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Pedagogy, Empathy and Praxis

Using Theatrical Traditions to Teach

Alison Grove O'Grady

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To Gabriella, Annaliese, Xavier,
Eva, Remy and Ignatius
With you all things are possible

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge and pay my respects to the traditional owners of country throughout Australia where this book was written and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters and culture. I pay my respect to the elders, past, present and emerging.

I suppose that every writer has an anecdote about their childhood dreams wanting to become a writer. In this regard I am no exception. This book is not a story about a city of mice and their musings as my 9-year-old self had originally hoped to tell, but it is about principles I hold dear and those include the belief that humane and deeply empathetic pedagogy and practices should be part of *every* learning experience for *every* student.

To my colleagues and friends in the School of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney, Australia, who unswervingly bolster and believe in me, my thanks. To Professor Michael Anderson, Professor Robyn Ewing and Associate Professor Kelly Freebody, who kept encouraging me, and my travel buddy and partner in endless creative ideas Kate Smyth, I am thankful every day that you are all in my village.

To my sister Charmian who is my rock and mainstay and to my beloved Patrick who takes every journey with me, I thank you with my love.

Preamble

The book discusses the contentious question of whether empathy can be taught as a pedagogy. Referencing recent work in various disciplines, this book discusses the barriers in becoming empathically literate by understanding how, through deep thinking and asking better questions informed by theatrical practices, pre-service or trainee teachers can develop confidence with an agile and distinctive new approach and methodology. This work acknowledges the seminal role that participation and drama-rich pedagogies play in the learning of and about empathy and the way teachers can activate a deep pedagogic empathy. Self-awareness skills or previously derided 'soft skills' such as empathy, as this book will argue, can be taught and built upon by modelling real-life situations or, as this book will advocate, through carefully constructed and pedagogic practices. The book will in many respects break new ground and a hopeful outcome will be ongoing research and work into empathy as a pedagogy and skill to mediate the alarming teacher attrition rates here in Australia and in the United Kingdom.

Empathy, it would seem, is the hopeful zeitgeist.

When I began writing this book, a devastating event took place in Christchurch, New Zealand, a city that had previously borne the brunt of nature's unpredictability and suffered at the hands of an earthquake that ravaged the city's architecture, tore at the fabric of the city and killed many of its citizens. On an ordinary Friday in March 2019, an Australian man entered a mosque whilst worshippers were bent in prayer and slaughtered over 50 people with a high-powered weapon, wounding many more and

hurtling the country and Australia as its closest cousin into a period of introspection, anger and, ultimately, mourning.

Through the unravelling of this diabolical event, one person became a beacon of hope for everyone who was affected. An example of leadership, strength, gentleness and empathy—New Zealand's prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, shepherded her country through the crisis with unparalleled grace. Critics and admirers alike agreed that this woman, who had only months before stood addressing the United Nations General Assembly, led the country and the world that watched in an example of empathy in action. She opened her address to the General Assembly some months before by declaring of her country:

> Our empathy and strong sense of justice is matched only by our pragmatism. We are, after all, a country made up of two islands—one simply named North and the other, South. (28 September 2018)

In the wake of the terrorist attack, Ardern donned a black headscarf in the Arab tradition and walked through the city—holding, touching, stopping and listening. Throughout the tragedy, publications and news outlets agreed that her actions exemplified empathy and its lived experience. The headline banners of many conservative news outlets, previously critical of her humane approach to policy, declared her to be a beacon of empathy—and therefore of hope. It would seem we are hungry for empathy in action.

This book considers how initial teacher training or pre-service teacher education might be transformed to meet the needs of the no longer new twenty-first century including the urgent need for explicit teacher training in pedagogic empathy. Teacher education reform books have argued over the last decade that inherent in the work of teachers is an ingrained capacity for empathic understanding; however, few have considered change from advances developed in social justice practices and theatrical traditions. With policy arguments internationally calling for students and the role of schools, to prepare students to work in complex and often chaotic times, this book articulates an approach that has been developed with the involvement and partnership of practitioners, playwrights, researchers, teachers, students and the community—to distil and facilitate empathy as a praxis. This book is about a commitment to practice and praxis underpinned by the cultivation of theoretical principles. It comprises processes and approaches that might better equip pre-service or training teachers to face the challenges in their future classrooms, including critically the way we relate to each other as human beings in this multifarious future.

Contents

CHAPTER 1

Empathy Is the Zeitgeist

Abstract By considering ways that pre-service teachers might engage with and understand the importance of explicitly teaching empathy, this book contemplates a move towards a pedagogy of empathy. The way this newly framed pedagogy can be taught through a participatory method during teacher training in order to transform learning is a key argument throughout the book. The challenges of learning to be a teacher in the twenty-first century mean that in addition to developing skills and competencies in various disciplines, teachers need to meet the multiple needs of learners and prepare them to be active citizens in an increasingly complex and chaotic world. Drawing on a human rights approach to practice and theatrical traditions, specifically 'drama-rich pedagogies' (Ewing, *Drama-Rich Pedagogy and Becoming Deeply Literate: Drama Australia Monograph No. Twelve*. Brisbane: Drama Australia, 2019), this chapter explores the significance and effectiveness of teaching empathy informed and shaped by theatrical traditions and community influences including Aboriginal and Indigenous perspectives, playwrights' perspectives, disability advocates and theatre practitioners, situated within the teacher training context. Human rights education and social justice practices are an emerging and vital field of inquiry within initial teacher education programmes internationally and the traditions of the theatre have much to offer to this pedagogic approach (see Rae, *Theatre & Human Rights*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). A coalescing of these approaches based on cutting-edge research activates a fresh perspective on the way we relate

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to each other in and subsequently outside of the classroom. I hope that this work will propel this conversation further into practice.

Keywords Empathy • Pedagogy • Disciplines • Initial teacher training • Praxis • Pre-service teacher • Drama-rich pedagogy • Participatory • Tableaux

Empathy in Teacher Education

Pre-service teacher cohorts in Australia and internationally are comprised of students from culturally disparate and diverse language backgrounds, and classrooms in Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand are similarly comprised. Pre-service teacher candidates bear the complex burden of not only meeting diverse students' needs but also provisioning them with multiple ways to 'be in the world' (O'Grady, 2016). By catalysing the affordances of traditions used in the theatre as a way to activate an understanding of complex ideas in a safe space, the garnering of and resultant increase in empathy are exemplified in case studies that reflect this impact.

Any substantive conversation about moving towards a pedagogy of empathy requires that the reader explores theories of empathy from neuroscientific and cognitive approaches.

Perspectives in teacher practice and how this approach might be grounded in and illuminated through practice and praxis orientations are considered here. A brief contextualising literature review situates this work within the corpus of literature and discusses the nature of empathy as a social good. Additionally, discussions of practice and ample references to participatory approaches that have developed successful engagement with practitioners through the facilitation of creative work, in the tradition of theatre, are unpacked in the book.

Deliberations that promote empathy in teacher education and training programmes and how this approach can develop a *repertoire* and constellation of empathies for teachers to facilitate transformation in the classroom form a central line of inquiry. Explanations that develop theories regarding the way teachers work, particularly those still in the practice stage of their career trajectories, will be posited as part of a suite of skills to teach with, for and about empathy.

Pre-service teacher cohorts in Australia and internationally are made up of students from culturally disparate and diverse language backgrounds, and classrooms are similarly comprised and reflect the rich diaspora of countries that contribute to the dynamism of multiculturalism in Australia and internationally. Teachers are therefore tasked with meeting the diverse needs of their students.

In order to meet these knotty challenges and deliver authentic and nuanced pedagogies, teachers rely on social and emotional inherencies that may or may not have been learned. These skills of human engagement that teachers, it is assumed, are riven with are unreliably acquired. It is for these and other reasons, further explained in the book, that our need to develop empathy and habits of empathy exists.

Empathy, it seems, is at the forefront of our Western thinking. Superficially, this is no bad thing. Kindness, being more humane, thinking of others, and reflection are all arguably positive attributions or ways to behave to better and create a more tolerant society. However, empathy conceptually needs to be activated in productive and transformational ways. Empathy needs to be defined, problematised and distilled to have denotation, particularly for early career teachers who find themselves working in an age of increasing compliance and governance, wrestling with the complexity and chaos of the no longer new century, leaving little room for self-actualisation.

Debates About Empathy

The current debates in the field regarding empathy include in the area of character and moral education and positive psychology. Whilst this book does not propose to delve deeply into the area of psychology, it references current debates in the field which include understanding empathy in a professional context where empathy is often a key consideration in medical practice. A growing body of literature indicates that empathic behaviours are positively linked, in several ways, with the professional performance and mental well-being of professionals, and this book focuses on teachers who are in training, referred to as pre-service teachers in this debate. Many schools in the independent and private sectors (including charter schools) are articulating empathy as an outcome of their individualised learning programmes, recognising the value in developing students who are highly skilled in negotiation, collaboration and communication, for example. These previously derided ‘soft skills’ are currently the subject of debate as

the world relies more heavily on artificial intelligences and the nature of traditional work becomes oblique. Harnessing the inherencies of the emotional and social human becomes paramount to our survival and leads to human flourishing.

Definitions of empathy vary widely, and this book will both problematise and define empathy. Drawing on the work of Maxine Greene (1995) and her argument that assembling a coherent world requires imagination in order to make empathy possible, discussions regarding the cognitive capacities of imagination and imagination as a generative learning activity (Fiorella & Mayer, 2015) that allow empathy to thrive are laid out in order to provide guidance.

Empathy is a multidimensional construct and can be loosely defined as an ability both cognitive and emotional that involves the capacity to insightfully read the feelings of another person and to respond appropriately, having understood social cues. Work from the 'Theory of Mind' (Premack & Woodruff, 1978) also acknowledges that empathy requires feeling as someone else may feel or engaging emotionally with another person's state (Saxton, Miller, Laidlaw, & O'Mara, 2018). Empathy may include compassion, but it also requires more than the placing of oneself in the shoes of another. It requires 'a shift in perspective away from oneself, to an acknowledgment of the other person's different experience' (Williams, Lynch, & Sifris, 2016, p. 171).

What Is This Thing Called Empathy?

Empathy is conceptually and historically situated in the discipline of psychology and philosophy as a twentieth-century phenomenon. In these disciplines there is no agreement on what empathy is; however, in borrowing from these traditions, understanding empathy and its place in education and the disciplines has become more important as the pace of change and particularly the nature of schooling become less fixed and pathways to work more tenuous for students. This also presents teachers who are preparing students for these complex futures with the difficult task of anticipating students' needs in this climate of complexity. Whilst argument rages about the value of metrics, test scores and league tables (for both teachers and students), the centrally important work of relationships and how we understand each other and respond in humane ways is pressing. The phenomenologist and Catholic saint Edith Stein (a pupil of Husserl the phenomenologist (1859–1938), later murdered in the Auschwitz death camp)

researched the problem of empathy as far back as the 1920s (ironically at the same time people were returning, many of them broken, from 'the war to end all wars') and in her findings argued that:

> empathy precipitates an understanding of each other as others experience us and that through empathy, I can discern the other's mental states to at the same time gain self-knowledge by coming to know how others experience me. (1964, p. xiv)

For those working with empathy in interdisciplinary contexts or in school-based disciplines such as history, Stuber (2000) usefully argues for a way of teaching history where students can use an empathic intelligence to help predict and explain the way theatres of war might happen and the reasoning and perspective of others behind them. This begets a productive empathy initially.

Paul Bloom in his book *Against Empathy* (2016) on the other hand argues that empathy is a negative in human affairs—that on balance its a 'sugary soda, tempting and delicious and bad for us' (p. 13) that it lacks reason and can allow us to align our understandings with those that are most like us. His hypothesis argues that empathy needs to be a 'value of conscious, deliberative reasoning in everyday life—that we should use our heads more than our hearts, for a rational and compassionate perspective' (p. 5). His biggest problem with empathy is bias—he argues that the problem with empathy is that it shines brightest on those we care about and stories we love—think about stories in history such as Gallipoli or the American Civil War; however, he believes that moral action and moral judgement are biased and that even when we try to be fair, to be impartial and to be objective, we tend to favour the outcome that benefits ourselves (p. 50).

So where is the place for empathy in subject disciplines? Teachers would argue (and I would agree) that empathic intelligence is fundamental to teaching and that empathy and social intelligence are 'inherencies' in our professional identities. However, it is the place of pedagogic empathy in the disciplines and how we might position empathy that is critical in our thinking. Many scholars have posited that historical empathy is an essential outcome in the history curriculum, that it activates ways of discerning the difference between present lived experiences and life in very different and often culturally dissonant pasts than those of the students to whom this information is being transferred.

By way of example, Endacott and Brooks (2013) propose a model of historical empathy that is situative and suggests three endeavours: empathy as a historical contextualisation, a temporal sense and deep understanding; perspective taking, understanding the other (perhaps the most difficult concept); and affective connections, how similarities and differences make emotional connections in meaningful ways. Using drama-rich pedagogies (Ewing, 2019b) and drawing on principles of 'process drama' (Bowell & Heap, 2013), pedagogies can be developed that facilitate transformative learning opportunities for students. This precipitates an opportunity for students to understand how the past influences the future and to know that there is not just one view of the past, but a range of views that may be contradictory, complementary and/or clashing. The singular testing of an event in history, such as the causes of World War One, cannot on its own provide a broad and valid education in history. Dramatic pedagogies and creative knowledge allow students an opportunity to articulate how a character might have arrived at a decision, gaining insight into their motivations and critically analysing or reconstructing an event; this coalesces giving form to fact and enabling engagement in empathic understanding of past events.

Empathy as a pedagogy can activate the boundaries of remembering particularly in the discipline of history, allowing for a lived experience that invites new ways of thinking about the body and self in space and time (Nicholson, 2012). The case study conducted at the University of Sydney in 2018 used the central figure of Dr. Elsie Dalyell, a medical officer in World War One and alumna of the university, to engage a broader audience with the stories and lived experiences of the *Beyond 1914 (trademark)* archives where a large repository of personal memorabilia resided. By using drama-rich pedagogies and elements of drama (O'Toole, 2002), teachers in rural and remote parts of the state of NSW, Australia, were presented with the opportunity to acquire new understandings in a professional learning context. These were based on the factual account of one woman's life whose story provided the space and tools—both physical and pedagogical—to develop a relatedness (Hughes, 2017) as a central premise of empathy. A raft of questions provided the impetus for a deeper study of perspectives. How might drama-rich pedagogies be used in the classroom to help students analyse and understand complex ideas like applied empathy?

Relying on a participatory form of theatre tailored to the task of teaching and learning, a pedagogical framework for inclusivity and ultimately

empathic literacy is proposed here using a case study in historical empathy. A factual pre-text, such as an individual's war experience, is used to imagine real events and stimulate empathy and, thus, encourage discussion and critique. In drama and process drama, participants assume different roles and undertake aesthetic and creative opportunities through highly structured dramatic activities. The key to this model of 'walking in someone else's shoes' is the active construction of meaning by teachers and students and its transformation into relevant and consequential knowledge. Understanding the world through the perspective of another human being is seminal in teaching drama, that is, it provides a conduit to understanding the world and contributing to meaningful discourses as democratically and engaged citizens.

My research in this area is moving towards what I describe as *metaxic empathy*. This takes account of a central element in drama and creative professional education whereby a pedagogical approach and a sense of self and experience influence a character, allowing for a deeper empathic engagement with characters—like the process of performing whilst at the same time retaining a sense of self and situative contexts.

This book contends pre-service teachers should be presented with opportunities in their teacher training to work towards embedding an explicit, strategic and metaxic empathy in their classrooms. I am reminded of the playwright Chekhov, who as a teacher of drama advised his students to read history to:

> understand them through their way of living and the circumstances of their lives … try to penetrate the psychology of different nations … endeavour to penetrate the psychology of persons around you toward whom you feel unsympathetic … attempt to experience what they experience. (Chekhov, 1953, pp. 4–5)

Discussion of Practice

The following discussion of practice describes a bespoke teacher professional learning experience using drama-rich pedagogies, amongst other techniques, to build teacher confidence in facilitating and teaching commemoration and memorialisation of World War One that began in 2016. This project began with a collaboration between a university historian and discipline expert, an elementary teacher education expert, local cultural institutions and regional museum experts and me as creative pedagogue.

