TOWARDS A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF
DRAMA RESEARCH IN THE NINETIES
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Introduction
I wish to use this paper as a vehicle for presenting a possible drama
research agenda in the nineties. As can be seen from a review of
literature, there are many different ways that we can investigate drama
education. If we accept Goodson &Walkers' (1991) view that the task of
research is to 'make sense of what we know', then the sense we make of our
teaching and learning will be somewhat limited if we only employ
mainstream empirical methods to research drama workplaces. In my considered
view, such approaches are best suited to providing us with a macro view of
drama education, but fall short of allowing a close view of the richness of
life within drama classrooms.
The main aim of this paper is to outline a case for recognising
alternative, qualitative modes of enquiry, appropriate to the kinds of
concerns, emergent issues, observations and notions of change we choose to
pursue systematically in drama. This paper has three parts which serve to
address fundamental aspects of all research, namely:
- Who will conduct the research?
- What methods will we employ?
- What might be the content of the research?

How we respond to these questions will determine the sense we manage to
make of our research endeavour. A begining is made by responding to the
first of my three questions, that is, who should conduct drama research?
1.   WHO WILL CONDUCT THE RESEARCH?
Asking who should do the research is not a simple matter of preference, but
underpins more fundamental issues about access to dramatic enquiry
(sometimes perceived as an elitist activity), and matters of research
ownership. Empirical researchers are likely to tell us that they are ones
in the best position to research drama classrooms - given their
professional competencies. Teachers have also been made to feel inadequate
as observers of their own practice, possibly intimidated by technological
explanations that have served to mystify rather than clarify research
purposes and methodologies.

Historically there has been a clear division of labour with researcher
experts carrying out investigations into the classrooms of others. Theories
generated by educational researchers have been conceptually distinct from
those on which teachers base their own practice. The practise of teachers
has been held against the (external) theoretical model of the researcher
with the aim of testing the degree of 'fit' between researcher theory and
teacher practice. If the fit was poor, then it was seen to fail.
Appropriate recommendations were then made about changing teacher practice.
Rarely has the theory of the researcher changed to suit the practice of the
teacher. Thus, there has been a clear division between theory and practice.

Worse still, drama teachers have been conditioned to see practice and research as mutually exclusive pursuits.

Historically, teachers have been made to feel inadequate as observers of their own practice, possibly intimidated by technological explanations that have served to mystify rather than clarify research purposes and methodologies. Thus, research in the formal sense has been left to the 'professionals'. The task of the outside researcher has been to explain classrooms for teachers who by default are deemed incapable of objectivity in their perceptions of practice.

External researchers would tell us that they were the ones in the best position to research drama classrooms - given their professional competencies. Questioning who should be researching drama classrooms is not a simple matter of preference or perceived competence, but underpins more fundamental concerns about access to dramatic enquiry (sometimes perceived as an elitist activity), and matters of research ownership.

Thus, by default and low teacher esteem, research in the formal sense has been left to the 'professionals', who have been deemed solely responsible for the creation of theoretical models serving to explain the teacher practise for teachers. We know that these theories are conceptually distinct from those on which teachers themselves base their work (See Young, 1990).

Presently, there is a growing body of opinion in Australia that teachers themselves are the ones best equipped to challenge, and if necessary change their own practice. They are the ones most likely to know their students and be responsive to problems of theory-practise over a sustained period of time. They are likely to possess a the genuine desire to improve practice for these students at this time. Advocates of the 'teacher-as-researcher' movement see this research contribution as a vital, indispensable source of knowledge about life in all classrooms, including drama. Teachers do not work in a social or cultural isolation, they have their own grounded theories, which serve to drive practice.

There is clear 'validity' in having teachers systematically and rigorously investigate their own classrooms. By teachers starting with issues that have immediacy, relevance and practicality for them, it is possible to bring to the surface larger questions for scrutiny that address the philosophical issues embedded in teaching practices.

