

Our corner of the triangle: a research-based theatre script

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Abstract

In this article, we explore issues of identity raised for us during a shared experience of a drama workshop activity at a Research-based Theatre (RbT) conference in February of 2024. While negotiating transitional experiences between teachers, researchers and artists in this article, we explore how these categories of identity can be challenged and understandings of what they mean can be refined. Our article is presented as a piece of Research-based Theatre. Zoom sessions were recorded where both of us shared our experiences related to teaching and research using artefacts that were associated with the experiences. The recordings were then transcribed before being edited and theatricalised as we reflected on these experiences in the context of a piece of theatre. This theatricalisation allowed us to consider the intersection of the abstract and the physical – anecdote and artefact – through the medium of a theatre script. This process helped us to structure and explore the experience of the conference activity as a way of sharing and making connections with each other and a wider audience. In scripting this piece, we found a sense of solidarity and liberation in reflecting on our teacher-researcher identities and being participants in this process of making RbT.

Keywords

playwriting, drama teaching, teacher identity, researcher identity, artefacts

Introduction

The equilateral triangle; a triangle in which each of its three angles is exactly sixty degrees. Used as a symbolic catalyst, we as two high school drama teachers and researchers, allow our fatigue to drive our use of the equilateral triangle as place, setting and object of the pedagogical spaces we inhabit. New to the RbT world, we drew on the experience of George Belliveau's workshop at the second Research-based Theatre

Symposium at the University of Melbourne (2024) to present a piece of collaborative, theatricalised autoethnography that catalyses around artefacts from our teaching.

The triangle workshop activity itself was a drama activity facilitated by Belliveau where three points in the space are identified, forming the corners of a triangle: “teacher”, “researcher”, and “artist” (Belliveau, 2024). Participants plotted themselves between three points of a triangle in terms of where they identified themselves. Then movement was encouraged to represent trajectory. As this was a warm-up activity, we as co-authors connected because of our similar trajectories from close to the “teacher” corner of the triangle, moving towards the “researcher” corner.

Using this experience to inspire autoethnographic reflection, our RbT script has helped us to reach out to each other as high school teachers on opposite sides of the country (Perth and Sydney). We have used it to navigate these complex experiences of drama teaching, learn to do drama-based research, and to find a deeper understanding of what we experience in the spaces of and around the (school and university) classroom. Acknowledging our voices and reflecting on our similar and contrasting experiences, we offer the triangle as a place to explore artefacts from our experiences and to challenge the constant imposition of typical drama teacher experiences. Belliveau's workshop activity prompted us to consider our identities within the transitional spaces of teacher-researcher-artist – to confront our internalised insecurities about these identities and the limits imposed by these identities.

Methodology

Before we present the theatre script, we outline some key terms that explain our reflective process.

Artefact

In the same way autoethnographers would “consult with texts like photographs, journals, and recordings” to help focus on significant moments of recall (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 3), we used objects and documents to help us share our teacher-researcher experiences over Zoom. We chose the word “artefact” to convey its physical presence in the process and

theatricalisation of experience: as a prop when we told the story and as a starting point for the artefact's dramaturgical potential when writing the theatre script.

Autoethnography

Our definition here draws on a dichotomy of “doing” autoethnography and “writing” autoethnography (Ellis et al., 2011) so as to provide clarity to what this means when we’re “doing” the research basis (structuring and collecting transcriptions via Zoom) and “writing” the theatre. The “doing” involved us discussing and video recording past experiences, consulting artefacts from our teacher-researcher experiences and discussing “epiphanies” (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 3) that we then offered for collective reflection between the two of us. The “writing” tries to “make personal experience meaningful” (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 5) and identify shared experiences of similarity or difference for teacher-researchers.

Teacher-researcher transition and identity

Central to our inquiry is our shared experience of occupying a transitional space. Transition often brings connotations of discomfort, and indeed, part of our reflections was about considering language around this discomfort. For example, the term “outsider” and the feelings of doubt that accompany (drama) teachers moving into research. Our definition of identity stems from this experience as one that is constantly changing and shaped by concerns of employment and practice and shared recognition (and critique) of institutional and disciplinary values (Barkhuizen, 2021; Swennen et al., 2017).

