama has been included in the primary school curriculum in Western Australia since 1997, however, its inclusion and the teaching of drama has not been consistently realised.

Teacher perspectives and beliefs about specific Learning Areas influence their planning and practice; often this is related to past experiences. This study aims to determine Year 1 teachers' perspectives of, and practices in, drama. In addition, knowledge of the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts and the level of support required during the implementation process are sought. The study focuses on the Year 1 level, as this particular year marks a significant transition in a young child's life from a Pre-primary setting to the Year 1 classroom; considering the playful quality inherent in drama experiences, it is a time when drama pedagogy could be explored fully.

Data collection instruments were generated based on previous research and state curriculum documents. Participants in the study were asked to complete a questionnaire. The data provided an insight into Year 1 teacher perspectives and practice and the new Arts curriculum. The subsequent semi-structured interviews were conducted to augment the questionnaire data.

The study found that Year 1 teachers extolled the positive benefits of using drama; however, experiences in drama, both as teacher and participant, affected their willingness to implement it. Teachers were using drama, yet analysis of semi-structured interviews revealed a common practice of implementing incidental and unplanned drama experiences. A foundation for the implementation of drama in the new Arts curriculum with recommendations for possible professional development and support for drama practice are provided.

The declaration page
is not included in this version of the thesis

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Finally, I would like to thank the participants in this study for their gift of time to this project.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Joan and Terry Boyles. They instilled in me an understanding of the necessity and importance of a 'good' education, emanating from their own interrupted schooling due to the intervention of World War II. Both very intelligent people, my parents were prevented by circumstances from fulfilling their educational potential.

Mum and Dad, this is for you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Context

Education in Australia is currently undergoing a major process of reform. The release of significant federal documents in recent years has been instrumental in pioneering new directions in education, leading to the development of an Australian curriculum for the 21st century. The recognition of the role the Arts plays in children's educational development is evident within these documents.

In 2007 the *National Education and Arts Statement* (Ministerial Council of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 2007) sanctioned high quality arts education at all phases of learning to support young Australians in the realisation of their full creative potential. A year later, the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), 2008) set the direction for Australian schooling for the following ten years. This document stipulated that the Arts, described as *performing* and *visual*, were to be included in the Australian Curriculum (MCEECDYA, 2008).

In 2009, the *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2009) was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). This document supports Goal 2 of the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEECDYA, 2008), the development of all young Australians into successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens. The Framework specifically emphasises play-based learning and recognises the importance of communication and social and emotional development, all of which may be encompassed through an Arts curriculum, which includes drama (DEEWR, 2009).

The publication of significant documents by the organisation responsible for the development of the Australian Curriculum, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), signalled two key modifications to the delivery of arts programmes in Australian schools. The draft *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* in October 2010; the subsequent *Shape of the Australian Curriculum Version 2.0* in December 2010; and the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* in August 2011, indicated that the Australian Curriculum in the Arts would entitle all students, from Foundation to Year 8, to experience and study all five arts forms for a minimum of two hours per week. These five arts forms were identified as: dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts (Ewing, 2010). In Western Australia, the

Foundation year corresponds to the Pre-primary year; subsequent references to the commencing year level will be 'Pre-primary' in this document, as this is the terminology used in all the Western Australian Curriculum documents.

All state-based curriculum authorities in Australia, except in Western Australia, endorsed Phase 2 of the Australian Curriculum, including the Australian Curriculum: The Arts. The Western Australian School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) replaced the former Western Australian Curriculum Council in 2012. The Western Australian SCSA expressed concerns about the proposed Australian Curriculum in the Arts, specifically whether early childhood and primary generalist teachers would be able to deliver all five arts forms within the time allocation, as suggested in the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2011). In the absence of an arts syllabus, the SCSA decided to wait before endorsing the Arts curriculum in order to investigate how these curriculum recommendations could be successfully implemented. In 2014, the Australian Curriculum, including the Arts curriculum, was published as an online resource to assist implementation in schools with the decision on the timing of the implementation to be made by the SCSA (Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2014).

In a recently published document in responding to a Government review (SCSA, 2015a), the SCSA reiterated its concern about the Australian Curriculum, in particular the quantity of suggested content. The SCSA considered there was not enough time in the school week to adequately teach this content. As a result, they intend to adopt and adapt the Australian Curriculum content, including the arts component, to reflect the context and needs of Western Australian Schools. This will be achieved by identifying 'core' and 'additional' content and then organising it into year syllabuses, as opposed to the two-year bands developed for the Australian Curriculum (SCSA, 2015a). To achieve these aims, the SCSA has developed the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline* as the curriculum resource for all Western Australian students from Pre-primary to Year 10 (SCSA, 2015b). This resource will incorporate materials from the Australian Curriculum: The Arts and the former Western Australian Curriculum Framework and will reaffirm the requirement that all the arts forms be taught by Western Australian teachers. Whilst the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline* is available to all Western Australian teachers, the Learning Areas from Phase 2 in the Australian Curriculum are still under development. The Phase 2 Learning Areas still under configuration are Health and Physical Education, The Arts, Technologies and Languages. The SCSA has indicated that the reconfiguration of content will be available to schools for familiarisation at the beginning of 2016 (SCSA, 2015a). The Phase 2 Learning Areas will be implemented via SCSA, however, until revisions are complete in the *Western Australian*

Curriculum and Assessment Outline, Western Australian teachers have been advised to use the WA Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998) and the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014) for planning purposes. Therefore, in the interim, many teachers in Western Australia continue to access content from all Phase 2 Learning Areas in the Australian Curriculum.

Comments made by representatives from the SCSA in a recent briefing suggest that the Board of the SCSA will require that, in Western Australia, the Arts be divided into two categories: *Performance* incorporating dance, drama and music and *Product* incorporating visual arts and media arts. It is thought that primary schools will be required to teach one arts form from each category during any one school year, with a recommendation that all five arts forms to be taught at least once during a child's primary school years (A. Blagaich, personal communication, 3rd March, 2015).

Within an international educational context, the compulsory inclusion of specific arts subjects in the primary school curriculum is an ongoing concern. For example, in the United Kingdom drama was reverted to a component of the English curriculum, when a revised national curriculum was implemented in September 2014 (Department for Education, 2014).

Problem

In Western Australia, historically, the Western Australian Curriculum Framework has provided a basis for planning developmental learning for students in the five arts forms of dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts (Curriculum Council, 1998). The Curriculum Framework supports learning in all five arts forms, and combinations of these constitute the Arts Learning Area. However, although it is suggested that the five arts forms could be used in interrelated ways, as each form had its "unique language, techniques and conventions," student learning was required in all five separate art forms (Curriculum Council, 1998). As one of the designated eight Learning Areas, the Arts has been taught in primary schools, but a time allocation has not been compulsory. Whilst primary schools aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum in which the integral role of the Arts is acknowledged and resourced, in many cases, only one or two of the arts forms are being taught (Moss, 2000). Consequently, it is possible that during a child's primary school years, he or she may not experience all five of the arts subjects. However, in the shaping stages of the Australian Curriculum an indication was given that a mandated time allowance for all five arts forms to be taught in primary schools would be introduced (ACARA, 2011).

The place and value of the Arts in primary schools continues to be a subject of discussion among government policy makers and advocates for the Arts. Ewing (2010, p. 1), in her review of the Arts in Australia, states, “in the latter part of the 20th century, particularly in western cultures and education systems, the Arts have increasingly been regarded as peripheral, relegated to the margins, the extra curricula.” Russell-Bowie (2012) suggests that the marginalisation of the Arts in primary schools may result in generalist primary teachers having inadequate training in the Arts and, therefore, being reluctant to teach arts subjects when they feel insecure in their knowledge and understanding of the Arts.

The apparent marginalisation of the Arts and the imminent implementation of a revised version of the new Australian Curriculum: The Arts in Western Australia provides an opportunity to examine the arts practice in schools. In particular, examine the use of drama and teachers’ preparedness to accept and implement a new Arts curriculum at a Year 1 level, as an assessment of current perspectives and practice is important. It is anticipated that this study provides an indication of teachers’ current perspectives of and practices in drama and the possible factors that impede and support this drama practice. Consequently, a foundation is established from which to ascertain the possible support required for successful implementation of the new Arts curriculum in Western Australian schools.

Rationale

Drama surrounds us and is a part of our daily lives. The necessity of replicating lives, exploring issues and challenging political trends and bringing these stories to life has been the task of writers and actors (R. J. Brown, 1997; Russell-Bowie, 2012; Warren, 1999). The art form underpinning theatrical, television and film work is drama. Researchers also contend that drama is an important subject in the primary school curriculum (Brown & Pleydell, 1999; Ewing & Simons, 2004; Poston-Anderson, 2012) because it can be used to support so many aspects of early learning. For example, drama can assist children with the transition from Pre-Primary into Year 1. As Dunn and Stinson (2012a) and Riley and Jones (2010) assert, the playful experience of frequent drama lessons can counteract the more formal structure that young children face when they enter Year 1, the year level selected as the focus of this study.

As an interactive and collaborative learning medium, drama can be used to encourage active learning which, in turn, relates significantly to the developmental stages of Year 1 children (Curriculum Council, 1998). Drama learning can occur in subjects such as literacy and numeracy and learning in these subjects can be enhanced through the use of drama; experience in drama may assist in embedding concepts at a practical and kinaesthetic level (Ewing & Simons, 2004;

Wee, 2009; Bird, Donelan, Freebody, O'Toole & Sinclair, 2012) and build literary understanding (Adomat, 2009). Currently, Western Australian schools have a strong focus on numeracy and literacy skills and through the medium of drama, early childhood teachers have the opportunity to utilise an innovative mode of teaching these subjects (Baldwin, 2012; Pinciotti, 1993). In addition, drama is a valuable strategy in the creation of multimodal texts. It is possible for teachers to access a range of semiotic resources, including the communication modes in drama, and develop a multimodal pedagogy that will allow the teaching of multimodal text generation (Bearne, 2009).

As Year 1 marks an important transition stage for young children in their schooling journey, Year 1 teachers may build on the principles of the EYLF, to “extend and enrich children’s learning from birth to five years and through to the transition to school” (DEEWR, 2009, p. 5). The EYLF argues that teachers should be reflective and critical in their provision of valuable teaching and learning programmes for their students and a relevant consideration would be the exploration of the potential of educational drama. Furthermore, in the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA, 2010, p. 10) the Arts are posited to “build on the Early Years Learning Framework and are taught using a purposeful play-centred approach.” In the same paper it is suggested that the Arts be integrated across the early childhood curriculum “to enhance play-based learning and also to create arts-specific learning outcomes” (p. 10). In the substantiation of key Australian government initiatives, drama can be instrumental in the implementation of the recommended requirements. Drama is not only a significant part of early childhood learning endorsed by government policy and frameworks, but very little is known about drama in the early years in Western Australia.

Purpose

The introduction of major curriculum change can signal a time when review of current teaching practice will occur (Walsh & Gardner, 2007). The purpose of this study is to describe teacher perspectives of drama in the Year 1 setting in Western Australian schools and to determine their drama practice; emphasis is placed on the various forms of drama implemented. In achieving these aims, the study specifically determines why Year 1 teachers use drama, how teachers plan for drama and identifies the factors supporting and inhibiting the teaching of drama in Year 1 settings. Teacher knowledge of the new Australian Curriculum: The Arts in relation to drama and their level of readiness for the new curriculum are also examined.

Research questions

1. What are Year 1 teachers' perspectives of and practices in drama?
 - 1.1 Why do Year 1 teachers use drama?
 - 1.2 What forms of drama do Year 1 teachers use?
 - 1.3 How do Year 1 teachers plan for drama?
 - 1.4 What factors support and/or inhibit the teaching of drama in Year 1?
2. What do Year 1 teachers know about drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts?
3. How prepared are Year 1 teachers for the implementation of drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts?

Significance

The Australian Curriculum in the Arts will incorporate the years from Pre-primary to Year 10; however, it will be taught to all students from Pre-primary to Year 8, with decisions made by state educational authorities about continued learning of the arts forms in Years 9, 10 and senior secondary schooling. Consequently, with the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Western Australia, students from Pre-primary to Year 8 will be given a learning entitlement to engage with all five major art forms, including drama (ACARA, 2011). In her review of the Arts in Australia, Ewing (2010) comments:

With a national arts curriculum imminent in Australia, this is an important moment to build on the paucity of the provision of quality arts education in the past and develop a future coherent body of research to deepen our understanding of learning and the Arts. (p. 29)

It was expected that this study would generate new information to address the paucity of recent research in the area of drama in the early childhood setting (Stewig, 1994; O'Toole, Stinson & Moore, 2009; Ewing, 2010). In addition, it could contribute to the revision and development of drama curricula for pre-service teachers at university level. The aim of this study is to provide a broader understanding of current perspectives and practices, especially in regards to implementing the new Australian Curriculum. Specifically, it proposes to investigate why and how Year 1 teachers use drama generally, utilise the different forms of drama and plan for drama. The study sought to identify the possible factors supporting and inhibiting the teaching of drama. Additionally, Year 1 teachers' knowledge and understanding of the new Arts curriculum and their level of preparedness for its implementation was investigated. It is anticipated that this information will have implications for supporting teachers in the

implementation of the Arts. This information could be applied by both the Western Australian Department of Education and other agencies in the design of models of implementation for the Arts.

This study is informed by a research project undertaken by Moss and Chalk (2004) into drama practices in early childhood settings in metropolitan schools in Perth, which found that drama was considered to be a strategy rather than an art form; it was considered that a study in a similar context would provide information on the current situation in schools that could be considered in the historical context of the previous study.

The researcher is an experienced drama educator with many years of practice. As a researcher, she is aware of her strong personal beliefs about drama and its beneficial use in the early childhood setting. However, the researcher attempted to 'bracket' her personal stance and experiences of drama in order to focus on the participants in the study and to gain an understanding of their experiences. Creswell (2013, p. 80) describes, 'bracketing' as the practice of investigators suspending "their experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh perspective towards the phenomenon under examination." LeVasseur (2003) expounds this belief by stating that in 'bracketing', the researcher is positioned to move beyond existing understandings and assumptions, whilst maintaining a curiosity towards the phenomenon.

The title of this thesis is derived from a quote from one of the participants in this study and offers a symbolic representation of the researcher's personal belief about drama in education. She believes that young children possess the inherent desire to play and, in particular, to enact the role of another. As a teacher, if she sensitively recognises interest in dramatic play and knows how to build on it, she can guide the children through many magical drama experiences. She believes this can be achieved by adopting an open approach in her teaching and through a willingness to ignite the spark that is observed.

Chapter 1 provided the contextual background for the study, offering a Western Australian focus within the policy framework preceding the development of the Australian Curriculum in the Arts. The significance of drama in an early childhood setting and an understanding of the issues surrounding the implementation of the new curriculum were also included. Chapter 2 comprises the literature review for this study, and Chapter 3 describes the methodology. The findings are presented and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, whilst Chapter 6 concludes the thesis with a summary of the key findings and implications for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature review will address three areas related to teacher perspectives of and practice in drama in Year 1 settings and the new Arts curriculum. The first section will address the research related to the inclusion of drama in educational settings and will focus specifically on the use of drama in early childhood settings. The second section will focus on research about perspectives and practices in teaching and learning drama in early childhood settings and will investigate teacher attitudes concerning the subject and the factors that affect the teaching of drama. Finally, the third section will discuss how teachers understand and are prepared to implement a new curriculum specifically in relation to drama.

A thorough search of the literature revealed a somewhat limited number of research studies on drama in the early years. Consequently, this review draws on secondary and tertiary sources to ensure a comprehensive exploration of practice and theory is enabled in relation to the research questions.

Drama in educational settings

Historically, drama has an extensive connection to education and drama pedagogy is substantiated by its own theorists and philosophies (O'Toole et al., 2009). The concept of including drama in the primary school curriculum can be traced back to the 1950s when Peter Slade published his seminal work, *Child Drama* (Slade, 1954). Throughout the ensuing years, teachers were made aware of the developmental and experimental potential of educational drama and, in time, drama became implemented in classrooms. This has resulted in educational drama being comprehensively explored and more realised in schools (O'Toole et al., 2009). However, within educational circles opinions differ about the concept of drama in the classroom; consequently an exploration of the concepts of drama is necessary.

Ozbek (2014) explains that the term 'drama in education' or 'educational drama' relates to the role of drama in the school curriculum. An alternative term to describe the drama occurring in schools is 'creative drama,' defined by Pinciotti (1993, p. 24) as a "specific type of dramatic learning activity that is guided by a leader and allows the participants to imagine, enact and reflect upon human experiences, real or imagined." Ewing and Simons (2004, p. 3) consider drama to be both a "method of teaching/learning and a body of knowing in its own right."

Renowned drama educators Miller and Saxton (2011, p. 121) state that drama education is “a way of working artistically with all students as they unravel the issues and challenges of being human through the metaphor of story without sometimes distorting the pressures of the requirements of performance.” Despite these differing but comparable concepts of drama that posit drama in education as an active, collaborative and imaginative experience, a common belief exists that classroom drama is about acting and producing plays. Chen (1997) conducted a study in Taiwanese Kindergartens to investigate the knowledge, experience and perspectives of in-service and pre-service teachers towards the implementation of creative drama. The research instrument designed by the researcher was based on a survey implemented in Stewig’s (1984) investigation of teachers’ perceptions of creative drama in the elementary classroom. In Chen’s (1997) study, the group of in-service teachers numbered 160. The teachers were employed in 29 Kindergartens. Chen (1997) reported that teachers had no understanding of the difference between classroom creative drama and formal performance, suggesting that some teachers did not understand the difference between theatre and drama in education.

The apparent confusion between theatre and drama in education may be the reason why researchers have deemed it necessary to clarify the difference between the two. If teachers think that drama is about performance, they may be less likely to integrate it into their teaching and learning programmes. A key drama theorist, Brian Way (Way, 1967, p. 3), describes theatre as comprised of actors conveying meaning to an audience, but that conversely, drama is “largely concerned with experience by the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience.” Importantly, this does not suggest a lack of performance opportunities in educational drama; rather it distinguishes between children participating in a formal style of drama where they act out “the words of others...[and one in which they] develop... ideas of their own” (Fleming, 2011, p. 12). The distinction between drama and theatre was emphasised in a recent planning document for the Australian Curriculum, the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA, 2010), which stated that, “Drama becomes theatre when it is acted by participants for an audience other than themselves” (p. 5). Essentially, as eminent drama educator Dorothy Heathcote states, drama in the classroom refers to the “teaching business, not the play-making business” (Heathcote, 1984, p. 92). However, the connection of educational drama to the conventions of theatre is evident.

Acknowledging the relationship between theatre and drama education, in her paper discussing how an aesthetic experience can be achieved, American drama theorist McCaslin (2005) claims that drama and theatre share the same three objectives: “an aesthetic encounter, an

educational experience and a social opportunity unique amongst the arts” (p. 19).

Furthermore, Toye and Prendiville (2000) recognise that when conducting drama work with children, especially when adopting the ‘teacher-in-role’ strategy, aspects of the theatre are ‘borrowed,’ such as the use of role and props, the setting of a context, and the use of tension. However, researchers maintain that teaching drama is not acting, although they indicate classroom drama’s connection with theatre conventions (Toye and Prendiville, 2000).

In the literature, researchers have also described the link between drama education and theatre as developmental, achieved through a series of activities leading to the acquisition of drama skills. For example, McCaslin (2005) defines creative drama and theatre as ‘process’ and ‘product’. McCaslin describes how the creative drama experience leads participants through a creative and imaginative dramatic process and the resulting drama work is produced in some form of presentation that conforms to the conventions of theatre. Additionally, O’Toole et al. (2009, p. 11) invoke the connection between drama and theatre as a continuum, with young children moving from ‘play to display’. As children move along the continuum, experiencing well-structured explorative drama work, they begin to understand the process of preparing for performance and will eventually be adequately prepared to share their drama work with an audience.

In addition to clarifying the difference between educational drama and theatre, the literature distinguishes between the teaching of drama-specific lessons and the use of drama as a pedagogical tool (Baldwin, 2012; Bamford, 2006). To realise the potential in arts learning, strategies from the art forms can be used to teach other Learning Areas, in addition to teaching specific art forms (Ewing & Simons, 2004). However, definitions of these two approaches to drama vary in the literature. For example, Chou (2007) clearly delineates between creative drama and ‘drama as pedagogy’ (as in a drama-specific lesson) referring to creative drama as being a focus on script writing, acting or performance, whereas ‘drama as pedagogy’ is focused on drama activities clearly linked to a more exploratory form of drama. Here, Chou (2007) uses the term ‘creative drama’ in direct contrast to Pinciotti’s (1993) definition of ‘creative drama’ cited previously.

Bamford (2006) conducted an international study in a continuing examination of the Arts in education. Bamford (2006) confirmed the existence of two different uses of drama in an educational setting; she defines the first as teaching *in* drama, which is the teaching of the skills and processes of drama and the other as teaching *through* drama by using drama as a pedagogical tool. When teaching *in* drama, the activities are purely drama-specific and are designed for children to develop valuable drama skills, using drama as a discipline in its own right (Ewing, Hristofski, Gibson, Campbell, & Robertson, 2011). In terms of teaching *through*

drama, a teacher could introduce a mathematical concept such as division using drama and movement; for example, children move around a space and then are asked to divide themselves by a number, organising themselves into groups of that number. Bamford (2006) maintains that for children to benefit from the educational potential in drama, both teaching approaches are required.

Play and drama

The correlation between drama education and theatre is recognised (Baldwin, 2012; Fleming, 2011; Heathcote, 1984; Way, 1967) and the place of drama in educational settings is established, as a pedagogical tool and a drama-specific approach (Bamford, 2006; Ewing, 2010; O'Toole et al., 2009). In a Western Australian context, support for the inclusion of various forms of drama is provided through the Western Australian Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998). In determining the foundation of drama in education, researchers often cite the relationship between play and drama; the tendency of young children to participate in and create make-believe and fantasy play is positioned as the precursor to creative drama (O'Toole et al., 2009; Verriour, 1989). However, this connection attracts considerable debate. The literature suggests that drama in education follows the natural progression of children's play. Certainly, the theories of play and its ensuing influence upon social development have resulted in the inclusion of drama in the early childhood setting (Klugman and Smilansky, 1990; Moss, 2000; Paley, 2004). In support of the presence of drama, Furman (2000) argues that children learn through play and through experience.

Young children can be observed either re-enacting real scenes from life or creating new worlds; the desire to act out situations is recognised as an expected aspect of their play. In support of the connection between play and drama, Vygotsky, (cited in Bodrova, 2008, p. 359) defines 'real' play as having three components: children take on an imaginary situation; children take on and act out roles; and children follow a set of rules determined by specific roles. Furthermore, Toye and Prendiville (2000, p. 9) state that educational drama "has its roots in child play." They argue that children naturally play 'make believe' and act out scenarios and that "imaginative pretend play directly leads into drama" (Toye & Prendiville (2000, p. 9).

Research suggests that early childhood teachers can build on young children's desire to play by encouraging them to participate in dramatic play (Bodrova, 2008; Klugman & Smilansky, 1990). In their introduction to a special section on dramatic play in an American early childhood journal, Katz and Mendoza (2008) maintain that dramatic play can also be described as socio-

dramatic play, symbolic play, and/or pretend play. However, all these terms refer to play that involves 'pretending' or the use of 'symbols' that 'stand in' for that which is real: one child 'becomes' a dog and another child its 'owner'; a puppet 'speaks' for a child; a pile of blocks represents a cave for bears (Katz & Mendoza, 2008, p. 1). A dramatic play activity can be facilitated by a teacher creating dramatic play areas such as a 'home-corner', 'shop' or 'play-corner' in an area of the classroom. However, additional and varying degrees of teacher intervention in this dramatic play can be implemented.

In referring to the "play to display" continuum, O'Toole et al. (2009) maintain the facilitation of dramatic play in a classroom serves as an important stage along the continuum, when a young child's innate need to play can extend to a more formal drama learning structure. Teacher intervention in dramatic play can be introduced gradually. Initially, young children will begin to play for their own intrinsic pleasure, and increasingly, the teacher can choose to structure the drama, firstly through the facilitation of dramatic play and then through the introduction of drama strategies with specific drama learning objectives (Dunn & Stinson, 2012a). When adult intervention is introduced into this form of play, Trawick-Smith (1998) asserts that metaplay effects can be established; children can be encouraged to step out of their pretend roles to think or converse about the make-believe, thus elevating the activity to a reflective cognitive practice. In time, drama with more teacher intervention may lead to children being guided to experience the presentation of drama for an audience.

The role of the teacher in dramatic play

The value of play in early childhood settings is clearly evident. Furthermore, Dunn (2003) and Dunn and Stinson (2012) assert that the facilitation of dramatic play in the classroom is a logical place to introduce drama to children. Teacher intervention in dramatic play can range from just selecting the theme (Harvey & Logue, 2010), to taking roles in the dramatic play and sharing the play together (Hall, 1998; Lindqvist, 2001). Teachers may assist children to move along the "play to display continuum" (O'Toole et al., 2009) from free and spontaneous dramatic play to more structured drama work that can result in a performance component.

The level of adult intervention in dramatic play can range from creating the space, providing the props, and scheduling time for this play to a more active facilitative role that is both complex and intentional (Katz & Mendoza, 2008). Moss and Chalk (2004) conducted an investigation into drama practices in early childhood settings in metropolitan schools in Perth, Western Australia, to ascertain the contexts in which drama is taught and the drama strategies implemented. The study employed an emergent design with eight open-ended questions.

Nineteen participants were interviewed for the project and the data was subsequently analysed. In terms of creating a space for dramatic play, Moss and Chalk (2004) reported that teachers would integrate dramatic play as a teaching strategy in other curriculum areas, believing that it was their responsibility to create the environment for the dramatic play. Once an area for dramatic play is established and a time allowance provided, educators and teachers can benefit from observing the children's play (Moss & Chalk, 2004).

The practice of observing children's dramatic play is valuable and educationally viable. In Moss and Chalk's (2004) study, the researchers reported that teachers observed spontaneous drama occurring in children's dramatic play and identified particular moments in the dramatic play to identify needs within the class. In her research project exploring the dramatic play of a group of primary school students, Dunn (1996) observed the play of these students in a classroom context and analysed the home play of a smaller group of students. Dunn (1996) collected the data for this project through the play diaries of the smaller group of students and interviews with both the students and their parents. From this study Dunn (1996, p. 21) found that students existed within the student group who Dunn labelled as "super dramatists"; students who were highly skilled in their dramatic play and could be identified as having a "well developed ability to utilise the dramatic form within their spontaneous dramatic play." Dunn (1996) suggests that teacher intervention in dramatic play may not be required if students are "super dramatists"; however, she recommends that teachers should become careful observers of their students' dramatic play and be prepared to take on the role of the "super dramatist" for those students who are unable to control the dramatic elements.

Through careful observation, teachers can develop sensitivity to the dramatic play of children and can be more informed to make the decision to intervene and adopt a more guiding role. Mellou (1994) refers to the degree of teacher intervention in dramatic play as "untutored," meaning free and undirected, and "tutored," which links more closely to creative drama. Ultimately the dramatic play activities of the "untutored" or "tutored" variety share common features involving interaction, transformation and imagination, and allow for the artistic, emotional and intellectual needs of the child (Mellou, 1994). In an attempt to ascertain the nature of possible teacher intervention in the dramatic play, Young's (2011) description of the drama work she facilitated with a group of 20 four year olds can be cited. Young (2011) states that the teacher should assume the role of "co-artist" and be prepared to step into the imaginary world with the children and control the drama experience with "moments of calm and moments of excitement" (Young, 2011, p. 19). However, Toye and Prendiville clarify that the teacher should assume a role closer to that of "social" actor which provides a more minimalist approach than that of a theatrical actor (Toye & Prendiville, 2000, p. 58).

In understanding the level of support required in young children's dramatic play, O'Toole (2011) suggests that early childhood teachers require "skills in managing and shaping dramatic play, understanding the relationships of drama to all the arts and play, and to learning" (p. 14). In a study conducted in Puerto Rico, South America, Almodovar (2010) investigated how early childhood teachers use and integrate music, drama and visual arts. Ninety-one teachers working with children of three to five years completed a questionnaire. From this initial data set, 20 teachers agreed to participate in observation sessions with the researcher. As a result of the observations, Almodovar (2010) found that all the classrooms had dramatic play areas. However, these remained the same and were not altered to represent a change in themes. Furthermore, Almodovar did not observe any teacher-direction of the dramatic play.

In a study to explore the use of dramatic play in Kindergarten to Year 2 classrooms, Olsen and Sumsion (2000) investigated the practices of four Kindergarten teachers working in New South Wales, Australia. The researchers were particularly interested in determining the perceived obstacles that impeded the use of dramatic play and how the teachers dealt with these difficulties. Data was collected through interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis. Olsen and Sumsion (2000) found that whilst all four teachers agreed on the importance of dramatic play, only two teachers used it in their classrooms. These two teachers seemed to be influenced by a perceived lack of time and collegial and parental expectations. In contrast, Olsen & Sumsion (2000, p. 15) found that for the two teachers using dramatic play "their sense of self-efficacy, or their willingness and ability to take initiative and responsibility for the inclusion of dramatic play in their classrooms, appeared to be the most important factor contributing to their provision of dramatic play experiences."

The literature suggests that the level of input and guidance in the dramatic play of children needs to be carefully monitored. From their extensive research with preschool and Kindergarten teachers, Bodrova and Leong (2003, p. 3) ascertain that teachers need to support young children in what they describe as "mature play." According to Bodrova and Leong (2003) mature play has the following features: imaginary situations; multiple roles; clearly defined rules; learning about social interactions; flexible themes and the facilitation of language development. They assert that mature play can be fostered by developing imaginary situations; integrating multiple roles, initiated through an expansion of play themes and roles on the part of the teacher; and sustaining the dramatic play by assisting the children to plan their play. Hyvönen and Ruokamo (2005) suggest seven qualities of mature play and one, which is creativity. Importantly, Bodrova and Leong (2003) maintain that teachers need to keep the balance between supporting this mature play and ensuring it is child-initiated.

Adding to the discussion and drawing on her research into dramatic play, Dunn's views on teacher guidance in children's dramatic play require consideration, in particular the ideas expressed in a co-authored chapter in 'Children, Meaning-making and the Arts' (Dunn & Stinson, 2012a). In this chapter, the authors support the notion that teachers should "scaffold children's learning in and through drama and play, while nevertheless providing an environment that is supportive of the child's need to develop independence as a creative and imaginative learner" (Dunn & Stinson, 2012a, p. 117). They describe how teachers can support children in their dramatic play by balancing their input and avoiding being too dominant. This balance is effected by teachers adopting one of four 'playwright' functions: narrating, intervening, reinforcing and reviewing (Dunn & Stinson, 2012a). Furthermore, Dunn and Stinson (2012a) explain that the intervening co-player role is the one most frequently adopted by teachers, when the teacher introduces a new idea or alters the situation in the dramatic play. However, they advise that, if regularly used, this role will discourage children from initiating their own ideas, as they become reliant on the teacher. Conversely, when adopting the reviewing role, Dunn and Stinson (2012) suggest the teacher does not introduce new ideas, but validates the existing dramatic world the children have created by asking reviewing questions. The reinforcing role allows the teacher to support ideas offered by children who are striving to have their ideas accepted in the play. Finally, the narrative playwright function affords teachers a co-player role, sharing in the play "without leading or trying to generate new directions" (Dunn & Stinson, 2012a, p. 125).