Through an inquiring approach to their own theories, using drama classrooms as the centre for these inquiries, teachers are clearly capable of continually challenging and changing those theories; this we know. Ebutt (1985) notes that changes in teaching occur because teachers can see that systematic examinination of what they do enables them to uncover alternative ways of viewing their work.

As Young (1990) points out, an important implication of the teacher-as-researcher position is that they provide a reflexive form of enquiry that is not merely an optional extra to existing research practices but one which is essential and central to the character of valid collective reflection in the educational research community. Within the teacher-as-researcher movement, decisions about what might be examined, the means for examination and the changes that can be made, are decisions that rightly reside with teachers. Teachers are viewed as both the subjects and objects

of their own and others' enquiries.

A Community of Enquirers

As teachers we need to come together in small groups to share understandings socially, to exchange our perceptions and to learn from each other how to overcome obstacles. Esteem needs to be raised so that we can

look at ourselves as a distinct community of inquirers set within our own particular educational contexts. Our community of enquirers could well extend to include students, colleagues and parents and encompass concrete experiences of self and colleagues. We would need to move our horizons beyond the immediate to include colleague perceptions of our classrooms, and discusssions about ways that we can transform what we can see. Our shared aims might usefully include the demystification of drama processes to engage in all manner of critical curriculum enquiry, aiming to locate solutions to problems of mutual concern.

Part of the communal process will involve developing the capacity become more self-conscious and to see our work as historically created where social actors have had relative power in shaping drama and the curriculum as it is, and has it might become. Drama might be seen as a continually constructed set of arrangements and agreements among professionals about what it is, and what it can be. By examining its social constructions with colleagues and others, it should be possible to see other alternative perceptions and possibilities. Research can be seen as a testing ground for alternative socially constructed visions.

A fundamental aspect of this research community might well be the commitment to democracy and participation in thinking through problems and prospects for classroom activity. Teachers, students and colleagues could act as collaborators on a common drama research project. Students are an important asset to this research community. As co-investigators they can share the unearthing of specific social issues, including the construction of the drama itself. Thus the community as a whole rather than individuals may be simultaneously participants and observers, effacing the distinction between researcher and researched. (Smyth 1986a)

2.   WHAT RESEARCH METHODS WILL WE EMPLOY?

The methods we choose for our enquiry will ultimately influence what we are able to observe, and the sense we are able to make of what we see happening in our drama workplaces.

The choice of method for empirical researchers would ordinarily be decided by the research questions at hand. The idea being that the method matches the question. There is an unquestioned assumption that the question pre-dates our observations. Our grounded classroom practice may not have clearly decipherable beginnings and endings, punctuated by salient questions. Chances are that practitioners will be are immersed in their own practices without the clear landmarks of the visiting researcher. Our task here is to identify ways that teachers might extricate themselves from the circumstances in which they are sited in order to critically examine, and if necessary change their practice using specific qualitative approaches.There are a number of qualitative approaches to drama enquiry that teachers may wish to adopt, perhaps the simplest is self-interpretive

ethnography.