Beginning with the human context, in this case the story of Dr. Elsie Dalyell (an Australian research scientist and medical officer serving close to the frontlines of battle during the Great War) as the pre-textual stimulus, and the elements of drama (O'Toole, 2002) to develop performance frame, the experience with dramatic tension was provided by a series of processes and activities that created an educational experience whereby the participants who were variously teachers, pre-service teachers and post-graduate and post-doctoral students from countries around the world, including Ireland, England, Hong Kong, Canada and New Zealand, used story and distancing devices in a safe space to engage with issues that might have affected Dr. Dalyell. The protection provided by role allowed the participants to explore multiple ideas, political persuasions, decisions and sociocultural understanding whilst at the same time offering an opportunity to engage with and develop critical empathy.

In the case of this particular drama, a theory of empathy underpinned the pedagogy and highlighted relatedness in order to unpack ideas and desires of the central figure of Dr. Dalyell, known to us as Elsie, and to situate our understanding of her actions in terms of universal themes of humanity and being humane.

The drama pedagogies that formed the basis for this teacher professional learning experience included a strong emphasis on sharing personal stories and re-telling localised mythologies that are captured in the telling and re-telling of war experiences. These experiences of re-telling and story were accompanied by tableaux, where those involved were asked to collate a physical representation of a given circumstance or experience. These allowed for a context to be established and, as these activities were performed in groups, their collaborative nature meant they were safe to perform and viewed with a careful debriefing and discussion of ideas and concerns that may have arisen.

One of the significant affordances of drama pedagogy used in this context is the opportunity for planning and structuring the activities in order to interrogate sub-textual questions that emerge from the reinvention of the past. When drama pedagogy is activated as a ritualised practice in the classroom for example, students are offered an opportunity to articulate and perform a character's intentions, to use conjecture to reimagine through embodied ways of knowing. The activation of performing then gives form to fact and enables an engagement and empathic understanding of past events.

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CHAPTER 2

A Conceptualising Literature Review

Abstract This brief contextualising literature review is helpful in framing epistemological and popular debates about what empathy actually is and if empathy is understood as a social good—then how do other scholars perceive we can achieve it and then manifest it as a teachable construct? In addition to contextualising the current debates about empathy, this chapter will present the affordances of theatrical traditions and scholarly approaches to its usefulness in developing critical and pedagogical empathy and empathy as a habit of mind and praxis. Levy (Theatre and Moral Education. *Journal of Aesthetic Education, 31*(3), 65–75, 1997) reminds us that the power of the theatre lies with its original intention and that is not just as a performance or reasoned activity but really as a stimulus that transmutes the present in order to provision and strengthen what remains unsaid.

Keywords Woke • Millennials • Cultural imperatives • Habituated practice • Empathic acts • Ecologically oriented pedagogy • Moral reasoning

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Empathy in the Twenty-First Century

Situating empathy and discussions about emotions and intelligence means comprehending the fact that talking about your emotions is a very new and twenty-first-century phenomenon. Previous generations were not encouraged, certainly in the Western context, to discuss feelings and emotions, and culturally for some groups, showing emotions could be considered a sign of weakness. This is compared with a millennial perspective on emotions, where interrogating how you feel about an issue is more likely to be a sign of being *woke*—in other words being socially aware which millennials think is desirable.

Research and literature about and for empathy is prevalent as we as a society seek to grasp the way other people think, in order to better understand them or, conversely, to manipulate them. Universal perceptions might show that empathy is sought to be better understood as a phenomenon; however, it is important in any conversation about empathy to understand that paradoxically it can be used for negative consequences. In his tome *The Empathic Civilization* (2010), Jeremy Rivkin situates empathy between the anthropological and the psychological arriving at the conclusion that this is 'the age of empathy'. His book challenges society to develop empathic intelligences sufficiently to understand the brutality of wars on the environment, the ravages on the local and the economic prosperity of communities and the dire consequences of ignoring these issues. Drawing cogent conclusions about the race for time, his work, in the age of empathy, underscores the central themes of the OECD's *Towards the Future* 2030 discussion paper (2018). Both Rivkin's work and the OECD's position paper grapple with the paradox that at the same time we are seeking to develop affective responses and empathy for our future, we are denuding environmental resources and reducing our humanity in issues of racial division. (At the time of writing (July 2019), the president of the United States, Donald Trump, began a divisive and public argument by baiting a democratic candidate in El Paso, where a mass shooting had torn the community apart, drawing a corollary between the candidate's colour and apportioning blame to people of colour and therefore, Trump argued, their propensity for homicidal behaviour.) Rivkin argues for a 'global empathy' (p. 3) citing the newly conceived view of humanity that is both inter- and intradisciplinary through combining neuroscience, psychology and social scientific fields to precipitate a way to understand the human narrative and social tapestry.

The word empathy is derived originally from the German *Einfuhlung* (Vischer, 1873) and it was then used to refer to an aesthetic appreciation of an object or how an object might make you feel as you receive and view it. The work of Edith Stein in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is seminal to the way we comprehend empathy. As a pupil of Husserl (1859–1938) the phenomenologist, it is prescient that Stein's work on empathy should be used as an exemplar for her supervisor's absence of empathy or in contemporary semantics 'gas lighting' of her findings. Husserl, it is reported, failed to credit Stein with any of this work into empathy that he used and published prolifically from. Edith Stein's life ironically is a case study in absence of empathy. Stein, who was born into a Jewish family, converted to Catholicism and became a Carmelite nun. She was later murdered in the death camp in Auschwitz during World War Two. Her work on empathy came to light in 1963 when it was discovered by clinicians who ensured her ground-breaking ideas were published and disseminated, many decades later.

As a pupil scholar she made ground-breaking discoveries still used in modern psychology, in which she describes episodes of empathy and the primordial experience:

> I don't simply see faces. I see angry faces, or faces transfixed with wonder, or bearing expressions of grief. I don't simply see physical bodies as mere physical things but rather as embodying the lived experiences of the people in front of me. (1964)

Fittingly, in this book where discussions of practice include those undertaken in the discipline of history as a discussion of empathy and praxis, Rivkin (2010) begins his exploration into empathy and civilisation with an anecdote that takes place in the battlefields of World War One on Flanders Fields, amongst the bloodiest of battles in that theatre of war. The night of the Christmas truce is a story that relays a ceasefire that took place on Christmas Eve of 1914 between the warring sides. It is said that the Germans sang Christmas carols to the Allies, and in turn, the Allies responded by singing back to their enemies. Some versions of the story have the enemies coming over the trenches to play football and to share a smoke with each other, but no evidence exists to corroborate this. As dawn broke over the battlefields, Rivkin says that the soldiers returned to their trenches and re-commenced their fighting, apparently with increased fervour.

This story of the Christmas truce can produce in the reader a range of emotional responses, from being heartened by the story, as Rivkin suggests could be the response, to being discomforted and ruminating on the futility of war. The consequential meaning made by hearing the story is developed by thinking about how human these men were. By choosing to behave in a humane and spontaneous way on the night of the truce, they were performing acts of empathy—for one another—and then paradoxically they were able to flick an emotional switch and return to their brutality.

Scholars differ in terms of their semantic definitions of empathy; however, it can be surmised that, as a concept, empathy is accepted to be a cognitive process that has cultural imperatives attached to the way we might understand it. The common trope regarding empathy is usually 'to walk a mile in someone else's shoes', and whilst this feeling about another person's situation is derided as hollow and implausible by popular social commentators Bloom (2016) and Krznaric (2014), it is a tangential way of understanding what it means to feel something sympathetic or compassionate about another person's situation and lived experience. In a society that is currently struggling to find humanity in situations where there are divisions between race and religion, a common or lay understanding of what empathy is when applied to these circumstances is untroubling, as long as the consequential behaviour is a humane response.

An example is the beautiful and oft-quoted scene from Harper Lee's defining fiction about racism and difference in small-town America, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee, 1963), where the wise counsel Atticus exhorts his children to refrain from judging the behaviour of Boo Radley (the mysterious neighbour with a folkloric background) and reminds them that 'you need to walk a mile in someone else's shoes' before passing judgement on them. As a mantra for more compassionate and thoughtful behaviour, this way of viewing the world as an empath is universally understood to be a good thing.

Because this book is in part about how empathy can be distilled into a tangential and teachable pedagogy and thus a habituated practice, critiquing empathy in pedagogy and *as* pedagogy is essential. Hoffman's (2000) four levels of empathy suggest that empathy runs deeper than walking in another's shoes; he argues that the cognition associated with an empathic act requires responding to another person's plight by assessing their needs and responding by relieving their suffering, if necessary, or sharing their joys and triumphs.

Popular conceptualisations of empathy possess what Nelems (2017) refers to as a cosy view and that empathy is a common-sense concept that is, particularly in Western educational sectors, seen as a social good. When untroubled, empathy as a concept is often conflated with sympathy and compassion. This is problematic when it is over-simplified as posited as a positive social trait that is precipitous in activating leadership, critical thinking and critical reflection. Nelems extends this by suggesting that empathy has many different interpretations as a multi-dimensional, ethical and social construct; she offers empathy as a 'constellations of concepts and experiences' and therefore a broader and pluralistic metaphor (p. 23).

Piccardo and Aden's (2014) work on plurilingualism and empathy reminds us that the increasing diversity both linguistically and culturally of classrooms requires educators to critique linguistic, cultural and emotional potential (p. 234) in order to develop a heightened intercultural communication. At the cross-roads of this deliberation is the increased need for educators to double down in a climate of standardisation and complexification (p. 235) where language education is radically changing. Aden's (2010) work is of particular note as it argues for a paradigmatic shift in the way language and language acquisition is treated. In the age of hyper-literacy and multimodality, these and other ways of knowing need to be considered in the planning of any pedagogy for students. The place for habituated empathy then lies in the nuancing of what Kramsch (2002) has described as ecologically oriented pedagogy. In part this acknowledges the visceral nature of language as part of a broader, embodied and emotional repertoire that must include deep empathy.

Understanding Empathy as Pedagogy and Praxis

Pedagogy is the core business of teaching and learning. It is also the most contentious and vexed aspect of any initial teacher education programme and of any type of reform in schools. Radical pedagogues and critical thinkers such as Giroux (2014) talk about a 'pedagogy of stupidity' where he contends that the current educational climate is wedded to a profit-driven and repressive system that values memorisation over creativity and high-stakes testing at the expense of collaboration and collaborative practices that shape democratic ways of thinking. A stifling of imagination and the divesting of political positioning from teachers and therefore learners is tantamount to an assault on modern democracy, according to his research and findings.

In a similar vein Zembylas (2012) suggests that by carefully re-examining our pedagogies and their moral undertones, as teachers and educators we can help students navigate their way through what he describes as 'troubled knowledge'. Troubled knowledge differentiates itself from the more commonplace pedagogies of conservative curricula, and emphasis should be placed on affective responses and 'explicit pedagogic attention' (p. 113) particularly when discussing or facilitating learning that interrogates contestable issues, such as those of race and racism.

Zembylas (2013) suggests that part of a *teacher's tool kit* (my emphasis) of pedagogies is 'strategic empathy.' The benison of that method is manifold and provides purposeful ways to consider knowledge and meaning making. Using empathy in strategic and planned ways can, he argues, provision teachers with a space both physical and metaphorical to test their troubled knowledge and then channel it through carefully strategising, into anti-racist and socially just perspectives, for example (p. 114). Providing the space both literal and physical for pre-service teachers to navigate and test the way they might structure learning also needs to be considered.

Despite the plethora of evidence for increasing education in the arts in classrooms to improve student success rates (Ewing and Saunders, 2016; Fleming, Gibson, Anderson, Martin, & Sudmalis, 2016; Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999), various governments, certainly in Australia and, at the time of writing, also in the United Kingdom, have failed to act upon this evidence and instead remain fixed in a reductive view of curricula. Leading scholars such as Ewing (2019b) have offered timely reminders that pedagogy is for the learners and is about learning (p. 3). Her salient reminder of the importance of an arts-rich and imaginative learning experience in education lends itself to the central line of inquiry in this book, that is, that pedagogy should be enriched by modifying theatrical traditions to engender critical and productive empathy.

An Orientation to Praxis

The father of praxis in an applied setting is undisputedly Paulo Freire (1970) who popularised the notion that to effect agency in teachers and learners the way knowledge is applied in a practical and theorised way requires praxis. The drama community has adopted this word with particular fervour. Capturing the intersection between the forms of theatre, reflection and transformation, Taylor (2004) believes that praxis is the

interplay between people, passion and platform and that, through an aesthetic medium such as theatre and drama-rich pedagogies, understanding the human condition becomes possible.

The architect of process drama Dorothy Heathcote (1988) upended the notion that learning drama or teaching drama did not have to be constrained by a fixed narrative. She argued that a process drama allowed the students to confront challenges and situations and draw upon skills of negotiation acquired through imaginative encounters in co-constructed worlds. Her pedagogical emphasis disrupted the idea that the teacher played a distant role; rather they engaged in a role and became part of the dramatisation—resulting in a pedagogical principle known now as 'teacher in role' alongside a technique that has been much interrogated by practitioners and scholars, the 'mantle of the expert', allowing the students to work as experts in the drama developing skills of discovery and meaning making and 'their habitual orientation to the world' (O'Neill, 1995, p. 293).

Theatrical Traditions in the Getting of Empathy

The theatre has historically provided a vehicle for exploring the human condition—pushing boundaries, contesting ideologies and propagating them to turn a mirror to the audience often to provoke reactions of introspection and critical reflection. Theatrical traditions lend themselves seamlessly to pedagogic practices and meaning making with compassion, sympathy and empathy as core components. Taking on the role of another person and understanding what motivates them, what they desire, what they intend and how they act are all essences of acting in the theatrical tradition. Heathcote's critics, specifically Hornbrook (1991), reproved what he believed was a diminution of theatricality in the architecture and delivery of process drama. Students in his views were denied the richness of theatrical training in the discipline. Both Heathcote and Hornbrook's conceptions of pedagogy and curriculum are practical here. Influentially for this work it is the richness of theatrical tradition to reveal tensions and to trouble knowledge in such a way that its strength lies in the becoming.

The traditions of modern, Western theatre and their usefulness in developing empathic pedagogy owe a theoretical and practical debt to the work of Stanislavski (1949) and method acting. The intention in method acting, not to over-simplify a complex method, is to imbue a character with a sense of the actor's self, whilst remaining true to the integrity of the

text. A core component of the work is Stanislavski's attention to the physical self and embodied practice. His belief that the body and therefore the self were underutilised as an instrument to work and learn with forms a central part of the praxis for becoming empathically literate and competent.

Susan Verducci's (2000) research into method techniques to develop moral reasoning practices is powerful in this line of inquiry regarding empathy as a pedagogy. Rather than canvassing definitional arguments about empathy, Verducci suggests that the way actors train in this method allows them to empathise by activating doable and discussable steps (p. 87). She suggests that borrowing from Nodding's (1984) ethics of care model and Nussbaum's (1995) pity postulation, educators in this case can appropriate these techniques to develop and cultivate empathy as a productive construct. Verducci is careful not to suggest that the students be manipulated by the process; rather she affirms Bertolt Brecht's (2014) caution to avoid emotional manipulation of the audience, who are, in this case, the students and teachers.

Finally, it is critical in this discussion about pedagogy, empathy and praxis to situate what Rivkin describes as a 'new dramaturgical consciousness' (p. 554) positioning the millennial generation as globally sensitive and cosmopolitan people who are consumers of affective notions and responses. This, he suggests, is evidenced by their lived experiences online and in digital social spaces. His hypothesis is that the third industrial revolution of technological change has opened the gates to a new generation of empathic sensibility (ibid.) and this needs to be taken into account in classrooms.

Compared with the passivity of movie watching and listening to the radio (preferred pastimes of previous generations), the Internet has changed what societally we might previously have identified as pro-social behaviour. Critics argue this generation has stunted sociability because of the Internet, whereas Rivkin argues their sensibilities are in fact heightened as a consequence of enlarging their emotional and empathic repertoire (p. 557). Erving Goffman's (1959) use of dramaturgical metaphors to describe the way different roles and jobs might require a particular persona to act as that person guides the designing of and recruitment of pedagogy that is rich in theatrical and dramatic elements and can be constructed to enhance empathy, compassion and sympathy.

The vast repository of writings both scholarly and popular about empathy as a desirable personal trait requires thoughtful introspection and perusal. How it can be construed to best effect in classrooms by carefully

constructed and reflective pedagogy and practices is a key argument in this book. The popularity of empathy as a common-sense or social good requires ongoing and careful scrutiny. As an applied practice using theatre as a principal tenet and praxis, the hope is that teachers particularly those training to work in classrooms might see the benefit to a more nuanced and therefore effective invocation of understanding and facilitating empathy.

