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A Level Drama and Theatre Studies in urban and rural English settings at a time of Post-16 educational change

K. McCauley

Abstract

This thesis examines how the two-year Drama and Theatre Studies Advanced (A) Level course is being delivered by a selection of teachers in schools and colleges in both urban and rural English settings. I analyse this subject's specifications from three awarding bodies and closely examine how they are being implemented in six sixth form centres. The government's proposed alternative to the A Level system, the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES, 2005a), is also outlined. I offer a summary of the key features of this White Paper and then identify how the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) interpreted this proposal when drafting their subject criteria for Drama and Theatre Studies. Each awarding body interpreted these criteria and then designed new draft General Certificate of Education (GCE) specification proposals. These three proposals are detailed here, but at the time of this study are being considered for accreditation by the QCA.

The reader is invited to question whether change to the delivery of this performing arts subject is needed and encouraged to consider the implications of these contemporary changes in Drama and Theatre Studies classrooms. Although there are many studies that focus on the effects of drama techniques in primary and secondary school classrooms, this research is different. It is unique because it emphasises the debate about how to deliver this specialist subject in sixth form settings. In addition, by outlining the latest processes that are ongoing during this period of educational change, this thesis questions how governmental reform impacts educational practice. Much has been written about educational policy making; the findings of this research contribute to debates in that area, and also to discussions about how policy outcomes are mediated and disseminated into day-to-day teaching practices.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I aim to give the reader a sense of what to expect in this study by setting the scene for the thesis as a whole. Although details and prolonged discussions on particular aspects of my study are developed later, the key aspects of my research are established here. My study's area of focus is clarified and the main research questions identified. I also note the boundaries of the research, identify relevant concerns and explain why other issues will not be pursued. As well as establishing the methods that were chosen for completing my case studies, my personal and professional commitments to this study are discussed. Finally, this chapter explains why I feel this is a relevant piece of research that will make a significant contribution to the field of Drama in Education.

Research Focus and Area of Study

Key Research Questions

This thesis examines how the two-year Drama and Theatre Studies A Level is being delivered by a selection of teachers in schools and colleges in both urban and rural English settings. The specifications for this performing arts subject, first implemented under the government's *Curriculum 2000* education document, were published by three awarding bodies: the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA), the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) and Edexcel. In this study, I analyse these specifications and closely examine how they are being executed in classrooms. This was achieved through the implementation of six case studies with triangulated research methodologies in a variety of sixth form settings. Also outlined is the government's proposed alternative to the existing A Level system: the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES, 2005a) published by the then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (known from June 2007 as the Department for Children, Schools and Families) (DCSF). I offer a summary of the key features of this White Paper and then identify how the QCA interpreted this proposal when drafting their subject criteria for Drama and Theatre Studies. Each awarding body interpreted these criteria and then designed new draft specification proposals. These three proposals are detailed in this thesis, but at the time of this study are being considered for accreditation by the QCA.

This study focuses on three key research questions. First, it asks how A Level Drama and Theatre Studies is being delivered using a sample of six English sixth form schools and colleges. Second, it considers the potential implications of the proposed governmental

changes to Post-16 education as stated in the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a). Third, it questions how these contemporary changes may impact on Drama and Theatre Studies A Level teachers and learners. Additional questions related to these three main objectives are also examined. For example, the international assessment of performing arts subjects is explored and the teacher training processes that many Drama teachers experience are examined. I question the roles and impact of government agencies like the QCA and the Office for Standards in Education (*Ofsted*) and look at the implementation of government reform processes. I also explain the proposed vocational diploma system, which is intended to work alongside academic assessment routes. These questions are examined through the analysis of fieldwork at six sampled case study centres as well as answered through a review of subject specific literature, primarily featured in the Literature Review Chapter of this thesis.

Reviewing Existing Literature

As well as reviewing literature that concerns educational drama, this chapter examines the expansion of Post-16 qualifications in this country. A historical contextualization of A Levels is given and the educational debates that have concerned the development of this qualification since it was introduced over 50 years ago are summarized. I explain the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) document, outline the A Level reform process, and then discuss the proposed implementation of specialised diplomas together with public reaction. An international perspective about educational policy is also detailed and related to the educational reforms occurring in England.

The central focus of this thesis, however, is Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies. My Literature Review features a discussion devoted specifically to the pedagogy of A Level Drama, which looks at how teachers are trained to deliver this examinable subject. Not only are the contents of the three existing Drama and Theatre Studies A Level specifications then summarised, but also the three proposed draft specifications being considered for accreditation at the time of this research are identified. Finally, this chapter defines the urban and rural English settings of the six schools and colleges documented in this research, who are intentionally not identified to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Methodology Structure and Format

In this research two sixth form centres represent each of the three awarding bodies that deliver Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels: Centres A and B utilise *AQA's Drama and*

Theatre Studies specification (AQA, 2003), Centres C and D use the *WJEC Drama and Theatre Studies specification* (WJEC, 2004) and Centres E and F deliver Edexcel's *Drama and Theatre Studies specification* (Edexcel, 2004). Although not identified to help preserve anonymity, certain demographic variations in characteristics were sought in the selection process. For example, as well as featuring both schools and colleges, the differences between centres include age range and academic results, location in inner city and suburban areas, and status as specialist, state funded and faith schools. This allowed for a bigger cross-section of participants, however the case studies were not then compared or contrasted between centres. Care was also taken in the interpretation and presentation of these small-scale case studies so that generalisation did not occur which could lead to uninformed discussions and unreliable or manipulated conclusions. As espoused by Bassey (1981 & 1999) this research serves to be illuminative, as the relatability of the case studies is more important than their generalisability. I aim to represent the teachers and learners who participated in this research while still ensuring that the study is relatable to those in similar situations.

I employ empirical forms of enquiry in an interpretivist paradigm in order to better understand the teachers and learners in the six schools and colleges. This qualitative case study research involves the use of multiple complementary methods and adopts the ethnographic principles of observing, questioning and interviewing participant groups in their natural settings. After being presented, the data produced through these mixed methods is then triangulated and analysed to better understand each case study on an individual basis. An action research pilot study is also featured. Although it proved highly beneficial, it must be noted that this pilot study was primarily seen as a chance to analyse the effectiveness of methodology procedures and was not designed to contain the same levels of validity or reliability as demonstrated in the main body of research.

Glaser and Strauss's (1967) grounded theory method of analysis was then used to better understand much of the data gathered in this study. Additional complementary inductive processes were also applied to generate theory and are detailed in the Methodology Chapter of this thesis. For example, the questionnaires, observations and interviews that were issued to the participants in each case study centre were first micro-analysed by dividing the data into units and then coded. This then led me to identify meaning through using a data-summary approach where I condensed what was expressed. Next, I attempted to identify a single unifying *core* category amongst my findings and I applied cross-case analysis to identify common themes. Although my aim was not to make direct comparisons between the sampled centres, I was then able to compile categories that showed a conceptual

framework of the aspects that were shared across the six schools and colleges. I was careful to describe any variations within each phenomenon, in order to characterise each individual account.

Relevance of the Study

Personal Commitment

When formulating my research questions and considering the study's aims and objectives I was very much influenced by my personal interests and concerns as a teacher of A Level Drama and Theatre Studies in an inner-city sixth form college. Although this is not an action research study, I was interested in using a systematic method to develop my experiences in the classroom. My interest in improving my own teaching practice has been influenced by Drama and Theatre Studies practitioners like those mentioned in my Literature Review and drama educators who led me to want to answer questions through the use of qualitative, interpretative modes of inquiry and data collection. My own reflections on improving and extending my work in the classroom led me to read literature in the areas of Drama and Theatre Studies teaching and learning. Eventually, this process drove me to investigate how teachers in my community approached their classroom practices. I found that (due to the interpretative nature of Drama) there were many different ways to deliver this subject and I was eager to discover the teaching and learning methods of others. By talking to teachers, I could enhance my own professional development and in turn, enhance my students' learning experiences.

Significance of the Study

This research is different from other educational studies in that it stimulates a debate about how to deliver Drama and Theatre Studies in the sixth form setting rather than focussing on process drama techniques in primary and secondary school classrooms. Although it was not my intention to apply this study to a wide national context, this thesis provides a unique series of snapshots of current drama practices that many may find applicable to other schools and colleges. This study is not only relevant to teachers and learners of Drama and Theatre Studies, however. It is also an important piece of original research due to the newness of the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) hailed as 'the most significant curriculum reforms taking place anywhere in the world' (Marley, 2007, 6). This study comes at a pertinent time of educational change and is distinctive because researchers independent of the government have not yet been able to consider the implications of these proposals on classrooms in the country. This thesis ends by

identifying areas for further research. My Reflections and Conclusion Chapter highlights Policy Development and Structure and Agency Theory (Giddens 1984 & 1995) and emphasises the need for more research into how governmental policies are developed and later disseminated to teachers. Also, the work of political commentators like Hennessy (1989), which criticizes the political tendency to produce a large number of initiatives in the hope of suggesting a more effective government, could be investigated in more detail.

Conclusion

This thesis not only asks the reader to consider whether change to the delivery of A Level Drama and Theatre is needed but it also questions whether the proposed draft specifications, written in response to governmental guidelines, will offer beneficial alternatives. It outlines the latest processes that are ongoing during this period of educational change and it questions how governmental reform impacts educational practice. In the next chapter, I engage critically with existing literature to generate both a historically based background and a theoretical framework. The themes and issues raised in this review of relevant literature are then later related to my case study research project, ultimately in order to demonstrate the need for (and importance of) my contribution to educational research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Before investigating how Drama and Theatre Studies A Level courses are delivered in urban and rural English settings, it is important to consider the historical context behind not only Post-16 educational drama but also of the development of the English A Level system. This Literature Review is separated into three sections. Part One defines the educational terminology that is used throughout this thesis. It then emphasises the debates concerning A Level reform; stretching from the point when the qualification was introduced over 50 years ago to the recent proposal of the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES, 2005a). The main focus of this thesis is then introduced in Part Two. In this section, the intention is to look at the pedagogy of A Level Drama and seek to explain how teachers are trained to deliver this examinable subject. Once this area has been fully explored it is then possible to closely examine the potential implications of governmental change to Post-16 education. Part Three reviews the draft Drama and Theatre Studies specification proposals being considered for accreditation at the time of this research. It also discusses the proposed implementation of specialised diplomas and the *Stretch and Challenge* aspect of the A Level reform process. This chapter ends by defining the urban and rural English settings of the sample sixth form centres.

PART ONE:

A Level Education: A Historical Context

The Introduction of the A Level Qualification and the Crowther Committee

Historically, there have been a number of changes to England's A Level system since it was introduced in 1949. A Level exams traditionally occur at the end of post-compulsory schooling, often as a preparation for students entering university and despite alterations, the qualification's original function 'has remained substantially unaltered throughout their unprecedented 50 year history' (Pound, 2003, 7). In order to comprehend the nature of curriculum reform focused on in this thesis, one must have an appreciation of previous approaches and organisational educational frameworks. It is also important to understand why many believe that A Levels have retained their reputation for academic excellence over the years.

When A Levels were introduced more than half a century ago, some thought they were dominated by 'university examining boards with vested interests in both maintaining academic standards and, perhaps more importantly, ensuring the continuing viability of the

three year honours degree' (Pound, 2003, 7). Within five years after the first A Level certificates were awarded, criticism began about what was seen to be a specialised academic curriculum for those aged between 15 and 18. As a result, the Crowther Committee was formed in 1956. This group compiled a number of policy recommendations to widen access to post-compulsory education. 'A four-fold expansion of the participation rates for 17 year olds in full time education was proposed, taking the figure to a projected 50% of the age group by 1980' (Pound, 2003, 7). This was to be achieved through the expansion of the Further Education (FE) sector, raising the school leaving age to 16, the introduction of a *Junior College*, and the development of local examinations for pupils 'for whom external examinations below the level of the GCE may serve a useful purpose' (Ministry of Education, 1959, 88 as quoted in Pound 2003, 9).

The Crowther Committee also received its criticism however, for espousing a system that was too constricting. This example of academic specialization soon became thought as a particularly British phenomenon, as it differed to American and European education models that had students studying a large number of subjects. The Director of Education at the University of Oxford, A.D.C. Peterson, became Crowther's most vocal critic. In his book *Arts and Science Sides in the Sixth Form* (1960) he described how A Level choice was almost entirely influenced by university entrance requirements. He believed that if students followed their own interests, they would want to opt for a broader range of academic subjects. With the support of the Gulbenkian Foundation, he argued the case for a four year A Level that had a bigger breadth of curriculum.

Peterson recognised that the first change in this trend toward specialisation came in 1962 when

the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, acknowledging the low levels of general education among first year undergraduates, argued that university entrance requirements should be based upon a combination of two specialist subjects, supported by un-graded passes in three general papers, including one in the recently-introduced 'Use of English' examination, and another in a foreign language (Pound, 2003, 12).

Also at this time, the *Robbins Report* (Committee on Higher Education, 1963) acknowledged the damaging effects of specialization at too early a stage. Eventually, these types of criticisms led the Schools Council to publish proposals to reform the post-compulsory curriculum.

Post-Compulsory Curriculum Reforms

In 1966 the Schools Council proposed a new framework involving a combination *major* and *minor* qualification, with two years of full time study and a programme of general studies. This framework was then superseded by a new set of proposals 'in which sixth formers would take a core of two A Levels supplemented by a number of elective courses, internally assessed and moderated' (Pound, 2003, 13). This idea was largely disregarded because universities were unwilling to leave the assessment of electives in the hands of the schools. The Schools Council then produced another provisional framework for curriculum reform in conjunction with the Standing Conference on University Entrance (SCUE). The *Qualifying and Further* (SCUE/SC JWP, 1969) proposals suggested a maximum of five *qualifying* examinations taken after one year of the sixth form, followed by three *further* examinations in the second year. The Council believed that this new method of working encouraged a breadth of subjects, while still enabling students to have an assessment pattern, a coursework element and a marked examination. Once again, however, this educational proposal was met with criticism. Schools objected because they thought the framework too challenging for students of average ability. They believed that it did not cater for 'the needs of those looking for an alternative to the purely academic route' (Pound, 2003, 13).

More vocationally-oriented qualifications were soon developed for sixth form students including an Alternative Ordinary Level (*AO Level*) syllabus that introduced new subject areas like electronics, computing and drama. This qualification was seen to bridge the gap between the A Level and the merged Certificate of Secondary Education (*CSE*) with the Ordinary Level (*O Level*), which initially replaced the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate to complement the growth in mass education in the post war period. The Schools Council next proposed *Normal* and *Further* qualification frameworks as a broader curriculum two-tier system. The then Secretary of State for Education, Mark Carlisle rejected these proposals, however, under the incoming Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher. He believed that under this two-tier system the *Normal* levels were devalued even before they had been introduced and *Further* levels were not clearly defined. 'Thus a further six years of consultation and debate had foundered over the issue of breadth and academic standards' (ibid, 14).

A period of Post-14 curriculum and qualifications reform began in the late 1970s as a result of an 'intensive economic crisis, the growth of youth unemployment and government concerns to create a stronger relationship between education and industry' (Hodgson and Spours, 2003, 10). The National Council for Vocational Qualifications (*NCVQ*) was

formed, which encouraged a more vocational and technical approach to the full time 14-19 curriculum through pre-vocational qualifications and initiatives for unemployed youths. Also, *A Basis for Choice* (1979) was published by the Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit. Many educationalists considered this document to be a seminal report that gave hope to those who had argued that educational reform was overdue (Pound, 2003, 15).

A Basis for Choice

A Basis for Choice represented the case for developing general and specific one-year vocational courses for students who wanted some kind of 'public recognition for attainment equivalent to that achieved by the academic route' (FEU, 1979, 24). Many believe this document was groundbreaking because it was the first to include both education and training, which was 'an appropriate response to the gradual blurring of boundaries between types of institutions and the courses they offered' (Pound, 2003, 15). Other landmark policy documents came about two years later. The *New Training Initiative* (MSC, 1981) (NTI) and the *Youth Training Scheme* (MSC, 1983) (YTS) argued for outcome-based standards, which eventually led to the development of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in the late 1980s. These programmes were introduced to replace the disappearing apprenticeships that were affected by the collapse of the 1970s manufacturing industry (Ainley, 1999).

The government began to argue a need for the development of generic or transferable skills to prepare young people. Such educational programmes were essentially driven by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) and the Employment Department (ED). What was eventually produced, however, was a plethora of awards and initiatives essentially aimed at those who were not interested in A Levels and were not able to gain entry on an apprenticeship or work in a shrinking youth labour market. This period from the mid-1970s through to the mid-1980s became known as The New Vocationalism and its major impact on curriculum and qualifications reform was to put a greater emphasis on active teaching and learning styles. Education moved towards continuous assessment instead of using terminal examinations. Also, a policy of rationalizing vocational qualifications within a national framework was created. The implementation of these courses represented a movement toward greater centralised control of the education and training agenda and, in particular, of the curriculum. Critics argued that they also represented an imposition of social control, a divisive approach to education and training, and an emphasis on vocationalism in the absence of jobs for young people (Hodgson and Spours, 2003).

An important period of time for curriculum and qualifications development began in 1986, as a number of initiatives were proposed. A national system of vocational qualifications began to be properly developed at this time, with the founding of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. Training and Enterprise Councils (*TECs*) were also established to cater for those who wished to stay on in full time education but for whom there was a limited range of national qualifications. The General Certificate of Secondary Education (*GCSE*) was introduced as a common 16+ examination to replace the O level and the CSE. Later, a National Curriculum was created for 5-16 year olds with Standard Attainment Tests (*SATs*). A series of reports and recommendations were submitted about the development of core skills, both in vocational qualifications and in A Levels (eg. HMI, 1989 & NCC, 1990). In addition, NVQs, a national system of competence based vocational qualifications, were based on occupational standards.

The Higginson Committee

It was also in the late 1980s that Professor Gordon Higginson gathered evidence on the principles governing the framing of the A Level syllabus and its assessment. In mid-1987 his committee not only reviewed the A Level qualification, but they proceeded to unexpectedly recommend a radical overhaul of this examination system. They proposed the introduction of a five-subject framework to broaden the academic curriculum. The Higginson Committee also advocated the development of core courses for all A Level subjects with modular syllabuses. They believed these syllabuses would increase the flexibility of learning patterns, but also accredit the achievements of individual students. In addition, the committee thought that a modular framework would help to establish equivalence between academic and vocational pathways.

The Committee's main recommendations gained a great deal of support, so it came as a surprise when this series of proposals was rejected by a Conservative Government in June 1988. 'Both of the official reasons given for the rejection related to the policy process itself: that there was too much reform already in progress, and that Higginson's recommendations would *queer the pitch* of the newly introduced AS Level examination' (Richardson, 1991, 2). The government believed that breadth would be added to the A Level framework through the recently introduced Advanced Supplementary Levels (*AS**) and 'that since the schools were already coping with a sea-change at 16+ with the decision to merge CSE and O level examinations into the new GCSE, any additional disruption should be avoided' (Pound, 2003, 17). The government did not want a general, broad

ranging system of education. The then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, summed up the government's opinion when she said, "It is absolutely vital that we continue to regard the deep study of some single subjects as important during the years from 16 to 18, particularly for people going to university" (Thatcher quoted in Hansard, 1987-88, 434, cited in Pound, 2003, 17).