Theatricalisation

During the process of reviewing our experiences, we recorded, collected, then reflected on them and represented them as a theatre script to be performed on the stage. This may be viewed methodologically as the transitions between “doing” and “writing” described above. In practice, it looked like we were structuring our ethnographic reflection around theatrical testing and experimentation. The use of artefacts helped guide and structure this process as our perceived value of these artefacts helped to qualify theatrical and conceptual decision making. Our inquiry questions began to take the following shape:

“What could the stage or conventions of performance offer us and/or an audience in terms of symbolic or semantic insight into our experiences? How would our artefacts bridge the gap between the remembered and the embodied experience?”

Research-based Theatre

The broad disciplinary term to cover a range of theatrical products at the intersection of theatre and research, with varying levels of aesthetic and epistemic purpose in process and, if applicable, performance scripting and/or production. Beck, Belliveau, Lea and Wager’s “spectrum of research-based theatre” offers a way to clarify where our piece sits in the disciplinary range: a “conference/stakeholder performance based on more informal, first-hand research” that is not quite based on “systematic research’, but follows more of a research process than “casual inquiry into historical facts” (Beck et al. 2011, p. 694).

RbT is becoming a prevalent methodological approach incorporating theatre to help gather, examine, disseminate (Belliveau & Lea, 2016), and theatricalise research data (Belliveau, 2015). In this project, the methodology of a/r/tography was consulted at the beginning of the process in which we drew upon our researcher-teacher identities to engage in research artistically: to question and understand our lived experiences (Belliveau, 2015). A/r/tography is a methodology that emphasises the process of when one draws upon their teacher, artist and researcher identities to artistically engage in research to reflect on and question their understandings (Lea et al., 2011). Focusing on the catalyst of the triangle workshop activity – how we identify ourselves within the triangle: teacher, researcher or artist – we settled on the following question: *How can a piece of RbT be developed using artefact-based autoethnography to explore our identities as teachers, researchers and artists?*

The research process began with evidence collection and transcription. We used artefacts to help catalyse relevant experiences regarding the triangle’s provocations of identity (as we experienced it) and recorded these over Zoom. The artefacts helped us refine the thematic focus of the script’s moments and scenes, as we kept discussing and qualifying creative decision making by returning to discussions of why we had chosen these artefacts as representative intersections of memory, sentiment and our identity. We

then began to refine the selection of experiences in preparation for the scripted autoethnography by discussing and reflecting on what each artefact offered as a way to reflect on the shared experience. Again, this reflection was recorded via Zoom. Artefacts led to improved alignment in conversation (Wallwey & Kajfez, 2023), richer discussion, and freedom to speak freely and clearly (Jones & Worrall, 2024). This notion of freedom and non-judgment of one's lived experiences was a focus within this project due to our experience of professional teaching and research spaces.

After this evidence gathering and refinement, the writing process began by discussing how the experiences/artefacts (now captured in transcripts) could be theatricalised, edited and structured with further reflective annotation. The scripting process was collaborative, with editing through Zoom and Google Docs® to jointly reflect and iterate our shared understanding, and honour moments of differences as they emerged (Belliveau, 2015). During theatricalisation, we also considered the aesthetic appeal of moments in our theatre script and negotiated the modal tensions of Research-based Theatre: interweaving the script with our voices, supporting literature and the physicalised nature of the script (Sallis, 2018). The resulting script took on many of our attempts at comedy during the writing and theatricalisation process, and we decided to preserve these moments for their critical irreverence. Whether this criticality is successful or not is ultimately up to our imagined audience, who ended up being secondary teachers like us, though we certainly found our comedy cathartic.

Our Corner of the Triangle

Characters

TAYLA, twenties, is a high school drama and dance teacher. A musical theatre enthusiast who strives to make the arts as visible as possible within education and is a stickler for high expectations in the classroom. TAYLA is known for her closet full of black clothing, and her students encourage her habit of excessively spending money on sneakers, so if staged, she would wear theatre blacks and her favourite pair of dunks.