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CHAPTER 3

The Critical Reasons to Teach with, for and About Empathy

Abstract In a recent study of early career drama teachers, where they were asked to write about what they considered to be the most important part of their job, they unanimously said it was relating to or connecting with their students and establishing trust (O'Grady, *Always in the Process of Becoming (Freire, 1998) How Five Early Career Drama Teachers Build Their Worlds Through Language and Discourse* (Unpublished Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016)). The participants in the study believed that the most important part of their role was not delivering content and discipline knowledge but that their first role is to establish a relationship with their students. By establishing a relationship and connection, this allows them to be authentic in their facilitation of knowledge and to nuance their teaching practices by considering their students' particular needs. A vast corpus of literature lauds values and virtues as significant constructs that students need to imbue. Empathy is often written and spoken about as a virtue of successful teachers, and it is often assumed that teachers have a great deal of it—whatever it is. But do they?

As the literature reminds us, empathy is difficult to define and most researchers in a range of disciplines are resistant for good reasons, to adhere to an all-encompassing view of empathy. Empathy has revealed itself to be the zeitgeist as we wrestle with ways to live and interact in more humane ways. Coplan's (Will the Real Empathy Please Stand Up? A Case for a Narrow Conceptualization. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy, 49*, 40–65, 2011) definition of empathy argues that perhaps a narrow

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conceptualisation is required to avoid pseudo-empathy because this can be less productive than learning in a climate where there is an absence of empathy. Playwright Angela Betzien argues strongly for theatrical traditions to teach empathy in an age where she described our politicians and leaders as appearing to have undergone 'empathy bypasses' (8 September 2014). Her provocation argues for a new generation that stays awake at night worrying about children in detention, engendered by engagement with theatre and its many forms.

Keywords Virtues • Values • Access • Equity • Interdisciplinary • Agency • Globalisation • Accreditation • Climate emergency

The Educational Landscape

Schools in the no longer new twenty-first century bear little resemblance to those of bygone eras, certainly in most first world or Western contexts. This is in contrast to many parts of the world where education remains difficult to obtain and notably it is predominantly girls and women that are denied access to or who are limited in educational opportunities despite the concerted efforts of human rights agencies and organisations to gain access for them. Understanding the impact of technology and advancements in communication on educational systems and pedagogy is key to understanding why an articulation of empathy is critical for human beings to develop and respond to their individual circumstances including considerations of access and equity.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as an international body and in the Southern Hemisphere the Australian Human Rights Commission have noted that the skills and approaches students in the early twenty-first century need to successfully navigate the world bear little resemblance to previously siloed way of learning that emphasised standards and compliance, with a scattered approach to discipline knowledge.

With the advent of artificial intelligence and the proliferation of automation in the workforce, organisations such as the OECD have given time and research to consider ways to move forward into these uncharted (certainly for schools) territories. One of the main concerns posed by the OECD is ensuring that the risks and opportunities that artificial intelligence (AI) present are balanced by a careful preparedness for learners in

an AI-saturated world. The provocation for schools everywhere is to acknowledge the challenges presented and to act on the proposed frameworks, such as that proposed by the OECD Framework. The *Financial Times* reported that:

> *The risk is that the education system will be churning out humans who are no more than second-rate computers, so if the focus of education continues to be on transferring explicit knowledge across the generations, we will be in trouble.*
>
> *The AI challenge is not just about educating more AI and computer experts, although that is important. It is also about building skills that AI cannot emulate. These are essential human skills such as teamwork, leadership, listening, staying positive, dealing with people and managing crises and conflict.* (2017)

A coherent approach to evolving an educational paradigm that understands the balance between skills and competencies that are innately human and irreplaceable by AI is essential when taking account of initial teacher education programming. Recent reviews of initial teacher education programmes in Sydney, Australia (July 2019), have reviewed curriculum that turns decades of siloed and discipline-specific curricula on their head and thinks about teacher training in a more cohesive and interdisciplinary way. This is in response to real-world concerns regarding the future of work. The challenge in this work is to capture the vexing question of what should initial teacher education prepare their teacher education candidates for? We still require the 'crispness of the discipline' (Dawson, 2018, unpublished) and deep, rich content knowledge, so where is the place for transformative practices in these programmes and who will be and how will they be taught? These and other concerns remain at the forefront of curriculum review and transformation.

The OECD's position paper (2018) *The Future of Education and Skills 2030* opens by offering a hopeful and radical vision for the future. This provocation to educators around the world identifies social intelligences as critical in any reconceptualising of any education system and the question that is currently driving many programmes of reform in initial teacher education is how does schooling respond to these challenges?

> *We are committed to helping every learner develop as a whole person, fulfil his or her potential and help shape a shared future built on the well-being of individuals, communities and the planet.*
>
> *Children entering school in 2018 will need to abandon the notion that resources are limitless and are there to be exploited; they will need to value com-*

> *mon prosperity, sustainability and well-being. They will need to be responsible and empowered, placing collaboration above division, and sustainability above short-term gain.*
>
> *In the face of an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world, education can make the difference as to whether people embrace the challenges they are confronted with or whether they are defeated by them. And in an era characterised by a new explosion of scientific knowledge and a growing array of complex societal problems, it is appropriate that curricula should continue to evolve, perhaps in radical ways.* (OECD, 2018 Towards the Future 2030. Discussion paper)

The OECD acknowledges that human beings will need to balance economic and environmental concerns in tandem with social concerns and challenges—people, profit, planet and peace—through partnership, and schools will need to facilitate this process of understanding. Learner agency has been identified as a significant challenge to pedagogy and practice, in any newly conceptualised framework for education. Increasingly students will need to be considered as highly individual, but this must be balanced by consideration for a fragile planet, a world where conflict ensures that economic disparity is ongoing, where literacy is also critical for manipulating and synthesising big data and collaboration and relatedness and relationships are the axis of all humans thriving.

Unpacking the Social

Frans de Waal in his *Age of Empathy* believes that empathy is almost a social glue that binds humanity together. Arguing that empathy has been with us as an evolutionary construct, he positions empathy as an affiliative trait rather than the competitive and antagonistic perception of human behaviour. Previous generations, like my parents' generation, for example, faced the horrors and the consequences of World War Two here in Australia as did those in Europe, America, Asia and Singapore. My generation by contrast has faced the perils of a nuclear threat, still ongoing—a differently conceptualised warfare by comparison and insidious in the unknowable and unseen—and my children's fears have been realised, with the rise of terrorist threats in communities they are familiar with and the very real climate emergency that led to catastrophic bushfires. Each and every generation has faced what they understood as unprecedented challenges, but the OECD argues that this generation, the millennials, will have those

challenges actualised in their lifetime because of the acceleration and immediacy of globalisation. Therefore, the responsibility of developing empathy as an affiliative and social trait lies with schools and the way we anticipate and help our students navigate these uncertainties and complexities to mitigate against these threats—real and imagined.

Critical pedagogue Giroux (2014) argues that a difficulty in manifesting critical and cultural dimension of pedagogic practices is that it is often limited to schools. With the saturation of empathy books extolling the virtues of empathy and how to *get it*, this praxis is in part a reversal of the norm that he posits. The public discourse has come first with the resultant practice and praxis, coming after. In challenging current understanding of cultural studies, in this instance Giroux argues that cultural studies or the study of social practices can challenge the rigidity and inflexibility of discipline boundaries—a key tenet of the position paper propounded by the OECD and the subject of a current research project with my colleague (Grove O'Grady & Smyth, 2020, unpublished). Key to this premise is the idea that a radical approach to curricula is needed in order to countenance societal problems that include inequities of the economic, environmental and here—the social.

Large parts of the globalised world that continue to grow at rapid rates are affected by urbanisation and critically the pressures of migration. Approaches to equity, acceptable standards of living and access to education to improve life chances are increasingly compromised. As the world wrestles with environmental challenges and the depletion of natural resources, countries such as India with the most rapidly growing middle class are also dealing with the environmental impact of recycling—thought to be a conscientious and deliberate practice of environmental concern. India continues to receive 'recyclables', collected as an act of sustainability and good conscience largely by Westerners that threaten to literally bury communities in a sea of plastic refuse.

Social justice as a dimension of empathic understanding and in the context of education has many nuanced and often culturally specific associations. The most useful meaning for the purpose of problematising empathy is one that frames social justice holistically as both a process and a goal. This accords very strongly with the OECD's position paper and its broader education goals. Adams, Bell, & Griffin (2007) definition argues for a theoretical consideration of social justice meaning that the definition is not only about ways to mitigate against discrimination, bias, prejudice and bigotry but the definition should also consider what the institutional

biases are—such as those encountered in educational contexts—and how they contribute to bias and prejudice. Identifying, delineating and understanding how inequity affects students is a priority and concern for many teachers and this is part of the 'hope' Freebody and Finneran (2013) describe when discussing the synergies between drama and social justice.

A willingness to teach in socially just ways influenced by tenets of critical pedagogies was the framing question in a previous study (O'Grady, 2016). The study found that some early career drama teachers believed their practices and indeed their discipline of drama aligned with socially just ways of teaching both methodologically and through the structure of the content and lesson planning. The rapid rise of technological advances and the proliferation of social media and reality television in particular informed the ways some teachers approached their teaching and the material they chose to teach with. The teachers who were in the early stages of their career also believed that the discipline of drama or as they called it *subject* drama allowed them to deviate from linear teaching practices and develop activity building and lesson planning that tackled difficult and sometimes controversial ideas—more so than in the cognate disciplines of English or science, for example.

Social Intelligence in Initial Teacher Education

Works by Gardner (2007) and more recently Luckin (2018) have advanced ideas about what we might see as human intelligence as distinct from artificial intelligence and how we can distil the way we think about our minds, to propel the facilitation of knowledge in new ways. Gardner's *five minds framework* positions the respectful mind and the ethical mind as two pathways to think about intelligence. The role of empathy and altruistic intelligences aligns perfectly within this paradigm. As Luckin notes there are seven different ways to think about intelligence, and they are divergent from previously individualised and siloed ways of acquiring discipline knowledge. The first intelligence is interdisciplinary academic intelligence and it is perhaps this view of learning that may prove to be the most unsettling to the way teacher training is currently organised.

Currently, training to be a teacher in a secondary context requires specific discipline and content study in the areas a student wishes to train and teach in—for example, if a student wants to be a biology and chemistry teacher, she will need to train specifically in these areas with attention to the pedagogy required in teaching and learning, coming after she has

studied the requisite content in a discreet aspect of her degree or course. Having completed that pattern of study, she will then need to comply with standards authorities in order to achieve accreditation to teach those disciplines. By contrast primary or elementary teachers are generalists with an increasing focus on specialisations such as STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) or single method mathematics (the arts, by contrast, are not recognised by a specialisation currently). In this context, these teacher candidates are probably more accustomed to a multidisciplinary approach if not an interdisciplinary approach to learning. With increasing reliance on AI, its influence will change the way teachers teach and what they teach. AI can provide an archive of academic knowledge in terms of content and teachers can focus on the needs of the learners in other aspects or domains of thinking, according to the OECD's position paper (2018), and many of these discoveries and inventions are positive for students with disabilities.

However, changes to education are not and cannot happen in isolation. Many public and private corporations and organisations are positioning themselves and reconceptualising and rethinking capacities they deem ideal in their specific workforces. Dynamic organisations and consultancy firms have recognised and identified the impact of AI and globalisation on their work practices. Deloitte's 'Future of Work: *The People Imperative*' (2018) identified that 47% of current jobs will no longer exist and that 41% of the United States workforce participates in what is referred to as the 'gig economy' (a term that seems to be a euphemism for unstable work). The precarious nature of work (also reflected in the education and school sector) means increasing competition for permanent work and rethinking as a society the way humans and robots or AI can or will need work alongside each other.

The Increasing Need for Heightened Social Skills

Some large corporations have conducted surveys (Deloitte Access Economics, 2018) to ascertain what the principal concerns of this group of people are, given that their life expectation will be well over 100 years of age. Millennials are caught right in the cyclical nature of changing work structures and identify, amongst their primary concerns, an increasingly unfair and threatening world as the key issue that concerns them most. This group is also interested in actively practising and acting on their beliefs and values. Over 77% of this group worked in volunteer capacities

in their communities and supported charities both financially and through active participation—caring and social acuity is foremost in the way they think about their world and future. This information is useful in reconceptualising the changing nature of schools and what pedagogy is needed to teach students and how the teachers who teach them will need to be trained.

Some of the findings from the survey suggest that soft skills—a pejorative term for values and attributes that are nice to have but bear little correlation to the *real* skills (my emphasis)—are the valuable skills people need to be successful citizens. Research teams at Harvard University commissioned by Deloitte in the previously mentioned survey identified empathy as the first of a series of capabilities workers will need for the future. Interestingly the organisation did not define it as a construct; it was assumed that readers of this document and government agencies would know what *it* (empathy) was. The study suggested that amongst the capabilities workers would need included communication, judgement and speaking skills.

Educators and schools will need to radically rethink current curriculum and facilitate ways for students to acquire these visions and values. Schools may struggle to keep up with and respond to these curricula challenges if they are ill defined or hard to conceptualise and teach. Some universities including the National Institute of Education in Singapore have redesigned many of their units of study in teacher training to focus on ways their teachers in training can develop pedagogies in areas like character education. The units of study consider that current teacher training programmes no longer meet these needs of a future-focused economy. Singapore is currently investing heavily in the knowledge economy, recognising the wealth of potential in the intellectual development of their country and the well spring of potential that lies within their people. This shift in thinking reflects the view that what is needed is an iterative outlook on the way learning is modelled in the classroom, with teachers as leaders of pedagogies and students as agentic co-constructors alongside them. The units of study focus on a set of new competencies and a reimagining of teacher practices that focus on relationships and communication skills. Part of the re-envisioning of teacher training courses is the expressed articulation of graduate attributes that include compassion and compassionate analysis, asking why? Really why?—as Jefferson and Anderson's (2017) line of inquiry asks.

The Climate for Empathy

Professional empathy is increasingly recognised as a critically important dimension of social intelligence in the workplace. By recognising someone's humanity, a conceptualising of oneness and reduction in prejudice is observed in those who have been skilled in this pedagogy and approach. Empathy is then closely related to reducing prejudice by recognising another person's right to individuality. Pre-service teacher candidates are therefore expected to prepare their students to navigate this expectation of manifesting a balanced approach to interacting with human beings in workplaces and communities of the future.

Conversations about empathy and the need for it to be conceptualised and activated as pedagogy can be a reaction to the political climate of the time. In Australia, where this book and the discussions of practice take place, classrooms are grappling with increasing unrest regarding race and discrimination. The revival of far-right nationalist movements is gathering support, and during the lead-up to the previous federal election in 2019, the issue of race again became a convenient conduit to wedge politics. And yet when Australians are surveyed about their attitudes to multiculturalism and given that in Australia 30% of people speak another language (at least) and/or have parents who were born overseas, the receptivity and support for multiculturalism is high. Some social commentators and researchers are more hopeful than others. Richard Glover's (a popular radio host on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation) social satire, 'The Land Before Avocado', is a humorous reflection on life in the Australia of the 1960s and 1970s. He suggests our tolerances and active empathy look a great deal better with the benefit of hindsight. The reader of his book is both horrified and relieved simultaneously as he charts the largely racist and deeply sexist decades of the past in Australia but lands on a hopeful discourse where vignettes describing the benison that multiculturalism has brought the country provision the reader with an expectation for hopeful social improvements, including a return to tolerance.

Mitigating Bias with Empathy

Professor Tim Soutphommasane, the former (2013–2018) race discrimination commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission, wrote a blistering analysis of nationalist populism and the effects on social cohesion in his essay 'On Hate' (2019). One of the central themes of the essay

was the insidious nature of racism. Of greater concern, he wrote, was the threat specifically of racial hatred to liberal democracy. He proposed a number of ways to mitigate against what he describes as a creeping acceptance of bigotry and racism, citing the politician Fraser Anning's maiden speech in August 2018 in the Australian parliament where as a parliamentarian he suggested a 'final solution to the immigration problem' (p. 16). He used this example as indicative of the insinuation of bigotry and the way it is made manifest in our communities—urging us to a careful examination of laws regarding freedom of speech.