Expanding Education and Training Participation

In 1991, the *Education and Training for the 21st Century* White Paper was published by the Department for Education and Science (DES). At this time, in addition to A Levels and NVQs, a third qualifications track was formed based on the introduction of the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ). The system that was formed sought to cater for the increasing numbers of 16 to 18 year olds participating in full time education who did not want to take A Levels. Some believed though, that the academic track was simply made more exclusive. A Levels were thought to be dominated by external examinations, while the vocational track was bombarded with coursework assessment and NVQs based on 'observation of the mastery of competences in the workplace' (Hodgson and Spours, 2003, 14). As a result of this formalised triple-track system, this White Paper had a number of opponents (MacDonald, 1992).

The government wanted to rapidly expand education and training participation but at a lower unit cost. The Further and Higher Education Act (FHEA) in 1992 took forward the *Education and Training for the 21st Century* White Paper proposals and tried to create a market in initial post-compulsory education through the inclusion of further education colleges. It also set up the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), which took colleges out of the control of Local Education Authorities (LEAs), who still retained responsibility for school sixth forms.

These moves immediately increased competition between the newly incorporated FE colleges and the school sixth forms over provision for 16-19 year olds and particularly over A levels and GNVQ's. The period also saw the rapid growth of small sixth forms in schools that used the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) to opt out of LEA control and to take on Grant maintained status with all the national government funding benefits that this decision brought with it (Hodgson and Spours, 2003, 15).

A number of proposals for the reform of the post-compulsory curriculum came into print in response to this White Paper. *Beyond GCSE* (1991) compiled by a Working Group of the Royal Society's Education Committee, proposed a new framework combining academic work while also seeking to raise the status of vocational education. Also, a baccalaureate-

type qualification gained momentum when *Learning to Succeed: A radical look at education today and a strategy for the future* (NCE, 1993) was compiled by the National Commission on Education. Its main proposals of reform centred around the development of modular courses to replace A Levels and a range of vocational courses. *Routes for Success* (1993) was also published during this year by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) as a call for a unified qualifications framework which made standards and assessment objectives more explicit. It also suggested that A Level subject scores should become integrated with those of GNVQs. This momentum towards the development of a unified examinations and assessment system was halted, however, with the publication of the *Review of Qualifications for 16-19 year olds* by Sir Ron Dearing in 1996.

The Dearing Report

In 1995 Sir Ron Dearing was asked to conduct a review of Qualifications for 16-19 year olds. In his results, he incorporated the findings of John Capey, who had been asked to review GNVQs, and Gordon Beaumont, who reviewed NVQs (Hodgson and Spours, 2003). Dearing believed further reform was justified on the grounds that the academic and vocational divide was inhibiting learner progress, that there were high levels of non-completion, that there were issues of basic numeracy and literacy, and that the system was complex and had little clarity (Dearing, 1996). His report, written during the last years of Prime Minister John Major's Conservative government, made a total of 198 recommendations including the need to establish a lateral AS* as a halfway stage to the full A Level, the need to reform the Advanced GNVQ into a smaller vocational qualification aligned with A Levels, and the inclusion of key skills in an AS* award. Also, he wanted the possible development of a certificate and diploma at A Level and a more accessible national qualifications framework with a common grading system between A Levels and broad vocational qualifications (Dearing, 1996).

Labour's own document was published in 1996 and entitled *Aiming Higher: Labour's plans for reform of the 14-19 curriculum* (1996). It proposed the development of a unified and modular 14-19 curriculum and qualifications framework in two stages, spanning two Parliaments. It was not until 1997, however, that the Labour Party officially committed itself to qualifications reform. Essentially, it embraced the Dearing Review rather than its own pre-election party document (Hodgson and Spours, 2003). It also unified the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) and the NCVQ into the QCA, rationalized the major academic and vocational awarding bodies into three organizations, and then launched a further round of reviews based on its own policy document *Qualifying for Success:*

A consultation paper on the future of Post-16 qualifications (1997) published by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) and the Welsh Office (WO).

Qualifying for Success and Curriculum 2000

Qualifying for Success proposed to break A Levels into two, three unit stages beginning with a one-year Advanced Subsidiary (AS) course and a second one-year (A2) course. Under this model, the former two-year course was separated into two stages, involving a one-year course that could be used as a final qualification, or as the first half of an A Level qualification. It also proposed to make grading and structure changes to GNVQs and to introduce Key Skills Qualifications. This reform was introduced as *Curriculum 2000* in September 2000 and replaced the old linear and modular A Levels and Advanced Level GNVQs. *Curriculum 2000* 'can be seen to have four major themes- broadening study at advanced level; introducing greater consistency of standards between and within different types of qualifications; rationalising the number of subject specifications; and improving alignment between general and general vocational qualifications' (Hodgson and Spours, 2003, 28). Under this new policy students were expected to study up to five subjects in the AS year of advanced level study.

Alongside the changes to A Levels, GNVQs, called *Vocational A Levels* or *Advanced Vocational Certificates of Education* (AVCEs), were reformed. They were designed into six unit or three unit blocks identical in size to AS and A Levels. Additionally, there was a smaller assessment regime, more in line with A Level grading. The main aim of the *Curriculum 2000* reforms was to encourage a wider range of students to mix and match general vocational qualifications within their programmes of study and to promote parity of esteem with A Levels (Savory, Hodgson and Spours, 2001, 35). Key Skills qualifications were seen as a way of raising standards and employability agendas in line with the first New Labour administration's manifesto (Hodgson and Spours, 2003). They recognise achievement in Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology and were designed so that the learner could take different parts of the qualification at different levels. The QCA was also asked to design specifications for Advanced Extension Awards (AEAs) in 13 subject areas to replace various university admission tests. This award was designed to stretch the most able and to allow for differentiation at the top end of the academic spectrum.

Academics and practitioners believed there were both strengths and weaknesses in *Curriculum 2000*. From December 2000 onwards it was barely out of the press, with students, teachers and parents complaining about workloads, examination stress and lack of guidance from examination and awarding bodies. 'At the end of its first year of implementation, in June 2001, the public concern over the first AS examinations led Estelle Morris, the [then] Secretary of State for Education and Skills, to insist a review of the reforms' (Hodgson and Spours, 2003, 153). *Curriculum 2000*'s strengths included the fact that it introduced smaller qualification blocks, modularity and a new level of qualification between Intermediate and Advanced Level. Many believed, however, that its weaknesses outweighed its strengths. *Curriculum 2000* was criticised for its design contradictions, the assessment burden it imposed on learners and teachers, and the manner in which the reform process was conceived and conducted (ibid).

In 2001, the Government once again sought to further enhance the educational curriculum and qualifications reform. They produced the Green Paper *Schools: Building on Success* (DfEE, 2001) and the White Paper *Schools: Achieving Success* (DfES, 2001). Both seemed to reflect the message first espoused in Labour's pre-election document *Aiming Higher* (1996). These documents, seen as building on the reforms and gains in primary education and as a way to modernise secondary education, were later joined by a second Green Paper, *14-19 Education: Extending opportunities, raising standards* (DfES, 2002). *14-19 Opportunities and Excellence* (DfES, 2003) followed in January 2003. It was in this document that Charles Clarke, the then Secretary of State for Education and Skills stated,

we must address the question of reform for the longer term... we need to create a clearer and more appropriate curriculum and qualifications framework for 14-19 phase- one that develops and prepares [our young people] for life and work in the 21st century (DfES, 2003, 2).

A Working Group for 14-19 Reform was established under Michael Tomlinson one month later in order to address structural weaknesses in the educational system and propose sustainable alternatives. After consulting with many organisations, sub-group members and officials, Tomlinson's Working Group published a Progress Report and then an *Interim Report* (DfES, 2004b) in February 2004. These reports began to set out proposals for the framework of an English Diploma, which the group hoped would replace the existing A Level examination system. *14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reforms: Final Report of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform* (2004a) was published in October 2004. In February 2005, the then Education Secretary Ruth Kelly, responded to this report by producing the *14-19*

Education and Skills White Paper (DfES, 2005a) which included details about the government's future plans for A Level provision in this country.

Michael Tomlinson's Working Group on 14-19 Reform

Michael Tomlinson was appointed the chief inspector of England's schools in 2000 and was instrumental in an investigation of A Level grade-fixing allegations. He also previously completed a number of reports that made recommendations to ensure the effectiveness of the arrangements for setting, maintaining and judging A Level standards. The then DfES responded to this work by saying,

We welcomed the Tomlinson reports and recommendations... We will work with schools, and colleges, as well as Awarding Bodies and the QCA, to get this right. This is the top priority in this area for the Department and the National Bodies responsible for running the current system (DfES, 2003, 24).

The Final Report of the Working group on 14-19 Reform (DfES, 2004a) began by recognising the strengths of the educational system, highlighting that more young people were gaining essential GCSEs, 15 year olds were performing well in international test comparisons and proportionally more students were going to universities and colleges. The working group then focussed on the significant weaknesses of the educational system. At that time more than 5 per cent of young people in England reached the end of compulsory schooling with no GCSEs. In addition, too few students continued to learn beyond compulsory schooling, a problem particularly seen in minority ethnic groups. Another problem was that young people needed to learn more basic literacy and numeracy skills in order to succeed in Higher Education (HE) and the work place. Also, the report stated vocational qualifications needed to be coherent and show progression. It said that the education system should retain a strong connection with the workplace, while combining strong general education.

The proposed format for a unified framework was written in line with five achievement targets set by the then Secretary of State, Charles Clarke. The working party wanted an educational system that stretched more able students and was vocationally motivated while reducing assessment burdens. It was hoped that the system would prepare young people for the world-of-work and also reduce drop out rates (DfES, 2004a). What was designed was a system that centred on two crucial developments. First, a common 14-19 learning format was proposed that mixed academic knowledge with specific disciplines selected by the learner. Second, a unified framework of diplomas offering a pathway from 14-19 education into further and higher education was espoused. At Advanced Level assessment

would remain balanced between external exams and varied internal assessment, with a greater weight on the teachers' professional judgement. A Level modules would be reduced from six to four and there would be a substantial cut in formal coursework.

The working party believed that the diploma framework would allow students to progress through (and be awarded for) four levels of achievement: entry, foundation, intermediate and advanced. They thought that the diploma, which could be gained at pass, merit or distinction, would offer pathways to further and higher learning training and employment. At all four levels, diplomas would be graded to provide an incentive for students to aim beyond the minimum pass threshold and enable universities and employers to identify the most able students (Ward, 2004). Tomlinson's proposed qualification involved two key elements, known as *core* learning and *main* learning. The proposal's core learning element stemmed from the fact that at that time, secondary school league tables were based on the proportion of young people obtaining five or more good GCSEs, but only 42 per cent of students had GCSEs in both English and maths (Smithers, 2004). The core, which included an extended project and opportunities to develop common knowledge, skills and attributes (*CKSA*), would ensure that no young person would be able to achieve a diploma without acquiring these skills. Also, students would have an entitlement of around 120 hours of wider learning activities. *Main* learning would form the majority of students' programmes of study. Students would choose courses from up to 20 *lines of learning* in which academic subjects and/or vocational courses (leading to particular employment areas) would be grouped together. Students could also opt to take an *open diploma* mixing a range of components (Ward, 2004).

In order to encourage students to strive to the next level of qualification, each diploma would contain elements of the one immediately below. Each diploma would be assigned a 180 credit total, with each individual component assigned a credit value according to the volume of learning it contained. This credit system would be used as the basis for establishing the threshold requirements of each diploma. Students would then earn a diploma once they had achieved 180 credits at that level (Halpin, 2004). Out of the credit total, the main learning component would cover two-thirds of this amount. Each credit would represent approximately 10 hours of 'notational total learning time' (Clare, 2004a, 4). Students would enter the diploma framework at the level appropriate to them and progress at their own pace. The qualifications would not be age related as GCSE and A Levels are. Also, high ability sixth formers would have the opportunity to take on components of degree courses while still at school.

Response to the Working Group's proposal was mixed. The report was generally welcomed by the educational establishment, although the teachers' unions said they were worried about a greater burden on their members and the possibility of a hurried introduction which mirrored previous reforms such as *Curriculum 2000*. Those in favour of the proposed diploma saw this wide reaching scope as a positive attribute. Universities believed that the standards represented by A Levels had been preserved and that the proposals differentiated between able candidates. They thought it was a broader, more flexible curriculum with more options for vocational subjects. In support of the plan, Ivor Crewe, the president of Universities United Kingdom stated that universities would have the opportunity to draw from a wider pool of well qualified candidates from all sections of society. The most able could show what they were capable of without devaluing the achievements of others. 'The report has also tackled the difficult problem of how universities can differentiate between the most able candidates' (Crewe, 2004, 7).

Employers were not as enthusiastic, however. The CBI said the proposals were strong on 'vision' but lacked detail (Clare, 2004b, 1) and believed the proposals would do nothing to improve standards of literacy and numeracy (Blair and Halpin, 2004). Michael Howard, the then Conservative leader, said a more rigorous exam system would be apparent under a Tory government. He supported the need for an urgent educational reform and also agreed with some of the working group's proposals, like that of cutting back on coursework and making vocational education more rigorous. However, when addressing the Society of Editors in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne he said,

"If the GCSE exams were abolished and teachers allowed to grade their students the system would be wide open to abuse... it would only take a very few to be caught doing it for the whole process to be discredited" (Howard quoted in Lightfoot and Helm, 2004, 4).

Sceptics like Chris Woodhead, a former head of Ofsted and schools inspector, agreed with Howard. Woodhead claimed, "yet another educational disaster... [the reforms] are gargantuan meaningless abstractions" (Woodhead, 2004, 18). Like Howard, he believed that a move away from external assessment would transfer considerable authority to teachers in school and this emphasis upon teacher assessment would lead to mass fraud, because there was such intense pressure upon teachers to get positive results. Many also thought that vocational education was not thoroughly addressed and that there was little emphasis on subjects like Science and Modern Foreign Languages for students between 14-19. Overall, those who opposed Tomlinson's model believed he was trying to do too much

for too many very diverse types of children. '[Charles Clarke] should resist the idea of a one-size-fits all multiple stage diploma... it would be better to admit that different problems demand different solutions' (Hames, 2004, 17). Despite these criticisms, the then Secretary of State, Charles Clarke, announced that a White Paper would be published early in 2005, outlining how the reforms would be implemented.

14-19 Education and Skills White Paper

Governmental Proposals

In February 2005, the then Education Secretary, Ruth Kelly, responded to Tomlinson's report by producing the government's *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES, 2005a). Although she was criticized for largely rejecting Tomlinson's proposal, she wrote that the White Paper would build on 'the excellent work of Sir Mike Tomlinson and his Working Group on 14-19 Reform and from the work of the successful school and college partnerships we are already seeing in the communities' (DfES, 2005a, 4). The chief proposal of this 93 page report was to 'retain but strengthen A Levels and GCSEs...' (Edexcel, 2005, 2) instead of replacing them as Tomlinson's Working Group had proposed. She then stated that the reforms were vital to the economy, social justice and to young people. Kelly espoused breaking down the barriers between academic and vocational education. The government's chief proposal was to develop a vocational route through the creation of a new system of specialised diplomas beginning in 2008 and running fully in 2015.

Like the Working Group's proposal, the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES, 2005a) began by addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the educational system in England. Primary school standards were praised for being at a high level and secondary school results were acknowledged for being positive. It was acknowledged that barriers to learning were being tackled and 16-19 student participation was increasing due to the implementation of Education Maintenance Allowance schemes. The weaknesses that were focussed on included the low numbers of Post-16 students staying on in education (when compared on international league tables). Employers were not satisfied with the skills of school leavers who went directly into jobs. Also, it was felt that more-able young people were not being fully stretched.

The government's education proposal sought to

Tackle our low Post-16 participation... ensure that every young person has a sound grounding in the basics of English and maths... provide better vocational routes ... for further learning and employment, stretch all young people and re-engage the disaffected (DfES, 2005a, 5).

The White Paper began by stressing the importance of Key Stage Three as the starting point of 14-19 learning and it proposed asking the QCA to undertake a review of the Key Stage Three curriculum so that high achieving students could be stretched and others could have additional time. Pilot studies to make some subjects more attractive to learners would be continued, end of key stage tests would be retained for 14 year olds, and summary details of pupil achievement across the curriculum would be provided in students' profiles. Additionally, the government proposed that a new online test of Information and Communication Technology (*ICT*) skills would be introduced in 2008. Achievement programmes to aid young people with work-based learning leading to diplomas or apprenticeships would also be introduced from 2007/08.

The *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) stated that more vocational education would be offered and new skills academies would be introduced as centres of excellence. Also, specialist schools would become leaders with additional resources for vocational provision. The government believed that their proposed changes were designed to meet the needs of learners and employers, with the workforce being supported if the reforms were to take place. In the White Paper, Kelly wrote that schools, colleges and other providers should take the lead in each local area so that prospectuses of options would be available to all young people. In addition, she stated that local authorities and the local Learning and Skills Councils should commission provision to address any lack in educational choices.

An accountability framework would support and encourage the development of the Labour government's 14-19 phase. The White Paper states that the government would ensure that inspections would challenge schools to offer a wide-ranging curriculum. Also, the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) proposes to include 'vocational qualifications in Achievement and Attainment Table measures' (DfES, 2005a, 9). Tables showing performance results in Key Stage Three English, maths and science would be published and also tables would measure the diploma standard. The government stated that teenagers would be encouraged when tables are published which credit schools who are successfully delivering higher level qualifications. Schools would be held to be more

responsible for the progress of their students, and institutions would be responsible for improving staying-on rates with progression targets.

A System of Specialised Diplomas

For the 14-19 phase, the government's proposal was based on the need for students to achieve functional skills at GCSE level. In order to achieve this, they believed that the Key Stage Four curriculum should become less prescribed in English and maths. Also, incentives for under achieving teenagers would be introduced along with diplomas for those who achieved five A*-C grade GCSEs. GCSE and A Levels would remain as the 'cornerstones of the new system' (DfES, 2005a, 8) but Achievement and Attainment tables would become tougher. In addition, new specialised diplomas, including academic and vocational material would be available at foundation, GCSE and advanced levels. The government believed that if implemented, diplomas would be supported by HE institutions and the QCA. Also, they would be taken by students when they are ready, and not at any fixed age.