Assuming a sensitive approach to guiding dramatic play is essential and Pinciotti (1993) reiterates this belief. Contributing to a journal article, as part of a special section on arts education in early childhood, Pinciotti (1993) stresses the importance of adult intervention in the "play to display" process:

Although all children play, however, all children do not become master players. Adult guidance, the development of the group, an emphasis on imagination in action, and the connection to the art of theatre are necessary to extend drama's potential and allow children the opportunity to develop the skills they need to utilize their dramatic learning capacity throughout life. (p. 27)

The provision of dramatic play opportunities in early childhood settings is encouraged and clearly outlined in the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009). Both the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) and the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014) reiterate the significance of drama as it allows children to realise their creative and expressive potential through individual and collaborative imaginative activities.

The definitions of dramatic play and the level of teacher intervention are diverse; however, for the purposes of this study, the term ‘spontaneous dramatic play’ refers to the dramatic play that is free and unstructured and ‘teacher-directed dramatic play’ refers to the dramatic play that involves teacher intervention. This intervention will range from setting up the dramatic play area, to asking to be invited into the dramatic play, to initiating a role within the children’s play. Essentially, the inclusion of both spontaneous and teacher-directed dramatic play in the early childhood setting will enable teachers to “harness the natural ability children have to learn through ‘acting out’ and move pupils into fictional worlds in order to explore the real world” (Toye & Prendiville, 2000, p. 11).

Although the value of drama (including dramatic play) and the role of the teacher have been well established in the literature, there is a paucity of research into the teachers’ perspectives of and practices in drama in the early childhood classroom context.

Perspectives of and practices in drama

Teacher practices in drama

The previous section established the place of drama in education, the role of the teacher and identified the differences between spontaneous dramatic play and teacher-directed dramatic play. This section explores the practices that teachers use to teach and guide young children through drama experiences in early childhood settings. Teachers may choose to introduce drama activities that are more teacher-directed once young children become confident in their spontaneous dramatic play; ideally, these activities should be designed to allow children the freedom to experience the creative drama process.

Several studies have identified a variety of drama forms or strategies used in early childhood settings (Chen, 1997; Kaaland-Wells, 1993; Moss & Chalk, 2004); the strategies described in these studies reflect many commonalities. The studies of forms of drama will be described and used as a basis for the selection of forms used in this study.

Kaaland-Wells (1993) conducted a study in eleven elementary schools in a school district in the United States of America. In the study, 224 teachers completed a questionnaire with questions related to their use of creative drama, including seven specified forms of drama, their personal background and training in drama, their perception of support for drama by members of the school community, and perceived obstacles to the implementation of drama. The participants represented a wide range of ages, teaching experience, training in drama and year level taught

within the elementary system; this extended from Kindergarten to the sixth grade. Kaaland-Wells (1993) adapted a questionnaire used in a research study conducted by Stewig (1984) which resulted in the production of a list of drama forms to use when surveying teachers. Kaaland-Wells (1993) included: dramatic play, improvisation/role-play (the two forms were combined as one), pantomime (mime), puppetry, Readers' Theatre, story drama (which she describes as an improvised play based on a story), and storytelling. In the results of her study, Kaaland-Wells (1993) found that the most consistently used forms were improvisation/role-play and storytelling, and the least consistently used form was Readers' Theatre. She suggested that the most popular forms required the least amount of preparation and training, whereas the implementation of Readers' Theatre necessitated a certain amount of preparation in sourcing and/or creating scripts.

In Chen's (1997) study in Taiwanese Kindergartens, teachers were asked about their use of six specified forms of drama. Chen (1997) also adapted Stewig's (1984) questionnaire and selected the six specific forms of drama for inclusion in his questionnaire, firstly, on the recommendation of a panel of Kindergarten teachers and secondly, as they were clearly defined in a drama text familiar to Taiwanese teachers. Chen (1997) included: dramatic play, movement, pantomime (mime), story dramatisation, social drama and puppetry. As Chen (1997, p. 169) defines 'social drama' as "role-playing or enacting of a role other than oneself as its main tool to enact real life situations and helps children to develop problem-solving skills because it focuses on how people deal with human problems", this form of drama could be also be defined as 'role-play'. Chen (1997) found that the teachers in his study used movement consistently; he states that 35.6% of teachers used it at least once a week and 21.9% at least once a day. The least frequently used drama form was pantomime (mime), with 2.5% of in-service teachers using it at least once a week and 3.1% using it at least once a day.

In the study conducted by Moss and Chalk (2004) in Western Australia, the researchers did not provide a list of specified drama forms, but asked the participants if they used the strategies of mime, role-play, Readers' Theatre or choral speaking when teaching reading comprehension. In interviews, teachers indicated that they used the following forms of drama in literacy sessions: role-play, Readers' Theatre, choral speaking; in addition they used improvisation, story dramatisation, but not mime.

In addition to the studies described above, other forms of drama have been identified. Prominent early childhood educator Vivian Gussin Paley (2011), in her essay, *Getting to know Derek*, describes her visit to a Kindergarten class to demonstrate the process of story dictating and story acting. Paley (2011) argues that narrative and telling stories is central to the drama process. Paley advocates a process where young children dictate their stories to an adult, the

stories are written down, and later the whole class comes together to act them out. The role of the teacher in this process demonstrates sensitivity to the spontaneous play of children. Paley believes that through authoring their narratives, then acting them out, children see themselves as confident and capable. This particular process also facilitates an unthreatening introduction to the concept of audience, where young children present a personal story in a simple drama form to their peers. In their research study in a childcare classroom with three, four and five year olds, Nicolopoulou, Barbosa de Sa, Ilgaz and Brockmeyer (2010) used Paley's storytelling/story acting process. They found that by using this strategy they were able to successfully integrate a play element into the pre-school curriculum. Drawing on Vygotsky's (1978) analysis of play and concept of rule-structured frameworks, they claim that children recognise and use rules in their natural play. If structured correctly, the storytelling and story acting process can "allow children to enter into the activity voluntarily and according to their own rhythm, inclination and abilities – while motivating them to grasp, accept, and explore the rule-governed structure inherent in the practice itself" (Nicolopoulou et al., 2010, p. 45).

There is a range of drama forms available to teachers in the Western Australian Curriculum Framework (1998), from ACARA (2011) documents and relevant studies. However, the following and most prevalent forms have been identified:

Dramatic play is included in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts (ACARA, 2014), but in the curriculum materials, no specific definition is available for variations of this drama form. As previously mentioned and for the purposes of this study, *Spontaneous dramatic play* refers to the dramatic play of children that is free and unstructured. *Teacher-directed dramatic play* refers to the dramatic play that involves teacher intervention; this will range from setting up the dramatic play area, to asking to be invited into the dramatic play, to initiating a role within the children's play (Katz & Mendoza, 2008).

Storytelling, as suggested earlier, story is central to the drama process (Paley, 2011). Storytelling uses the drama elements of voice and movement; storytelling implies the 'telling' and not the 'reading' of a story. Poston-Anderson describes storytelling as when "an individual and/or group tell a story aloud to others, bringing it to life through voice and movement" (Poston-Anderson, 2012, p. 211). Ewing and Simons (2004, p. 72) cite one of the advantages of storytelling as: "A person *telling* a story is able to speak directly and spontaneously and watch for listener's responses."

Role-play is included in the new Arts curriculum and is essentially when you pretend to be someone else. In the glossary for the new Arts curriculum, role is described as "adopting identification and portrayal of a person's values, attitudes, intentions and actions and

portraying these as imagined relationships, situations and ideas in dramatic action” (ACARA, 2014). Specifically, in the examples section of the new Arts curriculum, ‘role’ is defined as “taking on the point of view of a fictional character and listening and responding in role to others in role” (ACARA, 2014).

Movement is a drama concept included in the Scope and Sequence document in the Western Australian Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council 1998) and is the use of body language. In the new Arts curriculum glossary, movement is described as “using facial expression, posture and action expressively in space and time to create roles, situations, relationships, atmosphere and symbols” (ACARA, 2014). As drama focuses on enactment or doing, Ewing and Simons (2004) suggest that working with movement is a beneficial place to start with young children, as “working without words can be more manageable for young and inexperienced students – it’s a more tangible way of expressing what they’ve observed about the world” (p. 23).

Puppetry is included for the potential it has to promote social development in young children. Puppetry involves the manipulation of a puppet or object to give it character, life, and a narrative. Ewing and Simons (2004) describe a puppet being “any object brought to life by a person” (p. 53). One of the many advantages of working with puppetry in an early childhood setting is that young children consider that the focus of an audience is on the puppet and not on them. Keogh and Naylor (2009) conducted research to investigate whether the use of puppets in science and mathematics lessons would foster student dialogue and discussion. As a result of their research, Keogh and Naylor (2009) assert that when using puppets, shy children tend to become more involved and are encouraged to share their ideas, as they consider that the puppet is doing the talking. Puppetry has even been used for counselling purposes to encourage children “to share things that they may be unable to express directly” (Ewing & Simons, 2004, p. 53). A puppet can also be manipulated by the teacher and has the greatest impact when the puppet adopts the role of being the least knowledgeable class member (Keogh & Naylor, 2009).

Readers’ Theatre has been established as an important drama strategy for the past decade and can be described as a drama method in which a text is ‘brought to life’ for an audience through the use of suggested characterisation and action (Poston-Anderson, 2012). Ewing and Simons (2004, p. 83) state that it is “a way of working collaboratively in order to interpret a story and present that interpretation to an audience.”

Choral Speaking is a drama strategy that has been used by teachers for many years and describes the memorisation and recitation of various forms of texts. Students are introduced

to different texts and through repeated speaking of them, are able to memorise the words. Teaching children the features of vocalisation such as pitch, the use of pause, the pace and volume of speech and altering the stress of certain words, will assist in the development of expressive speech. In the new Arts curriculum, examples of knowledge and skills appropriate to children in drama at the Pre-primary to Year 2 level include the use of voice, “varying loudness/softness, pace and pitch” (ACARA, 2014).

Process Drama is a drama strategy included in the Foundation to Year 2 Content Descriptions in the new Arts curriculum. Process drama is a complex form of improvisation where children and the teacher work with a pre-text and develop the story using drama strategies and conventions. Commonly, in process drama, the ‘teacher-in-role’ strategy and features of ‘mantle-of-the-expert’ are utilised. In the new Arts curriculum, process drama is described in the glossary as “a method of teaching and learning drama where both the student and teacher are working in and out of role” (ACARA, 2014). Dunn (1998) and Dunn and Stinson (2012a) suggest that the more structured form of process drama can be an activity subsequent to child-structured dramatic play.

Teacher-in-role is a drama technique that was developed by renowned drama theorist, Dorothy Heathcote (1984), and describes the deliberate action on the part of the teacher to take a role in the drama. By adopting a role the teacher can share in the drama with the children, but also guide and organise from within the fictional world of the drama.

Mime is a drama convention that is included in the new Arts curriculum and is a form of non-verbal communication. Ewing and Simons (2004) describe mime as an exaggerated form of movement where the body is used “to explore and communicate an idea, concept, emotion or story” (Ewing & Simons, 2004, p. 25).

Tableau/freeze frame is a technique that is regularly and successfully used with all ages as it represents the essence of embodiment in drama. Either term may be used. Tableaux/freeze frames are still images or ‘photographs’ to depict a ‘frozen’ moment in time. Ewing and Simons describe this as the “use of bodies to crystallise an interaction” (Ewing & Simons, 2004, p. 128). Either term may be used.

Improvisation is included in the new Arts curriculum (ACARA, 2014) and can be described as being inventive and spontaneous in the drama. It does not involve any preparation. Poston-Anderson (2012, p. 185) describes improvisation as involving spontaneous interaction in an imagined situation. The definition provided in the new Arts curriculum glossary is “a spontaneous enactment taking on roles and situations to create dramatic action and extend an idea; usually short and are structured into a complete little play” (ACARA, 2014).

Planning for drama

The previous section described teachers' drama practice, and, in particular, the possible drama strategies and forms suggested to them in curriculum documents and drama resources.

Teachers will use these documents and resources to assist in the planning of drama experiences. Planning is an important aspect of any teacher's role (Garvis, 2012; Hattie, 2003; Young, Reiser & Dick, 1998). Through effective planning, teachers can define the focus of learning experiences and design appropriate activities within a suitable learning environment. In the absence of studies into generalist teachers planning for drama, a music perspective is provided. Garvis (2012) conducted a study in Queensland, Australia, to explore the weekly planning practices of early childhood teachers with particular reference to planning for music. Seventy-two teachers in rural, urban, and metropolitan regions and across Kindergartens, Preparatory classes and Years 1, 2 and 3 participated in the study. Garvis (2012) found that most planning was dedicated to literacy and numeracy, with limited evidence of specific plans for music; of the few plans that included music, activities were teacher-directed and did not allow for creative output. This suggests that teachers focus on planning for literacy and numeracy and have a limited understanding of how to plan for creative learning experiences in the Arts.

Research has also been conducted into the planning practices of 'expert' or 'superior' teachers. In a study differentiating between expert teachers and experienced teachers, Hattie (2003) defined expert teachers as possessing attributes of expertise within five major dimensions. Working with 65 teachers in New Zealand, Hattie (2003) found that expert teachers anticipate and plan more effectively than experienced teachers. Furthermore he describes the expert teachers' planning practices as being open and flexible, explaining that this mode of planning cultivates a reflective and sensitive approach to the needs of children. Young, Reiser and Dick (1998) investigated the planning practices of nine 'superior' teachers in a school district in the United States of America. 'Superior' teachers were defined as teachers who were finalists in the district's 'Teacher of the Year Award' and represented the top percentage of teachers. A systematic planning model was designed by two of the investigators and incorporated the following possible planning decisions: a) identify topics/content and develop a timeline for covering these; b) identify goals, skills and objectives; c) decide on instructional materials to use; d) decide on activities to employ; e) decide on tests and quizzes; f) adjust instructional plans on a daily and/or weekly basis. From the method of selection, these teachers were considered to be 'superior' by their peers, but Young, Reiser and Dick (1998) found they did not consistently plan for teaching according to the systematic design principles set out in the planning model.

Teachers rely on curriculum documents to support them in planning for teaching and assessing. Within the context of Western Australian early childhood settings, teachers and children may engage in a wide variety of different forms of drama. At the time of this study, to assist with planning drama experiences, Western Australian teachers were directed to access the Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998), and the Department of Education's Scope and Sequence documents (DET, 2007) and/or the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009).

Benefits of drama

The planning practices of teachers were discussed, with particular reference to planning creative arts experiences and the planning routine of expert teachers. The literature suggests that the inclusion of drama in early childhood curricula can be beneficial in the academic, social and emotional development of children. This section will discuss the benefits of using drama, teacher perspectives, and establish the motivation for implementing drama in an early childhood setting.

Specific benefits associated with the use of drama are significant; for example, in early childhood settings, social emotional skills that are vital for young children can also be developed through the use of drama. Essentially, drama is a social and cooperative learning activity in which children can work together in imaginary situations where a 'suspension of disbelief' occurs. A distinctive aspect of drama experiences is the way in which participating parties (including adults) share an agreement to accept the pretence and share in the resulting experience that occurs within the realm of the pretence (O'Toole et al., 2009). Drama builds a relationship of trust between its participants; the notion of the 'safe space' in drama relates not only to the physical space, but to an environment that is supportive, encouraging and allows for risk taking (Isbell & Raines, 2013; Pecaski McLennan, 2008). Importantly, the concept of a 'safe space' in drama experiences is recognised in the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA, 2010) document: "In drama, students enact representations of real and imagined human contexts in a safe space" (p. 13). The establishment of the relationship of trust in a drama lesson is important and can be facilitated through the setting up of rules and the structure of the lesson. It is within this 'safe drama space' that young children may be encouraged to test out different and diverse roles that frequently reflect life-like situations and build on their emotional resilience.

The collaborative and interactive quality inherent in drama activities allows for the development of young children's social skills. Drama experiences are driven through interaction and communication so that, as Verriour (1994, p. 4) asserts, "Social learning is

inherent in the collaborative nature of the work itself.” As drama learning often involves role-play or the pretence of being someone else, the development of social skills and tolerance can be promoted in young children. Moss and Chalk (2004) reported that one teacher considered drama valuable to reflect on and resolve playground conflicts.

The *Draft Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA, 2013) endorses the theories described above:

Drama is the expression and exploration of personal, cultural and social worlds through role and situation that engages, entertains and challenges...Drama enables students to imagine and participate in exploration of their worlds, individually and collaboratively. (p. 51)

With a strong research focus, the Arts curriculum supports the concept that the active and imaginative world of drama can be used to enhance social emotional and academic learning in early childhood settings.

Engagement and participation in the Arts promotes the development of creative thinking and practice (Culpan, 2008; Isbell & Raines, 2013). Central to the learning benefits of drama is the ability for children to realise their creative potential; drama supports the creation of new ideas and development of skills in problem solving (Baldwin, 2012; Bird, Donelan, Freebody, O’Toole & Sinclair, 2012; Pinciotti, 1993). Through the implementation of drama programmes, it is possible to provide young children with opportunities to explore their own ideas, form their own views and create their own interpretations of the world around them. Isbell and Raines (2013) define creativity as “the ability to think in unique ways, produce unusual ideas or combine things in different ways” (p. 3). Researchers have investigated the possibility of creativity being taught; previously, it was thought that creativity was a kind of gift that only a few people possessed (Guilford, 1986). In the consequent analysis of the traits that make people creative or not, it was thought that the “more creative individuals would think with greater fluency, with more flexibility and with greater originality” (Guilford, 1986, p. 60). The components of the creative process (originality, fluency, flexibility and the additional component, elaboration) were subsequently identified by Torrance (cited in Isbell & Raines, 2013, p. 8). Analysis of the creative process has resulted in a model developed by Wallas (cited in Isbell & Raines, 2013, p. 7) defining the four steps: preparation; incubation; illumination and verification. Additionally, Isbell and Raines (2013, p. 10) suggest an educational environment that will support creativity in young children will be a place where they have adequate time to try out new things and can take risks, without fear of ridicule. In his review of the implementation of an Integrated Arts course for third-year student teachers in a Bachelor of Education course at an Australian university, Culpan (2008) found that it was possible to

promote engagement with concepts of creativity, autonomous and collaborative learning and to facilitate the recognition of a creative process that could be facilitated in the classroom. Using a scaffolding approach, Culpan (2008) successfully guided the student teachers through a series of challenges that gradually built on their prior skills and experiences. The same review endorsed the importance of well-considered feedback and the recognition of the power of collaborative learning to guarantee a successful outcome in the creative process (Culpan, 2008).

Saebo, McCammon and O'Farrell (2007) reported on the first part of an international study investigating creativity in drama/theatre education. The initial step in this study was to explore the concept of creativity. Saebo, McCammon and O'Farrell (2007, p. 210) make the distinction between "teaching creatively" and "teaching creativity." When teaching creatively, teachers produce "interesting, exciting and effective" (p. 210) learning experiences for children by utilising imaginative and innovative approaches to their lesson design. Conversely, when teaching creativity, teachers ensure the development of the creative capability and capacity of children. However, in the *All our futures* report, published by the British National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (cited in Saebo et al., 2007) it is suggested that "teaching creativity is not possible without creative teaching" (p. 210). Lucas (cited in Saebo et al., 2007) states that creativity can be taught and he outlines four key conditions for this to occur: "the need to be challenged; the elimination of negative stress; skilled and accurate feedback; the capacity to live with uncertainty" (p. 210). In offering advice on how to foster creativity in school, Lucas (cited in Saebo et al., 2007) maintains that tasks should be open-ended and teachers should be regarded as "surprising" rather than "predictable." In support of this claim, Eisner, (2009) in his paper on what education can learn from the Arts, states that surprise is "one of the most powerful sources of intrinsic satisfaction and should be embraced by educators" (Eisner, 2009, p. 8). Eisner (2009) suggests that rather than expecting to predict the outcomes of their learning programmes, teachers should create conditions in their teaching where the surprise element can happen.

Essentially, drama activities also allow for differing styles of learning. Gardner (1993) devised a theory of Multiple Intelligences that include: musical; spatial; bodily-kinaesthetic; interpersonal; intrapersonal; linguistic; logical-mathematical; naturalistic and existential. Baldwin (2012) asserts that all the Multiple Intelligences, as suggested by Gardner, are inherent in drama forms and conventions, meaning that using drama as an approach to learning may suit many children. Baldwin (2012, p. 59) claims that "Drama as a teaching and learning medium utilises and develops a full range of Gardner's multi-intelligences in an integrated way, offering multi-sensory access to learners with different preferred learning

styles.” In addition, as drama allows children to express their knowledge and understanding in non-conventional ways, Baldwin (2012) suggests that drama can be used for assessment purposes, to demonstrate learning in drama and any connected theme in another Learning Area.

As a unique method of learning, drama allows for the development of abstract and symbolic thinking, offering young children the opportunity to experience the world from their own and others’ points of view. An element of pretence and the power of the imagination is realised when children engage in drama activities (R. Brown & Pleydell, 1999; Toye & Prendiville, 2000; Wagner, 1998). Drawing on the Vygotskian theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978), drama can be defined on a deeper level as “the conscious employment of the elements of drama to educate - to literally bring out what the children already know, but don’t yet know they know” (Wagner, 1979, p. 13). The use of role-play in drama can advance this understanding in young children; in role-play children can “walk in someone’s shoes and at the same time confirm the importance the importance of their own understandings and experiences” (Ewing & Simons, 2004, p. 31). However, teachers utilising the drama technique of teacher-in-role can also support children to realise the potential of their drama work. By taking part in the play “and at the same time monitoring the experiences of her students [h]er most important role is that of teacher, controlling class discipline and learning but releasing the power to the students when they are ready” (Morgan & Saxton, 1987, p. 38). In order to define the level of status between teacher and students when using teacher-in-role, Morgan and Saxton (1987) define three stances: manipulator, facilitator and enabler (p. 40). These correspond to a high, middle and low status and relate to the level of input and direction that the teacher will add to the children’s role-play or process drama.

In addition to developing practical drama knowledge and skills, reflecting on drama activities allows for a deeper understanding of personal preference and initiates the development of aesthetic reasoning in young children. Through drama, young children are provided with opportunities to develop sensitivity to the features of the Arts and an understanding of aesthetics (Dunn & Stinson, 2012a; Gibson & Ewing, 2011, Sinclair, 2012).

It can also be argued that drama can assist young children to deal with reality. Bruner (1966) asserts that young children learn to deal with reality in three ways: through the *enactive* process, this is learning by doing, or experiencing with the body; through the *iconic*, which can be described as knowing through an image, in a gesture, in drawing or in the mind; and the *symbolic*, the way in which knowing is translated into language. It is through these processes young children can begin to discern and develop their personal representations of the world and these processes can be identified within the parameters of drama experiences.

The literature suggests that drama can have an impact on literacy learning. Verriour (1994) explains that drama provides a rich context for language use and can enhance a literacy programme as well as the drama experiences, allowing the children to gain a deeper level of comprehension through exploratory activities of the text. From teacher responses in their study, Moss and Chalk (2004) confirm the belief that “dramatic enactment of a story or event made for enhanced affective responses in characterisation” (p. 9). As Norman (2002) states, “Drama in education is powerful not only in its relationship to theatre, to tension, to sound/silence, darkness/light, movement/stillness, but because it is an engaging way to read and comprehend and respond to literature. It is a way to enter the carnival” (p. 6). Adomat (2012), in her role as a reading specialist in an elementary school in America, investigated how drama allows young children to develop literary understanding. Adomat (2012) worked with ten first graders who were involved in the schools’ reading support programme. Over a period of seven months, the children participated in various drama strategies incorporated into their literacy learning sessions. The data was collected through observations, interviews with teachers and student reflections. At the conclusion of the study, Adomat (2012) found that the children had made significant gains in their reading and writing abilities and 80% of them were removed from the reading support programme.

Furthermore, researchers have found that drama is beneficial in developing children’s oral communication abilities. Barnes (2014) conducted a study to investigate the ‘Speech Bubbles’ programme, which was designed by drama practitioners to support children with speech, language and communication difficulties. The ‘Speech Bubbles’ programme was based on the work of Paley (previously mentioned in this chapter) and focused on drama practitioners using children’s stories as a basis for drama experiences. Barnes (2014) observed two groups of six and seven year olds in inner-city London schools and in addition, conducted interviews with drama practitioners, teacher assistants and parents. Barnes (2014) found that participation in the ‘Speech Bubbles’ programme resulted in improvements in students’ oral communication and increased vocabulary knowledge.

From the literature it can be determined that there are numerous benefits of using drama in the early childhood setting. However, the recognition and acknowledgement of these benefits may not necessarily result in teachers using drama.

Although literature published by drama educators and theorists suggests that there are many positive reasons why teachers implement drama in the early childhood classroom (Ewing, 2013; Paley, 2011; Toye & Prendiville, 2000; Winston & Tandy, 2009) very few studies have been conducted to investigate this question. It is apparent that teachers will use drama if they believe that it will enhance the academic development of their students. Chen (1997) found

that teachers were more likely to use drama if they believed it supported academic learning. Additional research suggests that teachers specifically use drama to identify and support academic learning. Responses in the study conducted by Moss and Chalk (2004) indicate that teachers use drama to identify certain educational needs in the class; this is achieved by creating an environment for dramatic play and observing the spontaneous dramatic play of children.

In support of the notion that drama in education is effective in curriculum delivery, Brown and Pleydell (1999) claim that the use of drama creates “learning experiences, ranging from spontaneous drama initiated by a child’s curiosity to drama work that is planned and guided by a teacher with specific educational objectives in mind” (p. 3). In her study, Kaaland-Wells (1993, p. 70) found that 42% of teachers “Strongly agree” and 42% “Agree” that creative drama is effective in the curriculum.

Drama is described as an interactive and collaborative learning medium (Curriculum Council, 1998). Western Australian teachers are encouraged to facilitate regular drama experiences with children to encourage active learning, which in turn relates significantly to the developmental stages of children in early childhood settings (Curriculum Council, 1998). In her review of the Arts in Australia, commissioned by the Australian Council for Educational Research, Ewing (2010) considers a range of international and Australian research and practitioner sources; these include several current case studies of community arts-based programmes, to investigate how the Arts can influence learning and the impact and transformation the Arts can realise in a social context. Ewing (2010) suggests that participation in arts-based educational programmes can foster motivation and engagement that transmits to the development of positive attitudes about schooling in general. She specifically mentions the fictional frameworks of drama allowing for “change in social behaviours, [as learners] work through real issues.” (2010, p. 40). In addition, Ewing (2010) states that “Due to its capacity to deliver such a range of learning outcomes, drama can and should play a central role in most key Learning Areas” (p. 40). Given that the literature has identified the numerous benefits of drama, this raises the question about factors that support or inhibit the implementation of drama.

Supporting and inhibiting factors

In the previous section, the benefits of drama in education and the motivation for teachers to use drama were described. This section seeks to identify the factors that support and inhibit the teaching of drama in early childhood settings. Teacher attitude is an important factor in

the implementation of drama; if teachers believe that drama is important, they are more likely to use it (Chen, 1997; Ewing, 2010). The nature and success of prior teaching experiences will influence practice (Chou, 2007). Researchers in an Australian study used in-depth interviews to investigate the personal arts experiences and training of nineteen primary teachers (Alter, Hays & O'Hara, 2009). The participants, who were representative of a wide range of backgrounds and ages and taught across a range of levels in the primary sector, were also asked to reflect on their own arts pedagogy. In this study, Alter et al. (2009, p. 26) found that "perceptions of the value and status given to the creative arts" was a key factor in determining whether teachers decided to include the Arts in their programmes. These teachers indicated that learning in the Arts assisted in the development of student confidence and social skills (Alter et al., 2009). In addition, teachers in Chen's (1997) study also valued drama as a learning activity that promoted social development and this perception influenced the frequency of their use of drama.

Evidence from the literature suggests that teachers use drama when they perceive it will support the academic development of young children (Chen, 1997; Moss & Chalk, 2004). However, in the same study by Moss and Chalk (2004), some teachers did not consider drama to be as important as the other Learning Areas in the curriculum, thus they did not value its potential to support learning. Similarly, Alter et al. (2009) found that teachers gave very little consideration to the cognitive aspects of learning through the Arts. The research suggests that an attitudinal change to drama can occur if teachers have a positive experience of teaching drama.

In her investigation of primary classroom teachers' integration of drama in Taiwan, Chou (2007) used an in-depth case study approach with two newly qualified teachers in the same school over a period of five months. The focus of her study was how classroom teachers integrate new knowledge and build upon their existing practice using drama as a pedagogical tool. However, a significant part of the study also addressed the challenges teachers experienced in association with their drama practice and included an examination of their perceptions of drama and their identity. Chou (2007) commenced the preparatory stage of the study by facilitating a drama workshop with the participants before they commenced teaching weekly drama-integrated lessons. During the thirteen-week teaching phase, the researcher carried out individual post-teaching interviews and held a group meeting with both participants every week. At the conclusion of Chou's (2007) case study, which included ongoing mentoring input from Chou, an attitudinal change to drama was revealed. The positive experience of using drama as a pedagogical tool resulted in the teachers' desire to make changes in their teaching practice to include drama.

Furman (2000) argues that a gap exists between early childhood teachers' understanding of the value of drama and the level of its application in the classroom. He suggests that whilst teachers believe that children can learn through drama, the majority are not making regular use of creative drama in their classrooms. Research from experts in the drama field confirms this finding, suggesting that teachers value, but do not necessarily implement, drama as both a pedagogical tool and an art form that draws on play, theatre and performance (Ewing & Simons, 2004; O'Toole et al., 2009; Poston-Anderson, 2012).

In addition to teachers' attitudes towards and perspectives of drama, general school community beliefs can also have an effect on the inclusion of drama in the classroom. Moss and Chalk (2004) reported that school priorities tend to determine the degree to which drama is taught, with resources and support for the Arts from the school community, such as other teachers, the principal and parents also influencing teachers in their decision to teach drama. In terms of the educational status of the Arts, the majority of teachers in the study conducted by Alter et al. (2009) believed that a negative attitude towards drama existed in the wider community, possibly due to a lack of understanding about the Arts. Garvis and Pendergast (2010) conducted a study in Queensland, Australia to investigate beginning teachers' self-efficacy in relation to their perceptions of support for the teaching of the Arts, Maths and English. Two hundred and one teachers responded to a questionnaire and analysis of the data suggested that support for the teaching of the Arts was limited. Garvis and Pendergast (2010) reported that teachers considered the Arts were not a priority in schools.

The disparity in the understanding of the nature of educational drama appears to influence the implementation of drama in the classroom, with teacher knowledge of drama being another key factor; teachers may not be prepared to implement drama if they do not fully understand how to teach it. In her study investigating Taiwanese primary classroom teachers' integration of drama, Chou (2007) found that teachers' understanding of drama as an art form also influenced their use of drama as an integrating teaching tool. As embedded in traditional Taiwanese culture, these teachers considered drama to be an art form directly linked to performance and theatre and consequently were reluctant to use drama as a teaching tool, preferring to focus on performance work. These same teachers did not have a comprehensive knowledge of the variety of drama forms that can be applied in the classroom, until they participated in the study and were mentored by the researcher. In another Taiwanese study, Chen (1997) reported that teachers did not differentiate between an exploratory and creative form of drama in education and a more formal form of drama focussed around performance; these teachers also believed that children would benefit more from the performance-based drama work.

Furthermore, insufficient knowledge of and skills in educational drama were found to be inhibiting factors in the study conducted by Kaaland-Wells (1993). In this study, teachers were asked to comment on factors preventing the use of creative drama; using a Likert scale, the teachers were asked to rate a series of statements. Teachers in this study perceived that the greatest obstacle was in reference to an overloaded curriculum; 39% either strongly agreed or agreed this was a barrier. The second greatest obstacle related to the lack of physical space; 38% of teachers either strongly agreed or agreed this was a problem. However, Kaaland-Wells (1993) found that the third-greatest inhibitor was in response to the statement “I do not know enough about it”; 30% of teachers either strongly agreed or agreed to this statement (p. 72). In addition, in Moss and Chalk’s (2004) study, teachers claimed that a limited knowledge of drama definitely influenced their implementation of drama in the classroom.