BRO, thirties, is a high school drama and English teacher, sometimes university educator, who is interested in the intersection of RbT, critical pedagogy, game studies and “being silly”. If this is ever staged, an appropriate costume choice would be a button-up with a repeating print (something floral).

At various moments, the AUDIENCE may take on performance duties, but this can be adjusted depending on the context and consent of participants.

Note on set

Minimal staging. The triangle (described below) should be visible to the audience. We have various ideas, including raked seating, signs and/or live projection.

Note on casting

For the sake of educational or artistic professional development, we are happy for our parts to be read by other actors of any experience level.

Note on referencing in the script

References appear through the script to acknowledge and make connections between the work of other researchers, artists and educators. These should be projected as an audiovisual cue as they occur, or be provided to the audience as a reference list.

Scene: The funeral

Spotlight CENTRE STAGE. On stage is the triangle: mapped out on the floor with white masking tape. The top corner of the triangle has a sign “Educator”, the bottom left point “Researcher”, and the bottom right point “Artist”.

TAYLA holds a small coffin in her hands and steps into the spotlight. “Ave Maria” plays softly in the background.

“YEAR 10 LIT POEM EULOGY”

The following is in the style of ourselves as Year 10 Drama students. An uncomfortable comedy is desired: parodic yet sincere. TAYLA recites the “Year 10 Lit Poem Eulogy” whilst BRO performs an inscrutable tableau with each repetition.

BRO Drama.

TAYLA A welcoming and safe space for students, they said.
Where everyone’s curiosity, creativity and participation can grow! (Ennis & Tonkin, 2018)

BRO Drama.

TAYLA Yet undermined.
And undervalued. (Teague, 2016)

BRO Drama.

TAYLA Not liking your class.
Well, there’s room in Drama.

BRO Drama.

TAYLA A space for all, whether chosen or placed.
Prejudice welcome too, of course. (Teague, 2016)

BRO Drama.

TAYLA A subject to get an easy “A”.
A subject without rigour. (Grey et al., 2020)

BRO Drama.

TAYLA We only have to play games.
We don't get any homework. (Pryor 2008)

BRO Drama.

TAYLA I'm bored.
But I'm not getting up and trying that. (Grey et al., 2020)

BRO Drama.

TAYLA A space for all.
A dumping ground... (Crotty, 2011)

TAYLA steps to UPSTAGE CENTRE and places the coffin on the stage block, which lies at the top corner of the triangle. A small canvas print on an easel says, "RIP DRAMA" (nicknamed "The Dumping Ground"). Daisy the Labrador is on STAGE RIGHT of the block, and Mrs Berenstein is on STAGE LEFT. "Ave Maria" fades.

TAYLA asks four volunteers from the audience to read their fond memories of drama before it is laid to rest. The four volunteers line up to express their gratitude and read the below.

AUDIENCE

MEMBER 1: English. Thank you for assisting my students in communicating their ideas and expressing their opinions with confidence during their oral presentations to the class (Bessadet, 2022).

AUDIENCE

MEMBER 2: Science. Thank you for enhancing my student's social interaction and collaborative skills; it increased their motivation to learn science and

assisted them when working with others during experiments (Kasbary & Novák, 2024).

AUDIENCE

MEMBER 3: Maths. Thank you. Integrating active and fast-paced visual activities promoted student exploration and understanding of mathematical scenarios (Kasbary & Novák, 2024).

AUDIENCE

MEMBER 4: Humanities. Thank you. Through dramatic form, my students could explore and examine real-world experiences and develop ideas, feelings and reflections toward cultural, social, and historical events/contexts (Kasbary & Novák, 2024).

TAYLA asks the volunteers to bow their heads for a moment. BRO takes significant artistic liberties in performing a mournful cover of what might be “Another One Bites The Dust” by Queen. TAYLA places a single amaryllis flower on the coffin and replaces the small canvas with a gravestone. TAYLA asks the volunteers to return to their seats.