Self-Interpretive Ethnography
Another way of getting closer to the reality of life in drama classrooms is
to employ an ethnographic-interpretive approach - so called because of its
'portrait-like quality of the observations we can make in focusing on
specific instances of human activity. It is labelled 'interpretive' because
the task of the teacher-researcher is to interpret observations. These
understandings may be mapped over long periods of time involving instances
of critical reflection.
For an individual teacher, this approach might be used to critically probe
and/or disprove generalised theories about drama teaching and learning as
applied to ones own classroom, and thus raise consciousness. The
beginnings of a 'self-interpretive ethnography might involve teachers
asking themselves: What do I wish to find out? Who might have this
information? How might I go about the search? What did I do? What did I
find out? (Holly, 1987). The main aim is to find something out and to
record what is found. Essentially, it may be used to address immediate, or
long term concerns. These self-disclosures may be documented in different
ways which I shall illustrate later.
However, working on ones own, without consulting other subjects within our
enquires can create problems of interpretation and verification. As a
teacher observer-participant how do I know that what I see is so? Do my
perceptions concur with others sharing this same event? To what extent do
my very questions limit what I can see? What part does habit play in the
course of my practice? In realising the limitations of these individual
interpretations of drama events, we can engage in more collaborative
activities involving teachers, colleagues, students, and relevant others
with a view to reducing possible distortions of interpretation and
understanding. This self-disclosing approach does have its value in
beginning to problematise certain taken-for-granted features of teaching
and learning that pervade all our work.
Using a collaborative-interpretive approach, teacher and colleague may
together compare and subsequently reflect on shared observations of
practice, revealing a deeper understanding of the dialectical relationship
between drama events and their social, cultural and historical contexts.
Togetherness may not necessarily mean that individual views are
surrendered. Observer-participants work together to reduce possible
distortions of belief, opinion, prejudice about their own/shared working
knowledge. Practices and views are discussed until more is known about the
focuses and presses of the drama. Collaboration can reduce distance between
researcher-teachers, researcher-students and the drama activity. The aim
is to be in a position to watch others in a systematic way, or have others
watch you - the focus is a colleagual one. Colleagues may take it in turns
to teach and observe each other's work. According to Bronwyn Davies (1985)
students can also collaborate in taking charge of both the research process
and products .
Although it may well be important to 'tell the drama lesson as-it-is',

there comes a time when we recognise the need to change our practice. We
ask 'how can we change our teaching and also the circumstances that
influence the way we come to teach'?

Action Research

Action Research provides one useful method for thinking systematically
about what happens in drama, implementing critically informed action where
changes are warranted, and then monitoring and evaluating the impact of
these actions with a view to further improvements. Ebutt (1985) defines
action research as the 'systematic study of attempts to change and improve
educational practice by means of their own reflection upon the effects of
those actions'. It is essentially a group activity. The teacher-
researchers say in effect: 'This is what we see, this is what we make of
it...this is what we would like to change'.

The development of action research especially in Britain and Australia, and
to some extent in the United States as well - promises one fruitful way of
uniting critical reflection and action and social as well as educational
change. When teachers become researchers, we have the possibility of
combining classroom-based analysis and reflection with a critical view of
interrelated social, political and ideological realities (Kemmis et al.

1983, Carr & Kemmis 1986).
As outlined by Kemmis, action research involves the development of a pllan
of action to improve classroom practice, acting on that plan and observing
the consequences, and reflecting on the effects so as to promote further
planning and analysis. If such action research can be integrated with
critical reflection, we may equally develop improved classroom practices,
more democratic research orientations, and broader social changes,
especially if the reflection on classroom effects can encompass realities
beyond the classroom door. (Landon, 1987).

It is not enough to have simply uncovered a number of dilemmas and
contradictions - the question is how to change the circumstances that
generated this state of affairs. The answer clearly lies in self-reflection
and discourse about alternative possibilities. As teachers and others in
schools begin to penetrate their teaching and discover the contradictions
that inhere within it and surround it, and as they describe, share and
contest their concerns in the social context of their schools, the group
begins to redefine knowledge claims they hold to be true by searching for
alternatives that might inform and transform their actions.

As Smyth (1986b) states changes in teaching do not occur simply as the
result of an external agency bent on introducing change, but because
teachers see the need for a systematic examination of their own work is
necessary and desirable, and capable of facilitating new ways of
approaching drama (drama) education. For the drama educator, action
research is about assuming power to change ones own theories and practices
in, through and about drama. Action research provides a conceptual and
strategic framework for initiating a cycle of critically informed action
and subsequent change.