Two main types of diploma were proposed. First, a general diploma was designed to raise English and maths attainment levels and ensure that those with five GCSEs were succeeding in these two subject areas. Second, the government proposed a new system of specialised diplomas integrating vocational and academic routes. The diplomas would include a number of optional lines and would be national entitlements by 2015. The first four, *ICT, engineering, health and social care* and *creative and media* would be available by 2008, another four to include *construction* would be offered by 2010 and the full range would be available nationally by 2015. As well as demonstrating skills in English and maths, students would have to show they had specialised learning in the relevant discipline. The students would also have to demonstrate that they had gained suitable work experience and that they had earned the relevant GCSEs or A Levels. It was also hoped that schools and colleges would consult employers so employment-based training (including apprenticeships) would be integrated within the diploma framework. The *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) stated that the QCA would work with employers to devise a set of standards for the content of the diplomas, tied to international benchmarks. This would help the quality of the diploma and help ensure there was a mix of academic and vocational study. Employers would be brought into the process of deciding what the diploma's various subject areas of study would be. The diplomas would emphasise progression and would interlock so that they would allow the achievement in one level to count towards what is needed in the next.

A Level Reform

As well as introducing a system of specialised diplomas, the government also announced that GCSE and A Levels would be retained as central to the White Paper's proposal.

GCSEs and A Levels are internationally respected. They will be kept as the cornerstone of 14-19 learning. They will continue to be assessed through rigorous external examinations; and they will be reformed to increase stretch and challenge and to improve progression (DfES in Edexcel, 2005c, 10).

The White Paper stated that plans to reform A Levels would begin with the government ensuring that there would be 'natural progression routes' (DfES, 2005a, 7) through the levels of the diploma and between GCSE and A Levels. The Paper also announced that although the balance of internal and external assessment at A Level would remain unchanged, there would be a number of alterations to the structure of A Levels. The White Paper proposed that the most able students would be stretched by the introduction of harder questions. Extended projects would test a wider range of higher-level skills and most able teenagers would be able to take HE options while in the sixth form. Universities would be given more information about prospective students by gaining access to grades achieved in individual modules, in addition to their overall A Level marks. Finally, A Level units would be reduced from six to four. In the White Paper, the government stated that these reforms would create opportunities and motivate young people to develop their talents and succeed (DfES, 2005a).

International Educational Policies

The *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper stated 'we will design specialised diplomas, learning from successful qualification systems in other countries' (DfES, 2005a, 88) and suggested that reforms would be compatible with educational arrangements on an international scale. Both Michael Tomlinson's Working Party on 14-19 Reform and those who designed Ruth Kelly's *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) took into consideration a number of international education policies prior to announcing their reform proposals. They found that 'no other qualifications and assessment system in Europe is built solely on national examinations' (DfES, 2004a, 59) and discovered that a mixture of varied processes were used to build qualification and assessment systems in European countries like the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Germany and France. Such systems were also operated in Australia, the United States and in New Zealand.

The government's educational policymakers found that many countries offered qualifications that encouraged less student specialisation and more all-round learning. The

International Baccalaureate (*IB*), for example, examines students in six subjects in their final two years, which must include English, a second language, maths, a science and a humanities subject. In addition, students write a dissertation, sit a paper and complete community service. The Baccalaureat in France is similar, in that it involves students between the ages of 16 and 17 taking seven courses in addition to courses in their specialist area. Scottish Higher qualifications also allow for a breadth of study. Students take one-year 'highers' in five subjects at 16 and later, a sixth year of study in a specialised area. The Welsh Baccalaureate, which began in 2003, involves students taking traditional qualifications like GCSE, AS and A Levels, while also studying a wider core curriculum including key skills, Welsh culture, Europe and the world, foreign languages, work related education, personal and social education, communications skills, Information Technology (*IT*) skills and problem solving. American schools also emphasise that students should be strong in a variety of areas, rather than solely succeeding in examination results. As well as course results and extra-curricular activities, American universities consider the Scholastic Assessment Test results (for university entry) more a measure of intelligence and achievement than the predicted results that are the basis of university offers in the United Kingdom.

Responses to the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper*

Many felt disappointed when the government rejected much of the diploma framework as espoused by Michael Tomlinson's Working Party. Besides the fact that the government disregarded much of Tomlinson's proposals after a costly million pound, 18 month period of research, John Brennan, the Chief executive of the Association of Colleges complained that, "the White Paper is a wasted opportunity..." (AoC, 2005, 1). He stated that the White Paper was simply describing a situation that was already occurring. Others agreed with this viewpoint when the proposal was introduced in February, 2005. There was widespread dismay amongst union leaders, educationalists and bodies (including the Independent Schools Council) at ministers' decision to reject the Working Party's central recommendation of a diploma including both vocational and academic courses to replace GCSE and A Levels (Mansell and Lee, 2005a). David Bell, Office for Standards in Education (*Ofsted*) Chief Inspector of Schools, said, "Continuing the current GCSE and A Level structure carries the risk of continuing the historic divide between academic and vocational courses which has ill served many young people" (Mansell and Lee, 2005b, 1). John Dunford, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, said ministers had failed most of the tests that were initially set out for Tomlinson. The Sixth Form Colleges' Forum (*SFCF*) responded by saying, "we find the proposals disappointingly piecemeal and

un-ambitious”(SFCF, 2005, 1) In addition, Ken Boston (QCA chief executive), Barry Sheerman (Chair of the education select committee in the House of Commons), Hillary Bills (National Union of Teachers president) and Dan Taubman (a lecturer’s union official) were only some of those who went on record to speak against the Labour government’s 14-19 proposal. Newspapers including *The Times*, *The Independent* and *The Guardian* argued that the proposals were not radical enough. Also, the University of Cambridge was in favour of the removal of the A Level system (ibid).

Critics were disappointed by Ruth Kelly’s *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) for a number of reasons. Firstly, they felt that this government policy statement disregarded Tomlinson’s previous report, which was written by a working group of knowledgeable educational experts. It was thought the government were not being bold enough about the future of internal and external assessment at A Level. Critics also felt there was little understanding about the nature of how to strengthen vocational learning. Educationalists questioned how existing and well-respected vocational programmes would relate to the specialised diplomas. Some queried how GCSEs and A Levels would integrate with diploma designs. Sceptics wonder how optional harder questions would stretch more able students, considering at that time AEAs had not proven universally popular and had a low take up. They also questioned whether or not there was a coherent qualification alternative being offered for disaffected learners. Ultimately, many felt that the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) would perpetuate the great divide between academic and vocational provision.

On the other hand, some reviewers believed that there were a number of attractive features in the White Paper. The British Broadcasting Corporation, CBI and the Institute of Directors all spoke in favour of the proposal. Sir Digby Jones, director general of the CBI stated, “business wanted higher standards not dramatically different structures” (Jones quoted in Edexcel, 2005, 3). Newspapers including *The Financial Times*, *The Observer* and the *Evening Standard* appeared pleased that The White Paper avoided a major educational upheaval. *The Financial Times* gave the policy ‘seven out of ten... it offers a fair amount for universities, employers and many pupils without turning over the whole apple cart’ (Edexcel, 2005, 3). Many believed that the government clearly recognised that the most pressing issue facing 14-19 education was that not enough young people were passing English and maths GCSEs with a C grade or above. Those who supported the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) felt that the government had a plan to tackle the poor staying-on rates and disaffected youths. Many felt that The White Paper

would address the lack of alternative provision outside of GCSEs and A Levels. They were pleased that for younger learners, Key Stage Three would be reviewed and for older students, coursework and research projects would be re-examined. The CBI, in particular, were pleased that vocational assessment and verification would remain unchanged but accountability measures would become much sharper. Parents and teachers of ‘more-abled’ students believed high performing learners would be stretched with the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a). Also, many seemed to be in favour of the government’s provision for collaborative learning between schools and colleges.

A Timetable for Completion

When the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) was published, the government acknowledged ‘we are embarking on a significant programme of change... we will produce a full timetable in due course’ (DfES, 2005a, 88). However, confusion and contradiction appeared soon after Ruth Kelly’s February 2005 14-19 governmental publication. The then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, told secondary school students in North London that he thought A Levels were too limiting as a form of learning and testing (Halpin, 2005). He stated that,

The problem with A Levels is that they are too narrow. I took English and French, and it would have been nice to have had an element of another language, some maths, some science...[the IB] offers a broader range of subjects (Blair quoted in Halpin, 2005, 36).

Also, at that time David Bell, Head of Ofsted, and Ken Boston, chief executive of the QCA, predicted that A Levels, “will be out the door and the diploma will take over” (Bell quoted in Halpin, 2005) within a decade. Soon after, Ruth Kelly promised to reconsider a general diploma at A Level in 2008, suggesting a Tomlinson plan could be implemented. Later this was contradicted, however, when she told journalists at a Westminster lunch that, “The education world can sometimes cloud the debate and give the wrong impression... A Levels are here to stay” (Kelly quoted in Halpin, 2005b).

Alan Johnson became the next Secretary of State for Education and Skills in 2006. It was also at this time that the government announced it would grant funding to allow more schools the opportunity to offer the IB diploma, ‘a move that could further undermine the proposed A Level state exam system’ (Hackett, 2006, 7). In addition, independent schools revealed that they would implement a ‘Cambridge Pre-U’ qualification in 2008 as an alternative to A Levels. This was also seen by many as a ‘reaction to the government’s rejection of the 2004 Tomlinson report, which would have replaced A Levels and GCSEs

with an overarching diploma' (Stewart and Mansell, 2006, 9). This research concluded prior to any educational changes made by Ed Balls, the then Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families under the DCSF, formed in June 2007.

PART TWO:

Teaching Drama and Theatre Studies

Qualified Teacher Status

It is helpful to consider how teachers might have been trained to deliver the subject of Drama and Theatre Studies prior to exploring the case study participants' interview responses later in this thesis. There are a number of ways to become a teacher in England. At the time of this research, in order to work in a state maintained school a trainee would need to gain Qualified Teacher Status (*QTS*) by completing a programme of Initial Teacher Training (*ITT*), which is offered through undergraduate, postgraduate, employment-based and assessment-only options (TDA, 2007). Independent and non-state maintained schools write their own regulations as autonomous incorporated bodies (FHEA, 1992) but in practice, as a result of being bound by their funding bodies, mostly they also require teachers to have (or be in pursuit of) suitable qualifications. It is important to note, however, that there are many exceptions where teachers are practising in classrooms without *QTS* (e.g. unqualified teachers with substantial work experience or those who have entered teaching through serving as a university lecturer).

Undergraduate students can take *bachelor of education* honours degree courses that enable them to study for their degree and complete their *ITT* at the same time. Alternatively, they can take a *bachelor of arts (or science) degree with QTS*: an honours degree with *ITT*.

Postgraduates with an existing undergraduate degree who plan to teach most often take one of a number of varied *postgraduate certificates in education (PGCEs)* which primarily focus on the development of teaching skills, as it is expected that students already have a good understanding of their chosen subject (TDA, 2007). Postgraduates can also complete their training with *school centred ITT*, which trains teachers in a school environment. Alternatively, *Teach First* was designed for those who do not want a long-term career in teaching but want to qualify as a teacher 'while completing leadership training and work experience with leading employers' (ibid).

In this country there are three methods of training in a school as a teacher through an employment-based qualification. The *graduate teacher programme* allows on-the-job training so

graduates can continue earning while they qualify as a teacher. Similarly, the *registered teacher programme* mixes work-based teacher training with academic study allowing non-graduates the chance to finish their degree and also gain QTS. *The overseas trained teacher programme* enables those who are currently teachers outside of England (both within and outside the European Economic Area) access to teaching positions in this country. Finally, for those teachers who have a degree and substantial teaching experience but do not hold QTS, a *QTS assessment only* course is available. Usually candidates compile and submit a portfolio of teaching evidence and are observed during classroom assessment visits.

Secondary School Drama Teacher Training

It is important to acknowledge that teachers need not train in Drama to deliver this specific subject. For example, out of the six course leaders interviewed for this study only two trained to teach the specialist subject of Drama which, in both cases, was not their main subject area: Participant A primarily trained in English and Participant B specialised in Physical Education (*PE*). Course leaders C and F both began teaching Drama after training to teach English and working for many years in English classrooms. Like them, many Drama teachers qualify to teach through Performing Arts, Media or English ITT courses but only briefly cover the subject of Drama in their course content, if at all. Course leaders D and E also had no formal Drama teacher training, but began teaching the subject through educational Children's Theatre projects and part time work on vocational courses at FE colleges. They are examples of Drama teachers who earned qualifications specifically aimed at teaching in the Post-Compulsory or FE sectors. Such courses largely focus on developing teaching skills with less emphasis on the subject that will be taught, however. These participants will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis. For the sake of this chapter, my discussion is devoted to better understanding the training of those who *have* specialised in Drama as a separate subject during their secondary school ITT training.

In 1945, the DES and the Education Committee of the West Riding County Council worked to establish a unique arts college at Bretton Hall to train teachers in art, drama and music, with the first cohort of students enrolled at *Bretton Hall College of Education* in 1949 (Bretton Hall, 2007). According to the Training Development Agency for Schools, at the time of this research there are 126 training providers for the secondary subjects of Drama/Dance (TDA, 2007). Out of these providers, all offer postgraduate training, 25 offer undergraduate training and 108 offer employment-based training. These universities, colleges and school-centred ITT organisations are inspected on a regular basis by Ofsted to establish whether they comply with the Secretary of State's criteria for ITT. Ofsted

inspections cover two main areas: the trainees' standards (e.g. subject knowledge, teaching standards and the ability to assess) and the training quality (e.g. course design and delivery, accuracy of assessing trainees and selection policy/procedures) (ibid). Out of all secondary school ITT providers (including key stage two and three) for the subjects of Drama, two institutions were awarded the highest Training Development Agency quality category on the basis of their Ofsted inspection. These institutions were the Devon Secondary Teacher Training Group (for its Drama PGCE course) and the University of Warwick (for its Drama with English PGCE course). They are included in this Literature Review to highlight the type of training experienced by those PGCE students enrolled on a highly rated ITT course. This researcher is not suggesting, however, that all secondary school Drama teachers have received comparable training.

Secondary school teachers work with children between the ages of 11 to 18 and specialise in teaching one or two subjects. All secondary school trainee teachers must spend a minimum of 24 weeks on placement being trained in at least two schools. Most divide their time between 12 weeks at their HE institution and in schools, where they participate in supervised teaching practice. Regardless of the ITT programme, all trainee teachers learn of the relevant national curriculum programmes of study for their chosen subject. They also learn how to plan and prepare lessons with learning objectives and must demonstrate that they can use ICT correctly. Trainees are taught to manage classes, promote good behaviour and minimise disruptions. Also, potential teachers must show an awareness of the professional values expected of teachers, in their attitudes towards pupils and colleagues (TDA, 2007).

The Devon Secondary Teacher Training Group state that as well as preparing trainees to teach Drama in secondary schools, they give them an option of developing their teaching skills in Dance or Music for Drama. Course literature explains that trainees take modules in professional studies, they gain performing arts experience (often through workshops with leading professionals) and they serve their teaching practice over a period of 28 weeks (DSTTG, 2007). This literature also states that assessments occur through school lesson observations, the examination of a portfolio, through a written (or audio-visual) assignment, through a final project and a subject knowledge audit. Ofsted praised the Centre's ability to balance the delivery of general professional study topics with drama subject training (Ofsted, 2005a). This subject training covers drama in key stage three, English, primary drama, Post-16 drama, physical theatre, examinations, assessment and sessions dedicated to the delivery of effective drama schemes of work through focussing

on areas like differentiation, special educational needs and the use of audio-visual aids. Ofsted also found that drama training occurs in the form of lesson observations by learning mentors in placement schools with large flourishing Drama departments (Ofsted, 2005a). The Devon Secondary Teacher Training Group state that, in addition, trainees are expected to become involved in all aspects of school life by organising drama clubs, theatre trips, participating in rehearsals and other arts activities.

The trainees on the University of Warwick's Drama with English PGCE course are trained to teach both subjects of English and Drama as individual specialisms 'whilst being encouraged to exploit the links between them, in and beyond the National Curriculum' (WIoE, 2007). The University states that trainees learn to develop pupils' writing, reading and language skills and the pupils' knowledge and understanding of literature. Drama conventions, theatre practitioners and performance forms are also focussed on. Course literature suggests that PGCE students learn how to develop pupils' skills in creating, performing and evaluating drama and are encouraged to create teaching approaches for mixed ability classrooms. In its 2004/05 inspection, Ofsted praised the course's reinforcement of the relationship of drama to other arts subjects through theoretical and practical sessions with physical involvement (Ofsted, 2005b). The course was also commended on a well-equipped drama studio and multi-media centre. Ofsted stated that ITT students regularly work with visiting artists and take trips to the theatre. They also commented that Warwick ITT students take subject knowledge classes on a wide range of topics including African theatre, physical theatre and the work of individual playwrights.

Post-16 Drama Teacher Training

Ofsted also praised both institutions on their Post-16 Drama ITT course content. They commented that trainees at both the Devon Secondary Teacher Training Group and Warwick University gain sixth form teaching experience and learn of up-to-date Post-16 examination specifications as well as 'appropriate information about government strategies and other educational developments' (Ofsted, 2005a, 3). Course literature suggests that students study a wide range of assessment schemes and are introduced to the drama guidance published by the QCA, the previous DfES and the Arts Council for England. Also, Ofsted commented that practical teaching sessions at Warwick University often are specifically aimed at helping the trainees deliver lessons that cover current set texts in A Level Drama and Theatre Studies specifications. For example, a session on the set text *The Trojan Women* (Euripedes, 2002 edition) 'extended trainees' subject knowledge and provided many ideas for mediating classical texts in the classroom' (Ofsted, 2005b, 3). Ofsted found

that trainees tend to plan well for their students' individual examination needs and offer good written and verbal feedback. 'They are assiduous in preparing materials for classes' (ibid, 6). Inspectors also found that trainees learn to make AS and A2 lesson objectives clear and they share with students the criteria by which achievement and progress will be judged.

In addition, Ofsted commented that both institutions recruit high quality graduates that have very often come into teaching from working in the theatre as actors, directors or designers. As a result, few are without an extensive subject knowledge which appears to be shared amongst those on the course through a series of active optional study groups. At Warwick University 'trainees had frequent opportunities to share their specialist knowledge and thus to learn from one another as well as their trainer' (Ofsted, 2005b, 3). In particular, Ofsted stated that many used their good knowledge and understanding of drama to enhance the sixth form curriculum. For example, a student with expert knowledge on the work of Bertolt Brecht led an AS group in performance.

Both of these ITT institutions received very few criticisms from Ofsted. It was noted, however, that the Devon Secondary Teacher Training Group had no specialist drama facilities. Ofsted stated that trainees have the use of a small community theatre when preparing their lessons, 'however, mentors do not consistently plan for trainees to use resources such as costume, properties and lighting in their lessons' (Ofsted, 2005a, 3). Most schools had new purpose-built drama studios with appropriate theatre sound and lighting, but again Ofsted commented that 'theatre technology is used rarely by trainees, even where drama studios are well equipped, and opportunities are sometimes missed to enhance pupils' work with costumes and properties' (ibid, 7). Inspectors commended the availability of textbook resources, however. They stated that both ITT centres offered trainees the use of libraries with books likely to be encountered in schools and a collection of texts on the pedagogy of Drama.