In a pre-service teacher education context, an investigation into the effects of a lack of knowledge of drama was linked to anxiety. In a research project set in a regional university in Australia, Wright (1999) investigated pre-service teachers’ anxiety within the field of drama education. Over a period of three years, Wright collected data from 89 pre-service teachers enrolled in a second-year creative arts unit within a three-year Bachelor of Education. As an element of his methodology, he asked the pre-service teachers to write a narrative focused on the subject of drama anxiety. In this study, Wright (1999) reported that a personal fear of performance could hinder a teacher’s preparedness to teach drama, with the anxiety often originating from a lack of understanding of what drama involves. In terms of the Arts in general, Alter et al. (2009) found that teachers’ skills and knowledge of the Arts influenced their ability to deliver lessons in the Arts, with teachers expressing the view that it was unrealistic to expect teachers to possess the necessary skills and knowledge across all arts forms. As a result of her extensive research into creative arts education, Russell-Bowie (2012) has authored a book about primary arts education aimed at pre-service and beginning teachers. In this text Russell-Bowie (2012) identifies the lack of personal knowledge and skills about the Arts and the understanding of the distinctiveness of each art form as being a barrier to the teaching of the Arts.

Studies have shown that a teacher’s confidence is a significant influence in the decision to implement drama (Alter et al., 2009; Chou, 2007; Moss & Chalk, 2004; Russell-Bowie, 2013). Supporting this research and drawing a parallel with the music art form, Russell-Bowie’s (2010) investigation of pre-service teachers’ background and confidence in teaching music, established that a strong background in music resulted in being more confident to teach it. In the same study, Russell-Bowie (2010) reports that if pre-service teachers displayed confidence as students of music, they appeared to be more confident as teachers of the subject. Moss and

Chalk (2004) reported that teachers expressed a lack of confidence in the teaching of drama with particular reference to the possible chaos and noise that may ensue. In her review Ewing (2010) also maintains that teacher confidence and attitudes are major factors in the implementation of drama. If teachers are unfamiliar with facilitating drama activities and have perhaps not completed any training, they may not have the confidence to attempt drama with their students.

In addition to issues of confidence, teachers may also think that they do not personally have the creative ability to teach drama to their students. According to Bandura (1997), enactive mastery experience engenders stronger efficacy beliefs than other modes of influence; having a positive life experience can affect a person's confidence and result in their willingness to repeat the experience. This self-efficacy is described as a person's confidence in his or her ability to complete a particular task or behaviour successfully. Conversely, an unsuccessful drama experience could undermine a teacher's confidence and discourage the use of drama as a learning method. Ewing (2010) agrees that the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and self-image and their notion of creativity and artistry influences their use of the Arts (including drama). In addition, she cites the widespread lack of sufficient or appropriate in-service teacher professional learning in the Arts as being a major factor in teachers' reluctance to engage in creative arts processes with their students (Ewing, 2010).

The lack of training in drama education has been the focus of some research. Using a case study approach, Wee (2009) analysed the work of a drama specialist working with young children in a large metropolitan private school in the United States of America. Over a period of nine weeks, Wee (2009) observed a drama specialist teaching one Kindergarten class and two first grade classes. She also made systematic observations of regular classroom teaching with the same students in order to gain an understanding of how classroom teachers taught drama to their students. In this study, Wee (2009, p. 500) found that staff development and "a willingness to try something new" could be the means to encourage more teachers to use drama. Sextou (2002, p. 127) conducted a study in Greece to examine teacher attitudes towards the "appointment of specialist drama teachers as a necessary input in schools." She analysed the questionnaire responses from 511 preschool and primary teachers; this group comprised of 41% pre-school teachers and 59% primary teachers. In support of the claim relating to lack of training in drama to an unwillingness to teach drama, Sextou (2002) found that teachers completing her questionnaire expressed a reluctance to take responsibility for drama work in their classrooms as they had not completed the specific drama training.

In addition to specific training in educational drama, a teacher's preparedness to include drama regularly in their teaching may depend on the length of time they have been teaching.

As a result of his study, Chen (1997, p. 144) reported that teachers with more teaching experience used drama more frequently in their classrooms. Researchers have found that the phases of teachers' experience are an important determinant in what and how they teach (Butt & Raymond, 1989; Huberman 1989; Maclean, 1992). Huberman (1989) combined an examination of the trends in literature with a study of 160 secondary teachers in Switzerland to produce an overview of the professional life cycle of teachers. The first stage is described as 'career entry' and focuses on survival and discovery; this stage is set at approximately zero to two years' teaching experience. In this stage teachers are preoccupied with themselves and their sense of adequacy, although there appears to be a sense of discovery and an initial enthusiasm with teaching, demonstrated by a sense of pride and place within the teaching profession. Chen (1997) stated that teachers in this stage, with one to two years teaching experience, used drama the least. Conversely, in her study, Chou (2007, p. 206) reported that inexperienced teachers displayed more enthusiasm for learning about new teaching strategies, including drama implementation, as they were in the early stage of professional development.

As teachers progress into their third to fifth year of teaching, they enter a phase Huberman (1989) describes as 'stabilisation.' Huberman (1989) states that at this second stage, teachers have generally been granted tenure and display a personal commitment to a career in teaching, although this will depend on the country in which the teacher is working. They demonstrate greater confidence and less concern with self and a greater concern with instructional goals (Huberman, 1989). This commitment to a teaching career is also reflected in Huberman's (1989) next stage. Categorised as teachers with less than ten years teaching experience, this phase is described as 'diversification and change' and reflects a commitment to the experimentation with new teaching materials (although this practice is usually private), student groupings, and different combinations of teaching activities. Teachers in this phase demonstrate a more ambitious pursuit of new ideas and challenges as their teaching practice 'stabilises'.

Assuming that a teacher could work up to and beyond 30 years, Huberman (1989) describes the mid-career stage as 'stock taking and interrogations' and this equates to 12 to 20 years' teaching experience. Teachers in this stage describe a feeling of 'routine' and although not necessarily experiencing a career crisis, they may be reviewing their teaching career and contemplating a change of career. However, Chen (1997) reported that teachers in his study with 11 or more years experience used drama most frequently.

According to Huberman (1989), teachers with 20 to 30 years' teaching experience (described as 'serenity' and 'affective distance') tend to display decreased career ambition, but have a perception of confidence, effectiveness and serenity. At this stage, the gradual process of

disengagement can begin. The final two stages, 'conservatism' and 'disengagement,' are associated with teachers who have over 30 years' teaching experience. Teachers in the 'conservatism' stage demonstrate increasing levels of rigidity and dogmatism, a resistance to change, and nostalgia for the past. They display a reluctance to embrace changes in education as they have experienced so many cycles of change in their careers (Huberman, 1989). Huberman (1989) argues that in the 'disengagement' stage, teachers experience a progressive internalisation and withdrawal (possibly serene) from the teaching profession, resulting in a reorganisation of their work so that it is of a more modest nature. Huberman (1989) also asserts that in this phase, disengagement can be bitter if the teacher is unhappy with the politics surrounding education at a local, state or national level. In some cases, if teachers feel they have invested in structural change that has resulted in the feeling of being betrayed, they practice "strategic minimalism during school hours" and a "disinvestment in concerns outside the classroom" (Huberman, 1989, p. 355). Although Huberman identified these two later stages, Chen (1997) did not comment on teachers in these stages teaching drama.

Many factors exist that will affect a teacher's decision to either include or omit drama teaching in their teaching practice. Some factors relate to a teacher's attitude, self-efficacy beliefs or experience, and others to school policy and administrative directives. In an ever-expanding and demanding curriculum, teachers complain of time restrictions, and time is a significant factor in the decision to include the Arts in teaching programmes (Alter et al., 2009; Moss & Chalk, 2004), with the quantity of curriculum material to cover being a concern (Alter et al., 2009). It appears that teachers are increasingly reluctant to find time to complete 'extra' activities; as a colleague explained, "With the demands of NAPLAN, we can no longer dedicate huge amounts of time on a school production – teachers begrudge the time it takes" (R. Thompson, personal communication, November 6, 2010). Teachers in Kaaland-Wells' study considered the greatest obstacle to using creative drama to be "too much prescribed curriculum" (1993, p. 72). Teachers may be interested in teaching drama to their students, but directives from school administrators may prevent them from doing so. In her study examining the work of a drama specialist, Wee (2009) explains that in the current climate of academic accountability, in many cases, drama is usually marginalised.

Understanding and implementing a new curriculum

Drama holds a place in curriculum documents available to Western Australian teachers. It is recognised that Western Australian schools will be teaching English, Maths, History and Science from the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014), and other Learning Areas (The Arts,

Geography, Technologies, Languages and Health and Physical Education) from the former Western Australian Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998), now represented in the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline (SCSA, 2014). Support material for the Curriculum Framework, provided by the Department of Education, namely the K-10 Scope and Sequence (DET, 2007) documents, can also be accessed through the School Curriculum and Standards Authority website. The Scope and Sequence documents act as a guide for possible lesson content, and include ideas for drama concepts, drama forms and styles and drama processes. The Curriculum Framework identifies four arts Learning Areas and these are currently used in schools: *Arts Ideas*, *Arts Skills and Processes*, *Arts Responses* and *Arts in Society* (Curriculum Council, 1998). Each area relates to specific concepts in the learning and teaching process; however, the interconnectedness between these four outcomes allows for aesthetic understanding and arts practice to be the central focus. This model allows children to demonstrate knowledge, understandings, skills, values and attitudes in the Arts through the achievement of the four outcomes. In the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts, two interrelating strands have replaced the four arts outcomes.

A rigorous writing and consultative process, occurring since September 2009 and involving a large number of teachers across all states of Australia, resulted in the development of a standard approach in the organisation of the teaching of the Arts. In July 2013, the release of a draft document of the Arts curriculum marked the introduction of the interconnecting strands of Making and Responding (ACARA, 2013, p. 7); this signified a change in national arts policy and superseded all other organisational strands, including the four arts outcomes in the former Western Australian Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998). However, at the time of this study, Western Australian teachers were using the Arts curriculum in the Western Australian Curriculum Framework until the Australian Curriculum was made available for use. Furthermore, teachers had access to the *Shape of the Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA, 2011) paper on the ACARA website.

Similarities between the *Making* and *Responding* strands in the new Arts curriculum and those in the West Australian Curriculum Framework are evident: *Arts Ideas* and *Arts Skills and Processes* equate to the 'making' of ideas using the appropriate skills and processes in each arts discipline; the concepts in *Arts Responses* and *Arts in Society* are combined in 'responding' with activities being described as "Students learn by reflecting on their making and critically responding to the making of others" (ACARA, 2013, p. 8). The new Australian Curriculum supports two organising strands instead of four, but each art form is still recognised as unique and so required to be taught as a separate entity. Whilst these newly devised strands are

comparable to the existing arts outcomes, Western Australian teachers may need support to fully and successfully understand and employ them in their lesson planning.

The imminent revision of compulsory arts education in Western Australia through the new Australian Curriculum underpins this study. From a drama perspective, the requirements of the Australian Curriculum indicate that drama will become a mandated subject within the primary school curriculum and allocated a set period of time. At the time of this study in the Australian Curriculum for the Arts, it is clearly stated that all students from Foundation (Pre-primary in Western Australia) to the end of primary school will study the five arts subjects, with schools determining how this will occur (ACARA, 2011, p. 4). The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts*, (ACARA, 2011) indicates that the allocation of time for teaching the Arts will be a school-based decision, but the notional amount of time for the Foundation to Year 2 band will be 120 hours. Learning in the Arts and the development of aesthetic knowledge are also described as sequential and cumulative, with new content, skills and processes being gradually developed as children progress through their primary years (ACARA, 2011, p. 4).

Very little recent data is available to ascertain if teachers feel competent to teach drama and we cannot be sure what teachers are doing; it appears that much of the drama occurring in classes does not originate from an adequate pedagogical skills-base (O'Toole, 2002). Many teachers feel insecure about using drama processes in their teaching (Ewing, 2010) and may be faced with implementing drama in their classes amongst the other demands of the new curriculum.

As the literature suggests (R. Brown & Pleydell, 1999; Ewing & Simons, 2004; Poston-Anderson, 2012), the benefits of educational drama in the primary school are numerous and yet, to date, the possible advantages remain unexplored in practice (O'Toole, 2012). The cause of this is uncertain, but possibly curriculum requirements and the very nature of drama have resulted in the subject not currently being implemented to the extent that will be required in the future. To comply with the requirements of the new Arts curriculum and to facilitate its implementation, it is likely that teacher practices and knowledge will have to change. In a profession where major changes have regularly occurred during the last ten to fifteen years, many teachers are suspicious of the manner, in which their practices are revolutionised, seemingly with little or no consultation (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). In an environment of educational reform, teachers may be reluctant to change practice and introduce new initiatives into their pedagogical 'toolbox'; as a teaching colleague explained, "I know I should be doing drama with my students regularly; it is so good for them, but with all the curriculum changes occurring, I just don't seem to have time" (L. Gardner, personal communication, February 8, 2011).

Researchers are monitoring the curriculum reform that is currently occurring worldwide, and investigating its effects on teachers (Fullan, 2009). In their study to investigate Year 1 teachers' attitudes towards proposed curriculum changes in primary schools in Northern Ireland, Walsh and Gardner (2007) sought to discover teacher attitudes towards the proposed changes and to determine what would be required for effective change to take place. In two separate attempts, the researchers circulated a questionnaire and obtained responses from a total of 286 teachers. Subsequently, six focus group interviews were conducted with 63 Year 1 teachers. From this study, Walsh and Gardner (2007, p. 137) found that although the teachers agreed with the proposed changes, they did not have "the energy or the inclination to engage in further change with limited resources ... and with minimal or no training." In another study, Burgess, Robertson and Patterson (2010) investigated early childhood teachers' understanding and implementation of curriculum initiatives. Specifically, the researchers focused on teachers' attitude, training attendance and adoption of ideas from a curriculum initiative. Twenty-five early childhood teachers in Sydney, Australia, responded to a questionnaire and indicated their decision-making at various stages of the curriculum implementation process. Burgess, Robertson and Patterson (2010) found that some teachers responded negatively when faced with the increased workload when lack of time was an existing concern. However, those teachers whose initial response to the curriculum initiative was positive were more likely to implement the change. In some cases, teachers engaged with aspects of the curriculum initiative rather than accepting the document as a whole.

Although teachers may agree in principle with proposed curriculum changes, the literature suggests that change is only effective under conditions that allow participants to form their own position, to interact with others, and to obtain assistance. The *what* and *how* of change need to be taken in consideration, with the benefits of the change made clear to teachers and assurance of the method of implementation provided (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Walsh & Gardner, 2007). Considering the unique nature of teaching and that these changes occur in a social setting, Fullan and Stiegelbauer assert, "solutions must come through the development of a shared meaning" (1991, p. 5). From their extensive research, Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) have developed a model of educational change that encompasses the essential elements of initiative-taking, restructuring, vision- building, power sharing (or teacher empowerment) and support. Fundamentally, support and training are required if teachers are to readily accept a change in their teaching pedagogy and begin to see the benefits of the new methodologies (Walsh & Gardner, 2007). Research into how teachers cope with curriculum change suggests that the placement of support systems and a sense of empowerment will be necessary if the implementation of the required changes in the Australian Curriculum in the Arts is to successfully occur.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a written or visual product designed to give direction to a study. It shows the relationships between the different concepts the researcher wishes to investigate and is constructed by the researcher within a research paradigm (Maxwell, 2005). The purpose of this study was to describe Year 1 teachers' perspectives of and practices in drama and also to describe teachers' knowledge of the new Arts curriculum and their level of readiness for its implementation. An interpretive phenomenological perspective posits that relationships exist between teachers' perspectives and the choices they make in planning their teaching practice. Experience and knowledge shapes perspectives and subsequently can support and/or impede the choices teachers make in their practice. In other words, if a teacher has previously had positive or negative experiences in drama, either as a participant in or a teacher of drama, these experiences could influence the teacher's choice of how or whether to use drama at the planning and implementation stage.

The teacher's practice is implemented, and this can be categorised into teaching that relates to general educational aspects and those features that can be described as being related to drama. Within the learning and teaching cycle, this practice will be reflected on and evaluated by the teacher and will be influenced by supporting and inhibiting factors. If the experience of teaching drama has been positive or negative, the teacher's perspectives will likely be affected. Research has shown that experience is a determining factor in the ratification of curriculum change (Burgess, Robertson & Patterson, 2010; Walsh & Gardner, 2007). Consequently, it is possible that teacher experience can affect teachers' perspectives of a curriculum change regarding drama; teachers may choose to accept and implement the proposed changes to a greater or lesser extent, or to disregard or avoid them. This decision may depend on whether the drama teaching experience was a positive or negative one and may not be conclusive; teachers may fluctuate between the deciding to implement or disregard the curriculum changes.

The following diagram (Figure 1) is a visual representation of the conceptual framework that guides this study and demonstrates the interrelationship between the factors described.

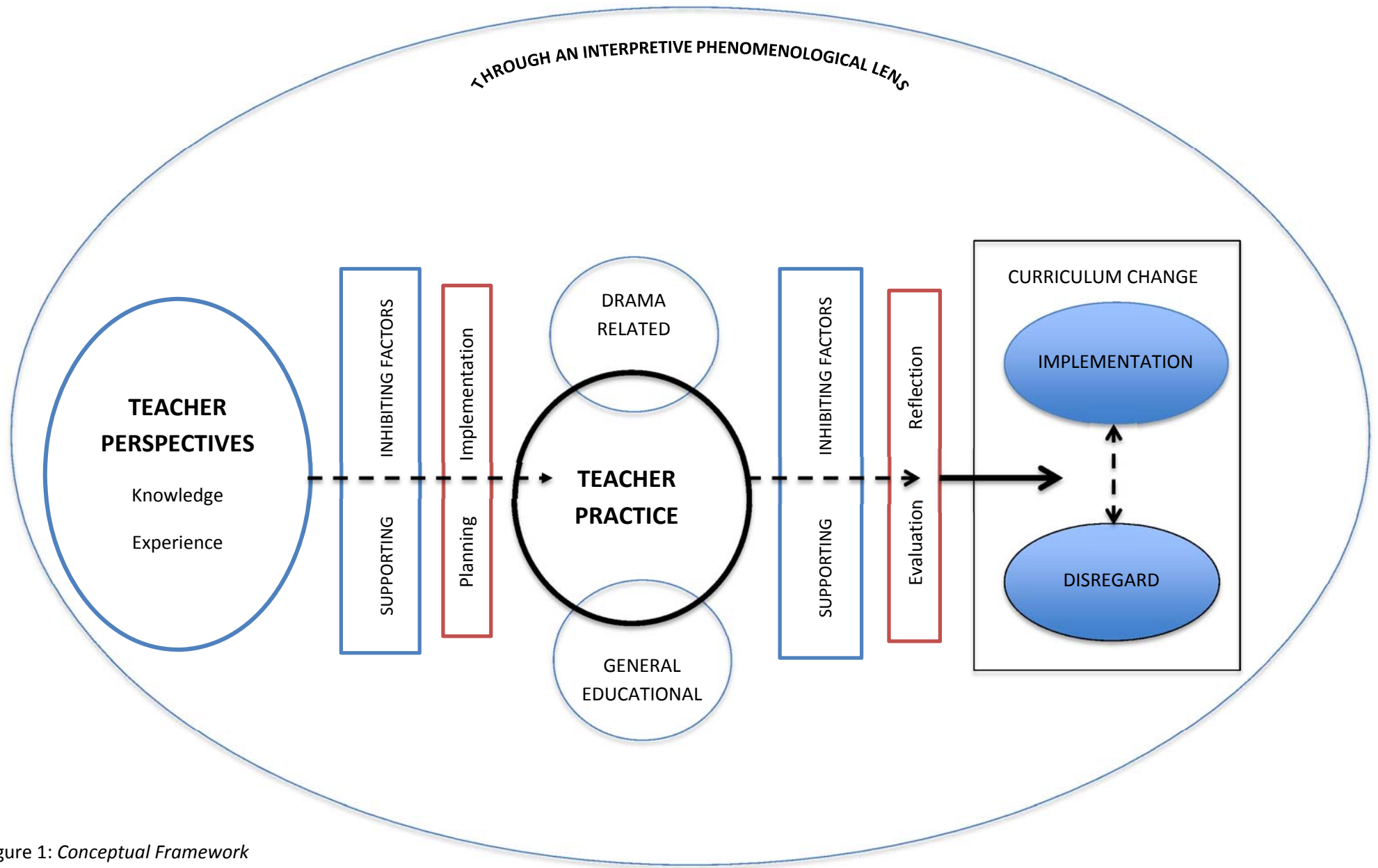


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

Summary

The review of the literature has identified all key aspects of the perspectives and practices of teachers in regard to drama. In addition, the factors that support and inhibit teachers in their drama practice, and the influences of curriculum change have been acknowledged. This information has informed the conceptual framework, which in turn presents a pictorial representation of the concepts of this study that clearly connect with its purpose. Consequently, the conceptual framework will guide this study, as it features all the concepts and interrelationships associated with its aims.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology, and is divided into four sections. The research design is discussed in section one. The context of the study and the participants are discussed in section two. The research instruments and data collection procedures are described in section three. The way in which the data was analysed is discussed in section four. The remaining sections will cover the limitations, validity, reliability and ethical considerations of the research.

The aim of this study is to describe teacher perspectives of and practices in drama at a Year 1 level and in addition, to describe teachers' knowledge of and preparedness for the implementation of a new Arts curriculum. This research was undertaken before a revised version of the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts was incorporated into the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline*. SCSA plans to make this curriculum resource available to Western Australian schools in 2016 for familiarisation purposes (SCSA, 2015). Within this resource, recommendations will be made for a mandated time allowance for all of all five arts disciplines: dance, drama, music, media arts and visual arts.

The research questions for this study are, as follows:

1. What are Year 1 teachers' perspectives of and practices in drama?
 - 1.1 Why do Year 1 teachers use drama?
 - 1.2 What forms of drama do Year 1 teachers use?
 - 1.3 How do Year 1 teachers plan for drama?
 - 1.4 What factors support and/or inhibit the teaching of drama in Year 1?
2. What do Year 1 teachers know about drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts?
3. How prepared are Year 1 teachers for the implementation of drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts?

An Interpretive Phenomenological Approach

Creswell (2013) explains epistemology as the belief about the nature of knowledge; that is, what knowledge is and how we can prove that it is knowledge. A researcher's epistemological beliefs will essentially inform the manner in which the research is conducted; therefore the research design must reflect a correlation with the beliefs. A constructivist philosophical

paradigm of research supports the view that “humans construct their understanding of reality and scaffold their learning as they go along” (O’Toole, 2006, p.32). This research study is constructivist in its attempt to construct new understanding of teachers’ perspectives of and practices in drama. O’Toole (2006) suggests the constructivist research paradigm is the dominant research paradigm for drama educators, and is the paradigm adopted in this study. In addition, Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 44) assert “Epistemologically, the constructivist paradigm suggests that the findings of a study exist precisely because there is an interaction between observer and observed that literally creates what emerges from that inquiry.”

As the study aims to investigate the congruence of people’s lived experience, in particular their perspectives and factors supporting or impeding their teaching of drama, an interpretive phenomenological approach guides the research. Interpretative phenomenology focuses on the study of our experience and can be defined as the conscious happening, as experienced from the first person point of view. In an interpretive phenomenological study, the researcher collects a number of participants’ views of a phenomenon and then describes what all participants have in common as they experience the phenomenon. Creswell (2013, p. 76) asserts “The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce the individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence.”

In choosing this approach, the researcher seeks to gain a greater understanding of the intricacies of teaching drama and attitudes towards curriculum change from the teachers’ point of view as determined by their experiences. When an interpretive phenomenological approach is adopted, the combination of research techniques is possible; a rationale for the mixed methods research design is described in the next section.

Research Design

A mixed method design was employed for this study as it uses elements from more than one approach which can add breadth and scope to a research project. This design capitalises on the strengths of each approach and therefore provides “the potential for substantial strengths that the component approaches cannot achieve when used singly” (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008, p. 21). The quantitative data may offer a source of triangulation for the qualitative data and vice versa. Therefore, a combination of the research modes may allow for the qualitative process to explain the quantitative results; in particular, the qualitative data may be utilised to investigate why a particular questionnaire result was apparent. Creswell (2008) identifies four mixed method strategies: concurrent triangulation, embedded, explanatory and exploratory mixed method design. These procedural strategies differ according to the priority given to the

quantitative and qualitative data collection, the timing and sequence of data collection, and how and when the data are mixed. This study employed the explanatory mixed method design, allowing for the quantitative data results to give a broad picture of the research problem and the qualitative data to provide “more analysis...to refine, extend and explain the general picture” (Creswell, 2008, p. 560). Further, in this interpretive phenomenological study, to guarantee methodological congruence, two phases were employed. In Phase One, data was collected from participants via a questionnaire and in Phase Two a group was formed from the original participant set and these teachers were interviewed. The multiple perspectives provided by both the questionnaire data in Phase One and the interview data in Phase Two allow for an interconnected and interrelated analysis of the phenomenon. In addition, Phase Two builds on what has been discovered about the phenomenon in Phase One, and supports a deeper inquiry into the ‘essence’ of the phenomenon. The consideration of methodological congruence is important to ensure the study appears as a “cohesive whole” (Creswell, 2013, p. 50). A representation of the design can be seen in Figure 2.

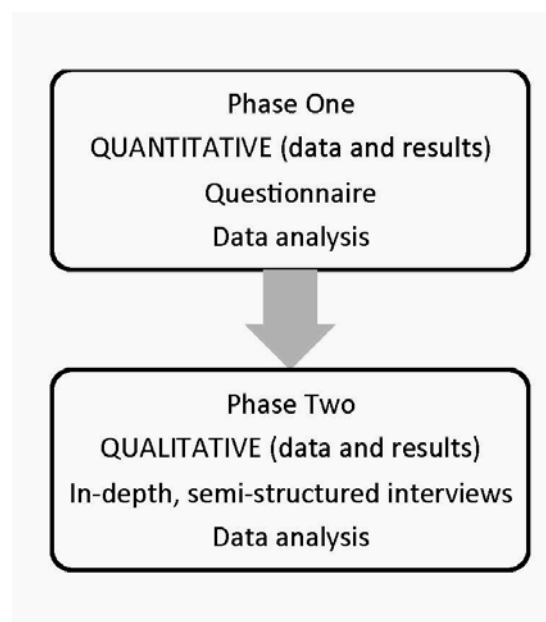


Figure 2: *Data collection* ¹

1. Adapted from Creswell (2008, p. 557).

Context and participants

The research study was undertaken in Western Australia, with data collected between September and December 2012. Year 1 teachers were invited to participate, with a contingency plan developed in case the response rate was low (see below).

Several factors led to the selection of this particular group of teachers. The following points provide a rationale for the selection of Year 1 teachers:

- The literature suggests that drama is an important subject in the primary school curriculum (R. Brown & Pleydell, 1999; Ewing & Simons, 2004; Poston-Anderson, 2012). However, in Year 1, drama is particularly pertinent to the transition from Pre-Primary into Year 1; as Dunn (2003) and Riley and Jones (2010) assert, playful experiences in frequent drama lessons can counteract the formal structure that young children face when they enter Year 1.
- Year 1 teachers may consider including drama to maintain some continuity with Pre-primary practices. At the time of this study, early childhood teachers in Year 1 in Western Australia were being encouraged to review their teaching practices in relation to the principles and practices of the Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009; O'Neill, 2011). The aim of the EYLF is to “extend and enrich children’s learning from birth to five years and through to the transition to school” (p. 5). As Year 1 marks an important transition stage for young children in their schooling journey, Year 1 teachers may build on the principles of the EYLF to be reflective and critical in their provision of valuable teaching and learning programmes for their students.
- As Year 1 is the link between Pre-primary and the primary years of schooling, it is identified as an appropriate year level for this study, as endorsed by relevant curriculum documents. The *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* paper (ACARA, 2010) states that the future intention in the Kindergarten to year 2 sector of schooling is for the Arts to “build on the Early Years Learning Framework” and that the Arts are to be taught “using a purposeful play-centred approach” (p. 10). It also suggests that the Arts will be integrated across the early childhood curriculum “to enhance play-based learning and also to create arts-specific learning outcomes” (p. 10). Drama can be instrumental in the substantiation of these key Australian government initiatives.

To ensure that information was gathered from a variety of contexts across Western Australia, all government schools with a Year 1 class were selected for the study. However, if the

response from government schools was low, it was planned to approach some independent schools and ask if Year 1 teachers would like to participate in the study. It was also anticipated that drama specialists might be included in the participant group; they were not excluded from the data as it was considered they would add another perspective. Of the group of respondents in Phase One of the study, 47 were from government schools and five were from independent schools.

Teachers who participated in Phase One of the study were invited to take part in a follow-up interview. Eleven teachers agreed to be interviewed, including two drama specialists, and this generated a pragmatic sample; the researcher believed that this sample would provide a broader and more insightful response to the research questions. Four other teachers had indicated an interest in being interviewed, but due to matters of inconvenience, decided not to proceed with the interview.

Research instruments and data collection procedures

Instruments

Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire was to initiate an investigation of the research questions and to gather information from as many participants as possible. This signalled the phase that probed areas of teacher experience, professional development, drama use, teacher perspectives, and supporting and/or inhibiting factors. The following sections describe the stages of constructing and administering the questionnaire and the subsequent analysis of the questionnaire data. The final section in this chapter describes the reliability, the limitations and the ethical considerations of the study.

Construction of the questionnaire

The construction of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) allowed for careful consideration of design, wording and administration. The questionnaire was designed using the Qualtrics online survey platform. Qualtrics was chosen as it is reliable, relatively easy to use, and allows for flexibility in the design of an online questionnaire. The questionnaire adopted a cross-sectional form and was designed to capture the views of a group of teachers at a particular time. The questions were drafted to elicit responses to the research questions before entering into the Qualtrics system and were based on the research and assertions about types of drama (Curriculum Council, 1998; Ewing & Simons, 2004; Poston-Anderson, 2012) and were designed

to address the research questions. Adjustments were made to refine the structure of the questionnaire to enable the correct placement of opening, successive and linking questions. In consideration of the constraints on teachers' time, the questionnaire was made as short as possible, but covered the necessary questions to ensure efficacy.

The opening page of the online questionnaire comprised a consent form for the respondents; by continuing with the questionnaire, teachers gave their consent to their responses being used in the study. A unique code was generated at the completion of the questionnaire, and by noting this, participants could contact the researcher and their response located and the data removed, should they decide that they no longer wished to participate in the study.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections:

The first section comprised five contextual questions about individual demographics, qualifications, experience and professional development in drama. Teachers were asked if they did drama with their students and were invited to provide reasons for their response. The majority of these questions were closed, with the required response being 'Yes' or 'No'.