We do not necessarily begin with a formalised research question. Rather the
group are likely to start with a thematic concern which serves to define

the substantive area in which the group decides to focus its improvement strategies. The group members meet to plan their action together, they act and observe individually, and then they collectively reflect on their experiences. They reformulate their better informed plans in the light of previous action and continue the process.

It is usually carried out in four major steps, or "moments". These involve:

- Planning: encompassing the kinds of critically informed action envisaged, the likely   risks of such activities, and the recognition of contraints and possibilities that facilitate or   impinge on these intentions;

- Action: putting the original plans into practice, but also allowing for flexibility in the   light of observed practice, and its perceived constraints;

- Observation: examining and negotiating the results of action and planning with a broad

    allowance for the unexpected through the use of selected documentation; and,

- Reflection: examining the action monitored through observation and actively attempts

    to make sense of observed processes. Through discussion, all members of the action

    research team re-plan, based on previous observations and actions, and continue this

    process of cyclic, critically informed action-planning-reflection.
(Kemmis and McTaggart, 1987)

In respect of relationships: the researcher speaks for people with them, not for them. The stance of the researcher is both objective and subjective, where one treats oneself and ones colleagues both as subjects and as objects in a process of critical reflection and self reflection. We are co-researchers on issues and problems which we share. This exploration of ones own theories and practices is contrary to the static recipe knowledge that often arises from attempts to match theoretical knowledge with teacher practice

The Action Research 'team' may consist of teachers, students, professional researchers, other colleagues, parents and/or be part of a broader, mutually supportive action research group, possibly intent on examining human processes and outcomes through enactment and reflection. Students

can become co-critics in the act of drama research. Each might take a turn in engaging the role of participant or observer, "effacing the distinction between researcher and researched". (Smyth 1986a).

The main aim is to improve working knowledge/grounded theory about drama pedagogy. Action research can facilitate the linking of teachers' and others' theories with grounded practice. Ideas about teaching can be tested, and different drama strategies may be compared and appraised in the light of continuing experience.

My own continuing experience of the Deakin-based Drama-Gender Project provides an example of Action Research.

The Drama-Gender Project
The Drama-Gender Project at Deakin embraces the Action Research cycle of Planning, Action, Reflection and Re-planning which typifies many Teacher-as-researcher projects.
The project is based on the notion that intending teachers, (my own students at Deakin), are expected to understand Gender Equity policies and acquire the knowledge and ability to put these into practice in schools. As a teacher educator, one of my tasks is to help students meet these requirements. I believe that such understanding is likely to begin when students have the opportunity to address their own consciousness of gender through the recalling, reconstruction and representation of their own gender stories via drama.
The aims of this continuing project are:
    (a) to reveal to students the ways in which they position, or are positioned by significant   others according to gender;
    (b) to identify the content of gender relations;
    (c) to observe how gender inequity is represented through drama;
    (d) to locate perceptions of drama as a socially critical process; and,
    (e) to observe perceptions of students as seen from their respective positions as   storyteller-directors, actors and members of the audience.
The Stages of the project are as follows:
STAGE A: PLANNING
A plan was initiated to allow active participation by all team members. The team consisted of a research assistant, critical friends in the area of gender education, volunteer male and female student teachers, with self as project organiser. We discussed our own experiences of gender perceptions and stereotyping, and ways that these experiences could be represented through drama.It was made abundantly clear that the problems of gender injustice are not someone elses, nor are they the students own, but these are shared by everyone, including the teacher. In this sense, all of us are the subjects of our enquiry.
STAGE B: ACTION
Telling Stories
Twenty-five students, as team members, discussed particular situations they could recall regarding fair-unfair treatment by self or others on the basis of gender. They divided into sub-groups, discussed and recounted stories about gender inequity, focussing on personal/social experience, media images they had seen, or stories they had heard from others. Experiences included past stories, and/or present predicaments.
Next these groups selected one story each on the basis of its appeal to group members.
Represention of the story through drama
These persons whose stories had been selected by the group were asked to direct them, aiming to uphold the integrity of their original experience, that is, 'telling it as it was'. Other group members acted out these

stories using various drama conventions. These enacted stories were
fragmented into specific scenes, allowing for critical reflection between
each fragment.
These stories were then rehearsed and performed before the whole class
group.
STAGE C: REFLECTION
Students reflected on each story in respect of selections and perceptions
of group members. What did the story mean to them? Why this selection of
content? Why was the story represented in these particular ways? How did
the positions of students differ according to:

        (a) their own gender?
        (b) the gender of the storyteller-director?
        (c) positioning as director, actor and audience?

STAGE D: FURTHER PLANNING
As a result of further planning, students reversed roles and acted out
idealised situations.
In respect of reversing gender roles, students took the opportunity of

experiencing a different gender positions to their own. This was more
complex than a simple female-male switch. It encompassed perceptions of
relative strengths and weaknesses they saw to be inherent within each role
perspective. Drama provided rich opportunities for:

    (a) revealing stereotypes
    (b) challenging them at source
    (c) transforming them

In terms of acting out 'idealised situations', students took the
opportunity to change original stories so that there was a degree of
resolution. It had been revealed that in students original stories, there
had been many instances of social conflict. This had occurred in gendered
relationships between friends, siblings, parents and so on. By following
this conflict with opportunites to resolve the ending students were able to
envision more equitable worlds. This is not the simple creation of a 'happy
ending', but a real resolve to change attitudes and perceptions of social
actors so that they act in ways which allow for different positionings of
maleness and femaleness, where they were no longer perceiving themselves as
victims. By questioning their experiences, and my own, students moved
towards developing a more informed theory about society, as well as an
awareness of the subtle relationships between power and knowledge.
Students revealed a range of topics from their own stories:
From these stories, there arose a number of significant themes. Examples
being Access, Vulnerability, Exploitation, Control and Societal
Expectations.
Access - that is, being denied equality of access to fulfil a range of
aspirations at home, at work, in sport and in social relationships. These
were blocked on the grounds of gender despite other abilities.
Vulnerability - females position themselves, and were positioned by, males,
as weak and submissive in comparison to perceptions of male strength.
Exploitation - the notion that males and females both exploit each other.
Both feign incompetence based on gender stereotypes in order to use the

other. Examples: the mechanical inability of females in garages, and the domestic inability of men; thus each is falsely dependent on the other in their respective fixed gender roles and contexts.

Control - students perceived that in stressful situations men keep their cool, but women panic. Men are seen to be reluctant in giving up control and power which traditionally was their own. For example, sharing the driving of vehicles where invariably the male would wish to retain power at the wheel.

Societal expectations - Both male and female students felt that they were trapped by social expectations of fixed gender roles, by presses from parents, teachers, friends and the community - but ultimately themselves. Even when gender inequality was recognised, some females were concerned about losing their feminity, their 'natural' role as mother and nurturer, and felt that equality would undermine their main source of power.

In short, the students so far on this project have seen themselves as social investigators capable of creating an agenda of possibility for social justice through specific, planned change.

Drama as an agent for change:

The efficacy of drama as an experiential agent for change appears to depend on several factors. These are: the degree of content relevance to students, extent of perceived empowerment, openness to change, having the courage to acknowledge change, ability to manipulate the art form, and perceiving drama as an enjoyable encounter.

At one end of the spectrum, some students, although part of the research team, greatly resisted any notion of change, preferring clear dualities of male-female positions and so did not wholly regard gender as an issue of injustice. Other female students registered discomfort fearing their femininity would be undermined if they assumed perceived male traits. Others, in the middle of the spectrum, professed greater awareness of gender through enactment. Further along, more students claimed a sense of power, responsibility, and purpose, having been exposed to aspirations greater than those imposed by historically based male-female roles and relationships.