Post-16 Drama Reference Materials

A number of reference materials have been designed to help teacher trainees deliver the specialist subject of Drama. *The London Drama Book Service* offers a comprehensive book list of Theatre and Drama in Education texts. Only a select few of their 300 titles pertain to the teaching of Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies, however. Fortunately, trainee teachers of this A Level subject can usually refer to sections in books which are largely focussed on Drama teaching at Key Stage Three or Four, educational research books, or English in

Education texts. Instead, this Literature Review is concerned with those writers who have published texts specifically highlighting Post-16 Drama Education.

Since 2001, a number of guidance documents on the teaching of Drama have been published by the Arts Council England, in conjunction with the previous DfES and the QCA. Most of these publications discuss lower school Drama provision, including *Drama in Schools* (1992)(2003) which provides guidance on pupil progression and covers key documents relating to Drama teaching throughout secondary school. Ofsted's *Inspecting Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies with Guidance on Self Evaluation* (2001b) was designed specifically to guide A Level providers, however, on how to evaluate teaching and learning standards and achievement. Secondary school Drama teacher trainees can also avail of Helen Nicholson's edited book *Teaching Drama 11-18* (2000). This comprehensive guide again largely covers topics relating to Drama at Key Stage Three and Four, but a number of chapters include sections on improvisational story-telling, script performance, writing plays electronically, physical theatre, devising, Shakespeare, pre-20th century texts and theatre practitioners; all topics that relate to work in AS and A2 classrooms. Nicholson later joined with Kempe to publish *Learning to Teach Drama 11-18* (2001). Unlike *Teaching Drama 11-18* (2000) this book is more of a step-by-step guide through the ITT process for teacher trainees, beginning with the application and interview process and covering how to develop a subject knowledge in Drama, write effective schemes of work, manage behaviour and assess both performance and written work. It also includes sections that were specifically written for teachers of A Level Drama, which consist of *Drama and public examinations* and *Monitoring, Assessment, Recording, Reporting and Accountability*. Other resources available to Drama trainee teachers include *Teaching Drama* magazine (Rhinegold). These termly publications are similar to the *Journal of National Drama* (National Drama) in that they often feature articles and resource materials specifically aimed at Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies teachers. Drama educators at all levels also can take advantage of comprehensive websites and in-service training from teacher organisations. *London Drama* and *National Drama* run conferences combining drama theory and practical workshops to provided training and support (Bennett, 2007).

There are also a number of student textbooks that were written to help students who are taking Drama and Theatre Studies as an examinable A Level subject. Banks' *Drama and Theatre Arts* (1991) was one of the first books primarily focussed on Drama and Theatre at GCSE and A Level. It takes a predominately historical view of theatre from Greek times to the 1980s and explains dramatic theory in relation to social, cultural and historical contexts.

Banks covers the work of theatre practitioners, the art of the theatre critic and offers student exercises for further project work. Cooper and Mackey's *Theatre Studies: An Approach for Advanced Level* (1995) emphasises a practical performance approach to Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels. It is separated into four sections: *textual analysis for set texts*; *frameworks for set text study*; *reviews and analysis of contemporary productions*; and *background information on key practitioners*. Mackey also later edited *Practical Theatre: A Post-16 Approach* (1997). Again, this book encouraged the practical aspects of the Drama and Theatre Studies course with chapters on topics like Acting, Directing, The Arts in Society, Theatre in Education and Masks. Chapters are divided into two sections: *research materials and information on a particular topic* and *resource activities* consisting of aims and objectives, information and tasks. Neelands and Dobson's *Drama and Theatre Studies at AS/A Level* (2000a) and *Theatre Directions* (2000b) complement each other in that the latter was initially intended to provide A Level students the opportunity to read passages from the major theorists and practitioners who figure prominently in *Drama and Theatre Studies at AS/A Level* (2000a). Both texts stand alone as accessible and informative guides, however. Additionally, Rhinegold publish a series of *A Student's Guide to AS Drama and Theatre Studies* (Lowe and Rush, 2004) (Harvey and Williams, 2004) classroom textbooks that are aimed at those studying the Drama and Theatre specifications of Edexcel and AQA. Other writers like Lamden (2000) have focused their work on a specific element within sixth form Drama and Theatre Studies teaching. In *Devising: a handbook for drama and theatre students*, she encourages the student reader to develop good devising skills for the practical elements of a number of different *Curriculum 2000* examinations, including AS/A Level courses in drama.

'Learning to teach drama is a continual process' (Kempe and Nicholson, 2001, 2) and while comprehensive and up-to-date teaching resources are beneficial to any secondary school Drama teacher, they are particularly important for those who have not specifically trained in this performing arts subject. As previously mentioned, there are a number of Drama resources which cover the practical delivery of primary and secondary school process Drama techniques. There are also a smaller selection of texts aimed at teachers and learners of Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies. For the most part, these resources offer focussed guidance on 'the aims and objectives for the current specifications in Drama and Theatre Studies' (Neelands and Dobson, 2000a, 1). While they have been especially helpful in enabling students to effectively approach previous specific syllabus requirements, there may now be a need to update these texts to reflect the A Level reform process. This researcher acknowledges that much of the practical and theoretical material detailed in these texts is

transferable, that is much will still be applicable even after the implementation of the revised A Levels, but that detailed mapping between the new specifications and the updated textbooks remains to be done.

Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels

Awarding Bodies and their Specifications

By 1990 Theatre Studies and Drama were well-established academic subjects in the curriculum of many 11-18 secondary schools and in the public examination system (Cockett, 1998). A Level Theatre Studies was offered in England through the Associated Examining Board (*AEB*) and WJEC. Also, A Level Drama was offered through the University of London Examinations and Assessment Council (*ULEAC*). Yet despite being two of the fastest growing subjects at GCSE and A Level in the 1990s, they were included under the collective heading of the Expressive Arts and never featured in the SCAA's (an organisation which compiles and publishes statistics on public examinations) list of major subjects. The SCAA did not see the task of gathering statistical data on Drama and Theatre Studies as falling within its remit (*ibid*). Despite their exclusion, however, enrolment entries for Sixth Form Drama were 87 per cent higher in 1997 than in 1990, with an average enrolment increase of 12 per cent a year compared to a 1 per cent increase across all other subjects (*ibid*). This rate of increase made Drama the fastest growing A Level subject after Business Studies.

Following the review of exam standards in 1995, newly formed awarding bodies were established to offer both academic and vocational qualifications. The Business and Technology Education Council (*BTEC*) and ULEAC merged to form the Edexcel awarding body in 1996. WJEC remained and Oxford, Cambridge and RSA (*OCR*) was formed in 1998 from the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate and RSA. Also, AQA came into existence in April 2000 following the merger of the AEB and the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board (*NEAB*). When regional awarding bodies changed, the courses on offer in the Performing Arts curriculum area were streamlined. 'This led to a hybrid- *Drama and Theatre Studies* course that married Drama (a progression from GCSE Drama) and Theatre Studies (the academic study of set texts and theatre history)' (Bennett, 2003, 9).

In this new course, the theoretical and analytical study of drama was integrated with practical work (Arts Council England, 1992). 'The specifications were organised within

syllabus frameworks which offered teachers some leeway for designing their own pathways' (Bennett, 2003, 9) and teachers designed amalgamated courses which focused on improvisation, scripted texts, performance skills, technical theory and written evaluations. A Levels changed even further though when the government published *Qualifying for Success* (DfEE/DENI/WO, 1997), a document that suggested breaking A Levels into two, three-unit stages beginning with a one year *AS* course that could be used as a final qualification or as the first half of an Advanced Level qualification, when added to a second one year *A2* course. At the time of this research, A Level Drama and Theatre Studies is being delivered under this examination structure.

International Comparisons of Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies

In countries like Australia and Canada, which have largely developed lower school Drama in Education programmes, the inclusion of the subject of Drama and Theatre Studies in high school varies across provinces and territories. In Canada for instance, teachers follow a prescribed Drama and Theatre Studies curriculum (which differs depending on the geographical area) but largely the course is not a requirement for high school graduation, and only a small number of students opt for the subject after Grade Ten when they students are 15-16 years old. It is considered a 'complementary area of study' (Bouchard, 2005) and the course may be either locally developed and authorised, or a provincial programme of study that allows for teacher flexibility to tailor the course to the needs of the students. Australia's provision appears to be similarly structured. 'The system varies state-to-state due to the lack of a National Curriculum' (Flintoff, 2005). Like in Canada, most state education authorities have separate curriculum and assessment documents that articulate the scope rather than the content of the courses to be offered in Drama. In France, The French Baccalaureat integrates Drama and the Arts in all pathways of the award through optional opportunities to take 30 minute oral theatre exams in the Scientific or Economic and Social strands of the Baccalaureat. Alternatively, students who take the Literary Baccalaureat pathway could opt for a three hour 30 minute written exam and a 30 minute oral exam on Dramatic Theatre expression.

The United States is similar to both Canada and Australia in that each state governmental board dictates the educational syllabuses that are implemented in its schools. As a result, Post-16 Drama is not always offered to students who are from a state where the arts are not valued in the curriculum. Also, out of those states that do offer Drama on the curriculum, many see it as a supplementary arts elective class with no final examination. Students select the class for a credit grade that adds toward their overall grade point

average. Overall, state syllabuses for Drama are rare in America and teachers are left to design Drama programmes themselves. Often, lessons are dedicated solely to putting on the school play, talent shows, or entering students in competitions for speeches, debates and public recitals.

The writing of Drama practitioners like O'Neill (1995), Grady (2000), Swartz (1995), Warren (1995 & 1996), Morgan and Saxton (1987) and Miller and Saxton (1999) continue to inspire pioneering work to increase the presence of drama in the educational curriculum of countries like the United States and Canada. Similarly, leading Drama educators like Burgess and Gaudry (1995), Burton (1995 & 1996), Haseman and O'Toole (1990), Moore (1998), Taylor (1995, 1996 & 1998) and McLean (1996) have published writing that has promoted the placement of drama in Australian primary and secondary schools.

Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies education also varies slightly between countries in the United Kingdom, other than England. Scottish students take Highers for one year when they finish their Scottish Standard Grades at the age of 16. The Scottish Qualifications Authority who is sponsored by Scottish Executive Education, is the department responsible for the development, assessment and certification of qualifications other than degrees. They oversee the delivery of Higher Drama and Advanced Higher Drama (taken by 16-17 year olds who chose to continue their studies until the sixth year). Both Drama courses explore drama, performance skills and theatre practitioners and are assessed practically and in written form. The Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) reports to the Department of Education in Northern Ireland and serves as a regulatory authority as well as an awarding body. Drama is delivered through CCEA as a minor part of the English Literature specification but Northern Irish schools have the chance to utilise WJEC, Edexcel and AQA specifications in addition. In Wales, teachers can chose to deliver Drama and Theatre Studies specifications from awarding bodies based in England or the specification from their national awarding body, WJEC. For those who deliver the Welsh Baccalaureate, the subject of Drama is not featured specifically, but the Welsh Assembly Government propose the integration of drama into the *options* component of the qualification.

Monitoring and Inspecting A Levels

When this research was completed, the QCA was a public body sponsored by the DfES; it was governed by board members who were appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills and was managed on a day-to-day basis by an executive team (QCA,

2005a). At the time of this research, the QCA ensure that all A Level specifications must comply with GCE codes of practice, the GCE AS and A Level specific criteria and the Arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; Common Criteria (AQA, 2003). While the QCA monitor qualification delivery, Ofsted inspects the work being delivered by teachers. The booklet *Inspecting Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies with guidance on self evaluation* (Ofsted, 2001b) was published to help Ofsted inspectors and Drama teachers in schools and colleges 'evaluate standards and quality in drama and theatre studies for students Post-16' (Ofsted, 2001b, 1). This guidance document concentrates on issues specific to Drama and Theatre Studies but also complements the *Handbook for Inspecting Secondary Schools* (Ofsted, 1999), the supplement *Inspecting School Sixth Forms* (Ofsted, 2001c) and the *Handbook for Inspecting Colleges* (Ofsted, 2001a).

Inspecting Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies with guidance on self evaluation (Ofsted, 2001b) is separated into two main sections focusing on *standards and achievement* in schools and *teaching and learning*. It also addresses other factors influencing quality, such as facilities and resources. Under the heading of *standards and achievement*, Ofsted emphasises that inspectors must analyse student work, participate in student discussions, and complete thorough lesson observations. Other factors that the inspector will include when considering standards and achievement are trends in results and course selection, comparisons with other subjects, distributions of grades and the occurrence of high grades, value-added information, retention rates and the performance of students based on their sex or race (Ofsted, 2001b).

When evaluating *teaching and learning* inspectors look at the teacher's subject knowledge and how far he or she demonstrates a fluent knowledge of playwrights and the social, cultural and historical aspects of theatre. Also, examiners focus on the extent of the teacher's practical skills in acting, directing and design. Overall, examiners consider whether the teacher has a general understanding of the place of drama in society. The degree to which the teacher can teach and demonstrate the styles and conventions of drama in practical specialist performance terminology is addressed. Inspectors look at the ways in which the teacher develops students' skills and their critical understanding of dramatic tradition and genres. Teachers are expected to deliver the necessary written language skills of evaluation and analysis that students need when completing textual interpretations. Finally, inspectors cover the extent to which the teacher shows students how to research, devise, construct

and present documentary and/or improvised pieces for a range of audiences, and develop ideas for dramatic exploration.

Ofsted offers further guidance to those inspecting Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies, which includes evaluating the students' capabilities to:

- Use a specialist vocabulary confidently and sustain discussion on a text
 - Assess and account for their responses to plays they have studied
 - Give a well-focused analysis of the impact of a piece of theatre they have seen
 - Demonstrate a sound understanding of technical and design elements of theatre and performance technology
 - Understand the role of director in theatrical productions
 - Show some understanding of drama and the performing arts in their current and historical context
 - Move effectively and responsibly as members of a group
 - Plan and deliver a production, or elements of a production
 - Perform convincingly and with confidence
 - Demonstrate an appropriate standard of acting skills in voice and movement
 - Evaluate their own performances and achievement
- (Arts Council England, 2003, 62).

Definition of Terms and Prior Learning

Although Ofsted officials are likely to observe Drama and Theatre Studies teachers if their centre is inspected, officials do not regulate how teachers should deliver this chosen subject. Even the QCA, who oversee A Level specifications, do not insist on uniformity in classroom delivery. Drama and Theatre Studies lessons vary across centres not only because of the way drama is interpreted in classrooms by teachers but also due to differences between the three awarding body specifications. For example, even the terms of *drama* and *theatre* are defined differently depending on the specification that is being followed. 'There are considerable differences in glossaries provided by the exam boards' (Neelands and Dobson, 2000a, 3). In Edexcel's specification, *drama* is 'used to refer to the process of creating and exploring meanings and communicating these through the art form of theatre' (Edexcel, 2003, 9). Edexcel defines *theatre* as 'the eventual outcome of the drama process as a performance experienced by an audience' (ibid). AQA, on the other hand, believes that 'drama is used to refer to written texts intended for performance, as well as to original work devised in practical workshops conditions' (AQA, 2003, 9). The term *theatre* is 'reserved for a complete audience-centred experience, integrating actors' performance with production elements' (ibid, 9). WJEC considers *drama* to be the 'interaction between drama text and stage performance' (WJEC, 2004a, 9) whilst *theatre* is 'the interaction between performance and audience in its physical environment' (ibid).

Although Drama and Theatre Studies specifications differ, each awarding body ensures that there is sufficient breadth and depth across the qualification by encouraging centres to structure their course using a number of 'learning pathways' detailing a range of texts and genres (Edexcel, 2003). While these suggestions might be helpful, the teacher must also take into consideration the needs of the students and their prior knowledge and experiences in the performing arts. *Inspecting Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies with guidance on self evaluation* (Ofsted, 2001b) begins by noting that teachers should be aware that students taking Drama and Theatre Studies GCE AS and A Levels may have varied levels of experience. Not all students will have studied GCSE drama but 'all should have some experience of drama through work in English' (Ofsted, 2001b, 1). It acknowledges, however, that the reality of the students' experience may be very limited and teachers have a responsibility to research the students' previous background.

Aims and Objectives of Assessment

The Joint Council for General Qualifications (*The Joint Council*) represents all awarding bodies and publishes details of procedures and arrangements common to these awarding bodies. Edexcel and AQA are unitary awarding bodies in England who are regulated by the QCA, while WJEC is regulated by the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales (*ACCAC*). For most subjects the regulatory authorities draw up criteria for the accreditation of qualifications to the national qualification framework (QCA, 2005b). Edexcel, AQA and WJEC then draw up syllabuses to meet these criteria. When personally corresponding with David MacKay, QCA's then Programme Leader for 14-19 Qualifications, he wrote about the unique circumstances surrounding Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels,

Subjects such as Drama and Theatre Studies, Media Studies and ICT [differ from 'large entry traditional subjects' in that they] do not currently have subject criteria and so each specification has its own assessment objectives... The QCA approves the specifications and tries to ensure some uniformity between the specifications for a given subject. These subjects started off with just one awarding body but in recent years they have increased their entries considerably and have specifications with a number of awarding bodies. We think that it is now time for these subjects to have subject criteria. We have decided, therefore to create subject criteria for these subjects when we next revise A Levels in order to standardise requirements. This revision is likely to take place in the near future (MacKay, 2005).

Although a standardised Subject Criteria had not yet been designed by the QCA at the time of this statement, the QCA had issued *Performance Descriptions of the GCE Code of Practice* (QCA, 2003) for the subject of Drama and Theatre Studies, as it did for all GCE subjects. This document addressed boundary settings and assessment objectives, which most likely led to the very similar aims that were apparent between the differing Drama and Theatre

Studies specifications. For both AS and A Level, those who designed Drama and Theatre Studies specifications aimed to promote an enjoyment and interest in drama and theatre, both through students serving as informed audience members and through the development of practical skills. They hoped to stimulate critical thought and extend the skills, knowledge and understanding of the social, historical and cultural contexts of drama and theatre through textual analysis and practitioner work. In addition, they wanted candidates to respond critically and sensitively to a range of texts and performances from different time periods and styles. They stated that students should consider the benefits of life-long learning and have access to further study or arts related careers. Overall, they espoused that the specifications should broaden experience and develop imagination. Creativity should be fostered and personal and social development should be promoted.

The three major awarding bodies are also alike in that they all aim to offer opportunities through Drama to support environmental education, the European dimension in education, and health education in connection with the report *Environmental Responsibility, an agenda for further and higher education* (Peter, 1993). Each specification provides opportunities for developing and generating evidence for the key skills of communication, application of number, IT, improving own learning and performance, problem solving and working with others. In addition, the analysis and appreciation of the subject matter of plays and productions are used to encourage the understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social and cultural issues. The exam boards differ slightly in their approach to assessment criteria, however. The weightings of the assessment objectives and the methods in which they are distributed throughout the specification, are interpreted differently by each exam board (See Tables 2.1- 2.3). Despite their individual approaches though, each board is required to assess student work based on the QCA's performance descriptions (See Tables 2.4 & 2.5).