Soutphommasane contextualises his argument by discussing the exemplary success of decades-long policies of multiculturalism, but he cautions against acceptance of a normalising or a slippery accommodation of divisive attitudes, exemplified by attitudes found on big news organisations like Fox News and the like. Arguing that the 'culture wars' are not only about race—issues of climate change, energy, same sex and gender are, he argues, part of an agenda to signal these issues as belonging to the elite establishment and therefore they have very little to do with what concerns 'the average punter'. It is therefore in this climate of social complexity and in the daily dealings of uncertainty about jobs and future directions that students and teachers are struggling to absorb these and other concerns.

The Australian Safe Schools initiative (21 October 2010) launched to controversy and has been the subject of watering down and side-lining in the curriculum since its inception. This programme was designed as a response to the thousands of school students who reported homophobic and transphobic prejudice in their schools and classrooms, often deliberate and sometimes implied. The programme was designed to train teachers to support all students and to facilitate the skills that students require to mitigate bias and to lead productive and safe lives in the thousands of schools around the country. Over 500 schools took part in the programme, in recognition of the gap in teacher training and the serious health effects linked to safety and well-being of students. The programme led to an outcry from conservative leaders and some church groups, decrying the programme as one that sought to pressure students to alter their gender identities. In reaction to this, Benjamin Law, an Australian social researcher, writer and LGBIT advocate, wrote an essay 'Moral Panic' (2017), where he interviewed a number of students who identified as queer or trans and they described at length the brutality of their experiences at school.

The need for progressive education and developing active allies in any move to challenge prejudice of any kind is pressing. Developing methods

that reduce prejudice or heighten awareness is part of a teacher's professional obligation. In discipline areas such as drama, the professional organisation for teachers—Drama Australia—articulates a set of principles in their Equity and Diversity Guidelines (Drama Australia, 2015) that specify the intention of drama pedagogy in active inclusion. The guidelines are underpinned by the liberation politics that influence and shape drama pedagogy and practices. The guidelines articulate the following principles: equity, inclusiveness, pluralism, diversity and empowerment are notions to ensure that the practice and praxis of this discipline promote student agency and that stories are valued and heard. Part of this proposition is the professional obligation that behooves teachers to render their practices in order to reduce prejudice. This obligation moves from often deeply felt moral principles where attitudes to race, gender and sexuality are negative to a praxis that acknowledges and metes out the laws regarding bias at the very least and, ideally, recognises the professional responsibility to all students as the ideal outcome.

Critically Informed Empathy

Educators increasingly recognise that to present students with effective ways to learn means working with social and cultural differences in competent ways. Previous methods that focus on mono-cultural pedagogies are now challenged by moving from a tolerance-informed method of teaching to empathy (Angell, 1994; Greene, 1995; Holm & Aspegren, 1999; Kanpol, 1999; Macedo & Bartolomé, 1999; Morrison, 1995). Reading about issues and retelling stories (like the story of the Christmas truce) are not sufficient to engender a true or critical empathy (Boler, 1999). The pedagogy is required to be enacted in a way that does not reify or replicate 'otherness'. A pedagogy of social justice requires providing opportunities for learning that 'increase and improve the life chances of the students we teach' (Freebody and Finneran, 2015).

It is critical that learning about others does not suffer from a deficit discourse or approach that moves from rational compassion to pity. Role playing as a method risks a superficial replaying of already entrenched views and oppressive experiences. Carefully scaffolded information and lessons that provide broad material and opportunities to ask questions are key to any social change and prospect for critical empathy (see Boler's,1999, description of the text *Maus*, Spiegelman, 1996).

Various syllabus documents that act as guiding and legislative framing for the way discipline and content material is taught in schools articulate relationships, sensitivity and cultural competence as central to the way material and content is shaped and facilitated in classrooms. Arguably, the exposure to art and literature as an example through the syllabus material allows for the possibilities that students can identify with 'the other' as Rosenblatt (ref) and Dewey (ref) wrote when arguing that social imagination could propel deeper understanding and therefore render students with an enhanced democratic view of the world.

Scholars such as Boler (1999), Coplan (2011) and Nelems (2017) have recently argued that empathy is deeply problematic. If, for argument's sake, I hear a trucks' brakes squeal and the sound of screaming, I am likely to look up from whatever I am doing to ascertain what might be happening and then quickly establish the likely danger to myself and those around me, and depending on proximity to the accident, I may or may not go to the aid of the truck driver and the injured. Is this a result of my heightened empathy? Probably not. I am likely motivated by a concern for my own safety firstly and then however I act following this event will be determined probably by further motivation and, realistically, my proximity to the incident. The way I behave here has very little to do with the production of empathy and a great deal to do with conditioning. Similarly, in classrooms, attitudes to problematic behaviours and relationships in the playground become conditioned responses rather than self-reflective evaluations of the situations and the power that may reside in the exchange.

Aristotelian philosopher Nussbaum (1995), who argues that students should develop a sympathy that is underpinned by a 'poetic justice', also advocates for student responsibility as 'the foundation for dignity, freedom and democracy' (p. 156). An extension of this argument proposed by Boler (1999) is her view that passive empathy is nebulous at best and lacks the capaciousness required of a pedagogic approach or that a pedagogy of empathy explicates. Cornel West's recent republication of his book *Race Matters* (2017) discusses what he argues is the inextricable link between social justice and empathy—you can't have one without the other—that empathy is part of a repository or repertoire of emotional fluency and *critical feeling* (my emphasis).

Work on empathy should centre on students' engagement with literature and the way this engagement can be shaped in order to develop a culture or habit of empathy that challenges stereotypes and world views

that are uncritical (Boler, 1999). She problematises who in fact benefits from the production of empathy and if indeed a social imagination promotes a form of justice, such as that argued by West (2017). A proposition that a poetic justice approach advocated by Nussbaum may not in fact provide a student with a way to engage or challenge a worldview—ergo the challenge to the rigidity and patterns of thinking that allow for the harbouring of racism, for example—remains unchallenged.

As an example of a pedagogic practice, Boler (ibid.) discusses active reading practices that allow students to access flexible and analytic critical thinking skills to interrogate a multicultural curriculum. She cites the example of reading *Maus*—a graphic novel account of the causes and aspects of the Holocaust. On any measure, this powerful text uses metaphor, allegory and other sophisticated literary devices to teach about genocide. I concur with this troubling of teaching a text in isolation in order to activate empathic responses and critical feelings. A text like *Maus* needs historical situation and complete historical accounts in order to meet an educational objective and to assist with the production of empathy. She argues that testimonial reading of texts precipitates:

> self-reflective participation; an awareness first of myself as a reader, positioned in a relative position of power by virtue of the safe distance provided by a mediating text. Second, I recognize that reading potentially involves a task. The task is at a minimum an active reading practice that involves challenging my own assumptions and world view. (1999, p. 166)

Philosophers such as Hume (2006) and Nussbaum (1995) have argued that emotions play a central role in our moral behaviour and that this moral centrality propels us to action. This is the nub of arguing for an active empathy that is situative, cognitive and material (Markauskaite & Goodyear, 2017)). Empathy belongs to a suite of emotional and altruistic behaviours. The question posited here is can these altruistic emotions, of which empathy is a central tenet, be mobilised to motivate action as an inherent principle in its articulation?

The common exemplar of empathy in action is 'putting oneself in the shoes of another'—the premise of if I walk a mile in your shoes, I may be more sympathetic or piteous regarding your plight. This is the first problem of empathy and, as previously discussed, the passivity and inactivity of this response requires a personal engagement that has self as a central concern and this passive pity can be more about me than the 'other'. In

the case of multicultural education and developing a workable definition to frame empathy, I need to recognise that I can never be you and that 'empathy is only possible because of this distinction' (Boler, 1999, p. 158).

Discussion of Practice

I conducted a study (O'Grady, 2016, unpublished thesis) that examined the teaching philosophies of early career drama teachers to explore their perceptions of the relationship between social justice, drama pedagogy and teaching. In discussions of their idealism and hopes for their classrooms and students, the teachers discussed the way drama pedagogies allowed them to teach complex ideas. The affordances of drama included teaching using activities that focussed on using the drama space to prompt difficult conversations about racist behaviours or misogynist views, for example.

One of the participants in the study, David, says his role as a teacher is to be a facilitator of information and experience. Gay and Kirkland's (2003) talk about 'instructional effectiveness' (p. 181) suggesting that teachers should be continually striving to understand how they can socially interact with diverse groups of students in social contexts; they suggest that teachers should undertake a continual critical reflection of their knowledge and assumptions about the world and, of course, their students. David says that students need skills of understanding and explicitly of empathy, in order to be fully engaged as active citizens of the world. David says he knows this because part of his practice is to engage in rich conversations with his students to hear their views and to discuss them in a safe forum.

Pedagogy as a construct is completely impotent until it is activated by human agency provided by the teacher/s. David believes that students need a curriculum that also embraces the world outside the specificity of the curriculum—that students need to know where power resides in their worlds. In order to mediate the world and develop a critical consciousness about human rights, David devised a lesson using drama pedagogy to explore and disrupt socio-political ideas. His students had been studying the commedia style of performance where they were developing a drama to examine women's rights. The students decided to appropriate an episode of the popular reality television show 'The Bachelor' as the pre-text for shaping their performance.

The original premise of the programme is to parade a series of prospective partners in front of 'The Bachelor', and if the women are pleasing to him, he then presents them with a rose, eliminating the women who do not meet his expectations. The gross objectification of women and reinforcement of gender stereotypes in the television programme is in stark contrast to the message of empowering women that should permeate classroom discourses. David says the students' performances broke boundaries because they examined, tested and talked about their ideas without fear of reprisal or ridicule owing to the protocols of the drama classroom.

The idea that drama pedagogy provides an exemplary platform to allow students to engage in ideas, problems, relationships and institutions in different ways that promote asking questions is critical for learning about empathy. This doesn't mean of course that drama is unproblematic. Drama pedagogy is a tool that requires skilful execution by trained teachers. They need to know their discipline content and the classroom context to allow new possibilities for understanding the world and thinking critically and empathetically about human interactions.

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CHAPTER 4

Towards a Pedagogy of Empathy

Abstract Recent work by Hughes (*Understanding Prejudice and Education: The Challenge for Future Generations*. London: Routledge, 2007) explored the impact of different learning experiences with an explicit focus on empathy as part of the international baccalaureate programme. By carefully crafting pedagogy and literature chosen for the specific purpose of moderating harmful bias, Hughes observed an integrated and harmonious classroom as a result. As he noted, empathy is not a natural antidote to prejudice as it does require careful scaffolding and explicit teaching. This chapter discusses empathy as a newly framed pedagogy that moves from passive to active given appropriate, considered conditions and developmental spectrum. Empathy becomes more meaningful as the experience moves towards the realm of lived experience and learning by doing or, in other words, a participatory approach. In Harper Lee's seminal story of overcoming prejudice *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the protagonist and attorney Atticus Finch notes, 'you never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view … until you climb into his skin and walk around in it' (1960). This chapter makes the claim that empathy as a newly framed pedagogy will transform approaches in teacher training that align with transformative learning practices and meets the needs both professional and ideological of teachers in twenty-first-century classrooms.

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Keywords Bias • Scaffolding • Transformative learning • Teacher professional learning • Reflective practice • Deep learning • Performative pedagogy • Habit of mind • Productive pedagogy • Embodied • Play • Imagination • Space • Silence • Structure • Safety • Surprise

Renewing Teacher Education

Empathy is a critical and interpretative piece in the development and renewal of initial teacher education programmes for the no longer new, twenty-first century. Scholar Nicole Mockler (2005) contends that the very best teaching occurs when teacher training values its own and where teacher formation takes account of the privilege to work alongside human beings who are ethical and socially just in all their actions.

In a similar epistemological vein, I have previously argued (O'Grady, 2016) that drama teachers position themselves to embrace this transformative approach because of the inherencies of drama situated in their practices within the discipline. Drama-rich pedagogies and creative approaches to teaching and transformation lend themselves naturally to imaginative recreation, allowing students to explore empathy in multiple ways. This participatory and collaborative approach is meritorious in initial teacher education programmes (this will be discussed in more detail in Chaps. 5 and 6). Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009) examined the critical place for courage and trust in teacher professional learning, in the age of compliance. They argue that professional trust and courage have long been a hallmark of dedicated educators, and this extends to include the place of transformative empathy as a facet of teachers' work and as a formative pedagogy that should be explicit in initial teacher education programmes. By acknowledging the privilege and responsibility that comes with teachers' work, this contribution shapes attitudes that teachers have towards their discipline and work in any school or classroom.

The shifts and changes that currently permeate the landscape of teaching and the work of teachers, certainly in Western contexts, mean initial teacher education programmes are also wrestling with the vexed nature of what constitutes essential components of their degree structures. In Australia alone, teacher education programmes differ from those offered in highly urbanised settings, offering a discipline-rich and praxis-oriented programme of 4 or 5 years and a degree in both discipline and education,

through regional providers that purvey an almost exclusively online degree structure with professional experience, the only relational aspect of the degree. This begs the question of what will our teaching profession look like in the latter part of the twenty-first century, taking account of the variance of programme provision? What are the distinguishing features of a 'good' teaching degree? And what will school and the role of teachers in the institution look like? These vexing questions lead any discussion in the formation of best practice and praxis. Mockler argues (2011) that an instrumentalist approach to teachers and their identities fails to wrestle with the complexities and uncertainties of the future and, thus, the place and responsibilities of teachers. Additionally, researchers and futurists question the role of teachers and teaching, taking account of the rigidity and compliance orientation of school structures, mitigated by policy edicts and the fast-paced changes and concerns faced by our students.

An assessment of what constitutes teacher identity and its continual evolvement is an important piece in why empathy and empathic intelligences are salient in any nuancing of reformative curricula for teacher training. Harkening back to Dewy (1934) and his discussion of the purpose of schooling provides a provocative deliberation that any consideration of schools and teaching should take account of the reflective and reflexive aspects of the work. The technical and reductionist views purveyed by directorial mandates often appear distrustful of school and the place of teachers in this expanse and this requires careful scrutiny. Teachers are proud of work that combines both the affective and the effective. A classroom full of human beings with their own stories, lives, loves and losses requires teachers to work not only with their heads but as Nias (1989) reflected with their hearts also. Teaching requires a confluence of emotion and heart work with the intellectual work we expect of them. In consideration of these traits, any planned school transformation should acknowledge that these are the qualities, values and virtues that underpin any rationale for transformational and exigent change.

For too long teachers and teacher education providers have had to contend with the implications of the nefarious idea of 'quality'. Quality, as a term of measurement, is used in association with the commercial aspects of teaching, and 'pervasion and associated implications of standardisation, testing regimes, and empty measurement rhetoric have positioned it as a "weasel word"' (ref). The exciting challenge of transformation and pedagogic shifts presented by the changing nature of what schools should prepare students for is the opportunity presented to align long-held values

and virtues—considered inherencies of teacher practice, with knowledge and curriculum redesign. Ethical practices and virtue are seminal constructs of any *quality* associated with provisioning teachers and their training, according to Groundwater-Smith and Mockler (2009). They argue for a shift in thinking about teacher practice that divests the commerciality and puts the moral work of teachers and educators firmly back in their safe hands. In doing so this opens up the space for countenancing empathy as a newly framed pedagogy within this space.

Shifts and Changes: A Future-Focused Approach

The OECD (2018) declared in *The Future of Education and Skills 2030* project that the adroitness students would demand to mitigate the complexities and the unknown of the future would require dexterity in navigating these uncertainties by drawing on skills and aptitudes for resilience, curiosity, imagination and self-regulation, all achievable, by activating pedagogies that are informed by principles of deep learning. The OECD's working document argues that the unprecedented challenges of the social, environmental, economic and technological precipitate interventions that take account of these domains. The document importantly places student agency as the focal tenet of a futurist education system and structure. In terms of what students might need in their competency tool kits, the organisation also advocates for a reflexivity that allows students to respond to a variety of given social and economic circumstances with highly developed skills that are both meta-cognitive and social.

This unprecedented articulation of creativity, compassion, mindfulness, authenticity and *empathy*, as cornerstones of an educational framework, provides a unique opportunity for educators to look beyond the constraints of measurement and to conceive of an education that is rich in epistemic fluency and discipline richness but also takes a 'slow teaching' (Ewing, 2016) approach where students can immerse themselves in knowledge building and understanding that takes them on a profound and self-directed search for knowledge where these constructs can be discovered and, ultimately, activated by students.