The second section concerned participants' use of drama and was consisted of three questions relating to the forms and integration of drama. The questionnaire was designed so that teachers who responded, 'Yes' to question 5, "Do you do drama with your students now?" continued with the remainder of the questionnaire. Those who responded 'No' to this question were taken to the final section of the questionnaire. Participants who responded 'Yes' to this question were asked to indicate their use of the different forms of drama. To obtain an understanding of these forms, a list of thirteen types of drama was generated from the Scope and Sequence document (Department of Education and Training, 2007), which can be located in the Western Australian Curriculum Framework for the Pre-primary to Year 2 age range (Curriculum Council, 1998). As this document is available to teachers for planning purposes, it was anticipated that these particular forms of drama would be familiar to teachers. Teachers were asked to indicate their use of the forms using the list. The forms of drama selected for this study are comparable to those used in the studies of Kaaland-Wells (1993) and Chen (1997) but some different terminology was used. For example, both Kaaland-Wells and Chen included 'pantomime'; however, this particular form has not been included in this study, as it is an alternative and American term for 'mime.' Kaaland-Wells and Chen refer to 'story dramatisation' as a drama form; this is the acting out of a story, either from an established text or from children's imaginations. In this study, the term 'improvisation' is an alternative for 'story drama' as it describes the drama process of 'playmaking', which includes "interaction in role" and "sequencing situation" (Curriculum Council, 1998, p. 2). The drama

form 'process drama' is a relevant strategy to use with Year 1 children (Aitken, Fraser, & Price, 2007; Dunn & Stinson, 2012b; Martello, 2004) and so was included in the questionnaire for this study. As a result of the researcher's experience as a drama educator and upon consultation with a group of early childhood teachers, the subsequent forms used in early childhood settings were added to the questionnaire in this study: choral speaking, tableaux/freeze frames and teacher-in-role. These were in addition to: dramatic play (spontaneous and teacher-directed), storytelling, role-play, movement, puppetry, Readers' Theatre, Process Drama and mime.

The subsequent closed question, requesting a 'Yes' or 'No' response, asked teachers if they integrated drama into other Learning Areas.

The third section contained two questions about participants' perspectives of drama in education. Teachers were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with eleven statements about drama. These statements were devised from assertions in the literature (Bamford, 2006) and were associated with the educational importance of drama in relation to the intellectual, emotional and social development of children. A final and separate statement that invited a response enquired whether teachers considered it was a requirement that they taught drama. The concluding question in section three asked if teachers could provide any other reasons why they taught drama to their students.

The fourth section comprised eight questions related to the themes of planning, supporting and inhibiting factors, knowledge, and preparedness for the proposed curriculum change. The first three questions related to planning processes and the fourth question asked about supporting factors in the teaching of drama. The next question asked participants to indicate the factors that inhibited the teaching of drama; at this point the teachers who indicated they did not do drama resumed the questionnaire. All participants were asked to respond to a statement about their knowledge of the Australian Curriculum in the Arts and if they were ready to manage the requirements of a new Arts curriculum. Teachers were also invited to add comments or elaborations on their responses in this section. At the end of the questionnaire, teachers were invited to indicate if they agreed to a follow-up interview or wished to be included in the draw for a drama resource, by providing an email contact.

Before being sent to schools, and to guarantee the clarity and accuracy of the questionnaire, the researcher consulted an experienced questionnaire researcher. The first draft of the questionnaire was given to a group of early childhood experts who were asked to provide feedback. The questionnaire was revised, then it was piloted with a group of ten teachers. The teachers involved were sent an email with a link to the questionnaire and were asked to access

and complete the questionnaire to test its accessibility, the logical progression and the comprehensive quality of the questions. These teachers reported back that they could easily access the questionnaire, that it was logically organised and that the questions were understandable.

Semi-structured Interview

The interview questions were designed to answer the three research questions by building on the responses obtained from the questionnaire. The interview was semi-structured with open-ended questions to allow for a broader response from the interviewees. As O'Toole (2006, p. 115) asserts, a semi-structured interview can allow for the collection of unexpected insight and can also provide the interviewer with the opportunity to "seek clarification, invite expansion and explore a response further."

The questions were deliberately constructed to obtain data from teachers who indicated that they did or did not do drama with their students. The first set of questions was aimed at teachers who did drama with their students and from this set, six questions were used to develop a second set of questions to use with the teachers who did not do drama; an additional three questions were generated to complete this alternative set of questions (see Appendices D and E). This procedure followed the mixed methods explanatory approach, with the quantitative results used to plan the qualitative follow-up (Creswell, 2008).

Procedure

Phase One

Using a database of all Western Australian government schools' email addresses, accessed by the researcher at her place of study, a questionnaire was distributed to schools with at least one Year 1 class and these numbered 590. Of the teachers invited to participate, some had split classes including Pre-primary or Year 2 children. As an incentive to complete the questionnaire, participants were invited to take part in a draw for a drama resource; inclusion in the draw required teachers to provide their email details at the end of the questionnaire.

Round 1

In Round 1, at the beginning of September 2012, the questionnaire was distributed via email to the government schools with a Year 1 class. The email was addressed to the principal of the school and included the relevant letters and ethical consent forms (see Appendices B and C) and a link to the online questionnaire. The response to this initial email was low and many

emails were returned to the researcher, as the principals' inboxes were full. Some principals responded in the negative and chose not to nominate their schools to participate in the study.

Round 2

Three weeks after the initial questionnaire was distributed, a second email was sent to the schools that had not replied. There was some response at this second point of contact, but the responses were still very low. Factors that may have contributed to the low response rate are the timing of the questionnaire, in the fourth term, teachers are focused on writing reports, and the fact drama is not deemed to be an important part of the curriculum in many schools.

Round 3

Due to the low response to the online questionnaire, the researcher organised for hard copies of the information letter, consent form, and questionnaire to be printed and these were sent to Department of Education schools during the October school holidays to arrive in schools at the start of Term 4. Schools that had previously responded were removed from the list of addressees. The response to this process was more positive, with some teachers choosing to access the online link and some choosing to complete the paper copy of the questionnaire and return it using a reply-paid envelope.

However, as a sufficient number of responses had not been obtained, the researcher contacted colleagues in independent schools and, through this point of contact was able to obtain additional participants. On a trip to the southwest of Western Australia, through connections with colleagues, the researcher was able to make contact with two schools and obtain permission to make school visits and meet with the Year 1 teachers. In this manner, another seven participants were obtained. Similar visits to metropolitan schools initiated by acquaintances provided additional respondents.

Finally, in late November, the researcher contacted Stephen Breen, the Chief Executive Officer of the Primary Principals' Association, in an attempt to elicit some assistance with the acquisition of further respondents for the questionnaire. In consultation with Mr Breen, a revised letter was created and sent out to the principals in this association via their monthly newsletter. One teacher response to the questionnaire was initiated in this manner.

After extensive attempts to recruit participants for the study, two Primary drama specialists working with Year 1 teachers expressed an interest and desire to participate. They were invited to participate, as they were considered to be an important inclusion in the study,

providing a point of contrast and comparison to the views and practices of the Year 1 teachers. Permission was sought and granted from these specialists to identify their voices.

The final number of respondents to the questionnaire was 52.

Phase Two

In Phase Two, teachers who had completed the questionnaire and indicated that they agreed to be interviewed were contacted; a convenience sample of eleven teachers was formed. These comprised four teachers who had indicated in the questionnaire that they did not do drama with their students, five teachers who did drama with their students, and the two drama specialist teachers.

These interviewees were chosen to provide a range of experiences of teaching Year 1 students and to include teachers who did drama with their students regularly, occasionally, and not at all. Two groups were formed: teachers who did not do drama and teachers who did drama. Ten of the teachers worked in government schools situated in metropolitan Perth, two of which worked in schools in low socio-economic areas, and one teacher worked in an independent school. To ensure the confidentiality of these teachers, pseudonyms were given.

Data Analysis

Phase One

Questionnaire

The online questionnaire responses were held within the Qualtrics system and the researcher entered the data from the hard copies of the questionnaires into this system.

Initial reports were run through the Qualtrics system to collate the data collected in the questionnaire. The data was collated under the heading of each question. Two distinct groups emerged from the data: teachers who indicated that they did drama with their students, and those who indicated they did not.

In order to create a visual representation of the data and to allow for easier comprehension, the Qualtrics programme was used to transform the data into tables and graphs. In the first section of the questionnaire, tables and graphs were created to show length of teaching experience with a Year 1 class, variations in teaching qualifications, and details of professional development. Using the data from the second section of the questionnaire, tables and graphs were produced to show the forms of drama used by teachers, the integration of drama, the

perceived value of drama in education, and variations in the planning documents used by teachers. Supporting and inhibiting factors were also represented in table and graph form.

Further analysis of the data sets from teachers who did drama and teachers who did not do drama was conducted in relation to professional development in drama and the years of experience teaching a Year 1 class. For this stage of the analysis, the researcher analysed the data using the SPSS programme. Using the SPSS programme afforded the opportunity to complete complex analysis by cross tabulation.

The data pertaining to the teaching experience of the participants was compared with that of those teachers currently doing drama with their students, the supporting and inhibiting factors, the drama forms used, the planning tools and practices, and teachers' perspectives of the contribution of drama in education. As a teacher of many years experience, the researcher is acutely aware of the varying stages of a teaching career: the significance of these phases and the associated features of each stage is supported by the literature (Huberman, 1989).

As professional development and training is clearly linked to teacher confidence (Fullan, Hill & Crevola, 2006; Timperley, 2011), the data concerning professional development was compared with whether teachers did drama now, their planning tools and practices, the supporting and inhibiting factors, the drama forms used, and teachers' perceptions of the contribution of drama in education.

Phase Two

Interviews

The information obtained in the interviews sought to authenticate and expand on information previously collected in the first phase. The researcher contacted the teachers who agreed to be interviewed via email. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a place of the teacher's choosing, which on nine occasions was on school grounds, although two interviews were conducted in cafés of the teachers' choosing. The interviews did not disrupt the teachers' schedules. The duration of the interviews was between 30 minutes and one hour.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed and the researcher listened extensively to the recordings and analysed the transcripts. Each interview was analysed individually and significant responses were noted, consequently, similarities and repeated themes were progressively revealed. The data from the interviews was examined in what Creswell describes as a "preliminary exploratory analysis" (Creswell, 2008, p. 237), and this provided a general sense of the data; consequently, a reduction of the original data occurred.

The subsequent analysis was completed in the two categories corresponding to the two groups of teachers: not doing drama and doing drama. Each group was analysed separately as the first of a three-part process described by Miles and Huberman (1994), with data display and conclusion drawing and verification following to complete the process. The first stage involved assembling and sorting the data from the interviews into themes. Responses from the interviewees were assembled under the research questions in order to look for similar themes amongst the teachers in each particular category. Once these common themes were identified, they were extracted and listed under the research questions to ensure that the data was organised and presented in a manner that could easily be understood for analysis and conceptualisation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The final stage involved the integration and interpretation of the data sets from both phases of the project. Patterns and themes were traced across the quantitative and qualitative data to guarantee coherence and consistency between both phases of the study.

Validity

With any research, it is paramount that the reader has confidence in the findings presented. Validity refers to the accuracy of the findings in a research project and is sometimes termed as reliability, giving a slightly different emphasis on data interpretation. Creswell (2013) states that the researcher and participants in a study are in the most secure position to describe the assessment of the accuracy of the findings. Furthermore, Creswell (2013, p. 250) asserts that a “report of research is a representation of the author.” The design of the instruments used in both Phases One and Two guaranteed validity, as they allowed for teachers who did or did not teach drama. Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 45) claim “phenomena can only be understood within the context in which they are to be studied.” In Phase One, participants in the study emerged as a representative sample of teachers working with Year 1 students in the state of Western Australia. In Phase Two, the interviewees were taken from the original group of participants and this guaranteed member checking, confirming the credibility of the information collected in the first phase. The questionnaire was piloted by a group of teachers before being sent to schools, and thus, ensured construct validity.

In describing qualitative research, Creswell (2013, p. 251) states that researchers are “triangulating information and providing validity to their findings.” In this study, the triangulation was assured through the corroboration of evidence collected through multiple methods. This was achieved by the instigation of a mixed methods design with themes

emerging in the first phase and being clearly incorporated in the second phase through the construction of a research instrument with which to conduct the interviews.

Reliability

In research, reliability refers to the constancy or consistency of results based on the data collection methodology. Guba and Lincoln (1989) assert that reliability typically rests on replication; if the instruments were used again in a comparable setting and applied to the same phenomena, similar results will be produced. The mixed methods approach in this study assured credibility and dependability through methodological coherence: the multiple perspectives achieved through the thorough collection, analysis, and interpretation of two sets of interrelating data confirms credibility. The term credibility is sometimes referred to as trustworthiness, suggesting that this term considers the ways in which credibility is guaranteed in research (Given & Saumure, 2008, p. 896).

Given a “rich, thick description” of a phenomenon in a study, prospective researchers would have enough information and understanding of the phenomenon to transfer the information to other settings (Creswell, 2013, p. 252). The mixed method design and detailed description provided by both phases of this study will allow for transferability. The quality of a phenomenon can be gauged if the general essence of the experience is conveyed for the participants within their context; this study is the researcher’s interpretation of the experience of teaching drama, based on the voices of a specific group of teachers within Western Australian schools (Creswell, 2013).

Limitations of the study

The study involves a small sample size; however, every attempt was made to enlist the participation of more teachers. Despite the small sample size, the participants are from a selection of schools in different contexts and represent teachers of varying degrees of age and experience.

Research bias

When conducting an interpretive phenomenological study, the researcher’s view of the participants’ experiences is categorised through his or her own perspective of the phenomenon. Whilst the researcher is acutely aware of the passion she has for drama in education, when conducting the interviews she was careful not to lead the interviewees into

making positive comments about drama. The interviews were recorded and the researcher genuinely tried to explore the comments made by the interviewees without bias towards drama in education. By following this process, the researcher suspends his or her own experiences and views of the phenomenon and concentrates on the experiences of others (Moustakas, 1994).

Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was sought and granted by the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee (ethics approval number: 3737). Additionally, as the study was conducted in government schools in the state of Western Australia, ethics approval was sought and obtained from the Director of Evaluation and Accountability in the Department of Education (ethics approval reference: D12/0555790). As teachers from independent schools were also invited to participate, permission from the relevant school principals was sought and obtained.

Anonymity and confidentiality

In the writing of the findings from this study, no teacher or school was identified in any way. The data collected through the questionnaire and interviews was coded so that only the researcher was aware of the participants' identities. Pseudonyms were used in the transcription and reporting of data from the interviews. In the case of the two drama specialists, both gave written permission to allow for the identification of their presence and specific 'voice' in the results of the study.

Withdrawal rights

Consent letters (see Appendices D and E) contained the following paragraph to ensure that participants understood they could choose not to participate in the study:

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. All potential participants who are approached for their participation and do not wish to take part in the project are not compelled to in any way. If any teacher decides to participate and then later changes their mind, they are able to withdraw their participation.

A unique code was generated at the conclusion of the questionnaire, allowing participants to request the removal of their responses from the data, should they wish to withdraw their participation.

Summary

The design of the study enabled data collection, the subsequent analysis of the data and reporting of the key findings. Using an explanatory mixed method (Creswell, 2008) design, the data in this study was collected in two phases. Data from the questionnaire in Phase One provided extensive information of the research questions and the interview data in Phase Two allowed for the authentication of themes and insights gained from Phase One. The analysis allowed from Phase One to Phase Two the triangulation of the data.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

The study was designed to investigate Year 1 teachers' perspectives of and practices in drama in Western Australia and teachers' knowledge of and preparedness for the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts. Currently, in Western Australia the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline* (SCSA, 2015) is available to all Western Australian teachers and incorporates content from the Australian Curriculum, with the Arts Learning Area in the development stage. The Arts will be available to schools for familiarisation at the beginning of 2016 (SCSA, 2015) and will signify the introduction of a mandated time allowance in schools for all five arts forms: dance, drama, music, media arts and visual arts.

Specifically, the research questions are:

1. What are Year 1 teachers' perspectives of and practices in drama?
 - 1.1: Why do Year 1 teachers use drama?
 - 1.2: What forms of drama do Year 1 teachers use?
 - 1.3: How do Year 1 teachers plan for drama?
 - 1.4: What factors support and/or inhibit the teaching of drama in Year 1?
2. What do Year 1 teachers know about drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts?
3. How prepared are Year 1 teachers for the implementation of drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts?

The research was conducted in two phases. In Phase One, the quantitative data provided an audit of drama teaching in Year 1 classrooms and also revealed teachers' perspectives of drama in education. The qualitative data collected in Phase Two built on the results from the first phase. Once the analyses of both sets of data were completed, mixed methods interpretation was possible by "looking across the quantitative results and the qualitative findings and making an assessment of how the information addresses the mixed methods question" (Creswell, 2011, p. 212). Consequently, Phase One results will be reported under each of the research questions, with relevant contributions from Phase Two data.

For the purpose of this study, Year 1 teachers in schools in Western Australia were invited to complete an online questionnaire. Of the 52 teachers who completed the questionnaire, eleven participated in a subsequent interview with the researcher. In the questionnaire completion, four participants only partially completed the questions, or did not complete it at

all; these attempts were included in the analysis. The questionnaire was designed to accommodate both teachers who did and did not do drama; consequently, not all participants answered all the questions.

To facilitate further investigation of the questionnaire findings and to provide additional data to answer the research questions, interviews were organised with eleven teachers. These were semi-structured interviews with questions designed to elicit further information about the findings of the questionnaire. The questions differed slightly to accommodate both teachers who took drama and teachers who did not take drama.

Findings from questionnaire and interviews

In this section, the findings for both the questionnaire and the interviews will be presented under each research question. Positioning comparable data from both data sets allows for emerging themes from the questionnaire to be explored further through the interview data.

Contextual Information

The first section of the questionnaire was completed by a total of 52 teachers from 30 schools.

Demographics

Questions in this section asked for demographic information about the participants. Thirty schools were represented in the study. Of this number, 27 are government schools and seven of these are located in rural areas of WA; the remaining 20 are located in metropolitan Perth. The three independent schools are located in the metropolitan area of Perth. Out of the 52 teachers in the study, eleven teachers were interviewed; four had indicated in the questionnaire that they were not doing drama and the remaining seven said that they were doing drama, of which two were drama specialists. One drama specialist had experience as a Year 1 generalist teacher and both specialists taught drama to Year 1 students. The eleven teachers who were interviewed are referred to as teachers, as this incorporates both classroom teachers and specialist drama teachers. Additional information about these teachers is presented below.

Interviewees

The following four teachers indicated in the questionnaire that they did not do drama with their students and subsequently agreed to be interviewed. It is important to note that three of

these teachers had drama specialists in their school. These interviewees are described as follows.

- Teacher 1 (T1): Barbara was a full-time teacher with many years experience teaching Year 1 and 2 students, and was teaching a split Year 1/2 class in a small metropolitan school. Barbara had a B.Ed. primary teaching qualification and a drama specialist in her school.
- Teacher 2 (T2): Linda was a graduate teacher with a B.Ed. primary teaching qualification. She was in her first full-time appointment as a teacher with Year 1 and 2 students in a metropolitan school.
- Teacher 3 (T3): Penny had six years experience working with Year 1 and held a part-time position. She gained her teaching qualification by obtaining a Graduate Diploma in Education. She shared a Year 1 class in a metropolitan school with another colleague and had a drama specialist in her school.
- Teacher 4 (T4): Sarah was a teacher with many years experience with middle and upper primary students. This was her second year of taking a Year 1 class. Sarah had a B.Ed. primary teaching qualification and had a drama specialist in her school.

Five teachers who indicated on the questionnaire that they did drama with their students were interviewed. They are described as follows:

- Teacher 5 (T5): Hannah was a full-time teacher in a metropolitan school that had a drama specialist. She had 25 years experience teaching Year 1 students. Hannah obtained a Diploma of Teaching, but it is unknown if this was in primary or early childhood studies.
- Teacher 6 (T6): Kellie was a graduate teacher and at the time of the interview she was coming to the end of her first year of teaching a Year 1/2 class. Kellie obtained her teaching qualification by completing her Graduate Diploma of Teaching. She had experience in drama, including completing Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE) drama and had undergraduate qualifications in the Performing Arts.
- Teacher 7 (T7): Margaret was a full-time Level 3 teacher at a metropolitan school and had 10 years experience teaching Year 1. Margaret obtained her teaching qualification overseas, with the equivalent of a B.Ed. degree in early childhood studies.

- Teacher 8 (T8): Teresa had a full-time position in a metropolitan school teaching a Pre-primary/Year 1 split class. She had 1.5 years experience teaching Year 1 students and had a B.Ed. degree in early childhood studies. Teresa had experience of teaching overseas.
- Teacher 9 (T9): Valerie had 17 years experience teaching Year 1 students. She obtained a Diploma of Teaching, but it is unknown if this was in primary or early childhood studies. Valerie was a Level 3 teacher and was coordinator of Science in the school.

Two teachers who participated in the study were drama specialists. They are described as follows:

- Teacher 10 (T10): Ingrid held a fulltime position as a drama and LOTE Specialist in a metropolitan school. She had been teaching drama for ten years, including Year 1 students. Ingrid obtained a Graduate Diploma but it is unknown if this was in primary or early childhood studies.
- Teacher 11 (T11): Cathy worked as a drama specialist in an independent school. She had taught for 22 years and had four years experience as a Year 1 class teacher. Cathy obtained a Graduate Diploma in primary education.

Teaching experience

All teachers were asked to indicate the period of time during which they had been teaching a Year 1 class. The responses indicate the amount of teaching experience, in terms of full years. For the purposes of further analysis the teachers' responses were organised into categories of zero-to-two years, three-to-five years, six-to-nine years and ten years or more. Over 28%, representing the largest group, are teachers who have zero to two years experience of teaching Year 1. The remaining three categories have comparable percentages ranging between 19% and 21%.

Qualifications

All teachers indicated that they had obtained a relevant teaching qualification, graduating from colleges of teacher education and/or universities. Twenty-five per cent of these teachers had obtained a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree in early childhood, whilst 35% had a B.Ed. degree in primary education. However, an additional 6% of teachers had gained a B.Ed. degree in Kindergarten to Year 7 studies. Twenty-nine per cent of teachers indicated that they attained a Graduate Diploma in Education and 4% of teachers had gained a Diploma of Teaching. Ninety-six per cent of teachers had obtained their teaching qualifications in Western

Australia. For the purposes of additional data analysis, three categories were created to represent corresponding qualifications:

- Early childhood training (B.Ed. ECS and K – 7) - 31%
- Primary education training (B.Ed. Primary and Diploma of Teaching) - 40%
- Post-graduate qualifications - early childhood and/or primary training unspecified (Graduate Diploma of Education) - 29%

Current drama practice

All teachers were asked if they currently used drama with their students. Of the 49 teachers who responded to this question, 84% of the respondents reported that they did do drama. Teachers who indicated that they did not do drama were given the opportunity to explain why this was the case; reasons included time and/or confidence, the fact that there was a specialist doing drama in the school, or that drama was not a school or personal priority. The eight teachers who indicated they did not do drama, were automatically directed to question 14 in the questionnaire.

Professional development in drama

All teachers were asked if they had participated in any professional development in drama. Approximately a third of teachers (33%) reported that they had participated in some professional development in drama.

Research question 1.1: Why do Year 1 teachers use drama?

Questionnaire responses

In order to ascertain why teachers used drama, participants who answered in the affirmative to “Do you do drama?” were asked to indicate the contribution drama learning makes in education. Teachers were given statements concerning the value of drama in education derived from the literature and were asked to indicate which aspects of learning and development they thought drama contributed to, by using a Likert scale.

In Table 1, teachers’ responses to these statements have been ordered by the percentages of those who ‘strongly agree.’ One hundred per cent of teachers indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed to five aspects. These were: imagination, creativity, verbal and non-verbal skills and academic development. Almost 100% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that drama contributed to the aspects of confidence, social and emotional development, positive

class dynamics and the development of empathy. In addition, 85% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed to the contribution drama makes to the understanding of other cultures.

Table 1: *Teachers' view of the contribution of drama to learning in Year 1*

Drama contributes to:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	%	%	%	%	%
Development of imagination	-	-	-	20	80
Students' creativity	-	-	-	29	71
Teaching verbal skills	-	-	-	29	71
Teaching non-verbal skills	-	-	-	32	68
Student confidence	-	-	3	35	63
Social development	-	-	5	37	59
Emotional development	-	-	7	41	51
Positive class dynamics	-	-	7	44	49
Academic development	-	-	-	56	44
Development of empathy	-	-	5	51	44
Understanding of other cultures	-	-	15	51	34

n = 41

These teachers were also asked if they thought it was a requirement that they teach drama.

Figure 3 shows that 78% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, whilst 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

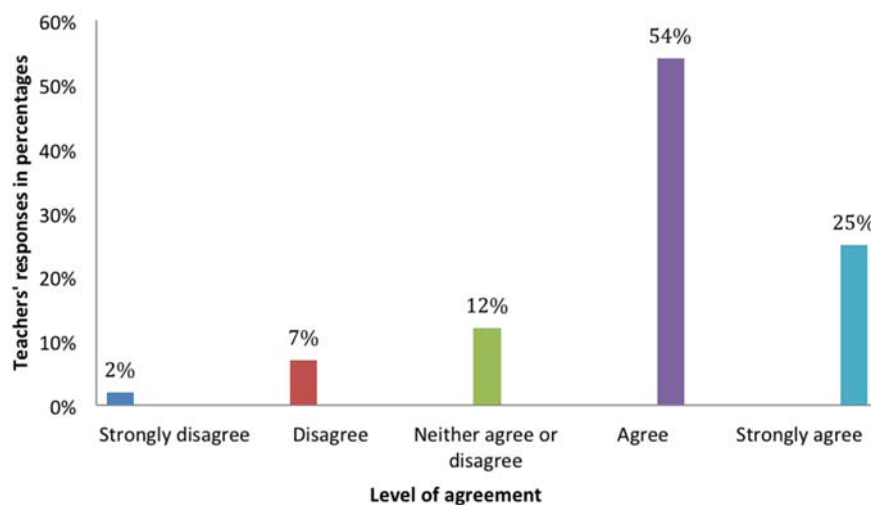


Figure 3: *Response from teachers to whether it was a requirement that they teach drama*

These teachers were given an opportunity to give additional reasons for teaching drama; 21 teachers provided responses. The key themes from these responses focused on the enjoyment and the active engagement in learning that children experienced when participating in drama. Further they offered that in drama children could express themselves in both verbal and non-verbal modes of communication, they developed confidence, and there was evidence of a deepening of understanding and comprehension of concepts through the use of drama.

At a later stage in the questionnaire, these teachers were also invited to add additional comments about teaching drama. Sixteen teachers made additional comments and three of these acknowledged that they believed drama to be important and considered that it was a neglected part of the curriculum. As one participant wrote, "I know I should include more drama but the demand for 'rigour' and being SEEN to be rigorous somehow impedes a more informal approach."

Interview responses

Teachers who indicated that they did not do drama were able to describe why they would use drama. They talked about participation in drama as an opportunity for children to develop performance skills, verbal and non-verbal skills, and as a valuable means of expression and creativity. These teachers also made a connection between drama and role-play and reiterated that this was a beneficial aspect of drama to use with children. For example, Sarah (T4) described drama as *"role-play with a message."*

The teachers who indicated that they do drama were asked why they do drama. All teachers stated that the reason for doing drama with their students was that it allowed for a different form of expression. They considered that learning in and through drama catered for different learning styles, as children are able to demonstrate their understanding of concepts through the medium of drama. As Valerie (T9) said *"students express themselves in different ways and so drama is a perfect way for those children who might not be very strong readers or writers to express their understanding through dramatic ways."*

Both Ingrid (T10) and Cathy (T11) said that one of the main reasons they liked to do drama with children was due to the fact that it caters for a wide range of learning styles; Cathy (T11) mentioned its usefulness *"particularly children who find writing difficult, reading difficult."* They spoke about the way in which drama allowed for a different form of expression, which was beneficial in providing a communicative outlet for certain children. Ingrid (T10) cited children with language difficulties and Cathy (T11) mentioned children who had been assessed as being gifted and talented. She said drama is *"very helpful for them to explore a lot of what's*

going on in their head, whereas a lot of those children found it difficult to actually get it down on paper."

Another interviewee, Margaret (T7), explained how she thought that drama allowed for the development of social and communication skills and that by using drama to teach a 'topical' concept, they were more likely to remember it: *"I also think if they're doing drama they're more likely to remember."*

When describing the beneficial time that children spend participating in exploratory play, including dramatic play, Teresa (T8) said:

"They learn through play... I find that the days I don't give my ones exploring times, I call it, I can't get anything out of them, whereas the days that I say, 'Right, you've got your half an hour, 40 minutes, do whatever you need to do: play, explore,' and the productivity at the end of the day is so much better than if I am to sit them down and just get them to do work."

Ingrid (T10) and Cathy (T11) also made the connection between play and drama, stating that as drama is an extension of the natural play of children, it makes sense to teach it. As Ingrid (T10) said *"they (children) see drama as just an extension of what their normal realm of playing is all about and so it brings out the best in them."* Cathy made the observation that part of the appeal of drama was the sense of fun and excitement that was apparent in drama experiences; she added *"it comes naturally, it's how they are wired."*

In relation to teaching drama to Year 1 children, Cathy (T11) discussed the way in which it was possible to develop a different relationship with children: *"you really get to know your students in a way that you don't get to know your students in any other lesson or any other Learning Area... You get to learn about their sense of humour, their knowledge and value system."* She continued to explain *"You get to break the rules when you accept the make-believe - you get to be free with the kids."*

This notion of the freedom in drama experiences was reiterated by Ingrid (T10), who said:

"There are no rules in the drama room – you can't get anything wrong - so even if you mispronounce something or even if you're illiterate and you can't read as well as the other students in the room, the drama room still gives an outlet for you to become a character and just to run with it."

All interviewees were asked if they thought drama had had an impact on their teaching and learning. Teachers who were not doing drama, Barbara (T1) and Linda (T2), spoke about liking the idea that drama could foster spontaneity and freedom in their students. Linda (T2), Penny (T3), and Sarah (T4) considered that drama had no impact due to their lack of confidence in the

subject or their lack of interest. Sarah (T4) said: *"If I was to do drama I would want a class of children who are going to be doing the right thing and not ruin it, if you know what I mean? Not have a bunch that's going to ruin it for everyone."* She also reported an opposing belief to the value of drama in education, when asked about drama, she stated, *"I don't see it as important as reading and writing, quite frankly."*

Responses to this question from the teachers who did drama with their students were varied. Hannah (T5) asserted that drama has not had a huge impact on her teaching and learning: *"it's not something I've specialised in or read up on more, etcetera, because there's always something new happening in the literacy world or the numeracy world."*

Kellie (T6) described how the drama experiences she had as a younger person had improved her confidence and that now she appreciated the way in which drama allowed her the opportunity to relate to the children on a different level: *"you can't always joke in maths and literacy whereas in drama you can kind of – I don't know – relax a little bit and just get a little bit silly which is ... the kids need to see that I'm not just, 'Do this, do that.'"*

Ingrid (T10) and Cathy (T11) considered their own experiences in the past as a major factor in their adoption of drama in their teaching. Ingrid (T10) explained:

"Being an ESL student myself, the only way I could express myself was facial expression, was using my hands ... But that was a positive part of my upbringing as a child that I was able to ... I may not have known the English word to say when I was feeling something but I could definitely show it with my face, and I could definitely show it with my gestures, and I think with a little Year 1 student, that is gold for them because you teach that to them, you instil that in them that you're still able to communicate."

Cathy (T11) discussed the way in which drama can assist in creating happy children, as she considers that *"it helps them to become confident, it teaches them how to manage their anxieties and fear and for me, that's absolutely fundamental."* She continued to explain her thinking:

"So I now, even though I have always known the power of drama, it used to be more about performance and oral language, that sort of thing, but now I believe that drama is so important for creating happy children. And giving them an opportunity to just come in and be themselves, laugh, get rid of some energy and not have to be contained. So I suppose that's had a huge impact on how I teach."