Table 2.1: Edexcel's Drama and Theatre Studies assessment objectives

AO1i (AS): 15% of A Level	Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which playwrights, directors, designers and performers use the medium of drama to create theatre and are affected by social, cultural and historical influences
AO2i (AS): 15% of A Level	Interpret plays and ideas using the medium of drama with knowledge and understanding
AO3i (AS): 20% of A Level	Communicate ideas, feelings and/or meaning to an audience making effective use of performing and/or design skills in response to a scripted play
AO1ii (A2): 15% of A Level	Evaluate the effectiveness of the ways in which playwrights, directors, designers and performers use the medium of drama to communicate their ideas to an audience demonstrating knowledge and understanding of social, cultural and historical contexts
AO2ii (A2): 15% of A Level	Interpret plays and ideas using the medium of drama in a sophisticated way and justify any artistic decisions from the standpoint of an informed playwright, director, performer and/or designer
AO3ii (A2): 20% of A Level	Communicate ideas, feelings and/or meaning to an audience making effective use of performing and/or design skills within the context of both devised and scripted work

Source: (Edexcel, 2003)

Table 2.2: AQA's Drama and Theatre Studies assessment objectives

AO1 (AS): 20% of A Level	Realise dramatic intentions through performance
AO2 (AS&A2): 30% of A Level	Respond with knowledge and understanding to drama from different periods
AO3 (AS): 7.5% of A Level	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a prescribed theatre practitioner
AO4 (AS): 7.5 % of A Level	Form judgements about live theatre observed
AO5 (A2): 15% of A Level	Present an effective interpretation of a play text demonstrating integration of text, style and theatrical method
AO6 (A2): 20% of A Level	Make connections between theoretical understanding and realisation in performance

Source: (AQA, 2003)

Table 2.3: WJEC's Drama and Theatre Studies assessment objectives

AO1 (AS&A2): 22.5% of A Level	Contribute to the making of drama individually and in a group by developing confidence and competence in technical and expressive production through a range of dramatic experiences including devising and working from texts
AO2 (AS&A2): 22.5% of A Level	Make creative and imaginative use of dramatic skills, devices and conventions by investigating, selecting and using appropriate methods, materials, processes and resources, (A2: <i>including working from themes through stylistically varied texts</i>)
AO3 (AS&A2): 32.5% of A Level	Research, analyse and evaluate drama texts (A2: <i>and theatrical contexts including historical and cultural circumstances, performance conventions and conditions</i>)
AO4 (AS&A2): 22.5% of A Level	Identify the relationships between text and performance from a directorial perspective and by documenting and critically assessing own and others' performance processes; (A2: <i>applying learnt skills from varied styles and genres, to dramatic issues</i>)

Source: (WJEC, 2004a)

Table 2.4: AS Drama and Theatre Studies Performance Descriptions

	Group 1: Performing and Designing	Group 2: Knowledge, Understanding and Evaluation	Group 3: Interpreting Plays
Comparison of Assessment Objective Classifications	<p>AQA – Realize dramatic intentions through performance (AO1)</p> <p>Edexcel – Communicate ideas, feelings and/or meaning to an audience making effective use of performing and/or design skills in response to a scripted play (AO3i)</p> <p>WJEC – Contribute to the making of drama individually and in a group by developing confidence and competence in expressive and technical production through a range of dramatic experiences including devising and working from texts (AO1)</p> <p>WJEC – Make creative and imaginative use of dramatic skills, devices and conventions by investigating, selecting and using appropriate methods, materials, processes and resources (AO2)</p>	<p>AQA – Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a prescribed theatre practitioner (AO3)</p> <p>AQA – Form judgments about live theatre observed (AO4)</p> <p>Edexcel – Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which playwrights, directors, designers and performers use the medium of drama to create theatre and are affected by social, cultural and historical influences (AO1i)</p> <p>WJEC – identify the relationships between text and performance from a directorial perspective and by documenting and critically assessing own and others' performance processes (AO4)</p> <p>WJEC – Research, analyze and evaluate drama texts (AO3)</p>	<p>AQA – Respond with knowledge and understanding to drama from different periods (AO2)</p> <p>Edexcel – Interpret plays and ideas using the medium of drama with knowledge and understanding (AO2i)</p> <p>WJEC – identify the relationships between text and performance from a directorial perspective and by documenting and critically assessing own and others' performance processes (AO4)</p>

Source: (QCA, 2003)

Table 2.5: A2 Drama and Theatre Studies Performance Descriptions

	Group 1: Performing, Directing or Design skills	Group 2: Knowledge, Understanding and Evaluation	Group 3: Interpreting Plays
Comparison of Assessment Objective Classifications	<p>AQA – Present an effective interpretation of a play text demonstrating integration of text, style and theatrical method (AO5)</p> <p>Edexcel – Communicate ideas, feelings and/or meaning to an audience making effective use of performing and/or design skills within the context of both devised and scripted work (AO3ii)</p> <p>WJEC – Contribute to the making of drama individually and in a group by developing confidence and competence in expressive and technical production through a range of dramatic experiences, including devising and working from texts (AO1)</p> <p>WJEC – Make creative and imaginative use of dramatic skills, devices and conventions by investigating, selecting and using appropriate methods, materials, processes and resources, including working from themes through stylistically varied texts (AO2)</p>	<p>AQA – Make connections between theoretical understanding and realization in performance (AO6)</p> <p>Edexcel – Evaluate the effectiveness of the ways in which playwrights, directors, designers and performers use the medium of drama to communicate their ideas to an audience demonstrating knowledge and understanding of social, cultural and historical influences (AO1ii)</p> <p>WJEC – Research, analyze and evaluate drama texts and theatrical contexts including historical and cultural circumstances, performance conventions and conditions (AO3)</p> <p>WJEC – Identify the relationships between text and performance from a directorial perspective and by documenting and critically assessing own and others' performance processes, applying learnt skills from varied styles and genres, to dramatic issues (AO4)</p>	<p>AQA – Respond with knowledge and understanding to drama from different periods (AO2)</p> <p>Edexcel – Interpret plays and ideas using the medium of drama in a sophisticated way and justify any artistic decisions from the standpoint of an informed playwright, director, performer and/or designer (AO2ii)</p> <p>WJEC – Identify the relationships between text and performance from a directorial perspective and by documenting and critically assessing own and others' performance processes, applying learnt skills from varied styles and genres, to dramatic issues (AO4)</p>

Source: (QCA, 2003)

Drama and Theatre Studies A Level Specifications

Drama and Theatre Studies exam specifications vary most in their content (*See Table 2.6*) even though they share common assessment criteria as prescribed by the QCA. When considering examinations and written coursework, Edexcel allots approximately 52.5 per cent of its A Level qualification to written work and 47.5 per cent to practical work, WJEC. candidates spend 35 per cent of their studies on practical work and 65 per cent of their time completing written work, and AQA allows for 70 per cent written work (in the form of coursework and written exams) and 30 per cent practical work. The sequencing and organising of unit areas vary, too. In the AS year, Edexcel students initially study two plays from the viewpoint of a performer, designer or director. They have practical workshops and complete exploration notes in the form of coursework. This is internally assessed and externally moderated and counts for 15 per cent of the A Level qualification. Students also serve as either performers or designers in the production of an additional play. This is externally assessed and counts for 20 per cent of the A Level. Finally, students take two written examinations that make up 15 per cent of their award. One paper tests their understanding of the way candidates participated in a play. Another question looks at their experience of a live piece of theatre. In the A2 year, Edexcel students devise an original piece of drama for an audience and construct written structured records. This unit is internally assessed and externally moderated and it counts for 20 per cent of the A Level qualification. Students again participate as a director, designer or performer in a scripted play in an externally assessed production that is worth 15 per cent of their award. They then take two written exams (for 15 per cent of the A Level qualification) looking at either the set texts *The Beggar's Opera* (Gay, 2002 edition) by John Gay or *The Trojan Women* (2002 edition) by Euripides. Also, students answer a question about the production history of a play written between 1575 and 1720, which must be observed live (Edexcel, 2003).

The AQA specification separates its devised and text units in its one-year courses, but it delivers its specification differently than Edexcel. During the AS course students spend 15 per cent of their total A Level mark by serving as an actor or designer in a piece of original drama for an audience while maintaining a portfolio of work worth 5 per cent. This unit is internally assessed and externally moderated. Students then spend 15 per cent of their A Level qualification answering two written questions on a play from Greek theatre to the Jacobean period and a question about a contemporary drama written in the twentieth century. Finally, candidates complete another written exam for 15 per cent of their A Level grade. They look at the theories and practice of theatrical practitioners and personally respond to aspects of live theatre. In A2, candidates perform a part of a play text for 15 per

cent of their A Level mark. They also submit a portfolio which is worth 5 per cent of their grade. This work is internally assessed and externally moderated. They then answer two written exam questions on two set plays for 15 per cent. One question looks at theatre at a given time period between the Restoration to the end of the nineteenth century. The other question once again looks at a contemporary drama written in the twentieth century. Candidates complete a final written exam for 15 per cent of their qualification. They must choose a question that examines the work of a practitioner and apply it to either a live production they have seen, or one they have participated in. They must also interpret an excerpt from an unseen play and consider the role of the director in their answer (AQA, 2003).

WJEC candidates spend 15 per cent of their qualification working on their acting or production skills of a set text in their AS year. They complete a process journal that is internally assessed and externally moderated (worth 5 per cent of their grade). Students then take a written paper worth 15 per cent. This paper requires candidates to do a directorial analysis of an unseen play text. They also take another written paper for 15 per cent of their A Level grade. The students must analyse scenes from two set texts 'with regard to character motivation and action, atmosphere and staging potential' (WJEC, 2004a, 3). In their A2 year, WJEC students complete an externally moderated theme project report for 15 per cent of their grade that addresses how students analyse and evaluate the working process involved in a practical performance. Students also receive up to 5 per cent of their A Level grade from being assessed by their teachers on their contribution to the performance or technical development of a play. Their work in the play makes up 15 per cent of their grade and is externally assessed. The scripted and devised pieces are based on a set theme and must include performance work from two written texts. Students then complete a written paper for 15 per cent of their qualification mark. They must analyse, as an actor or designer, a scene from a set text. In addition, they must look at dramatic structure and development, content and thematic elements. A second text is looked at for its historical context and dramatic theory (ibid).

The trends of Drama and Theatre Studies AS and A Level examination results differ slightly between exam boards. As well as setting performance descriptions for England's Drama and Theatre Studies A Level awarding bodies, the QCA also give guidelines on A/B and E/U boundary settings which are designed to assist Edexcel, AQA and WJEC examiners in exercising their professional judgement, even though it is recognised that they need to be interpreted and applied in the context of individual specifications and their

associated units (QCA, 2003)(See Tables 2.7 & 2.8). Over a period of time since the implementation of *Curriculum 2000*, WJEC has proven to have low fail rates and consistently high rates of AS and A2 students who earn A/Bs in the summer examinations (WJEC, 2004b). AQA's fail rate has appeared much higher than that of other awarding bodies (AQA, 2004). Edexcel candidates, on the other hand, seem to improve their Drama and Theatre marks if they continue to take the subject on to A Level standard after completing their first AS year (Edexcel, 2004a)(Edexcel, 2004b).

Table 2.6: Drama and Theatre Studies Specifications

	Edexcel	AQA	WJEC
Practical assignments:	47.5%	30%	35%
Written assignments:	52.5%	70%	65%
AS Content:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study of 2 plays from the viewpoint of a performer, designer or director through practical workshops with exploration coursework Perform or design in a scripted play Written exam on participation in a play and written exam on viewing live theatre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform or design for a devised piece of drama and complete portfolio coursework Written exam on two set texts Written exam on a theatre practitioner and written exam on viewing live theatre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform or design both a scripted and devised performance of a play with process journal coursework Written exam on interpreting an unseen play for potential performance Written exam on two set texts
A2 Content:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devise a piece of drama and complete structured record coursework Participate as a performer, designer or director in a scripted play Written exam on set text and written exam on the production history of a play from 1575-1720 which has been viewed on stage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform or design in part of a scripted play Written exam on two set texts Written exam on a theatre practitioner and written exam on interpreting an unseen play for potential performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme project report looking at their practical performance and contribution to the working process Perform or design three scripted and devised scenes from a set text, based on a theme. Written exam on two set texts

Source: (Edexcel, 2003) (AQA, 2003), (WJEC, 2004a)

Table 2.7: AS Drama and Theatre Studies Levels of Attainment

	<i>Assessment Objective 1:</i> Performing and Designing	<i>Assessment Objective 2:</i> Knowledge, Understanding and Evaluation	<i>Assessment Objective 3:</i> Interpreting Plays
A/B Boundary Performance Descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. produce work that is creative and which results from a well-developed understanding of the content, form, style and/or genre</p> <p>b. present work that is technically accomplished, disciplined and communicates effectively with an audience.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant aspects of drama and theatre using appropriate terminology</p> <p>b. present work that is well organized, clear and fluent.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. analyze and comment on the key characteristics of the play in terms of its performance potential and provide practical ideas for a dramatically effective interpretation in performance</p> <p>b. comprehensively interpret the meaning of a play through application of ideas and concepts appropriate to the context.</p>
E/U Boundary Performance Descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. produce work that is based on a limited understanding of the context of the work</p> <p>b. produce work that, whilst occasionally being able to communicate with an audience, has a limited level of technical accomplishment.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. demonstrate a limited knowledge and understanding of some aspects of drama and theatre, occasionally using some appropriate terminology</p> <p>b. present work that communicates in a straightforward way but with some inaccuracies.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. identify some of the play's theatrical characteristics in terms of its performance potential</p> <p>b. provide an obvious and straightforward interpretation of a play.</p>

Source: (QCA, 2003)

Table 2.8: A2 Drama and Theatre Studies Levels of Attainment

	<i>Assessment Objective 1:</i> Performing, Designing or Designing	<i>Assessment Objective 2:</i> Knowledge, Understanding and Evaluation	<i>Assessment Objective 3:</i> Interpreting Plays
A/B Boundary Performance Descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. produce work that is imaginative and highly creative which results from a high level of understanding of the content, form, style and/or genre</p> <p>b. present work that demonstrates sustained technical accomplishment and communicates effectively to an audience with a real sense of purpose.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding of relevant aspects of drama and theatre, articulating their awareness of the relationship between theory and practice</p> <p>b. write accurately, use terminology appropriately and be able to organize, sustain and develop an argument based on well-chosen examples.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. reflect analytically and perceptively on the key characteristics of the play in terms of its performance potential and provide inventive practical ideas for a dramatically effective interpretation.</p>
E/U Boundary Performance Descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. produce work that is unimaginative and shows a straightforward understanding of the content, form, style and/or genre</p> <p>b. present work that is only occasionally effective because of uneven technical accomplishment.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. demonstrate generalized knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre, making some connections between theory and practice</p> <p>b. write in a way that communicates ideas and understanding but inaccuracies obscure the meaning.</p>	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <p>a. present some ideas in response to a play that provide a workable interpretation of the play in terms of performance.</p>

Source: (QCA, 2003)

PART THREE:

Proposed Governmental Changes to Post-16 Education

AS and A Level Subject Criteria for Drama and Theatre Studies

Earlier this chapter featured a statement made in 2005 by David MacKay, QCA's then Programme Leader for 14-19 Qualifications, about the QCA's intention of designing a subject criteria for Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels. This was later accomplished when the QCA interpreted the proposals in the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES, 2005a) before designing their *Draft GCE AS and A Level Subject Criteria for Drama and Theatre Studies* (QCA, 2006d) in March 2006. A period of online consultation occurred which allowed *key stakeholders* the opportunity to access the QCA website to give their *professional views* on the aims, content, assessment, progression, accessibility, and challenges present in the draft proposal. The draft criteria had four assessment objectives (*See Table 2.9*) requiring candidates to 'make critical and evaluative judgements on the effectiveness of theatre performance' (QCA, 2006d, 6). Also, specific mention was made about the importance of devised work, scripted work and student attendance at live theatre. These elements were previously included in Drama and Theatre Studies specifications, but not specifically mentioned in the *Aims and Skills* sections. The QCA also stated that A Level candidates must study a minimum of four published plays, of which one must be a pre-twentieth century text. This is a much more specific requirement than the approach being taken at the time of this research by the WJEC, who require candidates to study 'an extended range of texts' (WJEC/CBAC, 2004a, 13). Finally, candidates would be required to study the work of one influential director, designer or practitioner; whereas previously a broader and more general knowledge of work was acceptable, with AQA as the only awarding body who emphasised the study of specific practitioners.

Table 2.9: Draft GCE AS and A Level Assessment Criteria for Drama and Theatre Studies
Assessment Objectives **Weightings**

		AS Level	A2 Level
AO1	Demonstrate the application of performance or design skills through the creation and realisation of theatre	30-40%	30-40%
AO2	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of practical and theoretical aspects of drama and theatre using appropriate terminology	20-40%	20-40%
AO3	Interpret plays from different periods and genres	20-40%	20-40%
AO4	Make critical and evaluative judgements on the effectiveness of theatre performance	10-25%	10-25%

Source: (QCA, 2006d, 6)

The GCE AS/A Level *Consultation Summary Reports* (QCA, 2006f) were published by the QCA in September 2006 to give the results of the online response. The reports indicated that from 3252 replies to all subject areas, only 51 respondents throughout the country logged online to the QCA website to record their comments about the proposed Drama and Theatre Studies AS and A Level. Even if these individuals were representatives for larger groups, from these 51 not all respondents answered every question, inevitably producing misleading results. For example, according to the QCA poll, '96 per cent of respondents felt the aims for drama and theatre studies, as currently stated, were appropriate' (QCA, 2006f, 18). In actuality, only 25 people answered this question in the poll and therefore 96 per cent accounted for only 24 respondents. Likewise, 87.5 per cent believed that the content for this subject was up to date, appropriately allocated, and would enable appropriate progression. In this poll, the 87.5 per cent was out of 16 respondents to this question and represented only 14 replies. The QCA reported that 54.5 per cent of respondents believed that 'the assessment objectives indicate clearly what is to be assessed by the qualification' (QCA, 2006f, 19) and that there was an 'overlap between assessment objectives' (ibid). This only accounted for 6 replies out of the 11 responses to this question. Also, 90.9 per cent felt all of the competences were essential to the study of this subject at advanced level, which accounted for only 10 out of the 11 respondents. Similarly, the report stated 72.7 per cent felt that no essential competences had been left out of the draft proposal. This represented 8 out of 11 respondents to that question.