Pedagogy as 'the Spine' of Any Approach to Teacher Education

Nomenclature is critical in vesting power and agency back into the hands of teachers with language as critical form of activism, and the effective use of terms such as pedagogy and praxis is no exception. Mockler and

Groundwater-Smith (2017) argue for a wresting back of the nomenclature of teaching from those that are distinctly neo-liberal and divest agency from teachers. Pedagogy as nomenclature is the beating heart in the practice of teaching. Performing and modelling as an empathically literate person is crucial in manifesting a Freirean (1970) view of teaching for a critical consciousness. Teachers should not shy away from addressing difficult social problems; however, careful training in these pedagogies is required particularly in any higher education context (Giroux, 2014).

Advocates for creativity in pedagogy that hones self-reflection, empowerment and agency and pushes against conformist or neo-liberal agendas in schools argue that imaginative and creative pedagogies lead to hopeful resistance of dominant discourses. In a similar vein, Coplan (2011) proposes that an effective conceptualisation of empathy requires complex and imaginative processes that allow a situative, psychological stance to be adopted whilst at the same time maintaining a clear and cogent self and other differentiation. It is from these ideas and arguments that a focus on critical and performative pedagogy becomes key.

An increasingly broad range of thinkers, scholars and educators are calling for ways to think about and teach empathy for a variety of purposes—some to meet superficial outcomes mandated by standards or compliances and others in pursuit of what can predominantly be couched as 'character education'. Schools in the international baccalaureate tradition, for example, articulate character education as seminal in their educational philosophy. This proves problematic in a pedagogic sense given that an all-encompassing view of empathy risks what Coplan (ibid.) describes as 'pseudo-empathy' and can prove more damaging than inaction or indifference. Her argument distinguishes the differences in the processes of acquiring and performing empathy, highlighting the distinctions between the 'conceptual, empirical and normative reasons for keeping them theoretically and conceptually distinct' (p. 40).

At the time of writing this book, the president of the United States of America, Donald Trump, had spoken derogatorily about four congresswomen of colour resulting, naturally, in heightened emotions about race and birthright. At subsequent rallies, Trump supporters chanted 'send them back' and Trump made no attempt (despite his protestations to the contrary when he was interviewed about this later) to douse the flames of hate and racial intolerance.

This is in stark contrast to the previous two terms of President Barack Obama who said in 2006 that he believed America needed to worry less about the federal deficit and more about what he described as 'the

empathy deficit' taking hold of the country at the time. In a similar vein Jacinda Ardern, the prime minister of New Zealand, mentioned in the introductory chapter, spoke in Melbourne, Australia, in 18 July 2019 and proposed to Australians to think about 'prosperity' through a different lens, other than economic. In sum, her argument was that if we cannot swim in rivers due to increasing pollution and inaction on climate change, if children are suffering the ill effects of impoverished health care because of lack of access and if people are increasingly homeless and transient because housing affordability is problematic, can we describe ourselves as prosperous? This line of argument accords strongly with the third challenge in the OECD's 2030 Learning Framework (2018) that identifies the social concerns that students need to navigate. Students need to think differently about the climate and urban ways of living that take account of increasingly diverse cultures and inequities in populations.

I would also argue that in the current climate of social complexity and often binary views of what constitutes citizenship and democracy, teaching and moving towards a pedagogy of empathy is of greater concern than ever before in order to facilitate how we might understand each other and how we arrive at our views and make moral decisions about the positions we take. The classroom and pedagogy performed in the classroom becomes paramount in creating the conditions to achieving this.

In framing any pedagogy and practice–praxis about empathy, it is useful to reference the United Nations and human rights education as the foundation for thinking about teaching and learning about practising human rights. As the *Human Rights Watch World Report* (2000) says:

> school is the major vehicle for humanism … Education can function as a unifying factor and produce informed and active citizens of an interdependent world … United Nations initiated in human rights and peace pedagogy. (Frantzi, 2004, p. 1)

To develop students' capacities to move from the very ego-driven position of childhood and to develop perception and awareness of others and their needs, schools need to provide ways of knowing and the space to explore and mitigate these challenges. One of the challenges for schools is to allow students the freedom to critique and to reflect what authorities and the subsequent rules and views that are presented to them. This accords strongly with Freire's views of a liberatory education (1970) and human rights education principles that take advantage of the pro-social

behaviours demonstrated by students and children whilst at school, especially in the secondary or elementary levels of education.

Dewey's (1922) work in the area of schools and human nature that advances the concept of 'intelligent sympathy' as a way to promote and shape a democratic classroom for personal growth assigns agency to all students in the decision making and learning process. The most common barrier to achieving intelligent sympathy as a precursor to developing effective skills in empathy is that schools are by their very nature established on hierarchical models. Education on or about human rights tends to be taught in a conceptual and factual manner and emphasises the *why* rather than the *how* of human rights—a passive rather than active or performed manner. A pedagogy of critical empathy that has been well crafted can offer students the opportunity to perform as empaths because they are empowered with measures to understand what they are able to achieve by taking control of their lives through purposeful decision making, informed by a critical understanding.

The importance of understanding how rich the pro-social capacities of students are for developing behaviours that are empathic or intelligently sympathetic cannot be underestimated. At the same time that rally cries of 'send them back' (regarding political candidates of colour in the United States) ring out, huge numbers of students across the globe walked out of classrooms in the same year, to attend organised rallies calling attention to the pressing nature, they argue, of adult inaction on climate change. We know that as children these students developed skills in empathy, generally by role taking and imaginatively recreating scenarios, whether they were in classrooms or through play that provided the foundation in concert with other influences such as home and care, for them to take a perspective and form a view as their inalienable right. Simple role playing allows us to develop a capacity to perceive an understanding of another's perspective and to understand emotions, feelings and views. These and other skills are the building blocks of critical empathy, but they rely on opportunities to perform these and other skills, by adults for the most part.

Reflection and Action

The concept that Dewey introduced about intelligent sympathy is grounded in the idea that classrooms are in fact the crucible for any testing of ideas about social justice. It is the real-time practice in humanistic behaviours and their acquisition that Dewey was hopeful of achieving by

arguing for democratic and social classrooms that build on friendships and relationships. Dewey (1922) argued that children develop reasoning and subsequent 'intelligent sympathy' when they learn to move from the egocentrism of very young children to increasingly reciprocal and equal relationships that are characterised by behaviours in elementary and secondary schools. Building on these established pro-social behaviours provides the point of departure for moving towards a pedagogy of empathy by building on the principles of intelligent sympathy laid out by Dewey.

Frantzi (2004) identifies the analytic position of teachers in this process of developing intelligent sympathy and argues that the role of teachers in modelling altruistic behaviour is essential for creating the conditions for students to learn about relatedness, interest and the rights of others, pointing to the part intelligent sympathy plays in the way we learn to live. It reminds us that each one can and should be a moral prophet of humanity (Dewy, 1934).

In designing and performing a pedagogy of empathy, the importance of reflection as a key consideration cannot be underestimated. Reflection, reflective practice and critique promote a condition that allows students (or any person using this premise) to question what they may have taken for granted or see as common-sense ideas that are often just masked prejudice. Arriving at any understanding of what may not be a popular idea can prove difficult for adolescents who are developing their morality and positions and are vulnerable to criticism. Understanding marginal positions and dominant discourses allows students to become practised in being open-minded and discerning when it comes to a raft of humanistic ideas, particularly those of race, ethnicity, ability and difference. Understanding culture and becoming culturally competent and therefore literate is one of the hopeful outcomes of creating a classroom of intelligent sympathisers and future empaths.

Developing heightened skills of emotion or emotional intelligence has always been seen as an inferior undertaking compared with truly intellectual pursuit seen attributed as masculine and any study of emotion seen as a feminine response. Feminist scholars have done much to disabuse this premise and Boler's treatise 'Feeling Power' (1999) along with work by bell hooks 'Teaching to Transgress' (1994) began the slow and often criticised articulation of the paramount importance and legitimation of emotions in the work of schooling and the reception of curriculum, by students. As previously noted, the OECD's (2018) concerns about the proliferation

of artificial intelligences and the place therefore of emotions as non-replicable intelligences in the work of schools and teachers lend gravitas to developing pedagogies of empathy. Boler's work theorises not only the gendered perceptions of emotions, but importantly she upends the idea that education in emotions and affective intelligences should be or can be passive. Instead she renders as critical to any education the idea that education in emotion must go further than the empirical, the rhetorical and the ideological—she offers instead 'a pedagogy of discomfort' (p. 175). Any truly effective pedagogy and teachable moment must also have a disruptive and contestable element that requires intellectual perspective taking and multiple views.

A pedagogy of discomfort's foundational principle is the notion that all education must necessarily be ethical and that to carefully plan for and activate pedagogies that challenge passivity and instead facilitate ways of knowing is required in order that students take away capacities to transform. This is of course, as Boler says, not without risks (p. xv). By legitimising emotions and considering them as part of a productive and transformative pedagogy, she maintains that this offers students and the teachers and educators facilitating the pedagogy opportunities to resist oppressive ideas and to richly explore social justice and education.

As previously noted, empathy in my conceptualisation as a pedagogic practice is necessarily a deeply cognitive and deliberative act. I build upon Boler's (1999) claim that in order to conceive of a better and more just world, we need to analyse why and how emotions can shape scholarly work 'as well as pedagogical recognition of how emotions shape our classroom interactions' (p. xv). Empathy as a pedagogy can challenge previously passive and self-indulgent or pseudo-empathy (Coplan, 2011) to a practice that can be applied in any place of emotion in order to improve understanding and deep connectedness in human life.

In a study I conducted (O'Grady, 2016), a number of early career drama teachers were asked questions about the way they thought about teaching for and about social justice and education in emotion, and whilst their responses differed in terms of how they conceptualised this work, they unanimously reflected upon the necessarily activist nature of delivering a pedagogy that challenges the status quo. In other more siloed and traditional disciplines such as science and math or English, they believed the confines of those disciplines and the strictures of the physical classrooms inhibited their freedom to deliver an active or transformative pedagogy.

As Boler consistently argues, a pedagogy of discomfort must offer the student a moment to rail against reductionist or overly compliant curriculum and 'to learn to see things differently, no matter how perilous the course for all involved' (1999, p. 176). In the 2011 study Elena, one of the participants and an early career teacher, noted that despite being forbidden by the school executive from holding an awareness campaign called 'Wear It Purple Day'™ to raise awareness of issues and difficulties facing LGBQTI students, she believed that the students in her classes held dominant views about sexual orientation that led to the exclusion of students who were queer and/or questioning. Her belief was that this lack of understanding had deleterious effects on the mental health of the students who were wresting with sexual and identity orientation.

By way of an example of reflection and action, Elena continued her campaign to raise awareness, risking sanction by the school executive because her perception of the role of educator was to engage students in critical inquiry not only in discipline studies but also in the wider school community. Undertaking an empathic understanding of how these students might be feeling required, in a non-threatening way, a necessary discomfort, but for this act to be truly transformative, this discomfort calls for action—a pedagogic practice.

Empathy as Habituated Practice

Scholars such as Larocco (2017) discuss empathy as an orientation not a form of motivation. Empathy and the act of empathising is not a natural act for every person and may not 'engage the other's alterity at all' (p. 13). How a student or teacher performs empathy or an empathic act can be dependent on their emotional repertoire and their sympathy towards the question or concern they face. An ideal outcome of the applied practice of empathy is that it becomes reflexive, critical, habituated and inherent in the way we behave in the world.

So, what does empathy as a habit of mind look like? Far from a spurious and lofty ideal, creating a climate and condition for the flourishing of empathic practices and students as natural empaths means building upon already well-trodden ways of learning and using learned beliefs to critique the familiar, in a safe space. Schools and educational institutions have been the vessel for character education or morality building, whether they have acknowledged and/or embraced that charge or not. Those schools in the religious tradition and independent of state educational bodies pronounce

habits of character or character formation in their prospectus and pedagogy. A habit of pedagogy is less familiar and requires a challenge to firm beliefs and is often risky.

Habits are hard to break and easier to assume or take up. Dewey (1922) talks about habit as something that requires reaching down to the very nature of who we are and thinking about facing loss (perhaps cultural, personal, spiritual) regularly in order to increase sensitivity. Alice Miller refers to 'poisonous pedagogies', a term she uses to describe the way we teach students to accept the status quo by not allowing them to notice the immediate threats to their agency and dominion in the classroom. To create empathy as a habit of mind, I borrow from Greene (1995) and the work of those scholars in the field of drama and theatre, particularly Stanislavski (1949), to nurture empathy as a habit by 'disturbing the familiar and making the familiar strange'. Relying on the traditions of theatre and drama-rich pedagogies, initial teacher education programmes can offer training teachers methods to engender humanity in their classrooms and enrich their own teacher artistry. The following chapter describes the action and applied nature of the pedagogy in practice.

Discussion of Practice

The iconic children's book *Peter Pan* (J.M. Barrie, originally written in 1904) is a tale about the quixotic Peter, who never wants to grow up. One of the enduring themes of the book is when children grow up into adults, they lose their ability to imagine and, of course, to play. The importance of play cannot be underestimated in any pedagogy that aspires to develop habits of empathy. Play and imagination were so important to Peter Pan that he refused to relinquish his imagination and, hence, refused to grow up.

The following example describes a carefully developed teacher professional learning experience (O'Grady and Smyth, 2017) that used play and imagination as the principal tool for teachers to develop an empathetic response to teaching about the complexity of growing up in an uncertain future, with elementary students. One of the salient findings of this project was the profound effect that an embedded method of play, in their practice, has on the way teachers viewed their work in the classroom.

This project was undertaken with teachers in a rural and regional context where access to teacher professional learning is often sporadic. Given this context and in trying to provide a learning experience for all the

teachers that transcends discipline specificity whilst still providing a common thread of understanding, this led us to develop an experience centring on commemoration and memory. The pedagogy we recruited precipitated playful and creative ways to generate new ways of learning by imagining. Fundamental to the success of the experience relied on meeting some conditions that included careful use of a suite of circumstances critical to engendering a climate of empathy. The ideal conditions and circumstances are space, silence, structure, safety and surprise (p. 160).

Space is an interchangeable concept but in essence it refers to a literal and a figurative space that works best for a pedagogy that engenders empathy. Space in this context refers to a condition where a particular vulnerability can be essential as a condition for learning and then as a productive outcome. Space provides the crucible for the generation of ideas and the forum in which to challenge them.

Structure and safety refer to conditions for learning where opportunities to test and contest boundaries require a safe and distinct structure in a creative setting, where deeper questions can be asked in a structured and pedagogic manner. This provisioning of a set of learning circumstances allows an opportunity for teachers to move from lower-order thinking questions such as *what* and *when* to asking the deeply empathic question *what if*?

One of the revelatory findings in developing critical pedagogy for deep empathy is the utilisation of *silence* as a pedagogic tool. Silences that are created through moments of emotion and physical stillness and silences that allow for an embodied representation of ideas and conjecture are effective in recreating experiences and stories. Teachers described the experience of playing in the silences as a way of thinking differently about achieving inclusivity in the classroom.

Drama, play and creative practices have, in this professional learning experience, allowed for the legitimation of imagining as a pedagogic tool in the way teachers and educators approach knowledge acquisition and the getting of empathy. The element of surprise is not just a description of teaching new strategies but really refers to the student responses to creative experiences. Recreating sounds for example is unique to every experience and to every participant. The surprise element in sharing stories and asking better questions deepens the understanding of perspectives and heightens empathy. The knowledge that can be gained from work that is generated by imagining and play can be implemented into curriculum design, professional development and opportunities for learning in the

classroom that encourage thinking in and about the world. The five S's of *space*, *silence*, *structure*, *safety* and *surprise* illuminate the way we think about play and imagination.

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CHAPTER 5

Using Theatrical Traditions to Teach Empathy

Abstract This chapter considers traditions in the theatre as the basis for learning that transforms dimensions of teacher training including specific training in empathy. The affect and effect of the arts and creativity on pedagogy has garnered renewed scrutiny (Anderson, The Challenge of Post-Normality to Drama Education and Applied Theatre. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance, 19*(1), 110–120, 2014) as the nature of schooling and work changes and societally we continue to grapple with concerns about the global economy, health, environment and social challenges. Critiquing theatrical traditions to activate methods to teach *with*, *for* and *about* empathy is the line of inquiry in this chapter. Experiencing through an artistic medium such as theatre allows us an experience that might engrave a lesson on our heart. Speculation, by contrast, leaves us untouched and disengaged from the reality of other people according to the British playwright, Sarah Kane (1971–1999).