Additionally, Ingrid (T10) enjoyed the way in which drama afforded her a certain degree of variety and a sense of spontaneity in her teaching. She said of her students, *"They've woken up that morning with the most creative 'beans' ever and they just enlighten your day. You also have some days where whatever you try is not working."*

Through the analysis of the questionnaire, the researcher identified three key responses regarding the contributions that drama made to learning and then asked the opinion of the interviewees. The key contributions were social development, student confidence, and creativity. These aspects are discussed in the following sections.

Contribution to social development

All interviewees were asked to describe their understanding of how drama contributes to the social development of children. It was interesting that the teachers who stated they did not do drama mentioned that drama could be used as a way of bringing children together who would not normally interact. For example, Sarah, (T4) said she used role-play techniques to assist with social problems in the class:

"I end up doing that particularly when there's a problem to address, if we've had a case of bullying in the classroom or there's little things happening then I think, hmm, the best way to do this would be not just for me to talk about how you handle the situation but for all of us to have a say-and-do, a little role-play ... so then doing the little role-play to just reinforce it is something that I would do."

Barbara (T1) and Linda (T2) considered drama experiences as a means of providing opportunities for children to interact with each other and contribute to the development of resilience. However, these teachers also commented that they had not observed social development through drama and consequently they felt that drama could not be cited as a contributor to the development of social skills. On the contrary, these teachers felt that drama was linked to challenging behaviour in the children. Barbara spoke of her children in the specialist's drama class: *"I think what happens more in drama is that they have ... if there are going to be children who are a bit difficult or have trouble working in a less formal environment, they tend to misbehave in drama."*

The teachers who did drama, in particular Hannah (T5), Kellie (T6), Margaret (T7), and Valerie (T9) all described how children could participate in the testing out of social situations through drama. As Hannah (T5) said, *"it's one of the best avenues to be able to get children to realise the different situations that they can be put into, and there are different ways of reacting to things."*

All teachers who did drama explained how they considered drama to promote the practical application of social skills, manners, and appropriate language in young children. Valerie (T9) described how she facilitated role-play with the children, who *"role-played out different scenarios you see them, they use the language that you've introduced to them and then they hopefully transfer that out into the playground in the social situations."* Furthermore, Kellie

(T6) said that the drama experiences assisted children by *"Showing what's appropriate, how to make friends, how to talk to people, what to do at the shop."*

In terms of the contribution that drama makes to the social development of children, Cathy (T11) considers that participation in drama activities assists young children in dealing with issues of self-regulation, anger or disappointment. She believes that they learn to, *"just go with the flow, it will be, let it go, move it on."* In clarifying this idea, she said that drama offers a class group the opportunity to openly share a fun learning experience:

"I think these increased interactions and the sharing of ideas and skills that really equate to really positive class morale and social interactions between kids that would not normally have anything to do with each other or say anything to each other."

Ingrid (T10) equates the drama space she has set up as being conducive to positive social interaction: *"It's a totally different set up, it's a totally different environment ... because there's no tables and chairs, what do we do? We don't sit in the chairs and we don't sit at a table. We don't pick up a pencil or colouring pencils because they're not here, so what do we do?"*

Contribution to student confidence

All interviewees were asked to describe their understanding of how drama contributes to the development of student confidence. Linda (T2), Penny (T3), and Sarah (T4) who were teachers who did not do drama, said they were not convinced that drama experiences would result in increased confidence in young children; instead they believed that confidence was a consequence of the natural development in their maturity. Conversely, Barbara (T1) who was another teacher who did not do drama, said that the children who participated in the drama classes out of school had definitely increased in confidence. She also commented on the positive influence the children's drama expertise had on the other children, adding that these children had some influence on the rest of class: *"the fact that the girls are doing it out of school and doing it in school, I think it's spread to the rest of the class."*

Several of teachers in this group discussed the fact that they felt that a student's propensity to drama was dependent on their personality. Linda (T2) described the different personalities in her class: *"I think for the more boisterous students, I think they just love it. It allows them to be themselves and be their characters and be really confident in that setting. For other shy students, I think it's a little harder, it's very confronting sometimes to get up in front of people and do it."* Penny (T3) had the same opinion about drama: *"It depends on whether the kids like it though, because not all kids are into drama, they're not all into performing so it won't really help those kids, I don't think. In the end, it's a personal thing whether you're into it or not really."*

All the teachers who did drama thought that drama contributed to the development of confidence in young children. In considering how this occurred, Hannah (T5) explained that during drama, when taking on the role of someone else (who needed to be confident within the drama), it was not necessary to be shy, so her student may think: *"This is a confident person and I can do the talking and no one's going to laugh at me."*

Margaret (T7) explained how drama freed children from the demands of academic learning; she imagined the beliefs of her children when participating in drama, by recounting their thoughts: *"I don't have to worry about pen and paper, this is me, I can just do it how I feel, I can use the words that I need to use, you know, because a lot of them, do struggle academically."* Margaret (T7) continued to explain how success in drama can also affect a child's overall progress and development at school stating *"that really helps their confidence a lot, so they can be good achievers there, it filters down. Definitely does."* Teresa (T8) explained her thoughts about how drama allows children the freedom to explore and speak out loud and that, with the boundaries of a formal approach to their learning lifted, children's inhibitions are lost. She said *"I think it's just them being able to express themselves, and it takes all those boundaries and, you know, you lose your inhibitions, don't you? And no one's judging them, they're just them doing what they want to do."*

Cathy (T11) strongly believes in the use of drama to assist children in developing coping strategies to allay fears and anxieties. She uses a concept described in a book called *Jelly legs* (Varney, 1995), which teaches the children to describe their fears in gradations of red jelly, yellow jelly or green jelly. She uses this concept to regularly discuss how the children are feeling about their drama experiences:

"In terms of confidence building through drama it is important to share feelings about what you experience inside, when you do drama. And this normalises all those feelings of fear, excitement or getting butterflies or not wanting to do it. And not being able to explain why sometimes as well. And by talking about these feelings that happen while you do drama, you're also exploring models of coping, skills and strategies."

Ingrid (T10) explained how the fundamental activity of role-playing in drama supported children in developing self-confidence; she recalled what one of her children had said to her: *" 'Mummy says I'm shy at home but when I'm on the stage I'm not me, I'm someone else,' and that's that child trying to say to us, 'I understand that I have to play a character and playing a character means that I'm not myself.' "*

Contribution to creativity

All interviewees were asked to explain their understanding of how drama contributes to the provision of opportunities for children to demonstrate creativity. The teachers who did not do drama agreed that drama does provide opportunities for children to demonstrate creativity as long as the experiences allowed for a certain amount of freedom and involvement. However, again there was mention that the creative aspect is dependent on whether children are instinctively inclined to participate in creative work. Comparing her Year 1 class from the previous year with her current class, Sarah (T4) explained how children in the previous class would effortlessly participate in role-plays. She stated:

“They were just the type of kids who could do, and that was just a popular story that we’d covered that we’d been working on, then it’d be a chance to have a go at just doing the role-plays and, you know, choose which character you want to be in a small group and whatever. But this year it hasn’t sort of rolled that way.”

Linda (T2) and Penny (T3) described how drama experiences could be incidental in supporting children diagnosed with ADHD; they considered that drama allowed these children to express their ideas through drama, when they were hindered in other forms of communication, such as writing and talking. When describing a student with communication difficulties, Penny (T3) said *“he can’t write down his ideas so the drama, I’ve heard he’s, like, quite good at expressing his ideas through drama and he’s quite a creative thinker and he can deliver his ideas a lot easier through the drama.”* Similarly, these teachers and the drama specialist, Ingrid (T10), believed that drama could be used to support English as another Language or Dialect (EAL/D) children in their learning of the English language.

The group of teachers who did drama believed that it allowed children the opportunity to demonstrate creativity; however, they argued that some children were naturally creative and that drama was the ideal mode for the creative output of these particular children. Kellie (T6) recognised the needs of these children, describing two of her more high achieving children by saying, *“they just – I don’t know – they just love ... they’ve got all these ideas in their head anyway and for them to be able to release it somehow, they love it.”* Valerie (T9) gave the same opinion regarding drama and naturally creative children: *“definitely allows those children who are, you know, other than a ... well, they’re more visual.”* Conversely, Hannah (T5), in describing her current class said, *“I haven’t got a creative lot at all.”*

Margaret (T7) believed that her children clearly demonstrated creativity during drama, as she said, *“There’s a lot of creativity there, you see them all doing their own thing. They’re not copying others, you know, they’re actually in the moment.”* Teresa (T8) thought that it was important in her role as a teacher to model the creative process. She had also observed peer

modelling in drama sessions: *“then all of a sudden they start acting out something and one of the children will go, ‘Oh, I can do that too,’ and then the next day there’s four of them ... and they’re all doing that activity that they’ve completely created by themselves.”*

In relating creativity with risk-taking, Ingrid (T10), claimed that young children do know how to be creative, but are reluctant to try new ideas, as they fear being wrong. She said:

“I think they do understand how to be creative, but yet I think they’re scared of wanting to have a go at it because their whole sort of schooling life, they’ve been told that, you know, yet again going back to the ‘No, that’s wrong,’ and all I want them to do is have a go, and we talk about having a go all the time.”

The other drama specialist, Cathy (T11), discussed how drama allows children to be creative and importantly, she believed that if a ‘safe space’ is provided, children are more likely to take risks in their creative drama work. She explained:

“You are driving a car and you’re only six and it’s a pink limousine with flying capabilities and a flat screen. So all that creative thinking, you even have to teach that, it’s just giving them permission and an outlet to share it and nobody laughs at anyone when they do it.”

She continued to clarify how an exploratory drama lesson can promote creative thought and demonstrate the creative process to children:

“So it opens up countless opportunities for creativity and a lot of the workshops and the discussions on experimenting with ideas in drama, so we’re having a go at exploring being that character and how we move – oh that didn’t work, so we’ll try it like this – it really promotes creativity and an understanding of what it takes to be creative as well.”

Ingrid (T10) mentioned how in drama individual and special ideas can be encouraged and that all ideas are valued:

“We talk about that there’s no right or wrong, but yet we also talk about if it’s someone else’s idea, we don’t really want to see it, because it’s someone else’s idea, it’s not your idea, so how can we make sure that it’s going to be only your idea, that it’s special, it’s special only to you.”

In their discussion of creativity, the drama specialists demonstrated a clear understanding of the creative process and how this can be facilitated through drama experiences. This was in contrast to some of the other interviewees who suggested that creativity was an inherent trait in some, but not all children.

Responses to the first research question suggest that the majority of teachers consider it is a requirement to do drama with their students. The reasons cited for doing drama included the enjoyment and active engagement inherent in drama activities and the way in which drama provided an opportunity for different expression. However, some teachers regarded drama as

only being suitable for particular personalities, and this view encompassed ideas on creativity; drama was a suitable mode for the creative output of those children who were naturally creative.

Research question 1.2: What forms of drama are used?

Questionnaire responses

The 41 teachers who indicated they used drama in their classroom were invited to indicate the forms of drama that they use from among those presented in a list constructed from the review of the literature; their responses are reported in Table 2. As teachers provided multiple answers indicating the different forms of drama they used, the percentages in Table 2 are based on the number of respondents with the totals adding up to more than 100%. Results indicate that 95% of teachers use role-play, whilst process drama and teacher-in-role were not widely used. Storytelling was used by 76% of teachers, Readers' Theatre by 44% and Choral Speaking by 49% teachers; these forms have clear links to literacy. Regarding the two types of dramatic play, twice as many teachers indicated that they used spontaneous dramatic play in preference to directed dramatic play. Of the six responses in the 'Other' section, a drama specialist indicated that she uses play building and responding/reflecting activities such as drama journals. Additional forms cited in this section included the dramatisation or acting out of a story and dramatic play through music.

Table 2: *Forms of drama used by teachers*

FORMS OF DRAMA	%
Role-play	95
Spontaneous dramatic play (no teacher intervention)	76
Storytelling (without a book)	76
Movement	73
Choral Speaking	49
Puppetry	49
Mime	46
Readers' Theatre	44
Directed dramatic play (with teacher involvement)	41
Improvisation	24
Tableaux/freeze frames	17
Other	15
Teacher-in-role	12
Process Drama	7

n = 41

Interview responses

When describing how they used drama, the interviewees who indicated they did drama mentioned some of the drama forms they used. Teresa (T8) sets up a dramatic play area that she changes every 6 weeks and she likes to link the theme of this to her planning in other Learning Areas. She explained *"If we're learning about Australian animals and there was a vet and then that linked into the animals from the circus."* However, most teachers do not have a dedicated area for dramatic play. Valerie (T9) said *"We don't have a dress-up corner in Year 1, no. It's just never been something that we've really taken off with. But we've got the space now, I guess, to have those sort of things in place."* Hannah (T5) teaches a class with both Year 1 and Pre-primary children. The Pre-primary children would usually be accommodated together in a purpose-built centre which has its own playground, but some of the children had been combined with Year 1 children. Hannah explained how the Pre-primary children in her class had been given an opportunity to share what was happening in the Pre-primary centre at the beginning of the year, but they had preferred to remain in their classroom with the Year 1 children. However, one of Hannah's roles was to conduct playground duty in the Pre-primary centre, as her Pre-primary children spent their playtime there. She described what she observed when watching this particular group of children in the Pre-primary centre: *"Part of my duty roster is out in the playground with them and earlier on this year they would occasionally have a couple of dress-ups on here and there, not like the rest of the group. They're quite a mature group, like, 'Oh no, it's too babyish for me.' [Laughs]. Where some of them could do with that type of play more often."* Given the opportunity to dress-up and participate in dramatic play, these Pre-primary children considered the activity to be too immature.

Role-play was cited as being commonly used by the teachers, particularly in a literacy context: for example, using role-play to act out stories. Hannah (T5) said *"If it's a better way for the children to show their understanding of the story, and to develop their higher order thinking skills, then yes, I will get them to demonstrate it."* However, Sarah (T4) did not consider that the use of drama (in this case role-play or the acting out a story) assisted with the comprehension of a story. She clarified, *"no, it was just fun. It was fun for them to be doing that. Yeah, but it was all pretty much the same, no one really deviated from the storyline very much, it was just, you know, like a way of retell, sort of thing."* Referring to role-play, Sarah added, *"I find that we don't get the time to do it really, really well."*

Barbara (T1) who did not do drama, explained *"we actually do role-play to sort out just, you know, disputes in the classroom...if there's been a problem we might just ... the other children*

might act out other ways that they could have reacted ...They're quite happy to do that, act out ways that you can deal with a situation."

Many teachers had sets of puppets in the classrooms and mentioned their value. In explaining the importance of puppet work in the "You can do it" programme (Bernard, 2003), Hannah (T5) said *"it's just been amazing to watch, so it's really developed the kids' skill at being able to, not just give a yes/no answer, being able to explain their answer a bit more and be able to, 'Well, I've thought of that so now how am I going to make it look?'"* Drama specialist, Cathy (T11) described how she used a large orang-utan puppet as the stimulus for exploratory and creative drama work with Year 1 children.

Teachers discussed the connection that drama had with stories. Teresa (T8) explained how she incorporates story into her literacy rotations: *"we will choose a book and that was the focus and we'd normally create sort of through the art side of it we'd make masks or props or those sort of things and then the children could, at the end of the week, come back and retell the story and that sort of thing."* Cathy (T11) described how she uses various drama strategies to assist the children in their comprehension of the story, saying, *"So we explore the concept physically and then we go into the verbal stuff, the thought-tapping, the eaves-dropping, re-titling the story, for example. Which is great for tapping into - did they really understand the story or the irony or the sub-text?"*

The teachers who did drama were asked to describe a recent drama activity they had undertaken with their students, and gave a variety of examples of drama activities. Hannah (T5) described how she had used projected play and the use of imagination to encourage writing. The activity was very successful and facilitated copious writing from the children: *"and then they got into the writing of it all, and my pre's just kept writing and writing and writing, and the 1s, like, 'Can we have more paper, please? Can we have more paper?' It just went on and on."* She was delighted at the children's response and the connection they made when accessing their ideas through imaginative, dramatic play. She said *"I just thought, oh gosh! Why haven't I done this before? And boys equally involved as the girls. It was quite incredible to watch."*

Kellie (T6) explained how she structured drama lessons using the format of warm-up, main body of the lesson, and the wind down at the end. She referred to examples of introducing the children to the concept of mime and facilitating role-play in pairs.

The assembly item was the drama activity cited by Margaret (T7). She explained how it was partly scripted, but also included an element of improvisation. She said, *"And honestly, they were fantastic, they came up with just such natural things and, like I say, clear as and it's just*

little Year 1s. To reach to the back of the undercover area and that, so that was great. And I didn't have to use the music or anything, they did it all." Margaret also said that she uses short films from YouTube as a stimulus for drama work and, on this occasion, the children had learnt a choral speaking rap from such a film.

Interviewees Teresa (T8) and Valerie (T9) also described assembly items as recent drama activities. Teresa's (T8) assembly item incorporated a clown theme and included, *"a little bit of acting, had singing songs, we did a poem as well [Pause]. Yeah, there's a really good mix of sort of the different areas blended in."* She said how delighted and surprised she was to receive so much assistance from many parents in preparation for the assembly: *"But yeah, it was just all of a sudden these parents sort of came out of the woodwork and it was, like, they wanted to be involved so... Because you ask parents to come and do reading with them or help out in the classroom – nuh, don't."* Valerie's (T9) assembly item, entitled "Rocket Sam", was a play on a bullying issue and was a script she had used previously with a class. Valerie also explained how she liked to work with a story and direct the children in small group drama activities to facilitate a deeper comprehension of the story. She said, *"I think you've got to model things first with them for quite a while before they can go away and then do it on their own without you standing over them."*

Ingrid (T10) explained how she structured the drama lessons and worked on movement and tableau activities. She described using scripts and plays with the children and assisting them with the development of short skits. Cathy (T11) described a lesson she taught where she started with a story and used non-verbal drama activities to explore the story theme, but also included an important symbolic prop and a simple ritual to deepen the children's acceptance of the make-believe. After some verbal drama activities, she asked the children to re-enact the story in their own way. The resulting drama work was photographed and recorded on film. Cathy explained that she uses new technologies, such as the applications on Apple products, to record the children's drama work, making it very easy for assessment purposes and for the children to respond to their own drama work.

Generally, teachers indicated that role-play was the most common form of drama used; its value was described in literacy learning and in the resolution of social problems. Other forms of drama associated with literacy programmes, such as storytelling, Readers' Theatre and Choral Speaking were also cited as being used. Most teachers did not facilitate dramatic play with their students; however, drama was considered to be a recognised component in assembly items.

Research question 1.3: How do Year 1 teachers plan for drama?

Questionnaire responses

Of the 41 teachers who did drama, 39 responded to this question, 26% of teachers reported that they did not plan for drama; 74% reported that they did plan. Of the teachers who indicated that they planned for drama, 15 made a comment about their planning practices. The majority of those who commented stated that they did not consistently plan for drama and generally used it as a tool, integrating it into other Learning Areas. These teachers also indicated in their comments that they did not plan for drama-specific lessons. Of the ten teachers who indicated that they did not plan for drama, seven made additional comments. These responses alluded to the prevalence of impromptu drama occurring and there was mention of some planning of drama integrated into other areas of the curriculum. Time and the busy curriculum were cited as reasons for not planning. There were also 39 responses to the question regarding planning for structured drama lessons; 41% of teachers reported planning for structured drama lessons, compared to 59% who did not.

The teachers were given a choice of planning tools and had the opportunity to add their own example. As can be seen in Figure 4, a comparable number of teachers use the Department of Education's Scope and Sequence documents (DET, 2007) and the Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998) whilst fewer use the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009). Alternative documents in the 'other' response choice were the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2010) and resource books.

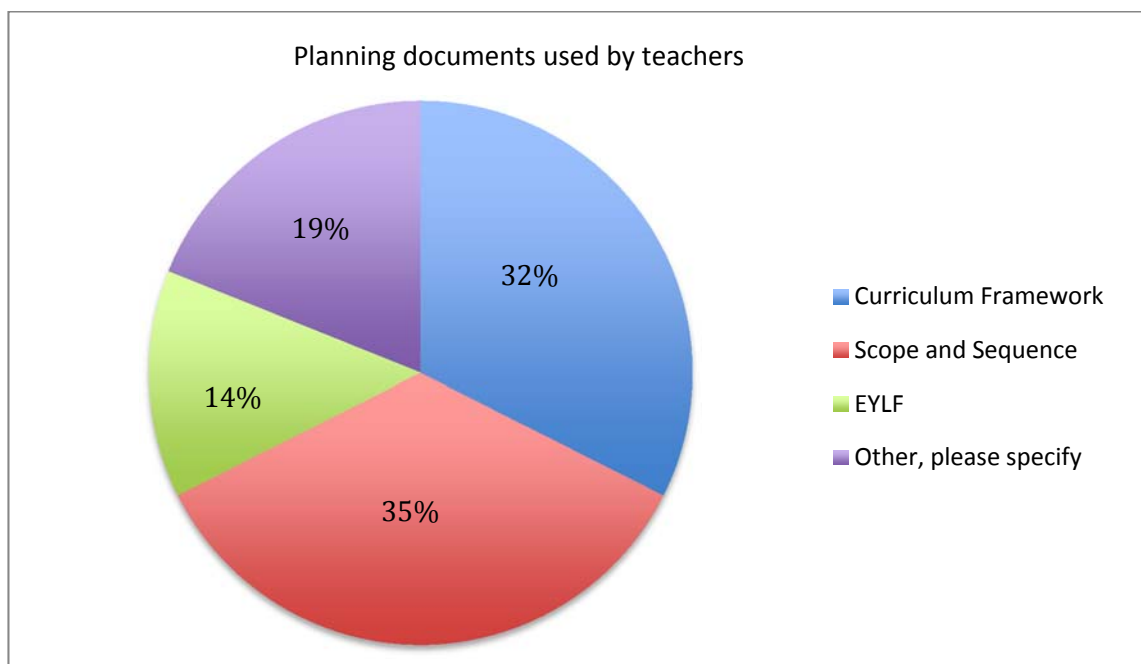


Figure 4: *Planning documents used by teachers*

Interview responses

All the interviewees who did drama were asked to describe drama experiences they had planned for their students. Interviewees who did not do drama but had drama specialists in their schools were asked if they were involved in the planning of drama experiences for their students. Barbara (T1), Penny (T3), and Sarah (T4) were teachers not doing drama, but had drama specialists working in their schools, taking weekly drama lessons with their classes. These teachers had no involvement in the planning of drama for their students; it was clear, however, that the specialist gave assistance to these teachers with assembly items. In most cases, these teachers were not aware of the content of the drama lessons with the specialist. Penny (T3) made the observation that the children liked drama with the specialists as the lessons had a 'game' element. Consequently, the children related the subject to play. She explained, *"both of the drama teachers make it into a game, a lot of it, and so it's not ... especially for the not so confident kids, I think that's really good. Because they don't really realise they're doing drama because they're just getting up and playing."* Barbara (T1) said that the children did not recount their school drama experiences to her. Penny (T3) said that she does not usually follow-up on the activities introduced by the drama specialist, although occasionally the specialist would ask her to work on something with the children: *"She comes and tells us, like, if there's something we need to cover a little bit more in class, like, when the poetry was read this year."*

All the teachers who do drama reported that they look for opportunities in their teaching for the incidental use of drama, and Hannah (T5) explained that her planning of drama experiences was not detailed. As a thematic teacher, Margaret (T7) said that she incorporates drama experiences into what she has already planned for other Learning Areas: *"I've got to teach this, can I use drama to make it more meaningful?"*

Kellie (T6) and Valerie (T9) explained that they based the planning of the drama experiences on a drama resource book or a "values" programme. Kellie (T6) described how a drama specialist recommended the drama resource book to her. She explained, *"so it's got a warm-up, a vocal activity, and they're repeated, a lot of them so that the kids get used to them. And then it's got a main activity, which is ... it's mostly role-play stuff or matching game ... yeah. It's mostly role-play and then a wind-down activity like a movement one."* Linda (T2) also reported obtaining drama resources from a colleague when being employed as teacher relief for a drama specialist and using these in her planning. She explained *"But I also have ... when I was at my previous school I know we had a drama specialist, and that was really so I photocopied a lot of things from her, which I still use in the classroom."* However, Kellie stated that she was trialling

different drama activities: *"it's my first year out, just kind of finding my ground and just seeing what works because I don't know how they're going to respond."*

Ingrid (T10) explained that she is currently using the arts section of the Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998) as a basis for her planning, as it is a requirement that she assess and report on the Year 1 children who participate in her drama programme at the school. She likes to select drama experiences that she knows the Year 1 children will enjoy, but that will also allow her to assess them. She said:

"The experiences I want to plan for my year 1 students is [sic] just enjoyable experiences, but yet an experience that allows me to assess them so I can address those important outcomes that I need to report on at the end of the semester, and give their parents a guideline of how they're progressing as well in the drama areas of the school."

Cathy (T11) and Ingrid (T10) both described how they plan for structured drama lessons with a warm-up, the main body of the lesson, and a wind down. Cathy (T11) cites the warm-up as beneficial *"purely to get them into the zone, turn their senses on, get their head ready to think and respond. So it might just be a quick game or something."* Ingrid (T10) uses the warm-up *"to get their brains switched into a drama mode"* and the wind down to prepare the children to return to their class.

One interviewee, Hannah (T5) acknowledged the importance of the 'drama-specific' drama lesson: *"And in all my years though I don't think I've ever taken a true drama lesson at all."* On further questioning, Hannah revealed that by a 'true drama lesson' she meant a 'proper structured lesson'.

For the main part of the drama lesson, Cathy (T11) uses a provocation or pretext to explore stories and conventions in drama, *"like a poem, piece of art, an object."* She takes the children through a series of drama activities to explore the concept physically, as she explains, *"we're just learning about physical theatre and representing objects and emotions and characters with our bodies."* She then uses verbal activities to explore the theme further.

Both specialist teachers cite the use of the wind down or cool down as an important component of the drama experience for Year 1 children; this is a quiet and relaxing activity at the end of the drama lesson. As Ingrid (T10) explained:

"We will end the lesson with what you would naturally call a cool down but, I mean, obviously the Year 1 students don't realise that that's what it is but I'm actually getting them ready to now exit the drama room door and become part of their natural school environment where the rules will change as soon as they leave and exit that door."

Cathy (T11) explained how she includes the relaxing activity at the end of the drama lesson. *“I do jelly time. Five or ten minutes relaxation, on the floor to calm them down. And to re-focus them and they love it. And you have to teach them how to do it, to be still, but they will do it for you, even the littlies.”*

The majority of teachers explained that they planned to integrate drama with other Learning Areas of the curriculum. Findings from the questionnaire data indicated that almost all of the teachers (93%) integrate drama.

Interviewees also discussed the integration of drama. Linda (T2), who was a teacher who indicated she did not implement drama-specific lessons, said that she did try to link drama into some areas of the curriculum: *“Yeah, I always try and link it to the curriculum in, like, different areas, so yeah, I try and make that a thing. [Laughs] It’s not actually labelled as drama, it’s labelled reading.”*

Drama specialist Cathy (T11) expressed a belief in an integrated curriculum; as she explained, *“I would ditch handwriting and health before I ditch drama [Laughs]. Because I can do health in drama ... integrating with Learning Areas and that is real learning in the real world. And not having write it all down – you don’t have to write it all down.”*

Responses associated with the research question about planning suggest that teachers referred to published programmes and curriculum documents when planning for drama. Mostly drama was being used incidentally and as an integration tool, however, the drama specialists were planning for drama-specific lessons.

Research question 1.4: What factors support or inhibit the teaching of drama in Year 1?

Questionnaire responses

Teachers who answered ‘Yes’ to “Do you do drama?” were asked to specify supportive factors in the teaching of drama from a list of items. Figure 5 illustrates that of the 31 teachers who responded to this question, 34% of teachers considered drama resources to be of the most beneficial in their teaching of drama. Forty-four per cent of teachers cited other means of support not listed in the question; these included using the Internet to search for ideas; collaboration with colleagues; specialist teacher support; and acknowledgement of their own imagination and creativity.

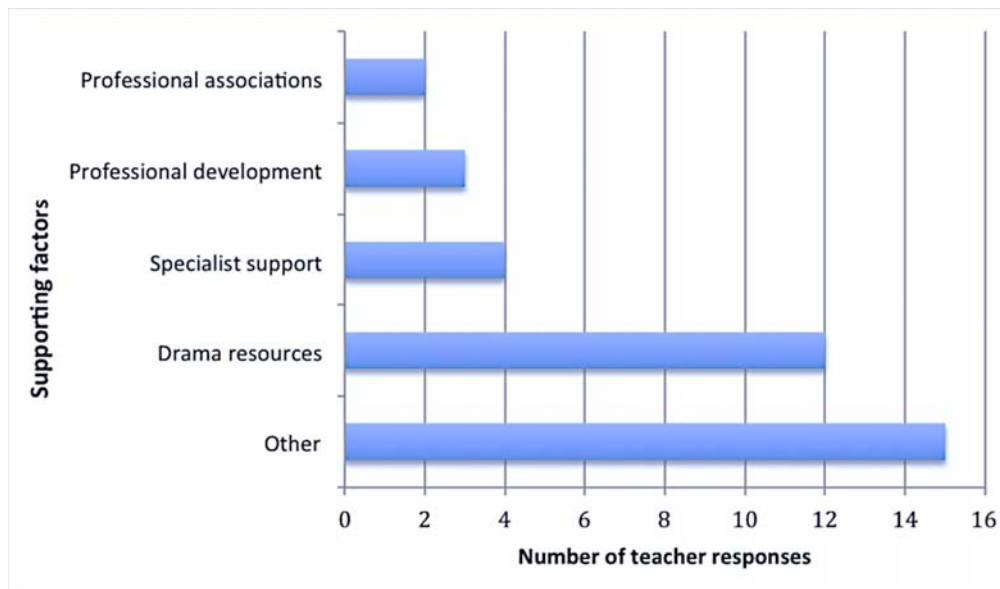


Figure 5: *Factors supporting the teaching of drama*

The following question denotes the point where all teachers resumed the questionnaire. Teachers were asked about inhibiting factors affecting the teaching of drama. Figure 6 shows that of the 42 teachers who responded, 61% of teachers cited 'time' as being the major inhibitor. Ten per cent of teachers made responses in the 'Other' section and time was mentioned again. In addition, statements were made about coping with a crowded curriculum and the lack of professional development opportunities.