Training montage

Cue a high-energy beat you would hear in a gym class. TAYLA and BRO deliver the following dialogue as a synchronised physical exercise routine. The shortened time of a montage is suggested through lighting (or heavy breathing).

BRO Right. Who are we?

TAYLA I’m Tayla, a high school drama and dance teacher from Perth. You’re Bro, a high school drama and English teacher from Sydney. What’s the story?

BRO We met at the 2023 University of Sydney Research-based Theatre Symposium and again at the 2024 Research-based Theatre Symposium at the University of Melbourne. We bonded over the realisation that we were

two of the few attendees currently in a high school classroom. (*The training routine shifts focus to the audience.*) Who are they?

TAYLA Our audience. We find them problematic for this performance ethnography because they are a combination of insiders and outsiders: constantly transitioning between teachers, researchers and artists. What does that mean? Let's break it down in reps. One!

The training exercise repetitions get shorter and more intense.

BRO Our goal is to present our video call transcripts. Two!

TAYLA Where we chose artefacts representative of our journey as teachers, researchers and artists. Three!

BRO Presenting these verbal annotations of artefacts as reflexive experiences in drama performance. Four! (O'Toole, 2006, p. 42)

TAYLA We're not claiming we represent the experiences of all teachers. Last one!

BRO We offer it to you as both insiders and outsiders, just like us. Rest!

The training is over, with much recovery noise.

TAYLA Why did we decide to make that an exercise montage again?

BRO In case they've forgotten what a drama classroom is like. It's a universal inevitability that Year 7 will suggest "aerobics class" when we're teaching improv.

TAYLA Oh yeah. (*cueing next scene*) Space Jump!

Scene: the triangle

TAYLA and BRO stand and walk to the top corner of the triangle; “Educator”. Both separate and find their way around the triangle, ensuring they stay on the masking tape line.

TAYLA What follows is a free-verse poem of our experiences of a workshop run by Professor George Belliveau that prompted us to reflect on ourselves as teachers, researchers and artists.

BRO: Professor Belliveau is an international leader in RbT and specialises in Theatre Education, focusing on a performative approach toward research and artistic expression. Belliveau’s (2024) triangle theory considers three vertices representing educators, researchers and artists.

TAYLA: During this warmup activity at the 2023 RbT Symposium, participants plotted themselves between three points of a triangle in terms of where they identified themselves.

BRO: Participant movement was encouraged to represent trajectory, and we, as co-authors, connected because of our similar trajectories within the triangle, thus beginning our inspiration for this script.

“The triangle”

TAYLA An equilateral triangle.
A triangle in which each of its three angles is exactly 60 degrees.
Two specialist drama teachers, BRO and I, new to the Research-based Theatre world, allow our fatigue to drive our use of the equilateral triangle as a setting and object of our pedagogical spaces.

BRO A connection.

A shared experience of Professor George Belliveau's workshop at the 2024 Research-based Theatre Symposium at the University of Melbourne.

TAYLA Collaboration.

Dramatised autoethnography.

Objects and artefacts.

BRO This conversational piece presents our experiences as drama educators.

TAYLA To exchange.

To reflect.

To understand.

To navigate.

To find purpose.

BRO Our first object of inquiry.

TAYLA The triangle.

BRO Its corners represent a shared tension between our identities as educators, beginning researchers, and artists.

TAYLA Our movement within the triangle brings awareness to our place in these roles.

BRO Acknowledging our voices and experiences to come together; seeing things from above. Cartographically.

TAYLA To destabilise our certainty...

BRO With stability...

TAYLA and BRO finish at the top corner of the triangle; “Educator”.

TAYLA If I asked you the question:
 “Where would you place yourself on this triangle?”
 “What corner would you stand in?”
 Educator?
 Researcher?
 Or Artist?

BRO An educator.

TAYLA Me too.

BRO I want to be a subversive drama teacher in the sense that I want to be critical.
 I want to keep working with people through drama to achieve everything
 we say is good about our subject.
 (suddenly uncertain) Is that my goal?

TAYLA I’m not sure where I see myself.
 However, wherever I am or end up on the triangle
 I just want to advocate
 as much as possible
 for my passion and the subject.