By exploring the traditions of the theatre, specifically Stanislavski's method acting (*An Actor Prepares.* New York: Theater Arts Books, 1936), process drama (Bowell & Heap, *Planning Process Drama, Enriching Teaching and Learning* (2nd ed.). Abingdon, England: Routledge, 1995) and drama-rich pedagogies (Ewing, *Drama-Rich Pedagogy and Becoming Deeply Literate: Drama Australia Monograph No. Twelve.* Brisbane: Drama Australia, 2019), teachers in training can enhance their understanding of the diverse social and cultural needs of the students in their care. Pedagogy

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and praxis that is firmly situated in enactment and uses the imagination as a generative tool can facilitate an understanding of multiple perspectives by 'walking in someone else's shoes' (Ewing & Simons, 2004). The term process drama refers to a participatory and engaging form of theatre tailored to the task of teaching and learning, where a factual pre-text from any discipline area or domain can be used to imagine real events. In a process drama the participants assume different roles and undertake aesthetic and creative opportunities through highly structured dramatic activities. Fiorella and Mayer (2015) argue that when students receive the appropriate guidance, the act of imagining can be a powerful pedagogical tool. Key to this model is the active co-construction of meaning by teachers and students and its transformation into relevant and consequential knowledge.

Keywords Theatrical traditions • Factual pre-text • Co-construction • Consequential knowledge • Etude • Improvisation • Drama praxis • Productive empathy • Ethic of care • Active analysis • Communities of practice

The Benefits of Drama-Rich Pedagogies

Previous chapters have argued why empathy should have a critical place in any newly conceived curriculum and attempt at school transformation. This chapter unpacks the method teachers and those facilitating knowledge might actualise through the activation of the long traditions of theatre as a pedagogic and didactic tool, to explicitly teach empathy as a critical concept and behaviour.

The benefits of drama-rich pedagogies in the teaching of various disciplines are many. Primarily, the learning experience encourages students and teachers to 'hold a mirror' up to their views and, as a result of that insight, perhaps change views or gain an 'empathic understanding' (Arnold, 2005) of the plight or circumstances of others. Equally, drama-rich pedagogies and process drama enable a reflective and critical approach to the acquisition of discipline knowledge, thus fostering independent thinking now considered a goal in classrooms of the twenty-first century.

Recent research into the benefits of an education rich in experiences of and with the arts (Ewing; Anderson et al.) has revealed what many teachers practising in these areas and disciplines have always known—that the

arts (and relevant here in this work about becoming empathic), drama and theatre can provide the necessary disciplinary and methodological framework to facilitate a deep understanding of complex ideas. This chapter considers research specifically on the impact of using drama-rich pedagogies and theatrical traditions and explores why this particular pedagogy can be a powerful tool for developing a transformational view of empathy.

Adolescence is a time of enormous social and emotional growth, and contrary to the mythology that surrounds this period, teenagers are often the most politically and ideologically attuned members of any community. Recently, around the world, huge numbers of school students, led by Swedish activist, Greta Thunberg, abandoned their classrooms to attend a series of protests about what they saw as gross inaction by successive world leaders on climate change. They risked the punitive measures threatened by their schools and, predictably, the backlash of the conservative commentators in order to attend the strike rally—hardly the actions of a politically naïve and disengaged millennial cohort. One of the reiterations in their protest banners was their collective frustration at what they believe is the very obvious and immediate effects of climate change and older generations' refusal to act.

The Portability of Theatrical Methods

Remote and regional parts of Australia have historically held conservative views about a raft of issues, particularly regarding immigration for example. Practitioners and teachers in these remote and sometimes low socio-economic areas have also expressed interest in methods that would engage their students and allow them opportunities to challenge assumptions especially about race and religious beliefs. In a research project conducted at the University of Sydney, Australia (2018), teachers in rural and regional areas talked about how difficult being a young teacher was in classrooms that were sometimes divided on racial and religious battlegrounds. Increasing pressures of testing and the economic pressure of the ongoing drought in Australian country towns were cited as the two most pressing issues that teachers had to contend with. The agility provided by theatrical traditions in a classroom that might lack access to technology is that facilitating this learning experience requires very little by way of resourcing, other than teacher training. The body, the self and the imagination are all tools that transcend race, economic inhibitors and the like. Using a pretext (Saunders, 2015) requires only one rich resource and can be chosen

from a wide range of material to inspire students and to act as the jumping off point into discussion about any given issue that might lead to empathic understanding. As a pedagogy and praxis, this fits any paradigm of a socially just praxis.

The playwrights and actors, who took part in a study about the getting of empathy (see Chap. 6 for detailed discussions of praxis), found commonality with teachers when they discussed the unpredictability of audiences and the pressures on young playwrights to produce work that was different but 'safe'. Similarly, teachers are encouraged to pursue 'safe' pedagogies that lead to predictable outcomes for their students. Teachers in the reference group, as part of the study, also discussed the risk involved in deviating from the standard or linear approach to pedagogy and the fact that this also constrained their students' intellectual freedom.

Risky and Experimental Pedagogy

Every playwright worth their salt would argue that their writing provides them with an opportunity to experiment with ideas. Sometimes their experiments are met with success, commercial or critical, but often their work doesn't make it off the page. As an experimental pedagogy, etude and improvisation to facilitate the developing of empathy were catalysed in the 'huddle' project (see Chap. 6 for discussions of practice), and clear distinctions were drawn between the two concepts of etudes and improvisations as didactic tools and methods. The actors described the differences in their practices between etude and improvisation and discussed ways the group could pillage the practice for teacher training in empathy.

Etude when performed with fidelity in the Stanislavskian (1949) tradition generally follows a text as compared with an improvisation which follows a theme. Using a text for an etude means free reading by the actor or performer and intuiting the text which has previously been unseen or unrehearsed. An etude performed with integrity should allow the play to be studied for its action, developed alongside the text which is used as a physical map. An etude inhibits some of the freedoms of improvisation because the text is the map—any diversion means you become lost in a tangent. Far from being inhibiting for performers, devotees of the method report that the freedom an actor is given in an etude is emotional or empathic allowing for a true perspective of the character's actions. This method when captured as a pedagogy and praxis is productive in teaching

about affective issues and allows students the agency and liberty to explore their own perceptions about a given situation or circumstance.

In developing a mandate that ensures common prosperity and longevity, the OECD recognises part of global and social challenges is, where there is widening conflict along ideological and religious lines, there is also a growing mistrust in governments particularly in Western societies where transparency and access to unfettered government machinations can no longer be assured. This uncertainty precipitates opportunities, if taken, to embrace or conversely rail against the complexity of societal problems. The teaching profession in Australia reflects the increasing social and cultural diversity that the organisation speaks of, and for this and other reasons, the social piece in the educational transformation is key to evolving this pedagogy in meaningful ways. Finding new ways to ensure the fidelity of diversity and its profound benefits to our society is a key tenet in this pedagogy of empathy using theatre as the impetus.

Rich discussions between the playwrights, actors and activists were had about the common concerns in developing and knowing more about human behaviours and what inhibits empathy. Many of their concerns reflected what the OECD has identified as ongoing issues that require nuancing and thoughtful pedagogy to address these problems. At the conclusion of the research huddle, it was useful to map these concerns against those articulated by the position paper (2018) and to identify where the theatrical methods we had worked on could make inroads in the identified areas of interest.

As part of the discussions, the actors asked the teachers what their principal concerns were in teaching about any complex human behaviours. The issues the teachers found most confronting and difficult to deal with in their classrooms were those of race and generalised intolerance. The teachers in regional areas were conscious that many of their students had little experience with multiculturalism as their communities tended to be Anglo-Saxon with smaller populations of Aboriginal people. In contrast to the regional teachers and their experiences, urban teachers reported that as many as 30 language groups could be represented in the one classroom, and this presented unique problems as the diversity may also include students from warring and opposing culture groups. By utilising a text and performance in the tradition of an etude and a scaffolded approach to broach contentious issues, the teachers found an almost immediate effect in reducing prejudice and heightening empathy in their students' behaviour and attitudes.

Theatrical Traditions and Drama

The theatre has a long history in Western and Eastern contexts of provoking the public discourses about the social, economic and historical—great tomes have been written that analyse the place of theatre in shifting perspectives and/or reinforcing a political ideology.

One of the affordances of drama pedagogy is the way it precipitates an active and embodied way to learn about human perspectives and the world around us. In drama practice the concept of praxis captures the underpinning theory of learning and cognition with the active engagement or 'the doing'. Derived from the Brazilian educator Freire's philosophy (1970), a critical piece in this concept is the way reflective practice can be used. This practice can propel students who engage in this learning with an understanding about others and their predicaments.

In some educational spheres practice and praxis and drama and theatre are seen as tensions—the theorists in opposition to the practitioners and vice versa and the drama practitioners concerned with process and the theatre practitioners with product. Much has been written about this debate and, whilst in some quarters these tensions have resolved, it is the principles and traditions that are useful here in developing empathic intelligence and practices, rather than ideologic positions on theatre and drama.

One of the gifts of the drama and theatre world is that praxis is an inherency in both contexts. One cannot exist without the other and, as facilitators of this methodology argue, this way of learning is characterised by the imaginary and 'doing' the imaginary work. Drama praxis and theatre processes are characterised by connections and relationships—to texts, to character, to ideals, to tensions, etc. The hallmark of this work is its co-constructive and group approach which lends itself to the work of empathy and rational compassion. As Taylor (2004) observed, it can sometimes be glossed over by educators that the work of drama is to provide 'improvisational encounters' in different contexts (p. 9). These encounters are negotiated by students and this brings with it the necessary considerations and challenges but at its heart—drama *and* theatre are about human experiences.

Robyn Ewing (2019b), a leader in the field of literacy, drama and initial teacher education, has long argued for creative arts and drama-rich pedagogies as vital to the social, emotional and intellectual well-being of any society (p. 9). Her argument extends the premise that drama-rich pedagogies and theatre practices develop critical understanding in the 'other'

4C's (Gibson & Ewing, 2019). They describe these abilities as curiosity, compassion, connection and courage. These critical concepts provide the framework for teachers and students to habituate the action and activity of making a difference by heightening skills of empathic intelligence and the creation of *empathic leaders*. As Ewing reflects, it is not sufficient for us as human beings to be empathetic or to profess to have empathy for someone or something—this passivity as Boler (1999) also argues is unproductive. A productive empathy developed by utilising the methods of theatre practitioners can produce deeply literate empaths.

Differentiating Between Pedagogy and Theatrical Traditions

The debates regarding what constitutes dramatic pedagogies, process drama, theatrical practices and traditions have vexed many in the educational sphere. Ewing's (2019a) careful and purposeful arrival at *drama-rich pedagogies* as nomenclature that captures the work described herein is the culmination of theories and practices–praxis that takes account of relational pedagogy, critical pedagogy, process drama and dramatic inquiry as examples of terms that can be used to describe the way teachers and facilitators interact and co-construct learning processes with drama.

Drama-rich pedagogies capture the seminal aspects of learning with play, the imagination, creative practices, embodied ways of knowing, perspective taking, collaboration and dialogic interaction (Miller & Saxton, 2005, p. 5). All the aforementioned elements of drama (this list is not exhaustive or definitive) contribute to the way students learn about being in the world and these *wonderments* (O'Grady & Smyth, 2017, unpublished) that allow students to assume different perspectives and to understand disparate points of view. This aligns with the way Stein (1964) conceptualises empathy as a process. Stein's original work posits that through acts of empathy we can come to learn what type of person we are. This is partly because through acts of empathy we can become more fully aware of what it is that we actually value.

One of the cornerstones of drama-rich pedagogy is the physical enactment or embodiment of a character or construct. Physically 'walking in someone else's shoes' (Ewing & Saunders, 2016) provides teachers with the premise for curriculum and activities where a student is allowed under the skin of a character. This idea of physically embodying or taking on the

characteristics of another person's situation has been problematised recently as a limitation rather than a precept for empathy. Boler's pedagogy of discomfort (1999, p. 175) debunks the idea that a simple act of walking in the shoes of another is sufficient experience to precipitate a truly empathic response. Research and some examples of practice would disavow this claim as insufficiently nuanced. The act of reimagining a character and thinking, moving and making decisions as they would is a powerful and critical performance in empathy.

In a similar vein, pre-service students who participate in the process drama 'Stolen' (Saunders, 2015) engaged in activities based on testimonial given at the Australian Royal Commission into the Stolen Generation of Aboriginal children and tabled as part of the findings and report 'Bringing Them Home' (1997). Pre-service teachers when asked about the effects of participating in this co-constructed drama commented on the powerful way it made them feel about this dark past and how this would change the way they teach issues about dislocation and belonging. Critically, they also said that this experience developed a heightened cultural competence in their classroom practices.

Method Acting and an Ethic of Care

A frustration that is almost universal in theorising empathy as an active practice is that whilst empathy or any development that heightens consciousness about becoming more humane is agreed upon as a good thing, many scholars (Noddings, 1984; Nussbaum, 1995; Verducci, 2000) agree that the ephemerality of the concept empathy leaves teachers, in particular, grappling with how to actually teach it. In the previous chapter, discussion about moving towards a pedagogy of empathy has positioned empathy and empathic practice as a key piece in any contemporary curriculum in the face of the unknowable future. Teachers are increasingly asked to assume administrative and bureaucratic roles, in an already full teaching schedule, and this necessarily means the applied practices of achieving a classroom of functioning empaths should be captured by achievable steps and lesson planning.

As Miller and Saxton (2016) have encouraged, it is insufficient to engage with a feeling or an affective notion without building knowledge as part of the learning experience. Fundamental in this knowledge building is the act of asking better questions and of noticing. Asking better questions means placing student questions at the centre of good teaching

practice. Allowing time for students to respond, modelling thought processes to reach a conclusion to a question or going deeper by asking additional questions is good teaching practice. In the diverse and culturally rich classrooms across different hemispheres, teachers and students stand to benefit (and, ultimately, societally) from an enhanced understanding of each other. Konrath et al.'s 2011 study reported that empathy in students had diminished significantly in the conversational arts, because texting was increasingly replacing facial interaction. Miller and Saxton (2018) offer several steps in the way conversations can be enlarged in classrooms including by explicitly teaching critical thinking, building a healthy community of inquiry and engaging in deep reflection as a dimension of empathic awareness. An additional dimension should be added to this list of critical inherencies for successful and rich learning and is based on the principles of etude derived from method acting.

Method acting as developed originally by Konstantin Stanislavski is the most popular means to teach acting in Western contexts. Originating in Russia and adopted in America, there are various interpretations of this method. Briefly summed up, the method centres on the idea that by discovering a character's inner and emotional life, an actor's intentions and motivations can be made real in any performance. A celebrated example of this method is that employed by American actor Dustin Hoffman who played a marathon runner being chased by Nazis in the film Marathon Man (1976). In keeping with this reliance on method acting, Hoffman rarely slept and ran hundreds of miles under duress in order to understand the experience of the character. This is neither practical nor desirable for school students; however, the premise of understanding that human behaviour and circumstances are shaped by the physical and the emotional is a key concept in developing empathic intelligence.

Noddings (1984) ethics of care trains those in the medical field including nursing students to understand and practice 'care'. The caring principle relies on the premise that you must not be subsumed by care but rather you maintain your own sense of self in the practice of care and develop a capacity for duality—that is, understanding a situation and responding with an ethic of care whilst retaining a sense of self. These principles of ethical caring have much in common with the concept underpinning method acting and drama-rich pedagogies. Stanislavski wanted his method acting to allow for an artistic expression that was authentic in terms of representing the humanity of a character, and it is this training that can improve empathic understanding and develop rational compassion as a

desirable skill for students to attain. Caring empathisers (Noddings, 1984; Verducci, 2000) rely on a set of principles that can be developed through a cognitive understanding of methods. These include learning to read textual clues, attention and attunement to the behaviour of others, motivational shifts, substitutions and duality.

Maxine Greene (1995) tells us that 'of all our cognitive capacities, imagination is the one that permits us to give credence to alternative realities' (p. 3). And by concretising imagination as applied practice, initial teacher education students can develop a confidence in their practices as empathic leaders of discipline knowledge with confident use of etude with an ethic of care.

Active Analysis and Etude

This technique developed originally by Stanislavski has been modified by many teachers of acting including the famous Lee Strasberg (1901–1982) and Stanislavski's protégé Maria Knebel (1898–1985) who passed this work down as a method in rehearsal processes. Active analysis and etude are designed to provision actors playing any character with an active rather than passive way to heighten character work and to ensure authenticity and integrity in performance. Rehearsal rooms, like classrooms, use discussion, questioning, noticing and textual analysis as part of a suite of tools to get under the skin of a play or scene and to produce a credible and aesthetic interpretation of the work. No two performances are ever the same—even when the scene has been performed by the same actor in the same theatre. It is this principle that lends so much to developing empathic practices as no two human behaviours are ever the same.