Online respondents were asked questions under the headings *Aims, Content, Assessment Objectives, Progression and Relative Weightings of Assessment Objectives, Scheme of Assessment, Subject Matter Aims, Accessibility for all Learners, and Stretch and Challenge*. While the response statistics appear valuable, they could be misleading if not analysed within the context of the number of online respondents. It is not immediately made clear in the statistic '90 per cent felt the relative weighing of the assessment objectives were appropriate at AS level [and] 80 per cent felt they were appropriate at A2' (QCA, 2006f, 19) that the result is out of 10 replies to that question. Similarly, only 10 respondents out of 51 answered a question about whether a four-unit structure was appropriate for Drama and Theatre Studies even though this aspect of the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES, 2005a) was considered integral to the design of the reformed A Levels. The then DfES believed that it would reduce the assessment burden, reduce costs and address exam timetabling issues (DfES, 2005a) but only 20 per cent of consultation participants registered their opinion on this issue, with half disagreeing that the four-unit structure was appropriate for this subject. In the Reflections and Conclusion Chapter of this thesis I question the effectiveness of a national

consultation questionnaire that has so few respondents. I also look at the evolution of educational policies and the process in which these policies are eventually disseminated into the classroom, often in spite of consultation results. The reluctance of some teachers to participate in governmental surveys is also examined.

The *GCE AS and A Level subject criteria for Drama and Theatre Studies* (QCA, 2006g) was published by the QCA in September 2006 soon after the publication of the *GCE AS/A Level Consultation Summary Reports* (QCA, 2006f). Very little changed in the newly revised addition of the previously published draft subject criteria, which appeared to suggest that the QCA recognised their consultation had only a limited impact with 51 Drama and Theatre Studies respondents showing concerns. Specific changes included the terms *skills* and *design skills* being more clearly defined as ‘performance and/or production skills’ (QCA, 2006g, 5) and the word *drama* was added alongside the word *theatre* in some instances. Also, the phrase *live theatre* replaced that of ‘theatre performance’ (ibid). The most significant difference, however, was visible in the section addressing the Drama and Theatre Studies’ synoptic element. Sentences were added which indicated a synoptic element ‘should be included at A2’ (ibid, 7) and this synoptic assessment should involve,

the selection and application of skills, knowledge and understanding to a range of new and varied contexts... candidates should be required to address artistic challenges through the creation of their own work and their interpretation of plays and show understanding of the ways in which other drama and theatre practitioners have made artistic decisions (ibid).

This document also stated that there should be both practical and theoretical elements to the synoptic assessment, which should draw on all the assessment objectives ‘although not necessarily with equal weighing’ (ibid).

Draft Drama and Theatre Studies A Level Specifications

In 2007 the three awarding bodies that offer Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels each responded to the QCA’s *AS and A Level subject criteria for Drama and Theatre Studies* by drafting GCE specifications. It is likely that these will be delivered in classrooms in September 2008 but, at the time of this research, Edexcel, AQA and WJEC are still awaiting accreditation from the QCA. Again, each specification was informed by the QCA and, ‘as a result, despite differences of approaches, emphases and assessment weightings within syllabuses, there are a number of common factors’ (Kempe and Nicholson, 2001, 42). However, although the content is similar between specifications they differ slightly in their course structure, the demands made on AS students, and their balance between practical and written elements (See Table 2.10).

Table 2.10: Drama and Theatre Studies Draft Specifications

	Edexcel	AQA	WJEC
Practical assignments:	Weightings unknown at this time	32.5%	Weightings unknown at this time
Written assignments:	Weightings unknown at this time	67.5%	Weightings unknown at this time
AS Content:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study of 2 plays in a practical and active way. One play is explored in the light of a theatre practitioner. Exploration notes and live theatre evaluation coursework is completed. Perform or design in a scripted play. Also perform a monologue, duologue or create a design from an additional play. A rationale of the interpretation must be provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written exam on a piece of live theatre. Written exam on a set text Perform (or design for) in a scripted play. Supporting notes of the preparatory and development work is completed as coursework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform (or design for) both a scripted and devised performance working on the ideas of 2 practitioners Written exam on two set texts. Additional written exam on a live theatre visit
A2 Content:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devise (or design for) a piece of drama and complete a coursework evaluation of the process and performance with evidence of the research completed. Written exams on a set text. Additional written exam on a piece of live theatre from a set time period, comparing the live production with the original performance conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written exam on two set texts. Additional written exam on how to stage an extract from a set text Devise (or design for) a piece of drama. Supporting notes of the preparatory and development work is completed as coursework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform (or design for) three scripted and devised scenes from different texts, based on a set theme. An evaluation piece of coursework is required. Written exam on two set texts. Additional written exam on a directorial analysis of an unseen text.

Source: (Edexcel, 2007) (AQA, 2007), (WJEC, 2007)

In the AS year, the practical elements of both Edexcel and AQA are based on scripted, rather than devised performances. Edexcel defends this choice in their specification by stating ‘Since the emphasis in most GCSE Drama...courses is on improvisation...[this specification] deliberately focuses on working with plays’ (Edexcel, 2007, 1). These awarding bodies also require a coursework element in this AS year. Unlike Edexcel, however, the written element of the AQA AS course also includes a written examination

on a set text and a live theatre visit. WJEC also includes a written examination in the AS year based on set texts and the viewing of live theatre. In addition, though, WJEC AS students must also perform practical pieces, but no coursework is required and both scripted and devised elements are evident. WJEC shares the Edexcel requirement of having AS students focus on the work of a particular theatre practitioner, however.

Students studying the Edexcel specification take their written exam on a set text and seeing a piece of live theatre in their A2 year. Also, along with AQA A2 students, they perform a devised piece of theatre and submit written coursework. AQA have the additional requirement, as in the A2 course of WJEC, of being examined on set texts and the staging of an extract. For WJEC A2 students, this examination is in addition to the performance of scripted and devised scenes with evaluative coursework.

At the time of this research, only AQA has published the proposed weightings of the practical and written elements of their A Level Drama and Theatre Studies specification. Interestingly, they state the written paper weighting as 60 per cent (AQA, 2007), without taking into consideration the coursework requirement as a form of written work. For the sake of this study, both course work and written examinations are considered as non-practical written elements to the specification. Both WJEC and Edexcel have separated their course content into practical and written elements, also, but the specific weightings of written coursework have not yet been defined. For the written evaluation element of the A2 course, WJEC writes 'details to be provided' (WJEC, 2007, 15) Similarly, Edexcel states what the coursework should consist of but does not give an indication of how much this written element is worth. From the details that have been provided, it appears as if the WJEC Drama and Theatre Studies A Level will approximately have a 40 per cent practical element and a 60 per cent written element. Edexcel appears as if it will have a 55 per cent practical element and a 45 per cent written element. Again, however, it is difficult to rely on this hypothesis until Edexcel and WJEC provide further details of the weightings of their written coursework elements, as AQA have already done.

There are some noticeable differences between the proposed draft specifications written in 2007 and the Drama and Theatre Studies A Level specifications implemented in response to *Curriculum 2000*. Although based on speculation, the practical performance content has increased for all Drama and Theatre Studies A Level courses. The Edexcel AS course no longer has a written exam but instead has additional performance and coursework elements. Also, the Edexcel A2 course does include a scripted performance requirement. WJEC no longer includes a coursework element in the AS year, although, like in the

Edexcel specification, students will study the work of theatre practitioners. Also, WJEC no longer includes a written exam which asks students to give staging ideas for an unseen piece of text. This requirement is instead implemented in the A2 year of the WJEC course. AS students will instead have a written examination about seeing a piece of live theatre. The revised AQA AS course includes the written examination of only one set text and there is no additional examination on a particular theatre practitioner either in the AS or the A2 year. AS students also perform in (and provide coursework for) a scripted play, rather than a devised play which is instead done in the A2 year.

Stretch and Challenge

For the *Stretch and Challenge* element of Post-16 assessment, the QCA developed a draft framework and criteria for the Extended Project at level three; with the aim that students complete a task relevant to their own interests and study areas. The project was described as a single piece of work ‘requiring a high degree of planning, preparation, research and autonomous working’ (QCA, 2007b). Students would be required to explore a subject independently, would be rigorously assessed and would have the same framework and criteria for both A Level and diploma students. ‘The criteria have therefore been designed to be sufficiently flexible for a variety of project types and outcomes’ (ibid).

After a four month period of online consultation in 2006, 284 respondents’ remarks were summarised in the *Consultation on Draft Extended Project Criteria: Summary Report* (QCA, 2006a). Only 3.5 percent who responded online to this consultation were teachers (or another type of profession) associated with the sector of ‘Arts, Media and Publishing’ (QCA, 2006a, 3); with most respondents working in the field of ‘Science and Mathematics’ and ‘History, Philosophy and Theology’. The proposed changes would affect many teachers of Drama and Theatre Studies, however. Students would have to work with a teacher, mentor or employer who would offer up to 180 guided learning hours, in extension to pre-existing units of study. The QCA acknowledged this when they noted that centres will need ‘guidance...[on] how to manage large numbers of students carrying out a diverse range of projects’ (QCA, 2006b, 8). Teachers of Drama and Theatre Studies could possibly find that not only their existing students want to do projects that must be guided by a Theatre Arts teacher, but also students who are hoping to make ‘cross-curricular’ links may want to study a ‘new or unfamiliar context’ (QCA, 2006b, 6). The fact that the *Consultation on the Extended Project* cites an example of a ‘theatre management’ (ibid, 7) research project as a favourable choice for a Post-16 student indicates the anticipated involvement of Drama and Theatre Studies teachers.

In addition to the Extended Project aspect of the *Stretch and Challenge* element of the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a), the QCA has also been developing guidance information for schools and colleges who hope to offer HE units as part of their 16-19 curriculum. At the time of this research, the QCA proposed that the existing provision exposing students to HE-linked experiences should be built on and the 'forthcoming curriculum development at a national level will provide an opportunity to review the 16-19 curriculum and its delivery' (QCA, 2007a). It is not yet known how HE modules will be integrated into A Level and diploma framework structures, but overall the QCA have 'the expectation of collaborative provision' (ibid). Differentiated questions will also be introduced to stretch more-able students. In his speech to Sixth Form Colleges in 2006, the then Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Alan Johnson, spoke of adding more open ended questions, requiring 'greater thought and more detailed written replies, rather than short answer questions' (Johnson, 2006). In addition, a new A* grade will be introduced.

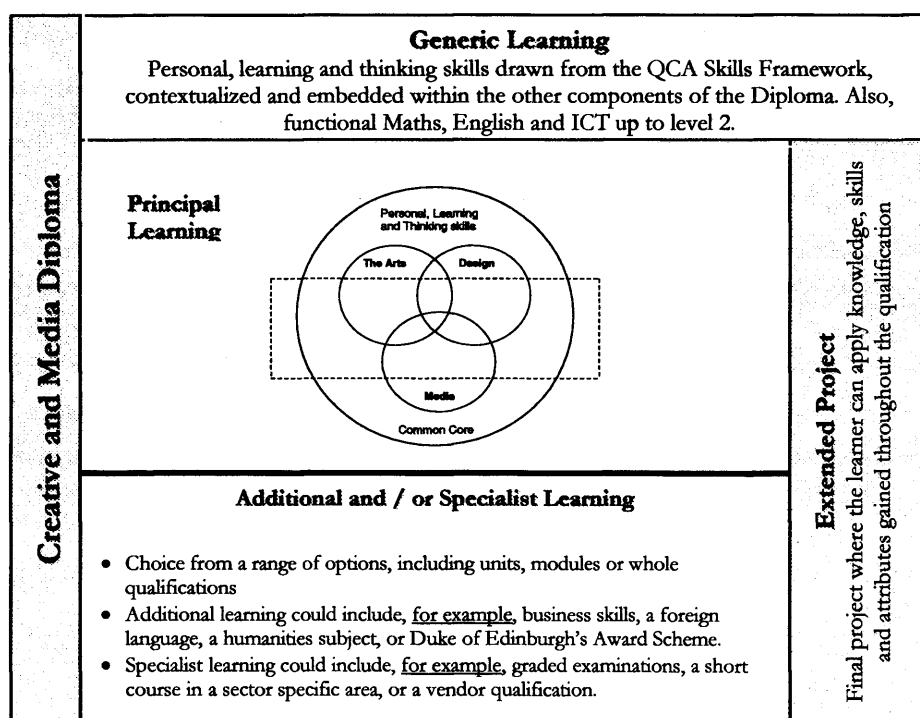
Creative and Media Diploma Strand

The Creative and Media Diploma (*CMD*) strand is featured in this research because it is the only diploma strand that delivers elements of the performing and expressive arts. Out of the 15 proposed diploma strands, the Creative and Media strand will be amongst the five diplomas to be introduced into schools and colleges in 2008. The *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) was designed to 'retain but strengthen A Levels and GCSEs and to develop a better respected vocational route through the creation of specialised diplomas' (Edexcel, 2005, 2). It is expected that all three-level *specialised* vocational diplomas will intertwine with academic routes and be featured in future league tables and will complement existing qualifications (SSC, 2006a).

'Relevant stakeholders, in particular awarding bodies, educationalists and... industry employers' (SSC, 2006a) were consulted about the design of the CMD. This diploma was initially developed by the government's Diploma Development Partnership (*DDP*) and was based on the work of three sector skills councils, with *Skillset* taking the lead. The principle aims of the diploma are for students to 'have a broad, experiential learning experience' (ibid) that will allow learners to apply their knowledge and skills as they progress to FE, HE or employment. Also, the diploma was designed to provide a greater choice of pathways that foster creativity while being a 'world class qualification that is rooted in broad education principles' (ibid).

As with all diploma strands, the Creative and Media diploma has elements of Principal Learning, Generic Learning, Additional/Specialist Learning and the Extended Project (See Figure 2.1). At the time of this research, many of these elements have not yet been finalised, however. For example, the Creative and Media Principal Learning component covers a broad and diverse range of sectors to reflect different creative and media industries in the performing arts, visual arts, music, film, animation, fashion design etc. These sectors have been grouped into the overlapping areas of *the arts*, *design* and *media* and are not mutually exclusive, but the learning objectives that will relate to these combined sector areas have not yet been defined. It is projected that approximately half of this component will be studied through work-related learning and the other half will be delivered through creative and practical means, but at the time of this research the Sector Skills Council (SSC) state, 'It is the content of this component that we are asking industry to define' (SSC, 2006a). They have proposed however, that a minimum of 60 per cent of learning should fall within one of the fields and a minimum of 10 per cent of learning should relate to a different field. The remaining 30 per cent can be taken in any field.

Figure 2.1: Creative and Media Diploma Strand (Source: CMD, 2006)



Accompanying this Principal Learning element is the requirement for students to develop personal, learning and thinking skills to support employability and to complement the entire learning experience. 'This is being produced by QCA and is currently in its latter stages of development' (SSC, 2006a). Also, a common core of skills that will include

elements of thinking and working creatively will be reinforced through being consistently applied. The Generic Learning Skills element of the diploma will be based on the QCA's 11-19 Skills Framework and will put personal, learning and thinking skills in context within the other components of the diploma involving Maths, English and ICT. The Additional/Specialist Learning component will allow students to take extra learning units, modules or whole qualifications and develop their skills in complementary subject areas, for example graded examinations in music or the performing arts. Finally, the Extended Project is intended to allow students the opportunity to consolidate the knowledge, skills and attributes gained throughout the qualification.

Integrating the CMD with Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels

At the time of this research, awarding bodies are awaiting accreditation from the QCA for their draft specifications that were written with the QCA's subject criteria in mind. It is expected that these specifications will be accredited by the summer of 2007 and delivered in the classrooms for September 2008. Also at that time, five vocational diploma strands will be available to students and will intertwine with academic routes and be featured in future league tables. Questions about the availability of these lines of learning remain unanswered though. In the government's document entitled *Specialised Diplomas- Your Questions Answered* (DfES, 2006c) the then DfES stated that students will have a great flexibility in the qualifications they can choose and can mix GCSEs, A Levels and diploma strands. Martin Ward, Deputy General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) acknowledged that, "GCSE and A Levels will still be offered alongside the diplomas" (Ward quoted in Finnegan, 2006, 3) and the OCR explained, 'there will be more scope for existing qualifications to fit into the Additional/Specialist Learning [elements of the diploma]' (Finnegan, 2006, 1).

Comments like, 'Some diplomas may also contain GCSE and A Levels' (DfES, 2006c) lead teachers of Drama and Theatre Studies to believe that although their centre may not be actually delivering a diploma strand, in the near future they may be delivering their A Level subject to diploma students. However at the time of this research, little is known about exactly *how* A Levels and diplomas will intertwine. The implementation of this diploma structure has been criticised as being 'muddled' by the Commons Education Select Committee (Blair, 2007, 7) and the government has been accused of rolling out initiatives 'in a rushed manner, with negative consequences in terms of quality' (ibid). It is likely that answers to these questions will not come until schools and colleges form consortia in their

local community and a *gateway* process is undertaken to decide how the educational institutions in their geographical area will offer all diploma strands.

Defining the Region

Urban and Rural English Settings

This research investigates how Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels are delivered in both urban and rural English settings. In order to allow for the anonymity of the case study participants, the specific geographical location has not been named. While some historians may argue that not identifying this information loses more than it gains, because of loss of the ability to set the case in context (Machon, 2002), this research favours the sociologist perspective that individuals' comments should be protected and personal accounts should acquire an appropriate air of detachment. I realise that this approach does not allow readers to compare certain fine details surrounding each case study, however. While this may have beneficially added to the richness of the findings, I felt there were too many demographic factors influencing each centre which could possibly detract the reader away from considering my overall research questions, which are the main focus of this study. While I choose not to explore the geographical setting of each case study participant, I do feel it necessary to offer an explanation of what is meant by *urban* and *rural* areas. 'Rural settlements are those that contain less than 10,000 people' (Countryside Agency cited in Barton Peveric, 2007). Factors that are used to identify rural from urban areas include numerical and spatial size, shape and physical appearance, function, density and economic structure. Traditionally, these rural regions are often defined based on the socio-economic characteristics of agricultural systems. Today, however, 'about 20 per cent of the population live in non-urban areas yet only 2 per cent of the population have working jobs in agriculture' (ibid).

Most of England's twentieth century educational provision tended to be concentrated in urban areas where the density of population made such provision cost-efficient. 'Sub-urbanisation in the mid-twentieth century rode a wave of population growth that placed more schools outside city boundaries and into counties where journey length, and transport costs grew' (Machon, 2007) Parents were unable to select the school they deemed to be most appropriate for their child. Instead school selection was based on the provision available in the students' catchment area. 'Managing the tensions within such systems was first handled by regarding administrative and political boundaries as impermeable-to gain access to a preferred school, a family had to move' (Machon, 2007) It was not until the

early 1990s that a child could be enrolled some distance from home as long as the costs were endured.

Local Authorities

Local Education Authorities (*LEAs*) (now known as Local Authorities or *LAs*) are the main providers of education at all levels for all ages (Fenwick and McBride, 1981). Prior to the implementation of the Local Government Act in 1972, there were three educational authorities in the county that is sampled in this study. These areas were then amalgamated into a single authority when the Act came into force in April 1974 and the education service became the responsibility of fewer authorities. In the early 1990s, the then Conservative Prime Minister, John Major's, concept of *subsidiarity* served as a principle for determining how powers should be divided or shared between different levels of government. The principle stated that decisions should be taken at the lowest level consistent with effective action. As a result, big LEAs were reorganised in the late 1990s into smaller unitary authorities. It was at this time that the city that is featured in this study formed a distinct LEA, independent of the county LEA.