BRO Drama.

TAYLA Always the pedagogical dumping ground.

TAYLA and BRO gaze down at the gravestone for Drama – “The Dumping Ground”.

Scene: the couch

A hideous floral couch from the 80s is placed STAGE RIGHT on the triangle. BRO stands STAGE RIGHT, and TAYLA stands STAGE LEFT. As TAYLA begins to speak, BRO begins doing all of the things a drama student might do when given the opportunity to sit on a couch in a classroom.

TAYLA Are you listening?

BRO For sure.

TAYLA As drama educators, we all have our own pedagogy. Students know that they will have to work hard when they are in my class. I set high expectations for them, achievable but high. I think accountability is important in drama.

BRO has become progressively more distracted, pursuing comfort in various positions on the couch.

TAYLA (*annoyed*) Are you sure you are listening?

BRO (*refocusing somewhat*) Sorry. Yes. Undivided attention.

TAYLA's annoyance leads her OFFSTAGE, where she grabs a chair from STAGE RIGHT and places it next to BRO on the couch, CENTRE STAGE. BRO moves to the chair.

TAYLA However, this couch just completely throws off my perfect rehearsal process.

TAYLA turns her head and looks at the couch with disgust. BRO looks over to the couch longingly.

BRO (*resisting*) Comfort is a distraction. The work must prevail.

TAYLA grabs the back of the couch and nods in agreement at BRO, who returns the nod. TAYLA then drags the couch away from BRO (and the triangle). Comical scraping heard.

BRO *(when dragging is finished, agreeing but resisting less)* No comfort in the triangle.

TAYLA The couch is the bane of my existence. The students seem to love sitting or lying on it, and whenever I ask them to go off in their duos to practice, there's always someone on it who becomes distracted. I have this theory that the couch represents the negative things I've heard others say about drama education. Once a student sits on it ... *(sees BRO reaching longing for the couch)*, it's GAME OVER.

BRO seems ashamed he's been caught out but also looks pleadingly at TAYLA, who finally relents and nods, giving BRO permission. BRO does a secret celebration and begins considering how to approach sitting on the couch, while TAYLA repositions in the triangle near "Researcher" for the following commentary.

TAYLA Now. Whenever I see a student go to sit on the couch, it happens in slow motion.

In slow motion, BRO goes to sit on the couch and freezes in a tableau.

TAYLA Before they sit, I say aloud, "No way. You are not getting yourself into this slump of sitting on that couch. We have goals you need to achieve today".

BRO sits on the couch and lays down, arms behind his head, feet up; chillaxing.

"Lit couch interlude"

The following is a juxtaposition of symbolic viewpoints: couch and not couch. The staging should reflect this.

TAYLA But see
 the worst thing is,
 whilst I watch these students sit on the couch in slow motion

BRO “...Playing with, manipulating and improving possibilities...” (Harris & de Bruin, 2017, p. 159).

TAYLA I hear in my mind the voices of every person
 that believes drama is not a “real” subject,
 it’s not “academic”,
 it doesn’t lead students to “successful careers”,
 “STEM, STEM, STEM”.

BRO “...as well as STEAM, that utilises the Arts as a fulcrum...” (Harris & de Bruin, 2017, p. 157).

TAYLA If that’s not bad enough
 I also have flashbacks of students who have said they picked drama
 because it’s a “free period.”

BRO “...allows thinking and creativity to be comfortably exploratory, malleable and personal” (Harris & de Bruin, 2017, p. 164).

TAYLA (*tone has softened*) where they get to “sit down” the whole time
 and “talk”
 or play games.

TAYLA looks over at BRO, but not in a disapproving way; her attitude to the couch has begun to change. BRO refocuses and sits upright on the couch.

TAYLA The devaluation of drama can come from many different avenues. I believe we set really high expectations for ourselves because many subjects seen as core often don't have to fight as hard.

BRO & TAYLA make their way towards CENTRE STAGE, aware that they are also centring within the triangle.

BRO In drama, we have to be fun but also not fun. On one hand, it's frustrating for us because we pursue the value of the work, but if I am playing the students' advocate here...