All claimed drama had been an essential catalyst in approaching the possibility of change. Following the drama, a number of students were able

to remember examples of gender discrimination which were not recalled prior to the drama. Clearly, as directors, actors, and members of a collective audience, students had been able to see the positioning of others in regard to gender relationships, realising that in their struggles for gender equity, they were not alone. As social actors, students were put into various positions which allowed them to analyse the tenability of their own stand on the issues surrounding gender.

Students came to see that there are no right and wrong answers, only contested positions. What was revealed to the students and self was the complexities of gender reform. It's not simply a matter of balancing some abstract scales of justice; its more a matter of investigating why and how people are positioned in political, cultural and social ways according to gender.

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Change was also influenced by the specific positions that students were afforded in the drama: For instance, from the director's point of view, it was possible to see ones own story come to life, and to engage in it from the different perspectives of each actor. If they had suffered discrimination, they were in a better position to see why and how this was happening and the pressures brought to bear by others; the issue was no longer so black and white. Through the direction and enactment came the validity of personal experience. As actors they were directed by someone who had experienced a story giving direct access to the issues involved. As actors they needed full understanding of the storyteller-director's story in order to act the part successfully. As members of the audience they were in an excellent position to critically observe experiences similar to their own.

Documenting Observation, Change and Critical Reflection

As can be seen from the examples given, an essential feature of qualitative investigations is the part played in the systematic recording of incidents and events. There are numerous ways that we can document our investigations. A popular form of documentation is the journal which is used by some teacher-researchers as the primary form for recording practices and experiences. The value of a journal as a tool for analysis is only as good as the questions we employ to interrogate, monitor and record our work. We have to move beyond its basic value as a collection of impressions, towards asking appropriate questions.

When documenting drama teaching and learning, we can also employ: anecdotal records [based on concrete situations over time]; logs [focusing on personal observations]; diaries [observations and interpretations]; field notes [impressions, interpretations with reference to practice elsewhere]; interview material and more formal case records [evidence within situations].

The Research Journal

A journal is not merely a simply flow of impressions, it contains useful descriptions of circumstances regarding others, the self, motives, thoughts and feelings. As such, it can be used as a tool for analysis and introspection. (Holly, 1987) states that a journal becomes a dialogue with oneself, over time. The writer can carry on a dialogue between and among various dimensions of experience. What happened? What are the facts? What was my role? What feelings and senses surrounded events? What did I do? What did others do? What did I feel about what I did? Why? What was the setting? The flow of events? And later, what were the important elements of the event? What preceded it? Followed it? What might I be aware of if the situation recurs?

This traversing back and forth between objective and subjective views, allows the writer to become increasingly more accepting and perhaps less judgemental as the flow of events takes form. Independent actions take on meaning. Holly (1987) adds that the analytical and interpretive notes should lead to reconstruction of the project from objective and subjective dimensions.

3.   WHAT MIGHT BE THE CONTENT OF DRAMA RESEARCH?

We now ask our final question: What will be the content of our research? What in our investigations of drama do we need to make sense of? I believe

that our questions have to extend beyond the search for a 'technical fix'
(brand 'x' is preferred to brand 'y'), or advocating a political stand
(showing drama 'works'). We know that the content of drama research has

been predominantly centred on the outcomes of drama in preference to the
complexities of drama processes or teacher- student relationships, or on
matters of empowerment, classroom politics. There have been few
investigations of those social, political and cultural contexts in which
drama (and all other 'educational' activity) is deemed to take place.
I have organised my list of research possibilities in terms of the past,
present, and possible future of drama education research in the nineties:
Drama of the Past