The county LA featured in this research was established in its present form in 1997, following local government reorganisation when two areas became unitary authorities. The seven District Councils made up the County and at the time of this research, these districts are generally affluent (with the number of pupils entitled to free school meals well under the national average). However, a small number of wards are amongst the most deprived 20 per cent of wards nationally (Ofsted, 2003). Overall, the authority serves a largely rural county that has less cultural diversity and is more economically advantaged than is the case nationally (*ibid*). Currently, 8.6 per cent of the school population is of minority ethnic origin, compared with 12.9 per cent nationally. The county also houses approximately 400 asylum seekers and refugee families, a percentage of whom educate their children in mainstream schools. Generally, pupils' attainment in the county's LA schools is close to the national average.

At the time of this research, the City LA addresses the educational needs of the City wards contained in the three City constituencies. The City Council serves a population with relatively high levels of disadvantage in some wards. Very few students come from homes where parents have gained higher education qualifications. Unemployment is falling but remains above the national average, leading to a high rate of pupils eligible for free school meals, from low-income homes. The area is unlike the surrounding county, in that over 35

per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language. The majority of these children are of Asian heritage but there are small African-Caribbean and dual heritage communities. In 2001 Ofsted stated that the 1999 report found this city's LA to be in a parlous state with few strengths and many weaknesses (Ofsted, 2001d). The City made considerable progress since this inspection, led by a new director of education who prioritized the LA's problem areas.

The poor Ofsted Area Wide Inspection of the LA led the City to initiate a number of educational programmes across the area. Amongst these was a *14-19 Action Plan* (¹ Learning Skills Council LSC, 2004) reflecting a collaborative approach to providing learning and training for young people. Since then, the City has made progress in 14-19 strategic organization and learner attainment since the first inspection. Many initiatives such as the *Excellence in Cities Partnership* (EiC), *Leadership Incentive Grant* (LIG), *Building in Cities Partnership (Building Schools for the Future)* (BSF), and *Aimhigher* have been initiated to try and help establish a more effective learning community. The implementation of these programmes is already having a direct impact on Post-16 provision in the City. Sixth form colleges, colleges of further education and secondary schools with sixth forms will be affected further, however, with the final decisions on the *Building Schools for the Future* bid and the outcomes of the Strategic Area Review process. Provision for 11-16 and some 14-19 provision has already be configured into three geographical zones in the City, while a fourth non-geographical zone across the whole City will deal with Post-16 provision.

A Level Drama and Theatre Studies in Urban and Rural Settings

The last *Pupil Level Annual School Census* (Gretton and Parsons, 2005) showed that the County's LA maintained 287 schools which educated approximately 96,499 pupils. Of these schools, 15 were upper schools with students aged from 14-18 and three were schools that catered for 11-18 year olds. The centres that offered Post-16 educational provision represented both community and voluntary faith schools and educated 6995 pupils in sixth form education, an increase of 231 people from 2003/04 to 2004/05 (ibid). At the time of the census there were seven independent schools in the County that were not regulated by the LA. When the City's census was completed, it showed that the LA provided for an estimated 47,137 pupils (LEA, 2005). It had four 11-18 secondary schools, three colleges providing Post-16 education, one college of further education and four independent schools with sixth form centres not maintained by the LA. As independent schools will not be a focus of this research (explained in more detail in the

¹ Withdrawn to assist anonymity throughout the remainder of this thesis

next chapter), at the time of this study there remain a total of 30 Post-16 educational providers across the LAs of the City and County that could be considered as participant centres.

While some colleges offer Post-16 students A Levels and enrichment courses in Drama and Theatre Studies, others offer Performing Arts and Performance Studies A Levels as well as Advanced GNVQs and BTEC National Diploma options. In this City and surrounding County it is possible to enrol in Higher National Diploma (*HND*) courses in Performing Arts, Contemporary Pop Music, Music Technology and Theatre Arts. AVCE qualifications in the Performing Arts and IB Theatre Arts options are also available. This research addresses A Level Drama and Theatre Studies courses, however, rather than considering the broader disciplines of the Performing or Expressive Arts. Out of the 30 non-independent schools and colleges in this City and County a total of 17 centres offer this specific qualification (*See Tables 2.11- 2.13*).

Table 2.11: City LA centres that offer Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels

(Data represents the 2005-06 academic year)

Name	Type	Number of students aged 16-18	Number of students entered for GCE and VCE	Average point score per student for GCE and VCE England Average =721.5 LA Average =637.7	Average point score per examination entry for GCE and VCE England Average = 206.2 LA Average = 195.1
School 1	VA,A Comp. Mixed 11-18	139	43	754.9	202.9
School 2	FESI N/A Mixed 16+	1211	364	464	188.9
School 3	FESI N/A Mixed 16+	817	181	577.6	183.6
School 4	FESI N/A Mixed 16+	1845	838	772.5	198.8

Source: (DfES, 2007)

Table 2.12: County LA centres that offer Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels
(Data represents the 2005-06 academic year)

Name	Type	Number of students aged 16-18	Number of students entered for GCE and VCE	Average point score per student for GCE and VCE England Average = 721.5 LA Average = 703.2	Average point score per examination entry for GCE and VCE England Average = 206.2 LA Average = 196.0
School 5	VC, T, Comp. Mixed, 14-18	525	205	792.7	199.6
School 6	CY, T Comp. Mixed 14-18	936	414	806.7	203.1
School 7	CY, S Comp. Mixed 14-18	350	134	675.0	186.9
School 8	CY, S Comp. Mixed 14-18	436	195	703.9	192.7
School 9	CY Comp. Mixed 14-18	280	112	642.3	197.1
School 10	VA, Sc Comp. Mixed 11-18	178	76	904.3	214.8
School 11	CY, L Comp Mixed 14-19	225	100	712.7	202.2
School 12	CY, A Comp. Mixed 14-18	394	174	821.2	204.4
School 13	VC, S Comp. Mixed 14-18	460	177	813.0	199.6
School 14	CY, T Comp. Mixed 11-18	516	189	659.8	198.2
School 15	VC, T Comp. Mixed 14-19	671	288	739.0	195.2
School 16	CY T Comp. Mixed 14-19	387	149	753.0	196.7
School 17	CY T Comp. Mixed 14-18	163	55	679.6	182.3

Source: (DfES, 2007)

Table 2.13: School Type

A	Arts Specialist College Status
COMP	Comprehensive (takes all pupils, usually regardless of their ability, aptitude, or whether they have been selected for a place at a selective school)
CY	Community school maintained by the LA. The LA is the admissions authority and has main responsibility for deciding arrangements for admitting pupils
FESI	Further Education Sector Institution (sixth form college, FE college, tertiary college)
L	Language Specialist College Status
LA	Local Authority
N/A	FE Sector College (takes students regardless of ability or aptitude)
S	Sports Specialist College Status
Sc	Science Specialist College Status
T	Technology Specialist College Status
VA	Voluntary aided school maintained by the LA, with a foundation (generally religious), which appoints most of the governing body. The governing body is the admission authority.
VC	Voluntary controlled school- maintained by the LA, with a foundation (generally religious) that appoints some (but not most) of the governing body. The LA is the admission authority.

Source: (DfES, 2007)

In the City, there are four sixth forms who offer Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels; three colleges are Further Education Sector Institutions who take both male and female students over the age of 16 and the fourth school differs in that it is a voluntary aided school maintained by the LA, with a religious foundation. This school has Arts specialist status and is a mixed comprehensive for students aged from 11-18. In the County nine community schools, which are maintained by the LA, offer the Drama and Theatre Studies A Level. There are also three voluntary controlled schools and colleges maintained by the LA with religious foundations. In addition, there is a voluntary aided school that delivers Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels in the County LA. Out of these 13 County sixth forms, 12 are specialist subject colleges in the areas of the arts, languages, sports, science, and technology. All are mixed comprehensives, but eight institutions admit students between the ages of 14-18, two admit students from ages 11-18, and three take students

from 14-19 years old. Student enrolment number differ between sixth form centres who offer the A level course of Drama and Theatre Studies. Those with the smallest enrolment numbers like School 1 with 139 sixth formers, tend to be schools that also cater for lower school students from the ages of 11 or 14. Other educational providers, who solely offer Post-16 teaching like School 4, have student numbers of up to 1845.

Both City and County average point score calculations are based on the cumulative achievement of students over the 2005-2006 academic year. The point scoring system developed by the QCA (*See Table 2.14*) was designed to be used as a means of measuring institutional performance and was not intended to replace national systems used for other purposes, such as the tariff used to decide student admission to HE (DfES, 2007). The Tables from September, 2006 include a wider range of qualifications than those of previous years and are based on a different point scoring system.

The number of students entered for GCE and VCE examinations with those schools and colleges who offer Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels averaged at 217; with the most students (838) entered by School 4 and the least number of students (43) entered by School 1. Out of these City and County institutions, the average point scores for GCE and VCE were figured below England's national average for eight centres. Additionally, out of these schools, six fell below their LA's GCE and VCE average point score. Average point scores per examination entry varied from 182.3 at School 17 to 214.8 at School 10, with 196.9 as an average rate over the 17 schools and colleges represented in this research.

For this study, I selected six case study participants from the sampling frame of 17 centres. The participants represented a cross-section of schools and colleges from both City and County LAs. Some were FE Sector Institutions (either as sixth form colleges, FE Colleges or tertiary colleges) who take students regardless of their ability or aptitude. Others were community schools maintained by the LA (representing voluntary aided faith schools, mixed comprehensive 11-18 schools, and specialist schools who excel in languages, technology, sports, sciences or the arts). These six academic institutions will be addressed in further detail in the Participants section of the Methodology Chapter of this research.

Table 2.14: The Point Score System
*The following table lists the major qualifications and their scores
based on the revised QCA point score system*

Grade	Size1	Points	Grade	Size1	Points	Grade	Size1	Points
General/Vocational A level			General/Vocational AS			Vocational Double Award		
A	1	270	A	0.5	135	AA	2	540
B	1	240	B	0.5	120	AB	2	510
C	1	210	C	0.5	105	BB	2	480
D	1	180	D	0.5	90	BC	2	450
E	1	150	E	0.5	75	CC	2	420
						CD	2	390
						DD	2	360
						DE	2	330
						EE	2	300
BTEC National Award			BTEC National Certificate			BTEC National Diploma		
D	1	270	DD	2	540	DDD	3	810
M	1	225	DM	2	480	DDM	3	757.5
P	1	165	MM	2	420	DMM	3	705
			MP	2	360	MMM	3	652.5
			PP	2	300	MMP	3	600
						MPP	3	547.5
						PPP	3	495
Advanced Free Standing Maths			Advanced Extension Award			Level 3 Key Skill		
A	0.1667	45	D	0	27	P	0.3	63
B	0.1667	40	M	0	23			
C	0.1667	35						
D	0.1667	30						
E	0.1667	25						
International Baccalaureate Diploma								
45	5	1380						
44	5	1350						
43	5	1320						
42	5	1290						
41	5	1260						
40	5	1230						

Source: (DfES, 2007)

Table 2.14: The Point Score System cont.

<p>How the average point score per student is calculated:</p>	<p>The average point score per student is calculated as the sum of the points awarded to each 16-18 year old student, using the new QCA point scoring system, divided by the total number of 16-18 year old students at the end of study towards General and Vocational A/AS or equivalent Level 3 qualifications.</p> <p>For example: If student A achieves 2 General A levels at grade B, a Vocational A level at grade C and a General AS pass at grade D, they would score 780 points (240 + 240 + 210 + 90).</p> <p>If student B achieves 1 Vocational Double Award at grade AB and a Vocational A level at grade B, and a Key Skill at Level 3, they would score 813 points (510 + 240 + 63).</p> <p>If student C attempts 1 General A level and receives a grade U but has passed the AS in the same subject with grade B, and achieves a distinction in a BTEC National Award, they would score 390 points (120 + 270).</p>
<p>Average point score per student:</p>	<p>$(780 + 813 + 390) / 3 = 661$ points (The sum of each student's points) / (The total number of 16-18 year old students)</p>
<p>How the average point score per examination entry is calculated:</p>	<p>The average point score per examination entry is calculated as the sum of the points awarded to each 16-18 year old student, divided by the total number of qualification entries. For this calculation, a General or Vocational A level and a BTEC is each equal to one entry, a Vocational A level Double Award is equal to two entries, a General or Vocational AS level is equal to half an entry, a Key Skill at Level 3 is equal to 0.3 of an entry. The Table above lists some of the common qualifications and the qualification entries counted. Where a student has attempted an A level and failed, but they have been awarded an AS in the same subject, the A level entry is still counted. So student C above, would be treated as having 2 entries and not 1.5.</p>
<p>Average point score per examination entry:</p>	<p>$(780 + 813 + 390) / 3.5 + 3.3 + 2 = 225.3$ points (rounded to one decimal place using normal rounding conventions) (the sum of each student's points) / (the sum of each student's entries)</p>

Source: (DfES, 2007)

Conclusion

The primary focus of this thesis is Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies. However, before investigating how this subject is delivered in urban and rural English settings it was first necessary to review literature which gave a historical contextualization of A Levels, summarizing the development of this qualification since it was introduced over 50 years ago. This chapter was therefore developed into three separate sections; the definitions of educational terminology and the summary of governmental debates in Part One lead to a discussion devoted specifically to the pedagogy of A Level Drama, explaining the specifications and addressing how teachers are trained to deliver this examinable subject. Part Three then closely examines the potential implications of governmental change under the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES, 2005a). The A Level reform process is outlined and the proposed implementation of specialised diplomas is covered. Also, international educational policy is detailed and discussed in relation to the educational reforms occurring in England. This chapter then concludes by defining the urban and rural English settings of the six schools and colleges documented in this research, who were intentionally not identified to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Reviewing this literature formed a significant part of the overall research process: the conclusions that were gained throughout the sections of this chapter influenced the formulation of my research questions, helped me to develop a theoretical rationale for my study and aided the overall framing and design of this thesis. For example, Part One's historical look at the overabundance of governmental changes that have influenced education (and specifically, the development of the A Level) led me to identify areas that could be further researched. As a result, the Reflections and Conclusion Chapter of this thesis reviews educational policy making and identifies the work of Hennessy (1989) who investigates the political trend to produce a large number of initiatives to suggest a more effective government. Part Two concludes that while Drama is a respected primary and secondary school subject the training of sixth form Drama and Theatre Studies teachers often differs; indicating that many would particularly benefit from regularly consulting available up-to-date textbooks, magazines and online resources. I believe Part Two of this chapter will later help readers put into perspective the sampled course leaders' comments about their perceptions of good classroom practice, their choice of lesson structure and content, their opinions on existing Drama and Theatre Studies specifications and their thoughts on how the proposed A Level reform will alter their subject. Questions about examination assessment burdens, the proposed diploma structure and the overall

perceptions of Drama teachers were asked of the case study participants as a direct result of the critical review of literature in Part Three. In the following chapters, I research many of the issues that were first introduced in this final section of the literature review.

Specifically, I aim to give readers a better understanding of how governmental policies are developed and later disseminated to teachers. In particular, Policy Development and Structure and Agency Theory (Giddens 1984 & 1995) are highlighted as areas that could be further researched to help explain the low online response rate documented in the QCA's *Consultation Summary Reports* (QCA, 2006f).

In his article, *Power and Privilege: re envisioning the qualitative research lens* (Taylor, 2006) Philip Taylor, the founder of the International Drama in Educational Research Institute (*IDIERI*) wrote that he felt encouraged that in the last ten years there has been a substantial development in 'writing on qualitative theory and how this theory translates to the drama educator' (Taylor, 2006, 1). He identified the value in 'the localised situation where small-scale theories respond to specific problems, questions and particular situations' (ibid, 11) Although research pertaining to specific case studies is often not intended to be applicable to anyone other than the sampled participants, it is still important that the researcher's Literature Review show a detailed awareness of the wider state of knowledge on the featured subject. Only then can the researcher begin a thorough and well-informed investigation.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Mouly tells us that research is ‘the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data’ (Mouly, 1978, 12). In this chapter, I first examine the aims and objectives of this qualitative study and identify the key research questions derived from the Literature Review. There are a wide variety of approaches employed by educational researchers to gather data, which are used as a basis of description, interpretation and explanation. In this chapter, I explain my reasoning for selecting an interpretivist paradigm to better understand the social setting of Drama and Theatre Studies A Level teachers and learners. I also outline the research strategies and design techniques that I adopted and I explain why it was inappropriate for me to utilise a purely positivist or quantitative method in this research.

My qualitative research uses case studies with the ethnographic principles of observing and interviewing participant groups in their natural settings. I discuss how I arrived upon my sampling processes but also look at the practicalities of completing a piece of research as an insider. The main focus of this chapter, however, is concerned with my data collection and use of multiple methods that facilitated the informal triangulation of this data. Interviews, observations and questionnaires enabled me to add a richness to my case studies that according to Yin (1993) would not be there if I only relied on a single method of data collection. Ethical and practical concerns are considered in this chapter and reliability and validity issues are examined. I then conclude with an in-depth look at the methods utilised in my action research pilot study. This trial period proved invaluable and its results influenced the overall research design that was employed during fieldwork in the 2005 autumn academic term.

Aims and Objectives

Research Questions

When formulating my research questions and considering the study’s aims and objectives I was very much influenced by my personal interests and concerns as a teacher of A Level Drama and Theatre Studies in an inner-city sixth form college. Although this is not an action research study, I was interested in using a systematic method to develop my experiences in the classroom. My interest in improving my own teaching practice has been influenced by Drama and Theatre Studies practitioners and educators who also utilised qualitative, interpretative modes of inquiry and data collection. My own reflections on

improving and extending my work in the classroom led me to read literature in the areas of Drama and Theatre Studies teaching and learning. Eventually, this process drove me to investigate how teachers in my community approached their classroom practices. I found that (due to the interpretative nature of Drama) there were many different ways to deliver this subject and I was eager to discover the teaching and learning methods of others. By talking to teachers, I could enhance my own professional development and in turn, enhance my students' learning experiences.

This piece of research addresses three main conceptual areas. First, it takes an in-depth look at how the two-year Drama and Theatre Studies A Level is being delivered in six sixth form schools and colleges. Second, it examines the potential implications of the proposed governmental changes to Post-16 education. Third, it considers how this change may impact the sampled AS and A2 Drama and Theatre Studies teachers and learners. Additionally, the study asks more specific questions that are related to each of these three objectives. For example, the international assessment of performing arts subjects is explored, the roles and impact of government agencies like the QCA and Ofsted are questioned, and A Level reform and the implementation of a diploma system is examined in some detail. These questions are answered through the analysis of fieldwork at six sampled case study centres and also through a review of subject specific literature, primarily featured in the previous Literature Review Chapter. Before I could consider how the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES, 2005a) could possibly affect the subject of Drama and Theatre Studies, I had to investigate how this A Level subject was being delivered. Teacher and student opinions on their chosen Drama and Theatre Studies specification were sought. It was also important to explore the day-to-day approaches of drama practitioners in their A Level classrooms in order to have a more accurate view of how this subject was being executed. In my view, this was best achieved through a series of six qualitative educational case studies.