BRO walks to STAGE LEFT.

BRO Imagine this. You've had a tough day and have drama last period. You walk into drama, and there's that couch. They think...

BRO slowly walks toward the couch, around it and back to the edge of the triangle.

“Hey, Miss Fordham is quite strict with her class time, but I know if I go to this couch, I might get five minutes to sit and chill before the lesson starts, as that's what I need right now. It's a sanctuary where I can regain control and have this small moment for myself”.

How do we have empathy as an artist, educator and researcher?

TAYLA Is empathy in the triangle our movement?

BRO Yeah, staying in one spot too long makes seeing another point of view difficult. Imagine restoring the couch to return it to its former glory and leaving it there as a permanent challenge to us. Rather than getting rid of this couch,

we use it to constantly reflect on the tension it creates, not just for us but for our students in that push we have for them to try and succeed.

TAYLA Restoring the ugly couch?...maybe I do need to challenge myself.

BRO Wait, why did we walk over here? Aren't we meant to be on the couch and chair for this next scene?

TAYLA and BRO return to the couch and chair.

Scene: the chair

TAYLA and BRO are very still and unresponsive during this scene. They have neutral expressions. The scene is performed by audience plants cued by the last line in the previous scene. They each have cue cards (given at random at the beginning of the performance) that describe their actions and cues theatrically. The overall effect should be similar to Augusto Boal's version of the "Lifting someone out of a chair" activity (Boal, 2002, p. 67), except no physical contact between the performers and the audience members should occur. If adjustment is required due to context and participants' consent, TAYLA and BRO can enact this activity with the lines of the AUDIENCE as a voiceover.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOU, AUDIENCE MEMBER:

Hello! Do the following when you hear BRO say the line: "Aren't we meant to be on the couch and chair for this next scene?" then the lights go down.

- *Make your way to the stage when the lights come back up.*
- *Look frustrated and angry.*
- *You may NOT touch TAYLA and BRO or their chairs.*
- *Your goal is to convince them to leave their chairs with your dialogue.*
- *You can ONLY say the following lines on your card ONCE EACH.*
- *Once you have finished your lines, return to your seat.*
- *Remember: you may NOT touch TAYLA and BRO or their chairs.*

AUDIENCE

MEMBER 5 Teachers should “try to do their best to set aside their own personal self-interests.” “[I]n the case of education, [teachers need] to consider the extent to which their educational work is really in the best interests of the students.” “The point is to be vigilant.” Your work should “not [be] about furthering the self-interests of some participants at the expense of others.”

AUDIENCE

MEMBER 6 “It means asking whether our educational work is really educational.” Does “our educational work [conform] to our view of what education is”? (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 40) Don’t get “...swept up in advocacy [doing] things because a whole school insists.” Watch out for “the danger of failing to develop a collective sense about what is worth doing together.”

AUDIENCE

MEMBER 7 “Bureaucratic commitments roll into schools and other organisations in waves.” “There is a need to create some time and space for conversations about things that matter.” (Kemmis et al, 2014, p. 41) “In order to learn, or to understand the viewpoint of another, we must learn to listen.” “...open spaces for others to contribute.”

The following line is said once all the audience members have returned to their seats.

TAYLA

AND BRO (neutral tone) “We also need to recognise that communicative spaces are frequently distorted by power, reputation and status.” (Kemmis et al, 2014, p. 44)

Scene: the traffic cones

TAYLA & BRO place six fluorescent orange traffic cones, one at each corner of the triangle and three randomly within the triangle. They both stand DOWNSTAGE CENTRE.

TAYLA So, this has been on my mind recently. Remember when George asked us, “How do you see yourself?” during his workshop?

BRO Wait a moment. Can we call him “George”? Who *are* we at the moment? Do we say– (*steps to “Artist”*) “George” or– (*steps to “Research”*) “Belliveau” or– (*steps to “Educator”*) “Professor Belliveau”?

TAYLA Let’s try the middle!

TAYLA runs to each corner and holds a tableau symbolising an artist, educator and researcher.