Etude forms the central dimension of active analysis. Etude requires embodiment and performance that mitigates any passivity or superficial interpretation of work because the participant needs to rely on improvisation and imagination. Etudes are developed to produce a scenic speech that combines the elements of empathic understanding including the emotional, the social and the psychological (Zamir, 2010). The action of an etude should allow actors an opportunity to develop a character's memory. This precipitates their ability to behave and decision make as if they had the lived experiences of that person or character. Etude sanctions the development of subtext and motivation before an actor takes on the cognitive task of memorising lines. The process and performance of etude precipitates any memory activity and relies on the critical thinking,

questioning and noticing in order that the character asks and answers powerful questions that are posed by the text. For Miller and Saxton (2018) questioning and developing a critical thinking mindset requires 'thinking to go deeper to discover how to act, modify, create, control and test out information' (p. 21).

If…

In an active analysis and context of etude, the director asks the actors to use *if* as the provocation in exploring the inner life of a character and person. The empathic process requires some space and time to reflect and to improvise the experiences and personhood of the character. 'Nothing but Nothing' by Towfiq is a play that tells the story of an Iraqi boat refugee and his incarceration in an Australian detention centre; it has been used to great success in some classrooms to learn about the treatment of refugees. In order to develop empathy, the principles and practices of etude mean the actors/students would need to intuit the text by asking *if* questions about the characters. This helps students to understand multiple perspectives of all the people in the play and interpret their actions.

Using *if* as the stepping off point into authentic performance and creating original and improvised dialogue, the actor can then overlap and interact with the integrity of the text by capitalising on their personal and critical engagement in order to make meaning. A consideration in this process of active analysis and etude is that any performance is not designed to be seen by an audience. Similarly in process drama, the experience of performance and play is designed for the benefit of individual and for collective unanimity and understanding not for public performance.

Some interpretations of the active analysis process and etude refer to 'the pools of silences' created by asking questions and presupposing imagined lives without reading or engaging in information and context that might prejudice or compromise the spontaneity of the process. It is thought that Stanislavski wanted to create conditions for expression that meant actors felt connected and importantly *responsible* for their character from the outset of the rehearsal period. As Ewing (2019b) remarks, 'dialogue and substantive conversations are central components of embodiment and enactment' (p. 23.), and these critical components are key to any development and co-creation of empathy and rational compassion in a myriad of circumstances that are concurrently powerful and

empowering. Zamir (2010) likens active analysis and questioning to learning a new language and suggests that in the first lesson you can only say a few words but, as your repertoire of words grows, the sentences you speak also allow you to ask questions in that language and this allows for a heightened understanding.

Discussion of Practice: Etude for Empathy

In 2018 the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the School of Education and Social Work, at the University of Sydney, trialed the use of Stanislavski's etude as a method to train pre-service teachers in ways to develop a critical empathy and nuance early career pedagogies. The project sought to delve into the various practices and habits of actors, playwrights, Aboriginal educators, community members and teachers and to appropriate and apply them in teacher training curriculum, to teach with, for and about empathy. The following questions were the driving questions for discussion and action in the bringing together of this disparate group:

- How do we learn to be human and humane in the world?
- How do we prepare our students to be good global citizens in a world where over 6 million people are currently stateless?
- How do we provide access to a way to respond to human rights issues by exercising judgement and decision making using a theatre-based model and pedagogy?
- How can theatre and applied theatre method activate a humanising approach in moving towards a pedagogy of empathy?

The group worked to devise a pedagogic tool based on the improvisations and etude situated in Stanislavski's active analysis, to offer pre-service teachers a doable and teachable method for establishing critical empathy. Stories were shared by emerging practitioners and playwrights of the circumstances where this method may have alleviated misunderstandings and mistrust had it been used in an educational context. Practitioners in remote and low socio-economic areas were interested in methods that would engage students and allow them opportunities to challenge assumptions especially about race and religious beliefs. The teachers talked about how difficult being in classrooms that were seemingly divided along insurmountable racial and cultural lines and their need to find new ways to challenge these modes of thinking and break down barriers.

The playwrights and actors found commonality with teachers when they discussed the unpredictability of audiences and the pressures on young playwrights to produce work that was different but 'safe'. As an experimental pedagogy, etude and improvisation were catalysed in the project and clear distinctions were drawn between the two concepts. The actors described the differences in their practices between etude and improvisation to provoke ways the group could pillage the practice for teacher training. Etude generally uses or follows a text as compared with an improvisation which usually follows a theme. An etude performed with integrity should allow the play to be studied for its action, developed alongside the text as a map. An etude inhibits some of the freedoms of improvisation because the text is the map—any diversion can mean you become lost in a tangent.

Etude as a way of learning has at its beating heart the intersection of play and imagination. Philip Taylor (1998) fittingly described drama as 'an opportunity to transcend the ordinariness of our own lives as we contemplate what is possible as we aspire for clarity and meaning' (p. 14).

To understand how a new method or repurposing of theatrical traditions might open up possibilities for developing empathic awareness and understanding can also be a conduit to deepen conversation as a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 2001) between theatre and classroom practitioners. The commonality found between classrooms and rehearsal rooms is where the critical overlap lies between the role directors and classroom teachers play in shaping the climate for questioning, speaking and appreciating ideas that are both affective and intellectual. This can also occur even when the ideas proposed may not accord with those held by the teacher or the director's conceptualisation of characterisations in the play or performance piece. We are reminded that, when students are able to create questions and control and direct the exchange of ideas, this can have the desired effect of a spillover into their lived worlds, where powerful conversations and an appreciation of other ideas can occur even when there is a disagreement (Miller & Saxton, 2016). Learning to respect differences and inviting other contravening ideas is a part of a robust community of ideas and productive, inclusive discourses and, of course, empathy.

The vast repository of writings both scholarly and popular about empathy as a desirable personal trait requires thoughtful introspection and perusal. How this method can be construed to best effect in classrooms by carefully constructed and reflective pedagogy and practices is a key issue

for practitioners, performers and writers. The popularity of empathy as a common-sense, social good requires ongoing and careful scrutiny. As an applied practice, using theatrical techniques and traditions like the etude as a principal tenet and praxis, the hope is that teachers particularly those training to work in classrooms might see the benefit to a more nuanced and therefore effective invocation and understanding of empathy.

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CHAPTER 6

Discussions of Praxis: Flexing the Empathy Muscle

Abstract This chapter will discuss two case studies of empathy as praxis—the first in an initial teacher education programme where theatre and classroom practitioners convened to share experiences and methods for the getting of empathy and the second in an early career professional learning programme focusing on the development of historical empathy in multilanguage classrooms in remote and regional Australia. With reference to previously mentioned theories of empathy, this chapter explores examples of empathy as a critical pedagogy, framed as a way to develop deeper insights into events, relationships, circumstances and human interactions. This conceptualisation of empathy is concerned with the idea that experiential and embodied learning is critical to praxis in its intention.

Keywords Democratic classroom • Critical pedagogy • Embodied learning • Storied lives • Empathy as a social good • Performativity • Soundscapes • Emotional intelligence • Sondering

Discussions of Praxis

The chapter will give examples of drama and theatrical activities and how they work. A core convention of drama-rich pedagogy is the practice of *teacher in role* (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). This is a method where the teacher enters the drama as a character and acts alongside the other participants, transcending the formal role as teacher. This core element and

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drama convention (O'Toole, 2002) can provide a catalyst for pre-service teachers to examine the way they relate with their peers and indeed with their prospective students to add moments of tension, or to activate content knowledge in inclusive and meaningful ways. The use of *debrief* in a drama context allows all the participants in the drama to articulate their feelings about the encounters they have had in the drama and to articulate assumptions and choices. The participants can also ask questions of each other in character and a well-constructed debrief should allow time to consider answers in thoughtful ways. Both the conventions of teacher in role and debrief are relevant to provide a pedagogy for teachers and students to reflect and speak truthfully about their experiences in the drama. It is vital also because it forms part of the safe space that is created in the drama or 'the no penalty zone' where students are free to contend any issues that may have arisen without fear of reprisal.

The benefits to a carefully constructed debrief allow students the space and time to ask knotty questions and to pose additional ones, without fear of any retaliation particularly if the subject matter of the drama and pretext is contentious. This opportunity of teacher in role and debrief, created within the drama, also ensures an agentic element to the learning where students' voices are given equal weight and consideration to the teacher's views and/or the views that are represented in the text being used. The debrief gives participants the opportunity to discuss their feelings as well as their views and to reflect and problematise any catharsis they potentially experienced. It is in these discussions at the end of the drama that participants get the opportunity to step back from their feelings and consider what those feelings and experiences have taught them about empathy. This chapter through examples of praxis makes the claim that through activating and facilitating this pedagogy initial teacher education training programmes can be the catalyst for necessary change and transformation.

What Storied Lives Can Teach Us About Empathy

I recently attended a gala fundraising event for an organisation called *WestWords*—established to encourage young people to pursue writing as a profession. The evening was held to raise awareness and funds to continue providing authors and experts as mentors to guide the writing lives of some people in this community. The outcomes from this programme are breathtakingly successful. Multiple poets, writers, commentators and

activists have been nurtured by the programme through publication. Libby Hathorn, one of Australia's best-loved children's authors, is the patron along with the well-credentialed actors, Brian Brown and Sam Neill.

The evening began with introductory remarks, a usual format for these occasions, delivered by author and commentator Richard Glover from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and he began with a provocation about empathy and writing that seems timely to precis here. He said that writing teaches us to imagine possibilities, to imagine love and lives that have been lived before and after us, paths trod by others that we have never conceived of walking or could ever tread. The unbridled joy offered to us, of the escape into other worlds, hearts and minds that writing affords us, in any storied form is unparalleled in any other media. Without these stories and our storied lives, we would not be able to understand *empathy i*n any of its forms. Empathy is, he said, a muscle and, as with all muscles, it needs exercising, or it atrophies. He posed a couple of rhetorical questions to the audience and these were How did empathy reveal itself? And how could empathy could be captured and distilled?

Glover gave the perfect example.

He spoke of the great love story in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1878) and her search for love and a sense of place in a complex and changing world. Her inability to let go of love even at the cost of her health and sanity is the stuff of one of the literary world's greatest stories. Glover argued that without an empathic reading, the story had little resonance for any reader and would be consigned to the dustbin of history. The reality is very different for most readers of *Anna Karenina* and, he said, most great stories. We bring ourselves to the story. We live storied lives. We understand as readers, we concur, we shed tears and we have empathy for all the emotional machinations of the characters in the book. There is little dispute that great works of literature can produce empathy, but for teachers working in the no longer new twenty-first century, the act of empathy needs to be exactly that—an act that is teachable and doable.

Research and Practice

Universities and colleges are also grappling with challenges to the way curriculum and content are shaped to better reflect the complexity of human capacity and the need to anticipate new ways for humans to flourish. Developing skills of affective or social and emotional learning (SEL) is the centrepiece of these new ideas. At my own university a great deal of work

has gone into developing graduate attributes that are considered desirable traits of engaged humans at graduation and can be achieved through progression in a wide range of disciplines. These include developing human capacities in cultural competence and influence. As a consequence of this development, research is currently being conducted into how these attributes can be taught as a pedagogy. The remit for the following project and research stream, discussed below, was to create an opportunity for leading practitioners in theatre, education and social work to come together and begin a conversation about empathy and its role as a pedagogy in the classrooms of the twenty-first century. Our explicit aim was to mine the expertise of theatre practitioners and classroom practitioners for methods that could facilitate empathic understanding and to establish direct links between these fields, to develop a comprehensive strategy for the development of empathy as a teachable construct.

The genesis of this research came from working with the Australian Human Rights Commission (an Australian statutory body that promotes and provides education and training which seeks to build a universal culture of human rights) and the commission's questioning of teacher training in human rights laws and how this understanding was reflected in current curriculum. One of the findings of a close interrogation of curriculum and course work revealed that understanding the rule and application of law, for example, the *Racial Discrimination Act 2012*, required a particular type of student and teacher agency. The literature showed that student engagement was enhanced when the application of the law could be understood by using a participatory approach, particularly through drama-rich pedagogy.

The debate regarding the amendments to the *Racial Discrimination Act 2012* was rife in the media at the time of this research and had precipitated a divisive discourse generally. The anti-racism campaign *It Stops with Me* was launched by the Australian Human Rights Commission at the start of an Australian rules football game to launch National Indigenous Week in May 2013. During the game an Aboriginal star player, Adam Goodes, was racially vilified by a young supporter (who was at the time a high school student). That incident was further compounded when a high-profile football president and news commentator made what appeared to be an apology to Goodes but after apologising went on to further vilify him by suggesting he appear in a King Kong movie. The press and politicians were divided on the lines of their interpretations of the act, specifically *Freedom of Speech*: Section 18C. In particular the words *offend, insult,*

intimidate or humiliate were widely debated, satirised and mocked. In this climate, our research into dramatic empathy as a practical pedagogy seemed timely.

As a result of this work and in this testy climate, I convened a panel of practitioners and playwrights with vast experience in examining and writing about human behaviours to work through possible methods to develop empathy as a praxis. Theatrical traditions are informed and continually shaped by human interactions both negative and positive according to the award-winning Australian playwright and performer Hannie Rayson (Hotel Sorrento, 1995) who describes her writing as 'the business of empathy' (2018). Zoe Hogan, an emerging young playwright who has written about the effect of colonising forces in East Timor (Greater Sunrise, 2018), regards empathy as a 'muscle' and says that without exercise it withers. Stephen Sewell, an established and award-winning playwright (The Blind Giant Is Dancing, 1985), considers in his play the ways in which relationships between human beings can become warped because of power and hierarchy and the prevalence of capitalistic and neo-liberal ideas that are by their nature absent of empathy. The playwrights gave their own personal interpretations of empathy as a precursor to developing a praxis with teachers. Their collective and expansive experiences bestowed unique insights the teachers could draw upon to operationalise methods for empathic practice and praxis.

Method

It is worth reflecting, in the context of any dialogue about dramatic empathy and empathic action, that dramatic art forms have provided human beings with a way to engage with and to examine relationships for centuries. Sharpening our outlooks and provisioning us with a mirror to hold up to ourselves and thus be accountable for our actions and speech, drama can be a democratising force (Neelands, 2016) that affords teachers no matter the discipline with the skills and conventions to carefully sequence and build upon students' comprehension of what it means to live in the world. As O'Connor (2016) elegantly said, 'Theatre belongs to everyone. It is not the preserve of those with acting talent or the privilege subset of society. It is a joyful place to explore, question and explain our worlds' (p. xxiii). Taking O'Connor's argument as impetus, we gathered from around Australia a group of interested playwrights; teachers in rural and regional contexts in schools with high migrant, refugee and Indigenous

populations; activists; theatre makers; teacher educators; and actors to dialogue together in what was called a research 'huddle'.

Invited teachers and playwrights travelled distances to attend, a tribute in part to the willingness of people to explore and find practical solutions to the debate around the efficacy of empathy as a practice. The participants knew the guiding questions before they arrived in an attempt to distil ideas in an effective and spirited way. They used the Aboriginal method of Dadirri (Ungunmerr, 2017)—a deep listening technique that encourages respectful listening to build community and is a way to learn from culture and build knowledge and understanding.

As a community of practice, it was decided collectively that work could begin if we embodied the practices we sought to capture. We were led in the afternoon by Zoe Cassim—a Bundjalung woman and teacher/activist, who acknowledged country and invoked the spirits of ancestors, the wind and waters we all share, to give us courage in our thinking. We used these as guiding questions:

- Can empathy be defined?
- Can empathy be distilled and facilitated as a practice in teacher professional learning?
- How do we frame empathy as pedagogy and practice for pre-service teachers?
- Can theatrical methods explicitly inform the practice and praxis of pre-service teachers?

The huddle acknowledged the definitional difficulties with empathy as a largely Western and highly individualistic phenomenon. Verducci's (2005) suggestion that the potency of empathy lies in its transformational capacity to provision human beings with a willingness to understand worldviews and engage in dialogue that does not represent a colonising approach of othering but instead promotes a growth model to 'step back' from what is represented proved a useful starting point. Passive empathy, she argues, is deeply individualistic and is often narcissistic and vague. Common conceptions of empathy as a 'social good' and that its promotion and fostering can only promote good are in her view troubling. Similarly, in any execution of method acting and etude, the actor imbues the character with traits that are derived from their own emotional repertoire. An actor can never be that person; rather they emulate them informed by emotional intuition and empathy.