In drama of the past, much of the telling of history has been done by
someone else for us. However,we can examine our shared and individual
histories. We all have stories to tell about our own drama and that of
others. This telling can give us a clear collective ownership, so that the
views of a few individuals with particular interests do not dominate the
telling of the many histories: We can interrogate our drama histories and
ask questions such as:
Our own/shared histories
•   Which combinations of philosophies and practices have led us to
operate in this way?
•   Through whose eyes have we viewed the drama past and why?
•   What practices have we employed and with what intentions in mind?
•   How viable are the philosophies and practices of the past in
constructing the present?
•   What are the cultural implications of my observations?
Responding to these kinds of questions enables us to reconstruct our
shared histories.
The histories of participants
Critical reflection on drama and history could involve teacher and
students as co-researchers, aimoing to develop their own units in
history/drama, utilising the contributions of those social groups usually
left out of standard text books. Students could then generate materials
from 'normal history'. This might involve the use of oral, local and family
histories, as a way of incorporating students' own past as a part of the
nature of history, and as a way of reinforcing the notion that knowledge is
socially constructed rather than found. I have found a lot of useful
research resources through an interest in tracing family history. Moreover,
we might encourage high school students to become actively involved in
historical projects and research related to a topic or issue of personal
significance. Such projects could be shared by students and engaged in
cooperatively, with the teacher participating as joint collaborator and
guide. Activities could be presented to the rest of the class, with
evaluation taking a different orientation - e.g. the extent to which
students were able to cooperatively engage with a topic, to connect past,

present, and future, and to discover the 'hidden realities' of history. (Landon, 1989).
We can incorporate those minority groups frequently excluded from history (grouped according to gender, race and so on). Researching drama and history together in this way can become a catalyst for social reconstruction - both inside and outside the classroom.(adapted from Landon (1989)
As Apple & Weiss (1983) point out, on critical examination the content of history texts, often reveals ideologically based emphases and exclusions, reflecting larger patterns of inequality - especially by gender, race, social class and ethnicity .
The drama presentations of students to family, social and political groups of contemporary and historical projects, based on working knowledge and research, using drama, could serve as one source for concrete action and change.

Drama of the Present

In wishing to identify the problematical features of contemporary drama education, we can ask:

As Teachers

How do we resolve tensions between teacher power and student empowerment? In particular, what ways can we adopt so that teachers and students can collaborate on the drama text without the teacher being the dominant partner?

In respect of Knowledge

What counts as 'worthwhile knowledge in drama (for self/ students)? How do we resolve the tensions between public knowledge (bodies of theories, information, impersonalstandards) and personal, subjective knowledge (validated through its relationship to the knower)?
This dilemma has been identified by Berlak and Berlak (1981) and represents differentiated teacher values placed on personal and public knowledge respectively. The personal knowledge view is that knowledge is validated

through its relationship to the knower. On the other hand, public knowledge represents a view of knowledge as bodies of theories, information, ways of knowing, that have received some degree of acceptance using 'public principles. Knowledge is conceived as having value independent of and external to the knower.
As Berlak and Berlak (1981) note further that an emphasis on public knowledge to the exclusion of personal knowledge may result in students who, for example, after studying "Hamlet" can recite passages, analyse its structure, summarize its plot, but who have not advanced in their understanding of their own motives and conflicts. Teachers who only emphasize personal knowledge will, more than likely, leave their students with a parochial construction of the world, and narrow visions of alternatives.
A transformational pattern is indicated by the art or drama teacher who initiates projects by making a systematic effort to encourage students to identify feelings, ideas, or points of view they want to express, and introduces to students at times when they will be most useful, concepts,

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facts, techniques, methods, that have been legitimated by experts in the field.

How might drama educators create transformational patterns of resolution between public and private knowledge for students? An inquiry using this dilemma might examine under what conditions teachers create transformational patterns of resolution, looking, for example, at the extent to which congruence of racial or social class backgrounds of teachers and students is related to teachers' abilities to join students' personal with public knowledge. (Berlak 1981).

How can we help students realise that drama knowledge is socially constructed, provisional, tentative, subject to political, social and cultural influences as opposed to being 'eternally true' and 'fixed'?