TAYLA makes her way back to the “Educator” corner.

TAYLA We both found ourselves in the corner where we identified as educators. Compared to everyone else, we were the random two.

BRO walks toward the “Educator” corner.

BRO Yeah, that kind of bonded us, didn't it? You and I stood in that corner, looking at everyone else and realising that we were the group's outsiders. Did you have that realisation? Up until that point, I thought, “I think most people would be teachers.” Then, as we stood in that corner, it was just us.

TAYLA Yes, exactly. However, the weird thing is I feel like I’ve shifted since then. If you had asked me in 2022 how teaching was going, I would’ve said I was really struggling. I felt thrown into it. Although I am still in the

classroom, I am working more in the extracurricular space. I have this sense of freedom I don't normally feel in the classroom. I get to negotiate what I teach, how I teach it and its purpose. I get to have a choice.

BRO Those experiences are invaluable. The art that they're making is not the syllabus, it's not assessments, and it's not reporting. It's yours and theirs.

TAYLA Exactly. I sometimes feel like the curriculum and assessments make it very tricky to build relationships with the students, particularly when you have students within your drama classes who do not want to be there. Not every student wants to be there, so when one student is off, it can dictate how that whole lesson progresses.

BRO Yeah, it makes you question: why can't our regular curriculum class time be like that? What's stopping us? *Is it the curriculum?*

TAYLA walks toward the "Artist" corner, following the path of the masking tape.

TAYLA Definitely! Having my own space has been an invited change. It is the complete opposite experience of what it's like as a teacher inside your "normal" curriculum classes. This is why I have been asking myself, "What do I identify as?" At the moment, I lean more towards an artist. I feel positive. I feel creative; no one is impeding. I have missed this sense of freedom. It makes me question whether I want to leave.

BRO steps out of the "Educator" corner. Finding a place within the triangle.

BRO Exactly. Returning to the triangle, remember when someone asked, "Can we move?". George was really responsive to that question because if you feel like your identity is shifting and changing in the triangle, that's fine.

BRO explores the triangle in his own way, breaking the usual path set by the masking tape and going back and forth between the three corners.

TAYLA You and I are at the beginning of this journey, and we're trying to figure out how to cross the triangle to where those researchers and artists are on the other side.

BRO finishes CENTRE STAGE. TAYLA goes and collects the six traffic cones. BRO & TAYLA stand CENTRE STAGE. TAYLA places the traffic cones in front of them in a line.

TAYLA I think it's the traffic cones. They are barriers stopping us. I mean, the police literally create a pathway of traffic cones when they stop the public to undergo a Random Breath Test. You see the banked-up traffic ahead, knowing your ETA has suddenly increased. The police bus and the bright orange traffic cones lead you to the RBT.

TAYLA goes OFFSTAGE and returns wearing a police hat and DIY breathalyser machine. TAYLA gestures for BRO to make his way toward the traffic cones where she stands. BRO acts confused but complies with the instructions.

TAYLA *(in an authoritative voice)* Excuse me, sir. I'm just pulling you over for an RBT. Please blow into this tube until I say stop.

To try and find a moment of levity with the police officer, BRO makes a joke.

BRO You know, when I first told my family about doing research in RbT, they were so confused. Why is he doing research on Random Breath Testing? Get it? R-B-T!

Awkward pause. TAYLA is unamused. Eventually, BRO blows into the tube for a comically long time- struggling and almost not reaching the beep. Finally, a beeping noise is made.

TAYLA And STOP.

TAYLA looks at the machine and gives BRO a disapproving look.

Sir, you're going to have to come back to the station.

(TAYLA resumes as herself) As teachers, we are guided on this path. To take the test. Some people go mad and go straight through the traffic cones. They are chased down by the flashing red and blue lights and returned to face the barriers of being an educator. Some escape the chase and are lucky in some ways, as they don't have to experience the barriers. Then, there are the others who follow the path they are given.

BRO So, it's not a physical barrier. We could easily go around it, but is it really that simple? The traffic cones have power over us.