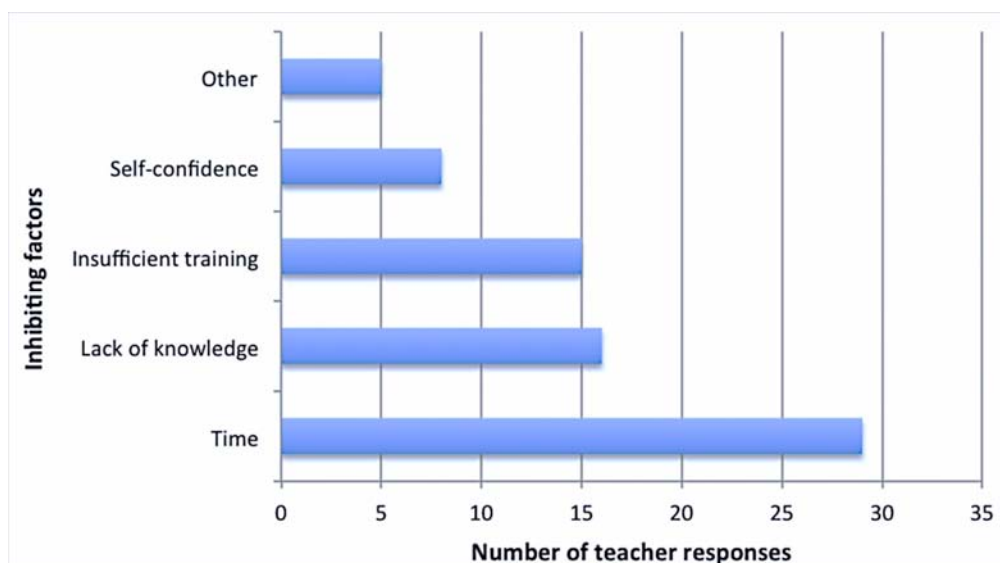


Figure 6: *Factors inhibiting the teaching of drama*

Interview responses

The teachers not doing drama were asked to describe the inhibitive factors only. The teachers who indicated that they did drama and the specialists were asked to explain the factors that support and/or inhibit the teaching of drama. They cited various factors that supported the teaching of drama. Kellie (T6) considered that the close links that drama had with literacy, supported its implementation and provided a valid reason to use drama: *"There is [sic] like the other Learning Areas, literacy, that supports it because you can draw on it, especially doing the Readers' Theatre and that kind of thing."* The notion of an easy and flexible integration was reinforced by Valerie (T9) who said, *"I like the flexibility where I can just put it into my programme as it comes in incidentally."*

Margaret (T7) indicated that the children's enjoyment of drama encouraged her to use it more:

"If I see how much the kids enjoy it and I see how easily they learn from it, so for me it's been more a, once again, going back to that achieving more than the social development, confidence building aspects that drama also has such a positive effect. So that's been the push."

Both drama specialists cited the positive feedback that they received from children and parents as being a supportive factor: *"it made me want to keep going."* (Cathy, T11). The fact that both drama specialists had a dedicated and spacious drama room was also cited as an inducement. These teachers also mentioned drama resource books as being a support and also the use of the Internet, allowing for easy access to new ideas and for finding background information on a given theme. Ingrid (T10) said that she used events such as Book Week to promote drama activities and consequently, the whole school event would have a positive effect on the drama programme in the school.

When asked about inhibiting factors, all interviewees cited time as a major inhibiting factor, as were the demands of the 'academic' curriculum. Linda (T2) explained how she feels:

"I struggle. I struggle with time, especially during the term and with all the testing that we've been doing, I've found it's really hard to fit that in because you've got a full programme as it is and you're trying to, you know, do those sort of things ... I would love to do it more but I just haven't found the time. In between reading and writing and maths, Year 1 is just such a critical time to get all those really solidified."

Kellie (T6) reiterated this idea: *"Time's always an issue, because there's a huge [Pause] not just because but low socio-economic area, literacy and numeracy are pushed very, very hard."*

Penny (T3) also cited the focus on literacy and numeracy learning: *"You just can't get*

everything in, especially with the changes in maths and English already because there's so much more you're supposed to do in maths and English."

Both Cathy (T11) and Ingrid (T10) mentioned time and an inflexible timetable as being inhibitors. As Ingrid (T10) said, *"Only having them once a week, and with the constant interruptions. I do call them interruptions ... Excursions, swimming lessons, your daily school life that inhibits perhaps drama time for that particular week."*

Two of the teachers who indicated that they did not do drama felt that their lack of knowledge of the subject hindered them, although they also deemed drama as an unimportant subject in the curriculum. Sarah (T4) said *"I don't think it's as important as teaching children how to read and how to write. I don't see drama as being on the same ... I see that as very unimportant, actually."*

Hannah (T5) explained that she felt that access to an appropriate space was an issue, but that she was also inhibited by her lack of knowledge: *"Inhibit it [Laughs] because I don't know enough about it. I don't know enough about it, and really I can link that into the next question about the Arts curriculum. I don't know enough about it."* Linda (T2) and Margaret (T7) agreed that professional development is a requirement for teachers to feel confident to teach drama. Linda (T2) described her feelings: *"Also I feel like even though I have done units in university, I feel like I still may need a refresher or just maybe a little PD to show us some of the things that can be incorporated in the classroom and that could be fun to do, because I think sometimes we just forget."* Margaret (T7) bemoaned the lack of professional development in drama: *"when last did I ever go to a drama PD?"*

The three teachers who indicated that they did not do drama and who had drama specialists in their schools did not consider that it was their responsibility to do drama. They explained that drama was timetabled and already being covered by the specialist. Penny (T3) added: *"Mainly because we've got the drama specialist and I can't fit that in as well as everything else. So she's there to do that in my DOTT time so it gets done."*

Cathy (T11) discussed the way in which other people's ideas about drama and creativity acted as an inhibitor, resulting in her need to justify her programme and specialisation. She felt that generally drama was not a priority and added that the perception of some of her colleagues that, *"drama is acting, drama is play, and drama is costumes. And it isn't."* Barbara (T1) offered her opinion on the place of drama in school settings: *"I think at the moment it's quite a low priority with all the NAPLAN and literacy and numeracy focus. It gets pushed down the agenda quite a lot..."*

In terms of the factors supporting the teaching of drama, teachers cited drama resources and collegial collaboration as being supportive. In addition, the enjoyment experienced by the children when participating in drama encouraged teachers to continue implementing the subject. The majority of teachers identified time as being the most inhibiting factor, with many teachers also complaining that they lacked knowledge of how to teach drama.

Research question 2.1: What do Year 1 teachers know about drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts?

Questionnaire responses

As a component of Phase Two of the Australian Curriculum, the Australian Curriculum in the Arts is currently being restructured as a part of the *Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline* and is due to be available for familiarisation in schools from the beginning of 2016 (SCSA, 2015). The Minister for Education in Western Australia did not accept the Arts curriculum Phase Two learning as other states did. Therefore, teachers in this study at the time were responding to the Phase Two development of the Arts Learning Area that ACARA had placed on the ACARA website (ACARA, 2011). A Likert scale was created for teachers to respond to a statement about their knowledge of the new Arts curriculum and their readiness to implement it: “I know a lot about drama in the new Australian Arts curriculum and am ready to implement it.” Of the 46 teachers who responded, 85% strongly disagreed or disagreed to this statement.

Interview responses

The group of teachers who did not do drama with their students claimed that they did not have any knowledge of the new Arts curriculum (ACARA, 2011). However, Barbara (T1) was confident that she would be able to follow the new Arts curriculum when necessary. As she elaborated that “*I think I’ve had enough experience personally and with the children to do that.*”

The teachers who did drama admitted that they knew very little about the new Arts curriculum; however, Teresa (T8) had looked at it. Valerie (T9) explained why she had not yet investigated the new documents: “*you tend to think, oh well, that’s the arts programme, that’s for someone else to do rather than me, so I haven’t even looked at it.*”

Ingrid (T10) had looked at the new Arts curriculum (ACARA, 2011) and commented that *“It sounds that it’s workable.”* Cathy (T11) admitted that she had not looked at it, but was aware of the major changes to the structure of the new Arts curriculum.

Responses related to research question 2.1 suggest that the majority of teachers did not have knowledge of the new Arts curriculum. Some teachers were confident that they could follow the new Arts curriculum documents when necessary.

Research question 2.2: How prepared are Year 1 teachers for the implementation of drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts?

Questionnaire responses

Participants in the questionnaire were asked to indicate their knowledge of drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts and whether they were ready to implement it. Findings suggest that 74% of teachers strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. In addition, 88% of teachers indicated that they did not feel equipped to manage the drama requirements of the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts.

Interview responses

The four teachers who did not do drama stated that they would need professional development in order to gain a sense of direction with their drama planning. They considered the provision of resources to help with the planning and integration of drama with other Learning Areas was also a requirement. They also wanted the opportunity to obtain support from colleagues who are experienced in drama. Some teachers commented that the positive experience they had with other Australian Curriculum documents promoted a confidence to work with the arts component. There was an acknowledgement from Barbara (T1), Linda (T2) and Sarah (T4) of the importance of drama, but Sarah (T4) expressed apprehension that in the new Arts curriculum, drama will be one more subject to fit into an already crowded curriculum. She commented that *“When I have done it I often think, oh, why haven’t I done this before?”* Correspondingly, she added *“I’m hoping that, for me, drama won’t be that one more thing you have to include, you know.”* Linda (T2) suggested that one solution to assist her in the implementation of drama in the new Arts curriculum would be to consciously include drama in her planning. She discussed this idea in terms of the integration of drama into other Learning Areas: *“I think drama could easily be integrated into society and environment and reading, into maths even.”*

All the teachers doing drama expressed the need to improve their knowledge of teaching the subject and they considered this would assist them to implement the new curriculum in relation to drama. Consequently, these teachers expressed the need for some professional development in drama. Teresa (T8) said that she thought professional development in drama should be designed to have a teacher coming in and demonstrating actual lessons in the school:

"It might be different for others but do you send one person off who I can go off and learn all this great stuff and use it in my classroom and I could even go back and share, but if they don't see it for themselves, you know, so maybe in that regard, if people actually came into the school and sort of did it as opposed to sort of the one or two teachers going out and learning about it. Because I think drama is one of those areas where I know for a lot of teachers they shy away from it because it's, 'I'm not doing that. I can't do that.' "

Some interviewees considered the benefit of a whole-school approach to the implementation of drama. Margaret (T7) discussed the status of drama in schools and how she considers that it needs to be more of a priority: *"we don't have someone who's been given that role of making it more of a priority or sourcing the resources or getting the ideas."* Valerie (T9) thought that it would be beneficial to have a discussion about the new curriculum with the arts specialists in her school: *"I think it'd be good to sit down and have a discussion with our arts specialists as well in the school to see what they know and how they're feeling about it as well."* Cathy (T11) also mentioned that she thought that when the new Arts curriculum was released, it would be very advantageous for the whole school to participate in a series of meetings to discuss the new document and *"accept this curriculum in the same way as when the literacy curriculum came out."*

In terms of practical drama resources to assist with the implementation, Valerie (T9) thought that videos of drama lessons would be a valuable resource: *"It'd be good to see examples of other teachers doing it in their classroom and what it looks like would help. Yeah, I think that would be the most useful sort of resource, I think."* Teresa (T8) explained that she would like resources to assist with reporting, such as videos and checklists. She said *"videos and you can actually watch the child, so I think that would be brilliant for the Arts, because you could actually see children acting out."* Although Margaret (T7) believed that recommendations of drama resources would be beneficial, she explained that it was vital to know *"what's going to really work with these kids, where do I go from here, what's the best way of planning it over a term, you know, that kind of thing I'm not good at."*

Hannah, (T5) thought that a resource with ideas for integration with other Learning Areas would be very useful: *"a quick referral guide and this could be slotted in a numeracy lesson,*

this could be slotted in in an art lesson, which would be fantastic, and this could be slotted into literacy.” She continued by saying that she would also like to attend a professional development session: “go and do some sort of PD that’s not too interactive but pertinent and meaningful.” Valerie (T9) also stated that a cross-curricular and collaborative approach to planning would be feasible, in order to meet the requirements of the new Arts curriculum. She explained, “I think it’s going to have to be cross-curricular anyway, so I think it’s just a matter of networking with other teachers, I guess, sharing ideas would be helpful which junior primary teachers do very well, so I think that networking is important as well, and that would help.”

Cathy (T11) said she would need time and specifically *“I’d want a document that is easy to follow, a document that has ways for me to tweak it and make it my own and how I could use it as a working document.”* Ingrid (T10) said she would like some training in the form of some professional development, possibly with a network of drama teachers. Ingrid (T10) was adamant that she wanted to see drama flourish in schools. Cathy (T11) conveyed excitement and nervousness concerning the impending implementation of the new Arts curriculum, expressing concern that drama would, in time, be ignored. She explained, *“But I suspect that might happen, if it’s not already happening. I am hoping that it might be ok in a little while, once it’s unfolded and people have had time – I am hoping.”*

Generally, teachers did not feel prepared to implement the drama requirements associated with the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts and concerns about time constraints and a crowded curriculum were mentioned. The majority of teachers considered that an improvement of knowledge about teaching drama was necessary. A combined and whole-school approach to the implementation of drama was cited as being more workable.

Cross analysis of questionnaire data

Cross analysis of Year 1 teaching experience with other variables

It is established that teacher training influences educational practice (Jeanneret et al., 2006). This was substantiated in the interviews when teachers mentioned the drama training they completed when studying for their teaching qualification. Although the majority of teachers could not recall the details of this training, responses were positive. Three categories were formed to represent teachers’ qualifications and these were compared with other variables in the questionnaire. Table 3 shows the results of the cross analysis between the teachers’ qualifications and whether they were doing drama with their students. All teachers with early childhood training were doing drama. It must be noted that two of the 26 teachers with a B.Ed.

Primary or Diploma of Teaching qualification who indicated they were not doing drama, had drama specialists in their schools. In addition, one of the 21 teachers with Graduate Diploma in Education also had a drama specialist.

Table 3: *Percentage of teachers who are doing drama compared with the qualification categories*

Qualification	Yes %	No %
Early childhood training (B.Ed. ECS and K – 7)	100	0
Primary education training (B.Ed. Primary and Diploma of Teaching)	74	26
Post-graduate – early childhood and/or primary training unknown (Graduate Diploma of Education)	79	21

n = 48

Table 4 shows the result of the comparison between teacher qualifications and the forms of drama teachers used. Teachers who had some early childhood training indicated they were more likely to use spontaneous dramatic play, role-play and movement. However, the same group of teachers suggested they were unlikely to use process drama. Whilst it was unknown whether the teachers with post-graduate qualifications had early childhood or primary training, this group of teachers were more likely to use mime.

Table 4: *Percentage of teachers who use forms of drama compared with the qualification categories*

Drama Form	B.Ed. ECS and K – 7 %	B.Ed. Primary and Diploma of Teaching %	Graduate Diploma of Education %
Role-play	100	74	64
Spontaneous dramatic play	73	58	57
Storytelling	67	53	71
Movement	80	42	64
Choral Speaking	47	47	21
Puppetry	53	37	50
Mime	27	37	57
Readers' Theatre	13	42	50
Directed dramatic play	33	26	43
Improvisation	13	26	21
Tableaux/freeze frames	7	16	21
Teacher-in-role	27	5	0
Process drama	0	10	7

n = 48

The number of years' experience of teaching a particular year level is seen to have an effect on the attitude of teachers to their career in teaching; their perception of their role and their commitment to the profession (Huberman, 1989). This was verified by responses in the interviews when teachers mentioned the connection between the extent of their experience and what they were prepared to undertake as a part of their teaching commitment.

Consequently, a series of comparisons was made with the Year 1 teaching experience results and other variables.

Categories were formed to represent teaching experience in a Year 1 setting and these were compared with other variables in the questionnaire. Table 5 shows the results of the comparison of years of Year 1 teacher experience and teachers currently doing drama with their students. All teachers with ten or more years of experience indicated that they are teaching drama. It is interesting to note that the greatest percentage of teachers not doing drama were in the six-to-nine years category.

Table 5: *Year 1 teaching experience compared with whether teachers were doing drama*

	Do you do drama with your students now?	
	Yes	No
	%	%
	83	17
Years of experience		
0 – 2 yrs.	87	13
3 – 5 yrs.	80	20
6 – 9 yrs.	64	36
10+ yrs.	100	0

n = 46

As can be seen in Table 6, Year 1 teaching experience was compared with the forms of drama used. Spontaneous dramatic play is used by over 75% of teachers with zero to two years' experience and ten or more years' experience, whereas approximately 50% of teachers with three to nine years' experience use this drama form. Over 60% of teachers, whatever their amount of teaching experience, use movement. More than 40% of teachers between the category of three to ten years and above use directed dramatic play, whereas 15% of teachers with zero to two years' experience use the same form. Over 70% of teachers with ten or more years' experience implement puppetry and Readers' Theatre; however, this same group do not

use teacher-in-role. Over 60% of teachers with six years experience or more use mime with their students. However, regardless of Year 1 teaching experience, over 80% of all teachers use role-play as a drama form.

Table 6: *Year 1 teaching experience compared with the forms of drama used*

DRAMA STRATEGIES	Year 1 Teaching Experience				Total number of teachers
	0-2 yrs %	3-5 yrs %	6-9 yrs %	10+ yrs %	
Role Play	100	100	100	80	36
Spontaneous dramatic play (no teacher intervention)	77	50	57	100	28
Storytelling (without a book)	61	87	71	80	28
Movement	77	62	71	70	27
Choral Speaking	54	50	29	60	19
Puppetry	54	37	43	70	20
Mime	23	37	71	60	17
Readers' Theatre	15	50	57	70	17
Directed dramatic play (with teacher involvement)	15	50	43	50	14
Improvisation	23	25	29	20	9
Tableaux/freeze frames	23	12	28	10	7
Teacher-in-role	15	37	0	0	5
Process Drama	0	12	0	10	2
Total number of teachers	13	8	7	10	38

Year 1 teaching experience was compared with data from the questionnaire which asked for teachers' opinions about the contribution drama makes in an educational setting. Compared to the other respondents, the teachers with three to five years' experience provided more positive responses to some of the statements. These teachers agreed or strongly agreed to the following: that drama contributes to emotional development (88%); that drama contributes to the understanding of other cultures (100%); that drama contributes to the teaching verbal skills and non-verbal skills (100%) and that drama contributes to student confidence (88%). Fifty per cent of teachers with three years' experience and above strongly agree that drama contributes to academic development, compared to 23% of teachers in the zero-to-two-years category.

Table 7: Contribution of drama compared with Year 1 teaching experience

Drama contributes to:		Yr 1 Teaching Experience			
		1-2 yrs %	3-5 yrs %	6-9 yrs %	10+ yrs %
Emotional development	Neither agree or disagree	8	12	0	10
	Agree	38	13	71	40
	Strongly agree	54	75	29	50
Understanding of other cultures	Neither agree or disagree	15	0	14	20
	Agree	54	38	72	50
	Strongly agree	31	62	14	30
Academic development.	Neither agree or disagree	0	0	0	0
	Agree	77	50	43	50
	Strongly agree	23	50	57	50
Students' creativity	Neither agree or disagree	0	0	0	0
	Agree	38	12	43	30
	Strongly agree	62	88	57	70
Development of imagination	Neither agree or disagree/	0	0	0	0
	Agree	8	12	43	30
	Strongly agree	92	88	57	70
Teaching verbal skills	Neither agree or disagree	0	0	0	0
	Agree	31	0	29	50
	Strongly agree	69	100	71	50
Teaching non-verbal skills	Neither agree or disagree	0	0	0	0
	Agree	38	0	43	40
	Strongly agree	62	100	57	60
Student confidence	Neither agree or disagree	8	0	0	0
	Agree	34	12	43	50
	Strongly agree	58	88	57	50
Positive class dynamics	Neither agree or disagree	8	0	0	20
	Agree	38	50	71	30
	Strongly agree	54	50	29	50
Social development	Neither agree or disagree	8	0	0	10
	Agree	30	25	57	40
	Strongly agree	62	75	43	50
Development of empathy	Neither agree or disagree	8	0	0	0
	Agree	61	37	57	50
	Strongly agree	31	63	43	50

In a continuation of the cross analysis of the experience groupings, this variable was compared with responses concerning teachers' planning tools. Table 8 shows that teachers with up to two years of experience were more likely to use the Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998) and the Department of Education's Scope and Sequence documents (DET, 2007) to assist with their drama planning process. However, some teachers in the three-to-five and ten-years-plus categories used the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) as a planning tool. The resources cited in the "Other" category were the Australian Curriculum, "my own imagination," resource books, and an inquiry plan.

Table 8: *Planning tools compared with Year 1 teaching experience*

Planning tools	Year 1 Teaching Experience			
	0-2 yrs %	3-5 yrs %	6-9 yrs %	10+ %
Scope and Sequence	75	57	40	57
Curriculum Framework	62	43	40	29
Other	12	14	60	29
EYLF	0	29	0	29
Total number of teachers	8	7	5	7

n = 27

Year 1 teaching experience was compared with the perceived supporting factors for teaching drama. Table 9 demonstrates that teachers with ten or more years of Year 1 teaching experience are more likely to cite specialist teachers as a supporting factor, whereas, teachers in the zero-to-two and three-to-five-year categories cited the use of drama resources as a key support. The "other" types of support cited by teachers were:

- Previous experience and knowledge
- The Internet – community projects, people, resources
- Books and my ideas
- First Steps (Education Department of Western Australia, 1997) – a professional development program with literacy resources
- My own teaching skills, imagination and creativity
- Puppets
- Collaboration with colleagues
- Training during degree
- My daughter – Drama teacher
- Specialist support – LOTE & Music

Table 9: *Perceived support for teaching drama compared with Year 1 teaching experience*

Support	Yr 1 Teaching Experience			
	1-2 yrs %	3-5 yrs %	6-9 yrs %	10+ yrs %
Other	56	67	85	43
Drama resources	44	67	29	29
Specialist support	0	33	14	43
Professional development	11	17	0	14
Professional associations	11	17	0	0
Total number of teachers	9	6	7	7

n = 29

The factors inhibiting the teaching of drama were compared with years of experience of teaching Year 1. Whilst responses were similar, Table 10 shows that more teachers in the six-to-nine-years' experience group cited lack of self-confidence and insufficient training as inhibiting factors. All teachers indicated that time was a significant inhibiting factor.

Table 10: *Factors inhibiting drama compared with Year 1 teaching experience*

Inhibiting factors	Yr 1 Teaching Experience			
	1-2 yrs %	3-5 yrs %	6-9 yrs %	10+ yrs %
Time	69	71	82	80
Lack of knowledge	54	29	45	30
Insufficient training	31	43	54	30
Lack of self-confidence	15	14	36	10
Other	8	14	18	10
Total number of teachers	13	7	11	10

n = 41

Cross analysis of professional development in drama with other variables

To ascertain if professional development in drama made a difference to teachers' drama practice, teachers were asked if they had received any professional development in drama. Subsequently, these responses were compared with other variables collected in the questionnaire.

The findings in Table 11 show that a large proportion of both groups of teachers who had, or had not, participated in professional development in drama, did drama with their students.

Table 11: *Professional development in drama compared with teachers doing drama now*

		Teachers doing drama with their students	
		Yes %	No %
Professional development in educational drama	Yes	94	6
	No	79	21
Total		84	16

n = 49

In terms of the inhibiting factors, Table 12 demonstrates that 33% of teachers who have completed professional development cite the lack of knowledge and insufficient training as inhibiting factors. Forty-four per cent of teachers who have not completed professional development cited lack of knowledge as an inhibitor and 41% of this group named insufficient training as impeding their teaching of drama. Time is stated as the most inhibiting factor.

Table 12: *Professional development in drama compared with inhibiting factors*

		Professional development in educational drama	
		Yes %	No %
Factors inhibiting drama teaching	Time	93	67
	Lack of knowledge	33	44
	Insufficient training	33	41
	Lack of self confidence	13	22
	Other, please specify	20	7
Total number of teachers		15	27

n = 42

Summary

This chapter reported the findings from data collected in Phase One and Phase Two of the study. A total of 52 teachers participated in the questionnaire and this group was representative of Year 1 teaching experience in government and independent schools, located in metropolitan and rural regions in Western Australia. From this group, eleven teachers were interviewed, forming two sub groups: teachers doing drama, which included two drama specialists, and teachers not doing drama. Analysis of the questionnaire data suggested that the majority of teachers were doing drama and that they believed drama to be beneficial. All teachers with early childhood training were doing drama. Some, but not all teachers had completed professional development in drama, but this had no effect on whether teachers did drama.

Teachers agreed that the benefits of doing drama encompassed the domains of imagination, creativity, and verbal and non-verbal communication. They also agreed that drama supported academic development, but the interviewees did not discuss the use of drama as a means to achieve academic learning. A dichotomy emerged about creativity; whilst teachers agreed that drama fostered the development of creativity, some teachers thought that creativity was a trait inherent in some, but not all children.

In addition, this data set provided an indication of drama planning practices and revealed the regular use of specific drama forms, such as role-play. Spontaneous dramatic play experiences were being facilitated by a greater number of teachers with early childhood training. In contrast, more teachers with a post-graduate qualification were using storytelling and mime. Examination of the interview data afforded a deeper analysis of teacher perspectives of, and practices in, drama. Whilst teachers described the benefits of doing drama, the facilitation of drama experiences was incidental and not planned. In contrast, the drama specialists planned drama-specific, structured lessons that encouraged explorative and creative drama.

Teachers reported that the principal factors supporting the teaching of drama were drama resources, collaboration with colleagues and accessing specialist drama support. However, findings in the interview data revealed that, if applicable, collaboration with drama specialists was not initiated by teachers. The majority of teachers cited time as being the main inhibiting factor. A lack of knowledge of drama and a lack of confidence were also mentioned.

The majority of teachers had limited knowledge of the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts. In consideration of the implementation of the new Arts curriculum, teachers expressed the need for training in drama, and professional development in an integrated curriculum

approach to planning. A number of interviewees believed that a whole-school approach would be necessary to ensure successful implementation of the new Arts curriculum.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Key findings emerged from the data collected in the study from the questionnaire in Phase One and from the interviews in Phase Two. This chapter summarises the research findings in relation to the research questions and affords an alignment with the literature. Sections are organised under four headings reflecting the research questions, and will include themes emerging from the data in Phases One and Two.

The aim of this study was to investigate Year 1 teachers' perspectives of and practices in drama and their knowledge and preparedness for the new Arts curriculum. This study sought to investigate the following three questions:

1. What are Year 1 teachers' perspectives of and practices in drama?
2. What do Year 1 teachers know about drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts?
3. How prepared are Year 1 teachers for the implementation of drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts?

The paucity of research in the area of drama in the Early Childhood setting (Ewing, 2010; Moss & Chalk, 2004; O'Toole et al., 2009; Stewig, 1994) and the imminent implementation of the arts component of the Australian curriculum propelled this study.

Year 1 teachers' perspectives of drama

The aim of this study is to investigate teachers' perspectives of teaching drama. The key aspects that shaped these perspectives were:

- The positive value teachers placed on drama for the contribution it provided to education.
- Teachers' personal experience and teaching experience of drama.
- The belief that successful participation in drama depended upon student personality.

Data from the questionnaire indicates that over 80% of teachers reported that they were doing some drama with their students. As this represents a significant percentage of the teachers surveyed, it suggests that drama is being taught in some Year 1 settings. The positive response to questions in the questionnaire, from teachers who reported they use drama, and

from the interviews signify that, based on their experience of doing drama in Year 1 settings, teachers use drama for a variety of reasons. In general, perspectives of drama were positive, with teachers citing the benefits of doing drama with their students. Specifically, data from the questionnaire indicates that teachers value drama, as it encompasses many areas of development in a young child. Almost 100% of teachers using drama agreed that drama contributed to the development of student confidence, social and emotional development, positive class dynamics, and the development of empathy. Findings from Almodovar (2010), Alter et al. (2009) and Chen (1997) highlighted various similar teacher perspectives, including the contribution that drama makes to the development of young children, in particular the promotion of socio-emotional development. Almodovar (2010) found that teachers used drama in the classroom, as they believed it stimulated learning and allowed for the development of social skills. In the study conducted by Alter et al. (2009), teachers reported using the creative arts to promote the development of social skills and student confidence. Chen (1997) found that teachers valued drama as a means of promoting social development and this influenced the frequency of their use of drama.

The majority of all 52 teachers either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that it was a requirement they teach drama. Conversely, nine per cent of teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed to this statement, suggesting that some teachers do not consider it their responsibility to teach drama. A possible explanation for this might be that these teachers had drama specialists in their schools and therefore considered that the provision of drama lessons was guaranteed, meaning that it was not necessary for them to plan for additional drama experiences. This finding is consistent with data reported in the literature. Alter et al. (2009) found that almost 50% of teachers in the study delegated the responsibility of teaching the creative arts to another person. The justification of this delegation was that teachers were not comfortable teaching the specific arts disciplines. In addition, Garvis and Pendergast (2010) reported that some participants valued the input of specialist arts teachers and acknowledged that the specialists should take responsibility for the arts teaching in their schools.

The interviewees mentioned additional benefits of doing drama, reporting that it allows for a different form of expression and caters for different learning styles, thus accommodating the diversity of learners in their classrooms. These teachers agreed with the many benefits of using drama that emerged from the questionnaire and in addition were confident that it allowed for a practical and demonstrative mode of learning. In particular, some interviewees mentioned the benefits of using drama to assist children with communication difficulties; a view confirmed in the literature (Barnes, 2014). In this current study, the findings indicate that the

teachers' positive beliefs about the benefits of participation in drama encouraged them to implement drama in their classrooms.

The drama specialists referred to the same reasons for using drama; however, they also identified the use of drama as a communicative outlet for children, mentioning the benefits of drama for both gifted-and-talented children and children learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D). One interviewee described her experiences as an EAL/D student, and explained the difficulty and frustration she had experienced as a child, when she attempted to communicate verbally. However, she found that participation in drama gave her the confidence to try and communicate. Using her receptive language abilities, she discovered an ability to express herself by implementing the kinaesthetic and non-verbal aspects of drama. This corresponds to Hertzberg's (2004) suggestion that drama assists students in their second language development, as it allows teachers to establish fictional settings where children can practise their language skills. Hertzberg (2004, p. 95) asserts that as drama can offer "life-like contexts and demands ... it can fulfil many major principles underpinning EAL theory."

The drama specialists also argued that the playful quality in drama experiences was appealing to young children as it was a reflection of their own natural propensity for play. This concurs with several drama theorists who support the idea that drama is an essential part of play (O'Toole et al., 2009; Toye & Prendiville, 2000; Winston & Tandy, 2009). However, the other interviewees did not mention this notion. As the drama specialists were working with a varying range of year levels, they were observing a larger number of primary children in their drama work. Consequently, they could recognise its effect on wider range of children.

Seemingly, positive or negative personal experiences of drama shaped teachers' perspectives of drama and in turn influenced the extent to which it was implemented. This finding is in accordance with the literature on self-efficacy beliefs and self-image (Bandura, 1997; Ewing, 2010) which claims that self-efficacy, or the confidence that a person has in their ability to complete a task, will influence the person's decision to attempt it. The interview findings suggest that personal experiences as a participant in drama or as a teacher of drama affect the decision to implement drama in the classroom. For example, the teacher and drama specialists who described the positive participatory experience of drama also recognised the potential to develop a different type of relationship with their students through the drama work they implemented. O'Toole et al. (2009) argue that the evolving and trusting rapport in drama is built on a shared agreement to accept the pretence and share in the resulting experience that occurs within the realm of the pretence. This rapport can be attained if teachers are prepared to be co-players in the drama (Dunn & Stinson, 2012a). However, the findings from this current

study suggest that, typically, only teachers who have experienced drama positively and consequently hold a positive perspective of drama realise this level of rapport with their students. For example, one interviewee described how her positive drama experiences as a child had shaped her attitude towards drama. This particular teacher planned weekly structured drama lessons for her class. In addition, the drama specialists' continual success in their drama teaching gave them the incentive to continue. In contrast, an interviewee who related a negative experience teaching drama resulted in her reluctance to make another attempt.

A general perception emerged from the interview data that drama provided opportunities for children to realise their creative potential. From his vast experience of working and researching in education, Robinson (2001) claims that the potential of an Arts curriculum is to promote creative thinking in children. Culpan (2008) concurs, affirming the importance of the creative and collaborative process inherent in an educational arts process. The drama specialists in this study supported the belief that a natural creative energy can be produced in drama lessons with all children and that this can be tapped through carefully planned and structured drama activities. Whilst the literature suggests that arts education can provide an environment to encourage creativity, in contrast, some teachers in this study reported that the effectiveness of drama depends on whether the children were naturally creative, or 'drama-inclined'. This opinion possibly reflects a belief that some teachers hold that creativity is a gift that certain people possess. Using examples from his experience, Robinson (2001) explains that with this perception in mind, many people believe that creativity cannot be taught; however, research has found that creativity can be taught (Guilford, 1986; Isbell & Raines, 2013; Torrance, 2007). This assertion has been qualified by an analysis of the creative process resulting in the development of creative process models, as, for example by Wallas (cited by Isbell & Raines, 2013), that clearly define the steps that foster creative thinking. This suggests that teachers who believe that creativity is innate in some, but not all, children, do not have a clear understanding of creativity. McCammon, Saebo and O'Farrell (2009, p. 216) claim that "Teachers who have a clear understanding of what creativity is and how it can apply to teaching and learning will be better able to promote creative achievement in their students."