The robust discussions and views that were shared proved the perfect precursor to a series of embodied practices led by Australian playwright Thomas De Angelis who devised a modified *etude* in the Stanislavskian tradition (as described in detail in Chap. 5) to allow all the participants room to physically embody and explore the issues at hand.

In developing etude as a method for performativity and praxis, we relied on a pre-text in the tradition of process drama (Bundy & Dunn, 2006; Ewing & Saunders, 2016), choosing to use a verbatim script taken from a previous study into attitudes of drama teachers to social justice in the curriculum (O'Grady, 2016). The efficacy of a pre-text relies on some criteria for it to function as the tipping point into any embodied exploration of an idea or issue. It should in part:

- Raise questions for the 'reader' of the text
- Provoke our emotions and our intellect
- Create strong visual images beyond the text itself
- Have an element of ambiguity about it
- Offer open-ended possibilities
- Allow the teacher to 'see' what the students will be doing and learning in response
- Involve/infer a group of people
- Indicate a future or a past
- Have its own inherent tension or beauty
- Include a juxtaposition of two or more unusual images/ideas
- Offer a hook for the students—something that appeals to their interests (Bundy & Dunn, 2006)

The following script forms part of a performed piece of interview theatre that was appropriated for the purpose of devising an etude. The character Jane is a drama teacher in her first year of teaching. She also has a disability which in her words has made her passionate about student agency, access to learning and curriculum choice. Her views regarding access to arts education inform her personal teaching philosophy where she articulates a belief that all students need the affordances that reside in drama-rich pedagogies to become citizens of the world. Without sufficient training in and exposure to affective notions, students are at risk of responding to complex ideas with superficial actions. The playwright Thomas De Angelis (Chamber Pot Opera, 2016) led us through an etude beginning with the practice of *if* (see Chap. 5 'Using Theatrical Traditions

to Teach Empathy' for a detailed exploration of this process); in keeping with the practice of etude, a script was provided but key details were left out of the text, including the name of the woman—Jane.

Woman 1

'Every student should be encouraged.
In terms of having a vision impairment … and coming from that background … and having some horrid teachers, I hate to say it … I think I'm more aware of what impact a teacher can have on you.
Even something as simple as encouragement—and just positive feedback—it's so important to those kids. Especially the kids who are struggling to grasp what it is you're teaching. Or the kids who just don't have self-belief.
I think that stems from my own schooling, I guess.
I picked art for an elective and the very first lesson we went on to the oval and we were meant to draw the back of the oval. And I thought, "well, this is great. All I can see is some green blobs".
Then I said, "Miss, what am I supposed to do?" She just said to me, "just draw what you can see". That was a pretty stupid thing to say to someone with a vision impairment. So, they made me change to computer studies!'
That's not fair.
Art—I could have drawn *what I could see* …

We then began a physical manifestation of this piece and used the active analysis and etude methodology to explore the way this participatory method could provide a way into the character and therefore inform and develop critical empathy about a number of concerns including:

- How the woman felt?
- What motivated the teacher to make the woman leave art classes?
- How the woman felt when she was denied access to art and marginalised from the conversation?
- What she might have seen had she been allowed to stay?
- What could the woman see?
- What is it like to see differently?
- What is seeing, really seeing?

As the day drew to a close, the group engaged in *a debrief* for two purposes: the first being to understand various reactions and engagements

with the text and the second to assess the workability (albeit in a limited and time-constrained way) of *etude* as a teaching pedagogy for developing empathic understanding.

One of the aims of the huddle was to understand how a new method or repurposing of etudes might open up possibilities for developing empathic awareness and understanding, and we discussed ways to deepen conversation as a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 2001).

The commonality between classrooms and rehearsal rooms is the critical overlap between the role directors and classroom teachers play in shaping the climate for thinking, speaking and appreciating everyone's ideas both affective and intellectual. This can also occur when the ideas proposed in the classroom or drama may not accord with those held by the teacher or the director's conceptualisation or characterisations in the play or performance piece. As Miller and Saxton (2018) remind us, when students are able to create questions and control and direct the exchange of ideas, this can have the desired effect of a spillover into their lived worlds, where powerful conversations and an appreciation of other ideas can occur even when there is a disagreement. Learning to respect differences and inviting other contravening ideas is a part of a robust community of ideas and productive, inclusive discourses and, of course, empathy.

Empathy and Affective Engagement in the Disciplines

One of the concerns with current curriculums worldwide is the siloed way that discipline content is taught in schools. As the OECD noted:

> Disciplinary knowledge will continue to be important, as the raw material from which new knowledge is developed, together with the capacity to think across the boundaries of disciplines and "connect the dots". Epistemic knowledge, or knowledge about the disciplines, such as knowing how to think like a mathematician, historian or scientist, will also be significant, enabling students to extend their disciplinary knowledge. (2018, p. 4)

Rethinking how we conceptualise and place importance on discipline knowledge is going to have an appreciable effect on a student's ability to meet evolving and changing circumstances and the emotional and social skill set they bring to this understanding in the future. In subjects such as history, teachers have used various methods of re-enactment (not to be confused with drama-rich pedagogies) to engage students in multiple

perspective taking and to engage them with subject matter that students often think bears little relevance to their lives.

History for example is about remembering the stories and the past lives of human beings who were involved in conflict. Recent research (EduMatters blog O'Grady, 2018) reveals that millennial students have little appetite for their own countries to engage in wars; however, they are increasingly attending the ceremonies and places where conflict and battles occurred. In countries like Australia, New Zealand and France, commemoration and memorialisation have become increasingly important ceremonies for young people that perhaps replace the religious propriety of past generations. History is about the lives of others in the past—making meaning and asking questions using drama-rich pedagogies allows students to work in cognitively complex and collaborative ways.

The following praxis describes in detail the way drama-rich pedagogies were used in a professional development project with teachers to foster a competence with using drama-rich pedagogies to teach history and promote historical empathy about people in World War One. Wrestling with what historical empathy really is became a key question as the project unfolded.

Discussions of Praxis with Historical Empathy

War and commemoration are some of the themes in the Australian curriculum for both elementary and senior students. Many teachers and schools face challenges in teaching these sensitive topics in ways that negotiate current nationalistic imaginings of war in ethnically diverse countries, whilst at the same time allowing students the space to think historically as interpreter, analyst and storyteller. One of the criticisms of history in schools is that stories are told and retold to align with the ideological propensity of the country at that time and often reify stories and reinforce prejudice.

The tale of Dr. Elsie Dalyell, a medical officer and an alumna of the University of Sydney, Australia, and the story of her work in World War One (previously discussed as a practice in Chap. 1) provided the impetus to explore the way creative and drama-rich pedagogies can transform historical knowledge of war and memorialisation and through historical imagination and dramatic interactions can bridge different social and cultural contexts and cultivate empathy, perspective and an appreciation of other points of view.

The guiding principles and pedagogies that underpinned the project's methodology were a modified version of a 'process drama' (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). One of the first distinctions that needed to be made was definitional and that meant understanding that drama-rich pedagogies are not historical role-play. Because drama-rich pedagogy and process drama are participatory and absorbing forms of theatre tailored to the task of teaching and learning, utilising a factual pre-text, such as the wartime experience of Dr. Elsie Dalyell, invites participants in the drama to investigate and problem-solve, conceptualise and critique using socially inclusive and productive art forms. Key to this model of professional learning is the active construction of meaning by teachers and students and its transformation into relevant and consequential knowledge. The project developed a methodology using the affordances of drama and supported by history skills workshops (e.g. analysis and interpretation of a range of sources) for teachers to use in the history classroom that explore the human role and condition before, during and after war.

> because the people and events of the drama are placed in an historical context, students create and experience a community struggling for social and political change … the drama provides a world of possibilities and invites them to take action in it. They begin to think of themselves as people who can make things happen, who can work together in situations fraught with danger, and who can strive together for justice and equality. (O'Neill, p. vii in Taylor 1998)

Conceptually historical empathy is a way of provisioning the students or in this case teachers with ways of knowing that might consider how decisions were made in the past and the perspectives that precipitated those decisions. Some research in historical empathy (Seixas & Peck, 2004) argues that a deepening of understanding of events and a lessening of the two-dimensional—time and place—understanding of events can come from this form of meaning making.

Social researcher Rivkin (2010) maintains that human beings were wired not for aggression but for a more social and attached way of communicating. Empathy and social relationships can play a part in ameliorating jingoistic behaviours and reifying delivery of historical events. As this book has averred, empathy is not a panacea for all that ails people and an over- simplification is nebulous and raises more questions than provides answers. Knowing that there are multiple views of the past and that these

views can be complementary and/or clashing and that this cannot provide us with a singular or definitive view of the past is important. The planning and structuring of a process drama such as the 'Elsie' drama can interrogate crucial subtext, such as why women were not allowed on the frontline in World War One and why Elsie's exceptional medical qualifications went unrecognised. These and other questions can emerge from a reinvention of the past. Drilling down to the lived details, asking questions, wondering as a critical process and performing embodied practices coalesce in order that form is given to fact and allow for an engagement in empathic understanding of what occurred in the past.

Elsie's story begins with her attending university initially as a teacher education candidate and then as one of the very few women medical students in the early 1900s in Australia to enrol and subsequently complete medical studies. Her journey of being an exceptional scholar, her contribution to understanding the role of bacteria in wartime injuries and her expansive contributions to European academia were previously unheralded. The role of women in war, her active service in Serbia and her shunning by the patriarchal medical fraternity upon her return from Europe and eventual employment as a second-tier researcher at a hospital for venereal diseases provided a rich narrative to work within. Her story allowed the teachers who participated in the drama to ask questions about their feelings of readiness to teach the very complex perspectives of war. One of the questions that the drama asked was about what they *wanted* their students to know about war and, critically, what *worried* them about teaching war.

The drama has a number of conventions and processes including teacher in role and debrief. The rich seam of meaning making that resulted from engagement in and playing within this imaginative and fictive context was reflected on in teacher feedback. The drama was influential in shaping a sense of place, space and time and connected in a powerful way the past with the present. By utilising the elements of drama and drama-rich pedagogies such as tableaux, soundscapes and embodied practices, spaces were imagined that transcended timelines, memorials were constructed and events were imagined, reimagined and disrupted. Setting the scene in an imaginative way gave licence for the participants to become sources of history and to interrogate the internal dialogues of war—necessary conditions for critical empathy.

Conclusions

The manifold synergies between history and drama can evolve an empathic intelligence and rational compassion, if the pedagogies are facilitated in critical ways that deepen the way students think about the past. History should be more than memorising facts and figures; it should also allow students to think about their own lived experiences and how these views influence and shape their futures and how they might interact with multiple perspectives. Zatzman (2005) suggests that history should allow us to go beyond the boundaries of remembering that allows a new way to think about the body in space and time. Using drama-rich pedagogies to inculcate empathic or rational compassion as a skill or construct can provide a particularised agency that generates new knowledge about the world that was before us—which is an entirely humanising and empathy-producing experience.

Perhaps it is for those reasons that Chekhov had his students read history and why reading *Anna Karenina* as Glover suggests allows us into a precious space to contemplate our collective dilemma to know what someone else is feeling.

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Conclusions

This final chapter brings together the strands of the book to examine the possibilities and challenges to activating empathy as a pedagogy and praxis. This is in part a response to global calls for thinking about curriculum in newly framed ways that take account of the challenges of post-normality (Sardar, 2010) and the impending consequences of development in artificial intelligence and the implications of this disquietude about the future of education.

In an increasingly conflicted world, reference has been made previously to the concerns that organisations such as the OECD (2018) have articulated and the consequent actions these and other organisations and institutions have taken to ameliorate and harness these challenges by developing future forward visions and frameworks.

As a teacher educator, my role is to ensure my students and pre-service teachers are firstly entitled to be novices but are also conversant and confident with newly framed pedagogies and practices. These models of praxis should be demonstrably agile to meet the increasingly diverse needs of their students in multi-language and multiracial and cultural classrooms. Empathy is vital to a re-envisioned teacher education training programme. Redefining and re-conceptualising empathy as a construct that is adaptable enough to be simultaneously and separately rationally compassionate, intelligently sympathetic and strategically empathic is the principal line of inquiry that has been pursued. Rather than argue for a narrow conceptualisation, this book offers prospective readers a way through the

A. Grove O'Grady, *Pedagogy, Empathy and Praxis*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-39526-1

nomenclature maze to the practical and practicable application of empathy through the traditions of theatre as an educational intervention.

As Goleman (1998) argued in his original work on social and emotional intelligence, it is essential for organisations (including higher education providers of teacher training programmes) to refocus to include what he describes as the 'limbic system' or more commonly the emotional intelligence of humans. This book has extended this argument to problematise and posture the benefits of developing explicit pedagogy and praxis that can mediate difference and promote strong and informed appreciation of what it means to be human and to live and work in the twenty-first century and beyond. This moving towards a pedagogy of empathy and way of learning and meaning making is not just theoretically sound but is imperative for teachers in the twenty-first century, to engender a democratic and socially just classroom.

The relationship between empathy that is altruistic and tends to the passive has been examined as research shows that most human beings have capacity to live both a transformative and active empathy and depending on dispositions and contexts they can also engage in a passive empathy that can be both problematic and simultaneously can heighten awareness.

The urgency that has led to this work in empathy is a consequence of the popularising of empathy in a raft of scholarly and recently neuroscientific work. However, at the same time acknowledging this stream of research, this book has sought to unpack these principles and understandings within an active lens that is tangential and applied for classroom practitioners.

An important premise of work in garnering and distilling empathy as a critical practice and praxis is to avoid adopting any theatrical conventions that reify or colonise 'the other'. Discussions about the dangers of empathy have been considered and it is posited here that that empathy can be a vague and nebulous concept that may produce reification of complex ideas. Empathy as a productive pedagogy requires the production, facilitation and learning to be rigorously scaffolded, and the practitioner or teacher has been sufficiently exposed to active analysis and etude, as a method to achieve this.

The artistic director of Circa Yaron Lifschitz delivered a provocation in January at the 2020 ISPA (International Society for the Performing Arts) conference in New York. He discussed the disquiet that has ensued as the result of the bushfires in Australia and the urgency to respond quickly to the climate emergency. Circa's new work *Sacre* focuses on borders and

argues through physical representation for barriers both physical and imagined to be erased. It deals with the contestation of borders and our pressing need to form new realities in order to mitigate our new realities. His provocation is for the arts to be a force for good, to reach out to new audiences and to engage and reflect new voices and diverse participants. We need to work beyond the containment lines and move into the unknown to breathe new life into the way art reflects and engages us as human beings, he believes.

As we work towards classrooms where questions are asked and unanswered and empathy is activated as a habit steeped in creativity, the methods proposed in this book guide the way. As empathy is the ultimate act of creativity, the asking of question and the imagining and reimagining, we can be unshackled from our own reality and imagine another's reality.

In sum, this pedagogy and praxis to develop empathy is responsive to a number of concerns. It cannot be definitive, nor does it purport to be. The purpose and approach of this book has been to direct the reader's attention and to foreground practices that are steeped in theatrical traditions in order to engender a more humane view of the world—born in the crucible of the classroom.

The garnering of empathy as a process and pedagogy has multiple moving parts. This does not signify an instability of concept; rather it activates a way of thinking about the world and responding with action, fueled by the evocation of feelings and emotions learned in method techniques in concert with the principles of caring. Lifschitz suggests we repurpose the word 'sondering' meaning a realisation that every passer-by is living a complex life as difficult and as joyously vivid as one's own. A pedagogy of empathy is just that—a collective response, incentivised by the long traditions of art and the arts, to establish a collectivised and urgent reality of empathic sondering.

One of the best received lessons I have with my pre-service teachers asks them to conceptualise, design and argue for their *perfect school*. Over the past years, they have come up with wonderful designs for the physical spaces of the school, but these designs pale against the time they spend thinking about the ideological principles of their *perfect school* and the way their ideological principles inform the pedagogy practised in the school. Invariably, they speak about student voice and agency, student safety, meaningful learning and always … always they talk about a culture of humanity. A *perfect school* where people come first, before results, before

bell curves, where students drive the agenda and pedagogies are flexible enough to accommodate every type of learning disposition.

For me that looks like a humanised pedagogy and praxis of empathy.

A way of thinking, responding, noticing, questioning, acting, caring, helping and imagining.

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