BRO steps over the traffic cones but experiences regret and returns to resume his original place behind them. As this is happening, TAYLA begins the next moment. BRO and TAYLA ask six audience members to place the traffic cones in new positions on stage. They have ten seconds.

TAYLA Exactly! There is so much to navigate within our drama classroom.

BRO And in research. And as drama practitioners.

TAYLA and BRO perform obstacle course-like movements around the traffic cones, each knocking one over at various moments.

TAYLA But how are we meant to navigate them all without knocking them over or taking the wrong pathway? If there even is a "correct" one...

TAYLA & BRO end standing beside their knocked-over traffic cones.

BRO You know I don't drink, right?

TAYLA Dramatic irony?

TAYLA and BRO step DOWNSTAGE CENTRE.

Quote: an ending?

BRO Are we just, *quote*:
 'self-absorbed narcissists
 who don't fulfil scholarly obligations
 of hypothesising,
 analysing,
 and theorising'?
 (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 11;
 not the opinions of the authors, presented for critique)

TAYLA We're opening this bit with that?

BRO Yeah, it's pretty full on, isn't it?

They shrug.

TAYLA Do we offer, *quote*: "insider knowledge of cultural experience"
 or "aspects of cultural life
 that other researchers may not be able to know"?
 (Adams et al., 2017, p. 3)

BRO Insiders and outsiders.
 Both and neither.

TAYLA Quote: “Insider knowledge does not suggest that an autoethnographer can articulate more truthful or more accurate knowledge as compared to outsiders, but rather that as authors, we can tell our stories in novel ways when compared to how others may be able to tell them.”
(Adams et al., 2017, p. 3)

BRO The ways (*gestures to include the audience*) of our drama classrooms.

There is an awkward pause.

TAYLA Did we write an ending for this?

BRO We probably should have ended it on the Adams, Ellis and Jones quotes.

TAYLA (*idea!*) How about a false sense of closure through the cyclical structure of a musical cue?

BRO Please.

“Ave Maria” plays again. TAYLA and BRO ritualistically lay one of the traffic cones to rest, then exit the triangle and take one last look before walking OFFSTAGE. LIGHTS and MUSIC fade with a spotlight on the traffic cone at rest.

Conclusion

We have taken pride in the script we created and valued the collaborative nature of its development. Research-based Theatre (RbT) believes in multiple meanings that can be uncovered by listening to others' viewpoints (Opfermann, 2019). RbT brought to light this notion of "startling empathy", which shifted us from being a passive audience

member to being inspired to acknowledge our teaching experiences through scriptwriting (Shigematsu, 2022).

Our work was innovative in incorporating theatricalisation artefacts into the scripting process. The starting point in our first Zoom meeting was discussing a comfort item we both have: a tissue-box labrador toy dog and a porcelain Mrs Berenstain bear. Through these comfort items, we looked at their symbolic meaning and our connection to them. Although an inanimate object, they have a purpose. From that moment, we found our inspiration; our script would be developed through evocative artefacts connected with our lived teaching experiences. During discussions, we agreed that as teachers, we transfer sentiment into an object; it's a part of that meaning-making process. We find it a particularly important part of the drama and the type of research we are doing or want to do. These artefacts began an open journey of connecting through dialogue and lived experiences (Wallwey & Kajfez, 2023; Jones & Worrall, 2024) to explore Belliveau's triangle and our shared tension between our identities. The physical and conceptual spaces of drama teachers, researchers, and artists are not mutually exclusive in our experience. How we label ourselves was challenged; seeing peers and colleagues moving in the triangle helped us realise they are all negotiating these categorical tensions.

We are both interested in the critical, the practical and the embodied; maybe the best place to do this work is in these in-between spaces – using artistic mediums like RbT to explore the blurry connections in-between disciplines. We hope sharing our experiences in this way may also offer a similar comfort to anyone navigating the in-between, as well, whether you are considering using Research-based Theatre as a process, platform or both, but more importantly, to navigate the relational ethics (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 9) of knowledge and understanding as we work together. Completing this project together has helped us focus on the solidarity all of us in-betweeners can share and has brought a feeling of liberation.

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