Consistent with Chen's (1997) study and evidenced through the interview data, drama experiences were not explorative. Chen (1997) found that teachers did not differentiate between an exploratory mode of learning in drama and performance-based drama. Furthermore these teachers believed that performance-based drama work was more beneficial. When asked about their most recent drama experience some teachers cited assembly performances. McCaslin (2005) defines the creative drama experience as an

imaginative process producing some form of presentation. However, findings in the current study suggest that although teachers facilitate performances, these are not a result of a process of exploration in drama.

Interestingly, whilst teachers cited the benefits of drama as a means of promoting social and emotional development in young children, very little mention was made of the use of drama as a tool for learning. This is in contrast to Chen's (1997) study, which found that teachers used drama, as they believed it promoted academic development. In addition, teachers in this current study referred to drama as being an enjoyable and a relatively unrestricted activity. However, one interviewee made the comparison between drama being exploratory and amusing, in contrast to other classroom activities having more of a 'work' focus. The perception that drama is 'fun' can be seen in a positive light, as teachers may be more likely to use it if they know that the children will enjoy it. Conversely, this perception can result in drama being placed on the periphery of the curriculum, if teachers do not associate it with academic learning or 'work.'

Although the majority of teachers in this study reported a positive perspective of drama, in contrast, one teacher reported an opposing belief, stating that it was not as important as literacy. Whilst she accepted that drama is a part of the curriculum, she persistently remained focussed on the demands of literacy teaching; this is consistent with findings from the study conducted by Alter et al. (2009), suggesting if arts subjects are not considered a priority, teachers do not include them in their regular teaching programmes.

Year 1 teachers' practices in drama

Forms of drama

An intention of this study is to ascertain teachers' practices in drama; in particular the use of drama forms was investigated. The three key findings concerning the drama forms used by teachers were:

- Teachers used a variety of drama forms.
- Teachers chose to use these drama forms incidentally, rather than planning to address drama skill development in the separate and specific drama forms.
- The majority of teachers used role-play and storytelling.

In the questionnaire, teachers were provided with 12 forms of drama and asked to indicate which of the forms they used in their teaching of Year 1 children. They were also given the

opportunity to state other forms of drama that were not listed. The bar chart below shows the 12 forms of drama and the number of teachers that used them.

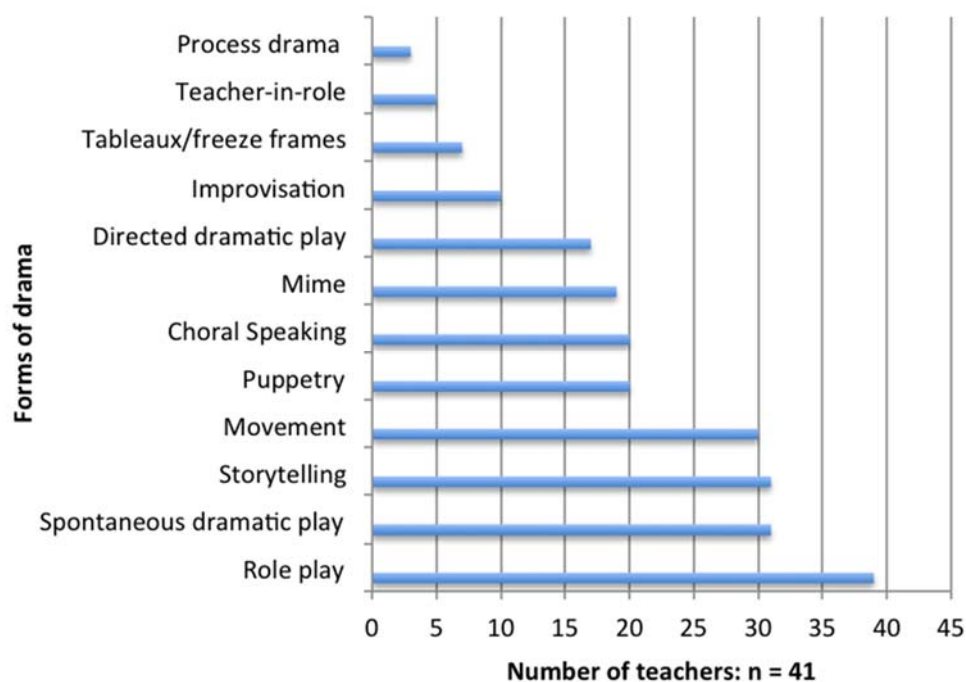


Figure 7: *Forms of drama used by teachers*

Asked to indicate which of the twelve forms of drama provided in the questionnaire they used, 95% of teachers reported that they use role-play most frequently with students. In the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts, role-play is described as “to pretend to be someone else” (ACARA, 2014, p. 9). The interview data suggested that all teachers were regularly using role-play to encourage children to test out social situations, and in particular to promote the practical application of social skills, ‘manners,’ and appropriate language in their young students. Teachers reported using role-play as an intentional strategy, but also described how they used role-play incidentally, as a means to teach another Learning Area or concept. This result is consistent with the studies of Kaaland-Wells (1993) and Moss and Chalk, (2004) who found that teachers consistently used role-play. Ewing and Simons (2004) assert that the understanding of a social situation can be deepened through the adoption of a role in the dramatic enactment of that situation. With regard to the incidental use of drama, the teachers in the current study explained how they would observe situations where role-play would serve to assist in the comprehension of a social problem or learning concept. Interviewees were confident of the use of the role-play form as an instant solution to situations that occurred in their setting. According to this data it is possible to suggest that a universal practice of using

role-play is apparent, suggesting that this form of drama is considered to be the most beneficial. In addition, Kaaland-Wells (1993) suggests that the high percentage of successful use of role-play is due to its spontaneity and its ability to be adopted with low levels of preparation, training and/or materials. Consequently, it could be argued that teachers use role-play because it is easy to understand and implement. Interestingly, the teachers who indicated they were not doing drama were using role-play, but regarded it more as a tool than as a drama experience per se. It is possible that these teachers lacked an understanding of drama, or, as a result of experience and experimentation in the classroom, they had incorporated role-play as an embedded pedagogy but were unaware of discipline specific vocabulary and/or discipline practice.

The next most-used forms of drama were spontaneous dramatic play and storytelling. Data from the questionnaire revealed that 76% of teachers used spontaneous dramatic play with no teacher intervention, whilst 41% facilitated directed dramatic play with teacher intervention. Spontaneous dramatic play is defined in the literature as the dramatic play that children participate in quite naturally, with no intervention from the teacher apart from the possible setting up of a dramatic play or 'home corner' area that includes the provision of resources and opportunities (Dunn, 1998; Katz & Mendoza, 2008). Manning and Sharp (cited in Dunn, 2003, p. 123) refer to this type of teacher involvement in children's dramatic play as "initiation." Directed dramatic play is where the teacher may be involved in the dramatic play by taking a role in the play, either by asking to join in the play, or by entering the play by assuming an appropriate role. The facilitation of directed dramatic play is an important step in the development of drama understanding, as it introduces the children to the idea that the teacher may take a more active part in the drama. Directed dramatic play is a precursor to creative drama lessons where the teacher will assume the role of facilitator and organiser. The data from the interviews suggests that a majority of teachers are facilitating spontaneous dramatic play and that fewer are directing dramatic play. Dunn and Stinson (2012a) support a reduced level of teacher interaction, suggesting that early childhood teachers should be sensitive to the needs of their students in participating in dramatic play without being overly dominant. However, several drama theorists suggest teachers should vary their level of involvement to assist in the progression from free and spontaneous dramatic play to a more structured drama work that includes more teacher interaction. The adoption of this level of interaction will allow for a smooth transition into creative drama lessons (Hall, 1998; Harvey & Logue, 2010; Lindqvist, 2001; O'Toole et al., 2009).

Whilst the questionnaire data indicated 76% of teachers who use drama utilised spontaneous dramatic play, interview data revealed that the majority of interviewees did not advocate the

inclusion of a dedicated dramatic play area in their Year 1 classroom settings. This is in contrast to the study conducted by Almodovar (2010) who found that dramatic play areas were set up; however, the early childhood teachers did not encourage the children to play in these areas. This suggests that teachers in this current study were allowing for spontaneous dramatic play without creating a specific area for this to occur. Only one interviewee talked about the importance of spontaneous dramatic play and explained how she regularly incorporated dramatic play into the class programme. She reported dedicating an area in the classroom to the creation of a dramatic play area and described how she changed the theme every six weeks to coincide with her planning in other Learning Areas. Her practice seems to be consistent with other research conducted by Olsen and Sumsion (2000) who found that teachers with a strong belief in the value of dramatic play appeared to have the motivation and ability to include dramatic play in their classrooms. It is possible, therefore, that whilst teachers considered the value of dramatic play, very few intentionally established an area or allocated time for this activity. Moreover, some interviewees explained that they had not considered the inclusion of a dramatic play area in the Year 1 classroom set-up. This practice is contrary to the suggestion that early childhood teachers should be encouraged to promote active participation in dramatic play in their classrooms (Bodrova, 2008).

Interestingly, the issue of structuring opportunities for dramatic play emerged from the interview data. One interviewee with a split Pre-primary and Year 1 class explained how the younger Pre-primary children had been given an opportunity to share what was happening in the Pre-primary centre at the beginning of the year, but had preferred to remain in their 'home' classroom. However, these children spent their recess and lunchtime breaks in the Pre-primary centre. When undertaking her playground duty role in the Pre-primary centre, the teacher had observed this group of children not participating in dramatic play, in contrast to their peers (based in the Pre-primary centre) who were keen dramatic players. What is evident is that the Pre-primary children valued dramatic play when opportunities were provided and an expectation existed on the part of the class teacher, facilitated by a dedicated area and/or time allocation for dramatic play. It would seem that the Pre-primary children based in the centre were participating in dramatic play as the area was established and the teacher expected them to play there. In contrast, the Pre-primary children in the Year 1 class did not participate in dramatic play when given the opportunity, as this was not expected of them in their own classroom. This raises intriguing questions regarding the nature of the classroom environment and ramifications of planning practices in an early childhood setting. In particular, it raises the question of how what is seen to be valued by teachers is transferred to the children.

The questionnaire data reveals that 76% of teachers who use drama utilise storytelling, and over 40% of teachers use Readers' Theatre and choral speaking. These results are consistent with the findings from Kaaland-Wells' (1993) study, which found that teachers were interested in storytelling and used it successfully. However, teachers in the same study reported unsuccessful use of Readers' Theatre. The teachers' perceptions were that Readers' Theatre requires extensive preparation and relies on the reading ability of children. Storytelling, Readers' Theatre and choral speaking are drama strategies are clearly linked to and may support the development of literacy in young children.

The literature confirms the impact that drama experiences can have on literacy learning (Adomat, 2012; Ewing et al., 2011; Norman, 2002; Verriour, 1994). Ewing et al. (2011) investigated the 'School Drama' programme that involved a co-mentoring partnership between primary teachers and professional actors. They reported teachers' positive claims regarding improvements in student literacy development as a result of this programme. In her study, Adomat (2012) found that the use of drama strategies in a literacy programme resulted in significant improvements in students' reading and writing skills. Data from the interviews in the current study confirms this view, as teachers asserted that they were using drama experiences to enhance literacy learning. Some teachers described the inclusion of the use of story and Readers' Theatre in their literacy programmes and in the literacy centres established in the classrooms; this is consistent with data obtained by Moss and Chalk (2004) who found that teachers incorporated drama strategies into their literacy programmes. In particular Moss and Chalk (2004) reported that teachers promoted the acting out and improvising of stories through story drama. However, interviewees particularly specified how drama and principally the use of role-play provided a context for deeper comprehension of fictional texts, and the development of oral language. In contrast, one teacher did not consider that the use of drama (in this case role-play or the acting out a story) assisted with comprehension of the story, but explained that it was just a means of making the task more enjoyable for the children. Some teachers also described how they used guided visualisation and/or role-play to initiate imaginative thought before children commenced a writing task. The guided visualisation technique resulted in a copious amount of writing and enhanced oral language use in the Year 1 children, both of which, stemmed from an imaginative introduction to the lesson. The present study raises the possibility that some teachers are seeking ways to enhance literacy programmes and consequently use drama strategies, believing they provide variety and depth to student learning.

In relation to the connection of drama with literacy, the drama specialists described using stories as a basis for the drama work, exploring the narratives through the conventions of

drama. They described in detail how they complete a variety of drama activities that encourage the children to build a belief in the pretence and prepare the children for the dramatisation of the story. Predictably, these activities demonstrate a more detailed and comprehensive use of drama and the recognition of drama's potential to enhance literacy learning.

The questionnaire data reveals that nearly 50% of teachers use puppetry as a drama strategy. Founding drama educator Peter Slade (1954) considers the interest and fascination that young children hold for puppets to be connected to one form of play: projected play. When participating in projected play, the children play with objects and toys, giving them voices and personalities and using them to enter into imaginary worlds.

In connection with the literature (Poston-Anderson, 2012), the interview data suggests that some teachers use puppets to make links with certain texts being studied and to promote expressive speech. Puppets were generally used as part of a literacy activity, with children working in small groups. In some cases, puppets were an integral and valuable part of programmes such as the "You can do it" programme. However, the findings of the current study in relation to puppetry do not support the previous research. Almodovar (2010) reported in her questionnaire data that 62% of teachers used puppets daily; however, the observation stage of the study established that, despite the availability of the puppets, the teachers were not encouraging the children to use them. Ewing and Simons (2004) advocate the use of puppets, as the focus is on the puppet and not the puppeteer, making puppetry a less threatening drama form for young children. The authors assert that when working with puppets children are able to "express their feelings and it can provide a release for some students" (Ewing and Simons, 2004, p. 53).

The practice of using a puppet as a teaching tool, with the puppet character assuming the role of the teacher, is endorsed in the literature (Keogh and Naylor, 2009). A similar practice was described by one of the drama specialists, whose use of a large puppet as a teaching tool provided the stimulus for planned drama activities connected to a story and progressing over several sessions. This teacher described how she manipulated a puppet and gave it a voice and personality to introduce a new story or situation.

It was interesting to note that other forms of drama such as improvisation, teacher-in-role, process drama and tableaux/freeze frames were infrequently used; this may be due to the fact that process drama, teacher-in-role, and tableaux/freeze frames have specific methodologies that are not commonly known to the generalist teacher. As improvisation is often an integral part of drama experiences, teachers may be facilitating it through their drama work with

children, without forethought or planning. This is consistent with Kaaland-Wells (1993) who reported that teachers consistently used improvisation and role-play, as the least amount of preparation and training was required for these forms.

Planning

Three key findings regarding the planning practices for drama emerged from the data. These were:

- Teachers planned to do drama.
- Teachers did drama incidentally, integrating it into other Learning Areas.
- Drama experiences were rarely structured.

Data from the questionnaire suggests that 70% of teachers made a conscious decision to plan drama experiences for their students. However, the majority of teachers planned to integrate the drama into other curricular areas, whilst three teachers planned for 'drama-specific' lessons. In her study, Garvis (2012) found that teachers planned to integrate music activities based on the classroom themes in units of work. However, this was achieved by teaching the children new song repertoires, as opposed to allowing the children the opportunity to explore music creatively.

In addition, the questionnaire data indicated that 70% of teachers consciously planned to integrate drama with other Learning Areas. The correlation between the percentage of teachers who indicated consciously planning for drama and those who indicated they integrated drama could suggest that teachers were using drama as a tool. This finding is supported by the written comments in the questionnaire that indicate the teachers' planning for drama was inexplicit and inconsistent. It is therefore likely that the majority of teachers were not planning for drama-specific lessons, but were integrating drama into other Learning Areas. From the same data, it was determined that some teachers were using the Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998) and the Scope and Sequence (DET, 2007) documents to assist with the drama planning process. Despite the EYLF document not including Year 1 content, other teachers indicated they referred to the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) in their planning process.

The interviewees were also asked about their planning practices or approaches in relation to drama and teachers reported using a range of practices, including integrating drama with other Learning Areas. Some planning was specific and some was incidental. Several teachers reported that the integration of drama was initiated through the use of published programmes. These programmes included drama activities, such as role-play and puppetry; examples of the programmes were the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies programme

(PATHS) (Kusche & Greenberg, 1994) and the “You Can Do It” programme (Bernard, 2003). Both these programmes focus on endorsing a ‘values’ system and are promoted in Western Australian schools, suggesting that drama is recognised as a valuable tool in the promotion of social skills; this belief is supported by the literature (Bird, Donelan, Freebody, O’Toole, & Sinclair; Poston-Anderson, 2012) which claims that the use of drama can assist in children’s social development. The types of plans provided in these programmes offer structured lessons, including detail of the different stages. An implication of this is the possibility that, in light of the time constraints upon them, teachers prefer resources with specific details.

Teachers described the benefits of an integrated curriculum in which drama could be used to teach other Learning Areas, whilst some of the interviewees reported planning for ‘drama-specific’ lessons. Some teachers described using drama resources recommended by a drama specialist when planning for drama. These teachers perceived that, coming from the drama specialists, the integrity of these resources was confirmed. This affirmation gave the teachers confidence to use the resources, and such an affirmation Huberman (1989) found is a contributing factor in teacher confidence. This practice is acknowledged in the study conducted by Alter et al. (2009) where teachers reported utilising the skills of experts in the Arts to assist with learning in the arts area when they lacked the confidence to teach it.

Interviews also revealed an incidental use of drama when more experienced teachers observed situations where drama (and specifically role-play) would serve to assist with the comprehension of a social problem, ‘value,’ or learning concept. These learning experiences in drama were not planned and were often the result of a social problem or a situation that had occurred amongst the children. This practice supports the belief that drama can be effortlessly integrated into other aspects of learning (Ewing, 2010; Fleming, 2011). Furthermore, Ewing (2012) asserts that it is important for in-service teachers to be shown how the Arts can be integrated as “critical, quality pedagogy” in particular curriculum areas (Ewing, 2012, p. 12).

It was interesting to note that only the drama specialists planned lessons that follow what is considered a structured format, including a warm-up (to move from the classroom to the drama zone), the main body of the lesson, and a wind down at the end. The structured organisation of the drama experiences ensures a flowing and seamless transition from the classroom to the ‘drama zone’ and later prepares children for the return to ‘normal’ classroom activities (Russell-Bowie, 2012; Wee, 2009). Russell-Bowie (2012) asserts that structuring planned drama lessons supports the management of children, in particular the establishment of a necessary expectation and routine in the lessons, which is an essential element for young learners (p. 256). In her study, Wee (2009) discusses the importance of structured drama lessons, claiming that without a well-defined drama lesson structure, teachers are potentially

neglecting to draw on opportunities for kinaesthetic exploration and representation and the expressiveness in the children that can be harnessed with drama. Barnes (2014) found that using the same and anticipated structure in the 'Speech Bubbles' sessions, in which children were taken through warm-up activities, the acting out of personal and group stories and a concluding reflection session, promoted a sense of security for the children and allowed for the growth of creative work. In addition, Fleming (2011) asserts that the focus of drama lessons needs to be carefully established so that lessons become "more than a series of arbitrary activities without a sense of purpose" (Fleming, 2011, p. 47). Fleming suggests the inclusion of both a specific drama focus and a content focus.

Wee (2009) also suggests that a lack of planning 'structured' drama lessons results in an inadequate use of the art form and neglects the potential use of drama as a specific and valuable Learning Area. One interviewee acknowledged the importance of the 'drama-specific' drama lesson, but explained that she had not taught a structured drama lesson in all her years of teaching.

The drama specialists also discussed how they planned to establish a safe learning environment in drama that allowed for exploration and experimentation and that promoted creative risk-taking. This practice is supported by the literature; in the continuation of their investigation of creativity in drama/theatre education, McCammon, Saebo and O'Farrell (2011) state that the majority of drama teachers "spend time carefully establishing their classroom community and setting up expectations for respectful and playful interaction" (McCammon, Saebo & O'Farrell, 2011, p. 217).

Factors supporting and/or inhibiting the teaching of drama

Supporting factors

The key findings concerning the supporting factors emerged from the data. These were:

- Drama resources, such as books and those found on the Internet.
- Networking and collegial support.
- Drama expertise of staff, when and if available.

In the questionnaire teachers were provided with four possible areas to support them in the teaching of drama: professional development; specialist support; drama resources and professional associations. A fifth option allowed teachers to add other areas of support not listed. The data indicated that 34% of teachers reported that drama resources were the most beneficial to them in their teaching of drama. This finding corresponds to Moss and Chalk's

(2004) study that found a significant issue influencing teachers in their decision to use drama was the availability of appropriate drama resources. In contrast to this finding, drama resources were not mentioned by teachers in the studies of supporting and inhibiting factors by Almodovar (2010), Kaaland-Wells (1993), Chen (1997) or Chou (2007).

Data from the interviews indicated that some teachers accessed a wide range of drama resources to assist them in their teaching of drama; these included drama resource books and resources found on the Internet. The drama specialists reported the use of drama resource books and the Internet as supporting factors in their teaching of drama. They claimed that the Internet allowed for easy access to new ideas and was an effective means of finding background information on a given theme. However, most teachers interviewed expressed the need for more usable resources and, in particular, practical examples of how to use drama more effectively, such as short video clips. Brown and Pleydell (1999) assert that in an early childhood setting, appropriate drama experiences cannot be guaranteed due to the lack of quality drama resources available.

The greatest response from the questionnaire data revealed that 44% of teachers cited other means of support. These included using the Internet to search for ideas; collaboration with colleagues; specialist teacher support; and an acknowledgement of their own imagination and creativity. This further supports the idea of Alter et al. (2009) who found that teachers relied on input from arts experts to assist them in the implementation of arts programmes. Furthermore, Garvis and Pendergast (2010, p. 17) suggest that teachers are “comfortable to give specialist teachers responsibility for arts learning in their schools.”

The data from the interviews sustained this idea, as interviewees reported the importance of collaboration with colleagues and the value of networking. This finding seems to be consistent with other research which found that beginning teachers valued support from colleagues in the form of advice, discussion and the sharing of resources (Garvis & Pendergast, 2010). Some of the teachers interviewed worked in schools that had drama specialists; interestingly they did not appear to take advantage of their colleagues’ drama expertise in terms of assisting them with their own drama teaching. The teachers had very little knowledge of the content of the specialists’ drama programmes, apart from the occasional contribution to assembly items. These teachers felt that it was not their responsibility to do drama as it was already timetabled and covered by the specialists. This finding further supports the idea of Garvis (2012) who found that teachers relied on the music specialist for all music education. However, it was unclear in Garvis’ (2012) study if the teachers attended the music specialist lessons. A significant finding of the current research is that resources, in the form of published materials and collegial shared expertise, support teachers in different ways. Ultimately it is the teachers’

responsibility to plan, teach, and assess the required Learning Areas in the curriculum; however, increasing demands on teachers' time correlate to the decreasing prioritisation of Learning Areas such as drama. As pragmatists, teachers make choices about planning and use resources that offer guaranteed solutions to their teaching responsibilities. Given the limitations on their time, teachers will teach to their strengths (Alter et al., 2009).

In their model of educational change, Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) ascertain that the unique nature of teaching requires change to occur in a social setting, so that "solutions must come through the development of a shared meaning" (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991, p. 5). Whilst some collaboration concerning drama teaching seems to be happening, drama specialists appear to be working in isolation and the opportunity to share drama expertise is not being realised. However, more research on this topic needs to be undertaken before the association between planning for drama and accessing suitable resources can be ascertained.

Inhibiting factors

Three key findings concerning the inhibiting factors emerged from the data. These were:

- Time constraints caused by the current focus on 'academic' curriculum and high stakes testing;
- Lack of training;
- Negative beliefs about drama.

Data from the questionnaire (over 60%) was confirmed by responses in the interviews when teachers reported that time, or lack of it, was the most inhibiting factor to teaching drama. Several interviewees mentioned that as a consequence of the demands of an 'academic' curriculum and the current emphasis on high-stakes testing, they have less time for subjects such as the Arts. Whilst some teachers recognised the value in drama experiences for their Year 1 children, the demands of the prescribed curriculum dominated time and attention. This finding is consistent with the studies of Creech and Bhavnagri (2002), Alter et al. (2009) and Garvis and Pendergast (2010), which found that in the current educational climate with enforced curriculum demands, teachers complained of time restrictions. This view has been identified by Ewing (2012, p. 11) who explains, "teachers are constantly telling me that they have no time to teach any more. Or that, while they do believe that the arts are really important, they have no time for the arts in a mandated curriculum and it must be extra curricular." This current study focuses on how teachers teach drama. The results support previous research into teacher practice that indicate teachers complain of severe time

constraints. However, the data in this study suggests that if a teacher values drama, they are more likely to make a conscious decision to include it in their weekly plans.

Furthermore, teachers cited the emphasis on numeracy and literacy and the increasing expectation to address these particular subjects as paramount. When faced with a rigorous, full curriculum and a testing regime, it appears the impetus to teach other Learning Areas is diminished. This is consistent with other research which found that teachers are aware that they 'should' be doing drama, but the core curriculum demands become their priority and ultimately dominate their time (Downing, 2004). With a focus on core subjects, Learning Areas considered outside the core curriculum, such as drama, are devalued (Downing, 2004). In her study, Wee (2009) found that the increasing focus on testing is resulting in the Arts and drama being considered as extra-curricular subjects.

The drama specialists spoke of time constraints on their drama programmes, particularly in regard to the regular incursions and excursions that occur in the primary school; with the drama lesson scheduled at the same time every week, there is the likelihood that children will often miss the lessons. If parents consider these specialist drama lessons to be 'academically inferior,' it is possible that some children will regularly miss specialist drama lessons, for example, to attend out-of-school appointments. Findings in previous research indicate that parent and school community beliefs about drama can affect the implementation and success of drama programmes (Alter et al., 2009; Moss & Chalk, 2004; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010).

A second inhibiting factor is the lack of knowledge about teaching drama due to an absence of training. The questionnaire data suggests that 32% of teachers report that their teaching of drama is inhibited by a lack of knowledge and 30% report that it is hindered by a lack of training. The same data also indicates that 67% of teachers have not had any professional development in drama. Ewing (2010) asserts that the lack of sufficient or inappropriate in-service professional learning in the Arts is a major factor in teachers' reluctance to engage in creative arts processes with their students. In contrast to this assertion in the literature, the questionnaire data also suggests that nearly 80% of teachers who state that they are teaching drama have not completed any professional development in drama, but are still teaching the subject to their students. Downing (2004) suggests this may be due to the fact that, despite the perceived obstacles, teachers support the place of drama and the Arts in primary schools.

Whilst data from the questionnaire suggests that teachers are teaching drama without having completed any professional development in the subject, data from the interviews supported the need for professional development in drama. Most interviewees described the drama component in their training as their professional development in the subject, and asserted the

need for additional training. Similarly, teachers interviewed in the study conducted by Moss and Chalk (2004) also requested ongoing professional development in drama.

The third inhibiting factor is the teachers' pre-conceived beliefs about drama. In some cases, these beliefs seem to emerge from experiences in drama, either as a participant or a teacher. For example, some interviewees reported that negative teaching experiences with drama in the past resulted in a reluctance to teach it again. Chen (1997) also found that teachers considered discipline problems as an obstacle: the freedom children require in drama experiences and the ensuing noise can result in a perceived lack of teacher control.

Whilst the drama specialists expressed positive attitudes about drama, they discussed the way in which other peoples' beliefs about drama and creativity acted as an inhibitor. The lack of knowledge and negative attitude towards drama that emerged in their school community resulted in a compulsion (on their part) to justify their drama programmes. Moss and Chalk's (2004) study, also found that support for the Arts from the school community influenced teachers in their decision to teach drama.

A fourth inhibiting factor is the lack of self-confidence to teach drama. Teachers in the six-to-nine years category of teaching experience represented the greatest number of teachers not doing drama. In addition, this group also denoted the highest percentage of teachers who indicated that a lack of self-confidence impeded their teaching of drama. This finding does not support Huberman's (1989) previous research which found that teachers with less than ten years teaching experience were inclined to take risks and attempt more challenging teaching strategies. However, Huberman (1989) also found in this teaching experience category that experimentation was usually of a private nature and not in the public domain, suggesting that whilst gains in confidence were evident, these teachers lacked conviction in their teaching practice.

Knowledge of drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts

In relation to Year 1 teachers' knowledge of the new Arts curriculum, one key finding emerged from the data:

- The majority of teachers had limited knowledge of the new Arts curriculum.

The questionnaire data indicated that 85% of teachers reported having limited knowledge of the new Arts curriculum. At the time of this study, the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA, 2011) was available to teachers via the ACARA website. Teachers in this study

were responding to this particular document; however, as it represented a stage in the writing process of the new curriculum and was not available for use, it was obviously not a priority for teachers to investigate at that time. This finding is consistent with data obtained in the study by Burgess, Robertson and Patterson (2010) which found that teachers implement curriculum initiatives only if they deemed the content useful.

From the interview data, the majority of teachers reported having little or no knowledge of the new Arts curriculum, and many assumed that it was another person's responsibility. Some teachers felt their experience gave them the confidence to follow the new Arts curriculum when necessary. Furthermore, the positive experience that some teachers had with the existing Australian Curriculum documents in subjects such as literacy has affected their perception of the impending Australian Curriculum documents.

Readiness to implement drama in the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts

Two key findings emerged from the data concerning teachers' readiness to implement the new Arts curriculum and these were that:

- Teachers were not ready, but confident they could manage the new curriculum when necessary; however, the need for in-service training in drama was evident.
- Teachers suggested strongly that the integration of drama in a cross-curricular approach would be beneficial.

Data from the questionnaire revealed that 85% of teachers did not feel ready to implement drama using the new Arts curriculum. The interview data also suggests that teachers would not be ready to implement drama according to the requirements of the new Arts curriculum. The majority of interviewees had not looked at the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts* (ACARA, 2011). If the introduction of the new curriculum were imminent, teachers would perhaps have given this new document some attention. In their study, Burgess, Robertson and Patterson (2010) found that the timing of the introduction of curriculum initiatives has an effect on teacher engagement with new materials. Teachers in this study were responding to the introduction of curriculum materials in literacy, pedagogy and health. Burgess, Robertson and Patterson (2010) suggested that the declining positive attitudes of teachers to these materials could be attributed to the fact that three new curriculum initiatives were introduced within a nineteen-month period. Graham (cited in Burgess, Robertson & Patterson, 2010)

claims with the introduction of multiple curriculum initiatives, teachers may experience innovation fatigue.

However, the data from the interviews indicated that teachers required professional development in drama and also some guidance in how to use the new Arts curriculum documents. This is consistent with Wee's (2009) study, which found that teachers are more willing to teach a subject if they have received adequate training in it. Interviewees discussed the importance of quality professional development in drama for the whole school. Specific models were mentioned that involve a series of professional development sessions with time in between for teachers to trial new pedagogical ideas.