Knowledge as given versus knowledge as problematical:

A further dilemma outlined by Berlak and Berlak (1981) describes the tensions towards, on the one hand, treating public knowledge (processes, content and values) as dependable, reliable and true and, on the other, toward treating knowledge as constructed, provisional, tentative, subject to political, social and cultural influences.(Berlak in Smyth, pps. 83-4)

Knowledge as neutral versus knowledge as political

How can we help students interrogate knowledge claims for the interests, and power relationships which underlie them? One way might be to interrogate all knowledge claims for the interests that structure both the questions they raise as well as those they exclude. Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985)

Pursuing real versus contrived issues

How can issues be genuinely researched without teacher predetermined means or ends? What makes a genuine issue in drama? How can drama can remain at a problematic level? One way forward might be to consider Young's notion of "problem perceptions", that as students mature, they become more adept at tackling progressively more difficult problems. Young states that "the students must gradually broaden their problem perceptions, and develop their critique of false 'naturalism' in accordance with their own pace of development" (Young, 1990). By critiquing 'naturalism' (those parts of living we often may take for granted) we get to identify what might be described as the 'real' issues.

Acceptance versus deconstruction of the drama text

How can we engage students as collaborative investigators in the deconstruction and demystification of the drama text? In my own work, I have suggested that the whole process of drama-making be deconstructed by students and teacher together. Helping students to understand the mass media by demystifying and deconstructing it through drama, is an impotant feature of 'real' research, that is making genuine attempts to understand the social facade underpinning many human interests.

Drama of the Future

 What projects of possibility can we imagine?

 What kinds of world can we help our students and colleagues envision?

 Which questions can we interrogate together as a community of drama enquirers?

Without answers to these kinds of questions how can we claim to create a

curriculum for others? We need to declare our social, cultural and political interests in trying to determine for others what a drama curriculum 'should be'.

Conclusions

I have attempted to outline the important contribution of teachers as researchers in the investigation of drama classrooms. I have further described some possible ways that such investigations can be carried out and the kinds of content focus that I consider to be important. When seeking to identify worthwhile drama research agendas for the nineties, we could well begin by critically appraising our own and colleagues' past, present and ultimately future drama research. A key element in achieving success in drama in the nineties depends on valuing ourselves more highly as researchers, modifying existing research methodologies and, where possible creating new ways of researching our own drama workplaces. We all have our own drama stories to share with others, and our own unique view of drama classrooms.

From here, we should be developing an affirmative network of enquirers - whose common aim is to advance drama practice through research - not as models - but as continuing attempts to reinterpret life in drama classrooms. We recognise that there are no invariant laws of drama - only insights which move us a little further forward in our understanding of drama.

How we research the notion of change in drama classrooms is in itself problematic, and subject to inevitable contestation among various political interest groups, both inside and outside the known drama world. It is only by systematically researching the possibilities of change that we can move forward in drama education. Through processes such as 'Action Research', we can examine critically the internal contradictions and problems of drama education, and from it construct new, alternative drama futures.

My own feeling is that many reports of drama research are still constrained by perceptions (usually empirical) of what 'research' should be, and concomitant feelings of low self-esteem among teachers as potential reporters of research within their own classrooms. There would be far more enquiry taking place if teachers had greater confidence, saw research as relevant , and accepted the challenge of researching their own grounded theories in critically informed ways, instead of leaving the research to experts.There is clear 'validity', to coin a word, in having teachers systematically and rigorously investigate their own classrooms. This may be done with students as both subjects and objects in the research process. As such we need to find ways of creating communities of enquirers mutually supportive and encouraging of teachers as researchers. We also need to raise the self-esteem of teachers, helping them realise the value of their own professional working knowledge, making explicit for selves and others their implicit practical insights within in group-help situations. Without reporting our research we deprive other drama enquirers of our perceptions

and investigations, and we ourselves remain in the dark. Research is ultimately about illumination - let there be light!

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