One of the issues that emerges from this study is that whilst many teachers, including the drama specialists, recognise the value of integrating drama with other Learning Areas, the majority are not regularly using drama as a pedagogical tool. Whilst teachers have the responsibility to structure their daily teaching programmes, currently, planning for an integrated curriculum does not appear to be common practice. However, teachers were willing to consider a cross-curricular and collaborative approach to planning, in order to meet the requirements of the new Arts curriculum. Suggestions included the possible and workable situation of planning to integrate drama with other Learning Areas through the use of a functional planning drama document. In his study, theorist Sir Ken Robinson (2001, p. 45) supports the integration and balance of curriculum subjects. He states "It is not a question of arguing for the arts in place of sciences, but for a balanced curriculum in which all of these disciplines have related roles." Elaborating on this idea, Sinclair, Jeanneret, Watkins, Swainston and Reid (2012, p. 166) suggest integrated arts programmes (the practice of integrating the Arts across a number of arts disciplines) might be beneficial "in the context of pedagogy, policy and the pragmatics of implementation" of the new Arts curriculum.

Teachers in this study were generally not implementing regular drama experiences in their classrooms. Curriculum is being constantly reviewed and this creates a level of uncertainty in educational sectors. The findings from this study may afford some understanding of the complexities of curriculum change implementation. In addition, the findings corroborate the ideas of Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) and Walsh and Gardner (2007) on the successful implementation of curriculum change in educational settings. Walsh and Gardner (2007, p. 138) assert that curriculum innovators need to provide "information, support and training to enable teachers to introduce change into their personal pedagogies and so integrate it more solidly as they begin to see the benefits themselves." Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) claim that teachers will accept and adopt curriculum change if a mutual recognition of the benefits occurs, and this can be achieved through a process of collective restructuring, vision-building

and power sharing. Interestingly, several interviewees in this study suggested a similar process as being the way forward. Fullan asserts that to change school cultures “deeply rooted in the past,” the current professional development model in education needs to be transformed to focus on “teacher learning.” He states “Student learning depends on teacher learning all the time” (2007, p. 35).

Summary

Connection to the Conceptual Framework

This summary will encompass the findings of the study in relation to the conceptual framework; modifications have been made to the conceptual framework (Figure 8) to reflect the key findings. The conceptual framework identified key factors that influence teacher perspectives of and practices in drama and the implementation of change. The study revealed the relationship between these factors and the complexities that impact upon both perspectives and practices. It is clear that perspectives are formed through experiences and beliefs about drama which, in turn, influence teachers in their decision to use drama in their classrooms. Conversely, experiences of drama and the identification of supportive and inhibiting factors feed into perspectives of drama. Generally, teachers’ perspectives of drama were positive; however, conflicting beliefs about the responsibility for teaching drama may influence their decision to use drama. A positive participatory experience in drama seemed to transfer to positive engagement with drama as a teacher. Consequently, a different relationship between teacher and students was developed through the use of drama, where all parties shared in the pretence. Furthermore, it seemed that if teachers valued drama, this value was transferred to the children. In addition, teachers were also influenced by the presence of a drama specialist, claiming that they did not have the responsibility to teach drama.

Teachers were supported in their use of drama through drama resources, both published and online, and collegial collaboration. However, in some cases, teachers did not appear to take advantage of drama specialists’ expertise. Teachers will face obstacles in the implementation of drama in their classrooms. In the study, time was cited as the most significant inhibiting factor. Teachers also mentioned a lack of knowledge as impeding their use of drama, however, participation in professional development in drama did not seem to affect teachers’ decision to use it. Community beliefs, including parental attitudes towards drama seemed to influence the teachers.

With reference to the conceptual framework, teacher perspectives about drama, their knowledge and the supporting and inhibiting factors will influence teachers' planning for the subject. Predominantly, in the study, teachers were not planning for drama-specific lessons, but were using drama as a tool and many of the described drama experiences were incidental or linked to a performance. Teachers preferred drama resources that included a structure, such as published programmes, and yet, the majority were not planning for a structured drama lesson.

Teacher practice in drama was demonstrated as an association between knowledge of the drama forms and experience of teaching Year 1 children. Teachers used a variety of drama forms, the most frequently used being role-play. Connections with literacy were evident with many teachers using drama to enhance literacy learning. Whilst teachers recognised the benefits of dramatic play, a dedicated area for this activity was not apparent in the majority of classrooms. The teachers who had experienced drama positively in the past and the drama specialists facilitated a more exploratory style of drama, in which children could develop creative abilities.

Finally, in relation to the conceptual framework, the planning, teaching and evaluating cycle processes will allow teachers to make a decision whether to implement or disregard curriculum changes. Teacher decisions on forward planning will be dependent on the level of success and the nature of the experience, from the point of view of the teacher and the children. The majority of teachers in the study had limited knowledge of the new Arts curriculum. However, from their experience of working with existing content in the Australian Curriculum, teachers were confident they would be able to manage the requirements of the new Arts curriculum. Conversely, teachers were keen to extend their knowledge of drama and gain support in teaching and assessing the subject.

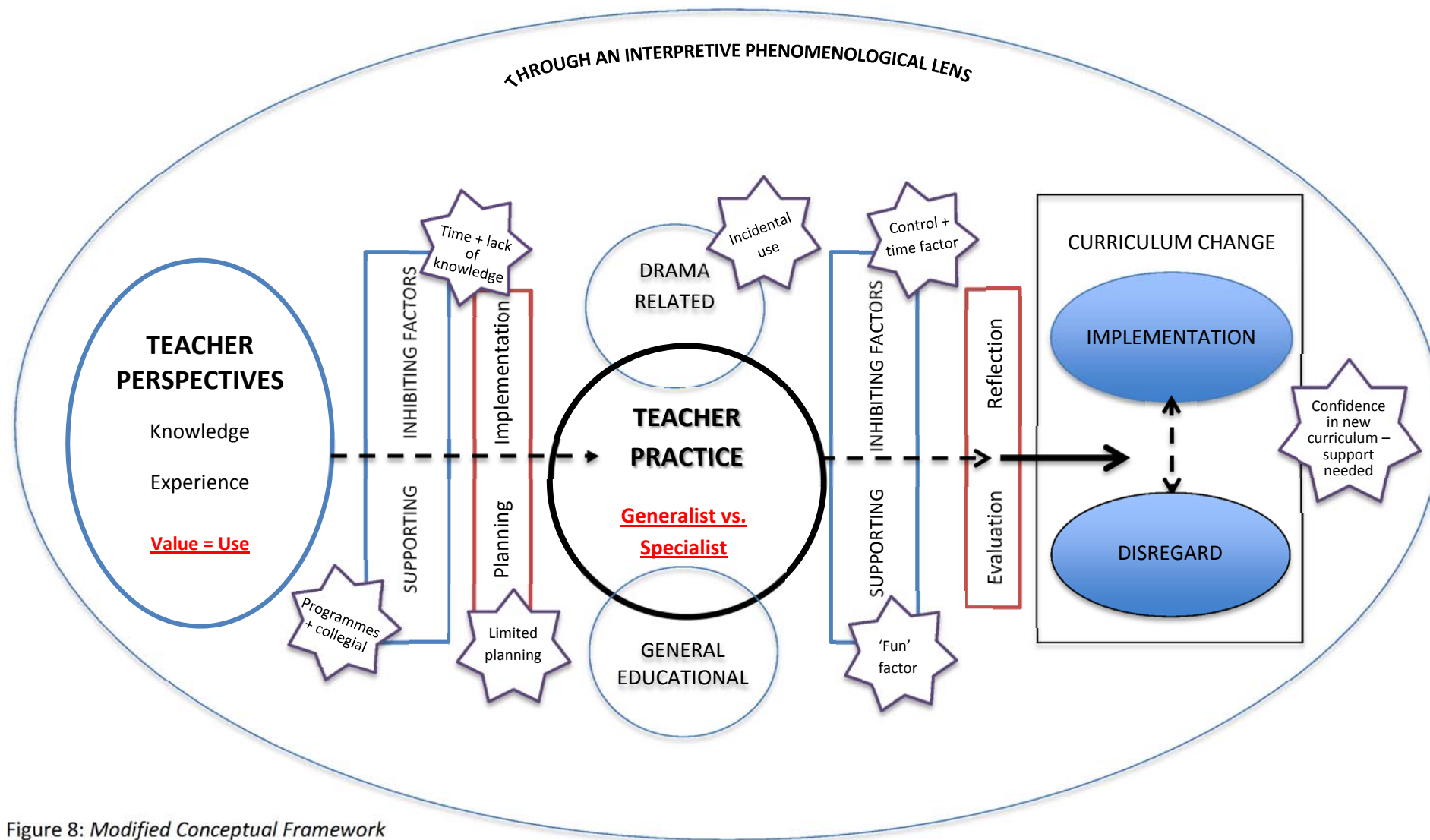


Figure 8: Modified Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The final chapter is divided into five sections. The first section provides an overview of the study and a summary of the research. In the second section, limitations of the study are discussed, whilst the third section offers the recommendations. The fourth section includes the implications for future research and the final section affords conclusions for the study.

Overview

The aim of this study is to investigate Year 1 teachers' perspectives of and practices in drama. The research also sought to determine Year 1 teachers' knowledge of the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts and whether they were ready for its implementation. The research questions provide the framework on which the conclusions of this study are based.

Summary of key findings

The majority of teachers were doing drama with their students in this study. However, a variety of practices are described. These practices were portrayed as a continuum of teachers reporting on their use of drama from very little to using a range of drama forms. Firstly, some teachers said they were not doing drama at all, although interestingly, some of these teachers did describe using drama strategies incidentally. Three of these teachers had drama specialists, but did not engage with them. Secondly, some teachers acknowledged while they did not plan for drama, they were using drama strategies, although the drama experiences in these cases seemed to be incidental. In particular, the use of role-play was a drama strategy frequently used in the solution of spontaneous social problems occurring in the classroom. Thirdly, several teachers planned for drama experiences, but were limited in their drama pedagogy. These teachers tended to use drama resources, such as published programmes, that provided them with a structured format to follow. Finally, the description of the drama specialists' practice provided a comparison with the generalists' practice and demonstrated an understanding of the complexities and potential student gains from experiencing drama. These teachers planned for structured lessons and used a wide variety of drama strategies. It was evident from their descriptions of the drama experiences they implemented for Year 1 children that they were providing children with opportunities for explorative and expressive creative drama work.

As indicated in the conceptual framework for this study, supported by the literature review and shown in the analysis, existing perspectives and beliefs about drama affect the decision to teach drama. Those teachers who could relate to positive experiences of drama, either as a participant or a teacher, were more inclined to do drama with their students. In addition, teacher perspectives of drama related to their sense of self-efficacy and whether they considered they had sufficient knowledge to teach drama. If their drama experience has been negative or their knowledge lacking, then teachers are less likely to consider implementing drama at all.

Finally, the teachers in this study are faced with the imminent implementation of a curriculum initiative, in this case, a new Arts curriculum. As Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) assert, for change to be successfully implemented, teachers need to be involved in the change process, however, these teachers have not been included. Referring again to the conceptual framework, teachers will be encouraged to implement drama and their programmes will stem from their general educational and drama-related pedagogy and knowledge. After consideration of the process, teachers will make the decision to adopt an authentic implementation of the curriculum, disregard it, or a sense of vacillation may be evident. The teachers in this study appeared confident to manage the implementation of the new Arts curriculum; however, further support will be required to ensure that teachers are able to develop appropriate drama plans and attain sufficient knowledge of drama strategies and drama lesson structures. If teachers are to accept drama as a valued inclusion in their pedagogy, and meet the requirements of the new Arts curriculum, it is important that their experience of teaching drama is positive.

Limitations

Despite the intentions of the researcher, the study attracted a relatively small sample size. Clearly, a larger sample size would have been beneficial and offered more insights. As the study was implemented in Western Australia, the transferability cannot be guaranteed, given that the implementation of the new Arts curriculum is different in the other Australian states.

Recommendations

These findings suggest that teachers will need support with the implementation of the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts. The realisation of effective professional development in both the teaching and assessment of drama will ensure that teachers perceive that they are

adequately skilled and will have the confidence to teach and assess drama. In addition, further research is required to discover how drama education is being taught in pre-service teaching degrees. In particular, the time allocation and drama content in these training courses require further investigation, taking into account the fact that in this study all teachers with early childhood training were doing drama. Furthermore, research into the resources required for successful teaching of drama is necessary. For example, the provision of suitable spaces for drama and timetabling issues will require investigation and consideration.

Implications for future research

This study recognises the link between teacher perspectives and teacher practice. It is apparent that teacher perspectives of drama affect their teaching of the subject. What is unclear is the way in which teachers form their attitudes about drama in terms of how it is valued. The inhibiting factors emerging from this study suggest that attitude is linked to teacher confidence and, in turn, this relates to a lack of knowledge about drama. In addition, it is possible that this attitude comes into being through insufficient in-service professional development or pre-service training, and/or personal experience teaching drama, or of being a participant. The origin of teachers' attitudes to drama remains a fundamental issue for future research.

Another significant issue emerging from the findings relates specifically to children in Western Australia. In particular, consideration must be made of the impact on children's learning, in recognition of what is happening in drama teaching practice. Furthermore, this present study raises questions of the status of the teaching of drama in Western Australian primary schools. In contrast to the other states in Australia, Western Australia is the only one to make adjustments to the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts before commencing the implementation process. The advancement of these curriculum changes and the implementation of the arts component in the Western Australian Curriculum and Assessment Outline (2015b) will signify the introduction of a new drama syllabus. The progress of this implementation and the status of drama teaching in Western Australia will need to be carefully monitored.

Training and professional development

The majority of teachers described their professional development in drama as occurring during their teacher training. In consideration of this finding, further research is required to discover the place of drama in pre-service teaching degrees. In particular, opportunities for

pre-service teachers to use drama on their teaching practice placements need to be established.

As the provision of effective support is paramount to the success of the implementation of the Arts curriculum, further research should be undertaken to investigate how teachers can be offered this support. This research should take into account all the inhibiting factors raised by teachers in this study. A particular focus could be the assistance teachers require to use drama in the achievement of the general capability, *Critical and creative thinking* in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2014). The fundamental goal will be to ensure that teachers are fully supported in their drama teaching, so that their value of the subject is a positive one.

Planning

Teachers indicated that time constraints were a significant factor in their planning practices; this is an important issue for future research. Teachers complain of dealing with a crowded curriculum. However, whilst they integrate drama and use certain drama strategies as pedagogical tools, they do not currently consider an integrated curriculum a priority. Teachers also suggested that their knowledge of drama was lacking and, consequently, this affected their confidence in the planning process. If teachers were given an opportunity to develop expertise in planning and assessing drama and consequently build their confidence, they would be more likely to teach drama.

Wider implications

The new Arts curriculum will be implemented in the future and teachers will be required to plan, teach, and assess all arts forms, including drama. Themes emerging from this study suggest that if teachers are to be ready, they will need to improve their skills in teaching drama. Importantly, in addition to planning and teaching is the question of assessing drama and Sinclair (2012, p. 48) asserts “assessing learning that takes place in or through aesthetic experiences can prove very challenging.” The introduction of the Achievement Standards signifies a change in teachers’ assessment practices, as teachers will be required to report on benchmarks in the Arts, including drama. This will require an understanding of how to moderate drama learning, in order to provide accurate feedback on children’s drama work. However, this will be difficult if teacher knowledge of drama is limited. It will be important to ascertain what this process will entail for teachers in Western Australian schools and determine the ways in which teachers can be supported in these changes.

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to investigate Year 1 teachers' perspectives of and practices in drama and ascertain the level of knowledge of and preparedness for the implementation of the new Australian Curriculum in the Arts. This study found that the teachers' use of drama was variable. Teachers valued drama and indicated they were using it, however, the potential of the subject as an exploratory and creative mode of learning was not entirely understood. This can be verified in the contrast of the drama specialists' work. Consequently, most teachers were restricted by their lack of knowledge of the varying drama forms and strategies and this resulted in limited drama experiences for their students. Teachers cited time as being the main factor impeding their use of drama, but lack of knowledge was also considered a constraint. The support available to teachers included published and online resources and teachers cited collegial support as another positive factor. In addition, teachers suggested successful implementation of the new Arts curriculum would depend on the adoption of a whole-school approach to the task.

The purpose of the new Arts curriculum is to enable all Australian children in primary schools to be given the opportunity to engage with all arts forms, including drama (ACARA, 2014). This study indicates that teachers will need significant support in the implementation of drama, if they are to be successful in their planning, teaching and assessing of the Learning Area. Young children naturally love to play and enjoy the imaginative worlds of pretence; if teachers can ignite that spark and build on it, they will be able to provide all young children with magical drama experiences. Teacher concerns of a crowded curriculum and a lack of training result in the marginalisation of drama; the challenge is how to provide adequate and practical support to ensure that teachers are confident and inspired to use drama.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE



Consent

Drama rising, starring the famous five: Investigating the relationship between current drama practice and the new Arts Curriculum.

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

I have read the information letter and understand the aims, procedures, and risks of this project, as described within it.

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

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

I understand that participation in the project is entirely voluntarily.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time, without affecting the relationship with the research team or Edith Cowan University.

I understand that at the conclusion of the online survey, I will be issued with a unique code that I will need to use if I wish to withdraw my participation in this research project.

Data can be withdrawn from the study up to the point of publication, in a report to stakeholders.

I understand that research findings will be reported at academic conferences and in journal articles, provided that the participants or the school are not named.

I understand that by proceeding with this online survey, I am giving my consent to participate in this research project.

Please enter the name of your school and your class.

A. This section is about you as a teacher.

How long have you been teaching a Year 1 class?

Please complete the following:
Which teaching qualification did you attain?

Award

Details

	Click here	Date	University
B.Ed ECS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
B.Ed Primary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Graduate Diploma in Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Master Degree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other (please specify) <input type="text"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Have you had any professional development in educational drama?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

B. This section is about your use of drama.

Do you do drama with your students now?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No. If no, why don't you?

What forms of drama do you use?

- ☒ Spontaneous dramatic play (children participate in dramatic play with no teacher intervention)
- ☒ Directed dramatic play (children participate in dramatic play with teacher involvement e.g. playing with children or waiting to be invited to play)
- ☒ Storytelling – telling a story without a book
- ☒ Role Play
- ☒ Movement
- ☒ Puppetry
- ☒ Readers' Theatre
- ☒ Choral Speaking
- ☒ Process Drama
- ☒ Teacher-in-role
- ☒ Mime
- ☒ Tableaux/freeze frames
- ☒ Improvisation
- ☒ Other(s) please specify

Do you integrate drama into other learning areas?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

C. This section is about WHY you use drama with your class.

Please make one response for each statement.

|

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Drama contributes to academic development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama contributes to students' creativity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama contributes to the development of imagination.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama contributes to teaching verbal skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama contributes to teaching non-verbal skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama contributes to student confidence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama contributes to positive class dynamics.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama contributes to social development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama contributes to emotional development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama contributes to an understanding of other cultures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drama contributes to the development of empathy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is a requirement that I teach drama.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are there any other reasons why you teach drama?

D. This section is about your planning processes.

Do you plan for drama as part of your Year 1 curriculum?

☒ Yes, please add comments if you wish.

☐ No, please add comments if you wish.

Do you plan for drama using:

- ☒ Curriculum Framework
- ☒ Scope and Sequence
- ☒ EYLF
- ☒ Other, please specify.

Do you structure drama lessons?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

What supports you in your teaching of drama?

- ☒ Professional development
- ☒ Specialist support
- ☒ Drama resources
- ☒ Professional associations
- ☒ Other, please specify.

What factors inhibit you in the teaching of drama?

- ☒ Self-confidence
- ☒ Lack of knowledge
- ☒ Insufficient training
- ☒ Time
- ☒ Other, please specify.

Please make one response.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I know a lot about drama in the new Australian Arts Curriculum and am ready to implement it.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you feel equipped to manage the drama requirements of the new Australian Arts Curriculum?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

Any other comments about teaching drama, or elaborations on previous answers?

Additional information

Would you be interested in doing a follow-up interview to this survey?

- ☒ Yes, please enter your name and email address below
- ☐ No

Would you like your name to go into a draw for a drama resource for your class?

- ☒ Yes, please enter your name and email address below
- ☐ No

APPENDIX B:
INFORMATION LETTER FOR PRINCIPALS

Dear Principal,

Drama Rising, starring the Famous Five: Investigating the relationship between current drama practice in Year 1 settings and the new Arts Curriculum.

My name is Christine Lovering and I am a postgraduate student in a Master of Education degree course at Edith Cowan University. As part of the requirements of this course, I am undertaking the above research project. You are invited to take part in this project, which has the approval of the Human Research Ethics committee. The project aims to assess the current use and prevalence of drama at a Year 1 level and provide a foundation from which the possible support required in the implementation of the new Arts Curriculum can be ascertained. I would like to invite your school to participate in this project.

What does participation in the research project involve?

Participation in the project requires that the researcher has access to Year 1 teacher(s) in your school. In Phase I of this project these teachers will be invited to complete a short online survey, designed to take 5 -10 minutes to complete.

In addition, a small number of teachers who have completed the survey will be invited to be interviewed for Phase II. The interviews will be held at a time and place convenient to the teachers and will take approximately 30-45 minutes. The interviews will be audio recorded. They will be asked about educational drama and the new Arts Curriculum.

To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. All potential participants that are approached for their participation and do not wish to take part in the project are not compelled to in any way.

If any teacher decides to participate and then later changes their mind, they are able to withdraw their participation through the use of a coding system in the online survey. All contributions they have made to the research will be destroyed unless explicitly agreed to after the intent to withdraw has been indicated.

If the project has already been published at the time a participant decides to withdraw, their contribution that was used in reporting the project cannot be removed from the publication.

There will be no consequences relating to a decision by an individual or the school to participate or not, or to participate and then withdraw, other than those already described in this letter. These decisions will not affect the relationship with the researcher or Edith Cowan University.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?

Information that identifies anyone will be removed from the data collected. The data is then stored securely in a lockable cabinet in the office of the researcher and will only be accessed by the researcher or her supervisors working on the project. The data will be stored for a minimum period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed. This will be achieved by shredding hard copy data and erasing electronic data.

At the end of the survey in Phase I, the participants will be issued a code which they will be asked to save. Should they wish to withdraw, they will need to contact the researcher with their unique code and then their data can be removed. The data for Phase II will be maintained in a way that enables the re-identification of an

individual's data and thus it can be destroyed if participation is withdrawn. This is done by using a system of individual codes, known only to the researcher, which is used to link each individual's consent form to all data that relate to that individual.

The identity of participants and the school will not be disclosed at any time, except in circumstances that require reporting under the Department of Education *Child Protection* policy, or where the researcher is legally required to disclose that information.

Participant privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured at all other times. The data will be used only for this project, and will not be used in any extended or future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from participants.

This research may be published in a journal/book, reported to relevant stakeholders and disseminated at conference presentations. Neither the participants nor the school will be identified in any way. Consistent with Department of Education policy, a summary of the research findings will be made available to the participating schools and the Department. You can expect this to be available in 2013.

Is this research approved?

The research has been approved by the Research Ethics Office at Edith Cowan University, and has met the policy requirements of the Department of Education as indicated in the attached letter.

Does the researcher have a Working with Children Check?

Yes. Under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004, people undertaking work in Western Australia that involves contact with children must undergo a Working with Children Check.

What are the benefits to my school?

The paucity of recent research in the area of drama in the early childhood setting and the proposed release of the new Arts Curriculum guide the focus of this project. The findings will establish an understanding of the teaching of drama in Year 1 and how this links with the demands of the new Arts Curriculum. The results of the project are expected to inform the delivery of professional development and support for drama practice in the Year 1 setting. Participating schools will be provided with a report of the findings, which will identify areas in which staff would benefit in professional learning.

What are the details of the draw?

As a 'thank you' for agreeing to be involved in this research project, at the conclusion of the survey, participants will be invited to be included in a draw to win a classroom drama resource to the value of \$100. Once the survey has closed, the winning teacher's name will be drawn at random and the winner will be notified.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study with a member of the research team, please contact me on the number provided below. If you wish to speak with an independent person about the conduct of the project, please contact Kim Gifkins, Research Ethics Officer, on (08) 6304 2170.

How do I indicate my willingness for our school to be involved?

If you have had all questions about the project answered to your satisfaction, and are willing for staff in your school to participate, please complete the **Consent Form** on the following page and return it to me at the postal or email address below. Please pass the attached letter (that also provides the link to the online survey) to your staff. A consent form will appear at the start of the online survey, with teachers' consent being confirmed through completion of the survey. Also attached for your information are copies of the teacher consent form, the online survey and the interview questions.

Thank you for your help.

Regards,

Christine Lovering

School of Education, Faculty of Education & Arts, Edith Cowan University,
2 Bradford Street, MOUNT LAWLEY, WA 6050

Phone: (08) 9370 6478

Email: caloveri@ecu.edu.au

Drama Rising, starring the Famous Five: Investigating the relationship between current drama practice in Year 1 settings and the new Arts Curriculum.

CONSENT FORM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PRINCIPALS

☐ I have read this document and understand the aims, procedures, and risks of this project, as described within it.

☐ I have taken up the invitation to ask questions, and I am satisfied with the answers I received.

☐ I am willing for this primary school to become involved in the research project, as described.

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

☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw the school's participation at any time, without affecting the relationship with the research team or Edith Cowan University.

☐ Data can be withdrawn from the study up to the point of publication, in a report to stakeholders.

☐ I understand that research findings will be reported at academic conferences and in journal articles, provided that the participants or the school are not named.

Name of site manager (printed):		
Signature:		Date : / /

APPENDIX C:
INFORMATION LETTER FOR TEACHERS

Dear Teacher,

Drama Rising, starring the Famous Five: Investigating the relationship between current drama practice in Year 1 settings and the new Arts Curriculum

My name is Christine Lovering and I am a postgraduate student in a Master of Education degree course at Edith Cowan University. As part of the requirements of this course, I am undertaking the above research project. You are invited to take part in this project, which has the approval of the Human Research Ethics committee. The project aims to assess the current use and prevalence of drama at a Year 1 level and provide a foundation from which the possible support required in the implementation of the new arts curriculum can be ascertained. I would like to invite your school to participate in this project.

What does participation in the research project involve?

Phase I

Participation in the project requires that I have access to Year 1 teachers. In Phase I of this project I would like to invite you to complete a short online survey, designed to take 5 -10 minutes to complete.

Phase II

After the survey data has been collected, a small number of teachers who have completed the survey will be invited to be interviewed for Phase II of the project. The interviews will be held at a time and place convenient to the teachers and will take approximately 30-45 minutes. The interviews will be audio recorded. Teachers will be asked about educational drama and the new Arts Curriculum.

To what extent is participation voluntary, and what are the implications of withdrawing that participation?

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. All potential participants who are approached for their participation and do not wish to take part in the project are not compelled to in any way.

If any teacher decides to participate and then later changes their mind, they are able to withdraw their participation. All contributions they have made to the research will be destroyed unless explicitly agreed to after the intent to withdraw has been indicated.

If the project has already been published at the time a participant decides to withdraw, their contribution that was used in reporting the project cannot be removed from the publication.

There will be no consequences relating to a decision by an individual or the school to participate or not, or to participate and then withdraw, other than those already described in this letter. These decisions will not affect the relationship with the researcher or Edith Cowan University.

What will happen to the information collected, and is privacy and confidentiality assured?

Information that identifies anyone will be removed from the data collected. The data is then stored securely in a lockable cabinet in the office of the researcher and will only be accessed by the researcher or her supervisors working on the project. The data will be stored for a minimum period of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed. This will be achieved by shredding hard copy data and erasing electronic data.

At the end of the survey in Phase I, the participants will be issued a code that they will be asked to save. Should they wish to withdraw, they will need to contact the researcher with their unique code and then their data can be removed. The data for Phase II will be maintained in a way that enables the re-identification of an individual's data and thus it can be destroyed if participation is withdrawn. This is done by using a system of individual codes, known only to the researcher, which is used to link each individual's consent form to all data that relate to that individual.

The identity of participants and the school will not be disclosed at any time, except in circumstances that require reporting under the Department of Education and Training *Child Protection* policy, or where the researcher is legally required to disclose that information.

Participant privacy, and the confidentiality of information disclosed by participants, is assured at all other times. The data will be used only for this project, and will not be used in any extended or future research without first obtaining explicit written consent from participants.

This research may be published in a journal/book, reported to relevant stakeholders and disseminated at conference presentations. Neither the participants nor the school will be identified in any way. Consistent with Department of Education policy, a summary of the research findings will be made available to the participating schools and the Department. You can expect this to be available in 2013.

Is this research approved?

The research has been approved by the Research Ethics Office at Edith Cowan University, and has met the policy requirements of the Department of Education as indicated in the attached letter.

Does the researcher have a Working with Children Check?

Yes. Under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004, people undertaking work in Western Australia that involves contact with children must undergo a Working with Children Check.

What are the benefits of this research project?

The paucity of recent research in the area of drama in the early childhood setting and the proposed release of the new Arts Curriculum guide the focus of this project. The findings will establish an understanding of the teaching of drama in Year 1 and how this links with the demands of the new Arts Curriculum. The results of the project are expected to inform the delivery of professional development and support for drama practice in the Year 1 setting. Teachers in participating schools will be provided with a report of the findings, which will identify areas in which staff would benefit in professional learning.

Would you like to be included in a draw for a classroom drama resource?

As a 'thank you' for agreeing to be involved in this research project, at the conclusion of the survey, participants will be invited to be included in a draw to win a classroom drama resource. Once the survey has closed, the winning teacher's name will be drawn at random and the winner will be notified.

Who do I contact if I wish to discuss the project further?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study with a member of the research team, please contact me on the number provided below. If you wish to speak with an independent person about the conduct of the project, please contact Kim Gifkins, Research Ethics Officer, on (08) 6304 2170.

How do I indicate my willingness to be involved?

If you have had all questions about the project answered to your satisfaction, and are willing to participate, you will find the **Consent Form** on the opening page of the survey – by proceeding with the survey, you will be providing the consent for your participation. This is the link to the online survey:

<http://tinyurl.com/97qkw9z>

Thank you for your help.

Regards,

Christine Lovering

School of Education, Faculty of Education & Arts, Edith Cowan University,
2 Bradford Street, MOUNT LAWLEY, WA 6050

Phone: (08) 9370 6478

Email: caloveri@ecu.edu.au

APPENDIX D:
PHASE II (A) INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Phase II (a)

Questions:

1. Can you explain why you do Drama with your students?
2. Could you tell me about the drama experiences you plan for your students?
3. Can you describe the impact do you think Drama has had on your teaching and learning?
4. Could you tell me your understanding of how Drama contributes to:
 - The social development of students?
 - The development of student confidence?
 - The provision of opportunities for students to demonstrate creativity?
5. Can you explain the factors that support and/or inhibit your teaching of Drama?
6. What do you know about the new Arts curriculum?
7. What help do you need to implement the new Arts curriculum in relation to Drama?
8. Can you tell me about a recent drama activity that you did with your students?
9. Is there anything else you want to say about drama in education or the new Arts curriculum?

APPENDIX E:
PHASE II (B) INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Phase II (b)

Questions:

1. How would you define educational drama?
2. Can you explain why you do / do not do Drama with your students?
3. Do your students do any Drama? Tell me about it – who with, where, when?
4. Are you involved in the planning of drama experiences for your students?
5. Can you describe the impact do you think Drama has had on your teaching and learning? Do you follow-up the Drama taken by the drama specialist?
6. Could you tell me your understanding of how Drama contributes to:
 - The social development of students?
 - The development of student confidence?
 - The provision of opportunities for students to demonstrate creativity?
7. What do you know about the new Arts curriculum?
8. What help do you need to implement the new Arts curriculum in relation to Drama?
9. Is there anything else you want to say about drama in education or the new Arts curriculum?