Qualitative Research

I analysed my data with qualitative methods because I wanted to provide a deeper understanding of the social phenomena of teachers and students (Silverman, 2000). Denzin and Lincoln argue that qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices because by doing so they expect to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand. 'This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, 3). This research

also employed quantitative empirical forms of enquiry, however. Quantitative research primarily focuses on collecting facts and using scientific techniques that are likely to produce generalizable conclusions, whereas qualitative research is more concerned with uncovering the perceptions of participants (Bell, 1987). However, as espoused by Anderson, Herr and Nihlen, 'Almost any technique in qualitative or quantitative research can be combined with other techniques to enrich a study' (1994, 168). In this research, I feel I have taken a more balanced view in realising all methods have weaknesses or limitations and it can be unwise to rely solely on one perspective or source (Bell, 1987). My use of mixed methods enabled me to subject my data to a degree of statistical scrutiny while still taking a holistic perspective, based on theories that were emergent rather than fixed. As a result, I believe my research was enhanced because my perspectives from which to view the data were increased by employing mixed methods. In this thesis, quantitative data collection complemented qualitative methods, allowing me to offer a richer and more detailed description of each case study.

In this research, I adopt Glaser and Strauss's (1967) idea that theories should be *grounded* in data, rather than presumed at the start of the research study. With this method, I attempted to articulate how my qualitative data could be used, not just to provide rich descriptions but also to generate theory. In this research, my process involved identifying categories from my emerging data. I then built up abstract theoretical concepts before identifying my core categories. This method of inducing theoretically based generalizations from my qualitative data was applied when analysing my observational field notes, my questionnaire responses and my semi-structured interview transcriptions.

It was important for me to recognise that as the researcher, I played an important role in the production and analysis of my qualitative data. On a professional level, I was involved with the research activity and my findings were an interpretation. They were in no way *pure* in a positivist sense. I had to exercise control over my attitudes and opinions and operate in as detached manner as possible, without personal prejudice. I acknowledged that in addition to working as a qualitative researcher, my identity, values and beliefs played a role in the production and analysis of the data results because of my experiences in the A Level classroom. I also recognised that I had a privileged insight into the social issues seen in the sampled rural and urban settings. I did not consider this position to be a limitation, but more a crucial resource (Denscombe, 1998).

Case Studies

A case study method of investigation was selected for my study because it allows 'the researcher to observe the characteristics of an individual unit- a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, 106). Stenhouse (1988) suggests that evaluative case studies consider a single case or group of cases in order to provide educational decision makers with relevant information. Educational case studies allow researchers to view the complexities of teaching and learning in a single situation. They are used by researchers in order to understand educational action and are not primarily concerned with *social theory* or evaluative judgement. The use of case studies for social research has become widespread in academia because it benefits those who want to look at one aspect of a problem in depth within a limited time scale. The disadvantages of case studies are that where a single researcher is collecting information, selection has to be made. In this case, it is often difficult to cross-check information which leads to a danger of distortion. Some question the value of studying a single event where generalisation is not possible. Despite these criticisms, I decided to use case study research because I intended to focus on a few individual instances of teaching and learning, through the use of using multiple triangulated research methods. According to Yin (1993) there are three different forms of case studies. Exploratory case studies 'are aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent study' (Yin, 1993, 5). Descriptive case studies present a 'complete description of a phenomenon within its context' (ibid). Finally, explanatory case studies 'present data bearing on cause-effect relationships' (ibid). The case studies that are employed in this research accord most readily with Yin's *descriptive* case study, as they seek to explore the phenomenon of teaching and learning within the context of Drama and Theatre Studies A Level specifications.

Cohen and Manion state that the purpose of case study observations 'is to probe deeply and to analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing generalisations about the wider population to which that unit belongs' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, 107). Similarly, Denscombe believes that the aim of a case study is to 'illuminate the general by looking at the particular' (Denscombe, 1998, 30). On the other hand, many believe that generalization from a single case study is not possible. For example, Nisbet and Watt state, 'the observer in a case study has to be selective but his selectivity is not normally open to the checks which can be applied in rigorously systematic enquiries such as large scale surveys- it tends to be personal and subjective' (Nisbet and Watt, 1984, 77). Likewise, Stake (1995) tells us that qualitative case studies allow those being researched to be studied in depth and the quality and utility of the

research is not based on its reproducibility but on whether or not the meanings generated are valued.

Bassey takes the view that in order for a case study to have merit, the details should be sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to be able to relate. The *reliability* of a case study is more important than its *generalisability* (Bassey, 1981). He believes that if case studies are 'carried out systematically and critically, if they are aimed at the improvement of education, if they are reliable, and if by publication of the findings they extend the boundaries of existing knowledge, then they are valid forms of educational research' (Bassey, 1981, 86). Although there is a danger of distortion with small-scale case studies, in that they are often not able to be cross-checked through a comparison with a similar test site in another locality, I believe that it was the best mode of investigation for this research. As Johnson (1994) espouses, each researcher must decide upon the *rules* of their individual case study. 'Each must depend upon the nature of the phenomenon investigated, and the particular circumstances in which it occurred' (Johnson, 1994, 22).

Participants

Initially, I wanted this research to address the teaching and learning of A Level Drama and Theatre Studies in England. I soon realised I had to be more realistic, however, and acknowledge that as a single researcher there would be inevitable limitations and I would not have the resources or be able to do justice to a study of that size. It was then that I decided to focus my research on schools and colleges that were located in one geographical area. The schools and colleges that are featured in this study are *typical* in that they represent a cross-section of schools and colleges from both inner city and suburban areas, specialist schools, state funded and faith schools. I recognise though, that case study research is not sampling research (Stake, 1995). These cases were studied to better understand the Drama and Theatre Studies A Level work that was occurring in these particular locations, rather than to better relate to the teaching and learning practices in other schools and colleges.

My first criterion in selecting cases was to maximize what could be learned (Stake, 1995) by including participants who were likely to lead me to a better understanding of the area I was studying. In this country, the awarding bodies of Edexcel, WJEC and AQA each deliver Drama and Theatre Studies A Level specifications. I wanted each awarding body to be equally represented, so I picked two schools and colleges for each awarding body being studied. This enabled me to have approximately the same amount of fieldwork information

on each Drama and Theatre Studies specification. I chose not to select participants based on nationally representational sampling because if I were to do this, I would have focused much more on the Edexcel exam specification (which is delivered in 54 per cent of centres) versus the AQA specification (delivered in 41 per cent of centres) and WJEC (delivered in 5 per cent of centres). If I were to adopt this approach, I believed that I would not be able to gain enough knowledge about the WJEC Drama and Theatre Studies specification to complete an informed study. It also became evident early on in the research process that, in order to study centres who offered the three awarding body specifications, I would need to include schools and colleges in a geographical area bigger than that of the City's LA. Thus the County LA was introduced into the sampling area. This proved to be of huge benefit to the research, as I was then able to document findings on centres both in the rural and urban areas. I decided to include six unique centres that differ in location, size, financial funding, specialist status, age range of students and academic results. In addition, I observed and interviewed teachers who ranged in age, sex, qualifications, experience and educational approaches.

Independent schools were not included in this study because I was looking at a particular disciplinary area in public sector provision. The centres in this study therefore were not independent from the state and were required to comply with national legislation changes. There were 30 non-independent Post-16 educational providers across the LAs of the City and County that could be considered for this study. Out of those, a total of 17 schools and colleges offered the Drama and Theatre Studies A Level qualification. As few centres nationally deliver the WJEC specification, my first priority was to post an introductory letter to those institutions who deliver this syllabus (*see Appendix 1*) but only two centres responded and later agreed to participate. As I had decided to have equal numbers of participants who deliver the Edexcel and AQA specifications, I then concluded that six case studies would make up my participant group chosen through purposive sampling.

I was able to more accurately pin point the centres that delivered Edexcel and AQA syllabuses through searches on the institutions' online websites and through my insider knowledge of the Drama and Theatre Studies teaching and learning in the area. Through my research, I found that most centres (who matched the criteria of the study) in the LAs of the City and the County deliver the Edexcel specification. As a result of this finding, I sent letters to two centres at a time, instead of contacting a number of institutions and waiting to hear from any interested parties. The first two centres were selected because I was already in regular communication with their Head of Departments (an ethical issue that

is explored later in this chapter). This also was most likely the reason why both agreed to participate in the research. At that point no other Edexcel centres needed to be contacted.

Surprisingly, contacting AQA participants proved to be the most problematic. I had presumed that if 41 per cent of centres in the country chose to deliver this Drama and Theatre Studies A Level specification, then slightly less than half of the centres in my sample area would also deliver this syllabus. In actuality, this was not the case. The number of centres that delivered the AQA specification in this geographical area was less than the number of centres who delivered the WJEC specification. My interest to know why more centres in this region chose to offer Drama and Theatre Studies through WJEC rather than AQA later led me to investigate this in my field work and analysis. I found that out of the 17 rural and urban Post-16 centres that offer this subject at A Level, 53 per cent deliver the subject through Edexcel's specification, 12 per cent use AQA's specification and 35 per cent use WJEC's specification.

After contacting all the eligible AQA centres, only one participant responded and agreed to be included in the study. Luckily, however, my first meeting with this Course Leader led me to another contact who had previously been contacted by letter but gave no response. As a result of speaking to the Head of Department at the other AQA centre, she became interested in my study. I was mindful that this example *snowball sampling* in which one participant nominates another (Arksey and Knight, 1999) could possibly bring up ethical concerns if the invited participant felt her identity was not anonymous and that she must perform in a particular way. Although, she was not able to meet to discuss my research plans, she agreed to serve as a case study participant in the overall study. This situation was not ideal, however, as not having a meeting could possibly disadvantage the respondent. In order to combat this, I integrated an explanation session before our interview which covered information that was given to the other participants prior to my arrival at their centre.

The six case studies in this research are labelled as Centres A, B, C, D, E and F, with teachers and learners also identified with corresponding letters. This decision was made in order to allow for some anonymity for the participants in the hope that they would not be easily identified. As previously mentioned, certain demographic differences in characteristics were sought in the selection process (schools and colleges, inner city and suburban areas, specialist schools, state funded and faith schools, age range and academic results). These are not, however, identified during the Findings Chapter of this research in

order to preserve anonymity. Centres with varying characteristics were included solely because they allowed for a bigger cross-section of participants. Primarily, however, I am interested in learning how the Edexcel, AQA and WJEC specifications are being delivered in the classroom. It is not my intention to compare and contrast the case study findings between centres or draw conclusions that particular teaching and learning strategies are occurring because of the centres' overall demographics.

Identifiable factors that are later produced in the Findings Chapter of this study include the awarding body used by each centre and their A Level Drama and Theatre Studies examination results. This information could allow the 17 possible Drama and Theatre Studies A Level providers in the rural and urban LAs to be traced, but this is not my intention. I am including this background data because I believe it supports a better understanding of the case studies being researched. For overall data outside of Performing Arts departments, one can refer to the Literature Review for details of each of the 17 centres' type, ages, enrolment numbers and examination results. I acknowledge that references to Ofsted reports could possibly allow the reader to have more of an insight into teaching and learning decisions, but again the inclusion of this information would make the centres easily identifiable. Therefore this information has not been identified so as to not jeopardise the participants' confidentiality and anonymity.

Negotiating Access: an insider's view

First, I sent a formal written letter of introduction to specifically named Heads of Performing Arts (*see Appendix 1*). I decided to directly contact the person who would hopefully give the interview and be observed (prior to contacting the Head teacher or Principal) as I believed the teacher would be able to better see the value and understand the purpose of my research. This letter identified my place as the Head of Performing Arts at a sixth form college and listed my personal work details. I made the decision to be identified as an insider in this research because I felt that an honest and open research relationship would aid the study. I could not ethically conduct this study if I did not inform the participants of my role in the community. I also felt that my identification as an insider would ultimately aid the research process.

There were many strengths of being an insider, such as the ability to draw on one's own everyday experiences to understand what may be going on within the research study (Wellington *et al.*, 2005). I believed that teachers would be more likely to participate if they thought I could relate to them on a professional level. Although it is a debatable point, I

felt that they would value the study more because as a teacher, it is likely that I would work in the best interest of Drama and Theatre Studies practitioners. Rather than pessimistically thinking I would enter their centre as a competitor, I believed the centres would follow encouragement from their LAs and senior managers who wanted to open lines of communication. Of course, they might have thought that my field notes would be used to aid my work in the classroom rather than for research purposes. Overall however, as I was not representing my place of employment in this study, I thought that links would be made with participants that would lead on to further projects related to the performing arts.

The letters of introduction were personalised with the school or college mentioned throughout the body of the letter. I wanted the reader to feel that they were being invited to participate due to their individual circumstances, and not because they were one of many being contacted. I included my research title and project outline and asked for the 'opportunity to meet... to discuss my research'. This then left the decision with the reader. I purposely did not include statements like, 'I will contact you within a week of you receiving this letter' as I wanted contributors to make the decision to participate and not take part because they felt bombarded or guilty. The most assertive element of the letter was the insertion of the ending statement, 'I look forward to hearing from you soon' and the inclusion of a self addressed stamped envelope. These were balanced, however, with polite statements like, 'I would greatly appreciate...' and 'Thank you, in advance, for any help that you can offer'.

After receiving emails, telephone calls and letters from interested parties, I met the six course leaders at their centres during the quiet period of A Level examination leave. I detailed my project outline and received verbal agreements to participate. Then, I sent letters about my research intentions to each head teacher and principal (*see Appendix 2*). These again were personally addressed, mentioned my insider researcher status, and gave a brief outline of my proposal. I also stated that I had met with that centre's Drama and Theatre Studies course leader who had offered to participate in the study. I wrote about my hope to come to their institution in 2005 to leave student questionnaires and to complete confidential semi-structured interviews and observations. In addition, I mentioned student anonymity and how each participant would be fully informed of the research process and the implications of their contribution. Finally, they were invited to notify me of any concerns or objections they had about the execution of my course leader interviews, student questionnaires and classroom observations in their school or college.

Data Collection and Methods

Multiple Methods and Triangulation

One of the strengths of the case study approach is that it allows the researcher to use a variety of sources, many types of data and a number of research methods as part of the investigation (Denscombe, 1998). Once my data was collected I felt that triangular techniques would help me to fully explore my findings 'studying it from more than one standpoint... by making use of qualitative and quantitative data' (Cohen and Manion, 233, 1994). My interest in employing methodological triangulation was due to the fact that varying methods produce different kinds of data on the same topic. I adopted a more informal approach to this research technique, however. While I feel I still had a more rounded and well-formed viewpoint of the subject being studied, my triangulation methods were less-prescribed than most multi-method studies in that they were primarily used to check for contrasts in my findings. Cohen and Manion suggest that 'if, for example, the outcomes of a questionnaire survey correspond to those of an observational study of the same phenomena, the more the researcher will be confident about the findings' (ibid, 234). My research was improved because I gained more data and was able to document different perspectives through multiple methods. I believe that ultimately, this helped the validity of my research. I acknowledge, however, that my informal use of triangulation could never prove that my data or analysis was absolutely accurate in a way that could be quantifiably described.

Multiple methods are important if researchers are to defend case studies against those who criticise them for being based on a process of soft data. Adelman, Jenkins and Kremmis write that case studies 'are often regarded with suspicion and even hostility. Their general characteristics remain poorly understood and their potential underdeveloped' (1984, 93). Perhaps their opinion is based on the fact that even within their supporters, case studies are defined differently and, as a result confusion has arisen. For example, Nisbet and Watt (1984) argue that the interview is the *basic research instrument* in a case study, whereas Cohen and Manion (1994) suggest that at the heart of every case study lies a method of observation. These statements are not necessarily contradictory, but they do lead the researcher to believe that case studies are made more viable if they include valid and reliable data collection methods. The case studies that were employed within this study's research were centred upon 12 semi-structured, non-participant observations of AS and A Level teaching and learning; one observation of AS and A2 class work at each institution. In addition, six semi-structured interviews of Drama and Theatre Studies course leaders

were included and semi-structured open-ended questionnaires were given to A2 classes of sixth form learners in each participating institution.

This decision to include observations, interviews and questionnaires is supported by the works of Bassey who lists three complementary methods that can be combined in a case study: 'asking questions, observing events and reading documents' (Bassey, 1999, 81). Yin also argues for a mixed method approach to case study research when he states, 'The richness means that the study cannot rely on a single data collection method, but will likely need to use multiple sources of evidence' (Yin, 1993, 3). This study makes use of all of Bassey's *complementary methods* but furthers its *richness*, as described by Yin, through the inclusion of a fourth component in the form of student questionnaires. The data produced through these multiple methods was then triangulated. The Discussion and Analysis Chapter of this thesis specifically details how this information was then analysed to better understand each case study on an individual basis.

Interviews

Stake writes, 'The qualitative researcher should take pride in discovering and portraying the multiple views of the case, [as] the interview is the main road to multiple realities' (Stake, 1995, 64). There are many advantages to the use of interviews in qualitative research.

Interviews are adaptable forms of data collection because the interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings (Bell, 1987). Tone of voice, facial expressions and hesitations on the part of the interviewee cannot be picked up by questionnaires or surveys. The interview, on the other hand, can be developed and clarified. Interviews are designed to investigate a given topic and allow the researcher to gain an insight into emotions, feelings and experiences rather than factual matters. Sensitive and personal issues can be dealt with during this face-to-face approach to data collection. In addition, interviews are useful for gaining information from participants who are in positions of knowledge and can offer insight into privileged information. The disadvantages of interviews are that they can be time consuming and often a subjective technique that could possibly be open to bias. Even so, I believed that by including interviews in this research I would gain a better understanding about the sampled course leaders thoughts about A Level Drama and Theatre Studies.

First, it was necessary for me to decide upon the nature of the interview out of the many different types that could be utilised in a qualitative study. With structured interviews the interviewer is left little freedom to make modifications and it is therefore characterised as

being a closed situation (Cohen and Manion, 1994). A structured interview can often repeat the same process of a questionnaire and not allow for the documentation of often complex or sensitive data that can be found in case study research. Unstructured interviews contrast this by offering an open situation, where the emphasis is placed on the interviewee's thoughts and the interviewer is as un-intrusive as possible. The interviewee speaks his or her own words and develops his or her own thoughts that can lead to in-depth investigations of personal accounts. This research adopted some of these ways of working but was distinguished from unstructured interviews in that the researcher had more control over the nature of the responses and the length of the answers allowed by the respondent (Denscombe, 1998). My semi-structured interviews first gave a clear list of key questions that would be posed, but I was flexible in terms of the order in which the topics were considered. I was also tolerant of open-ended answers that allowed the interviewee to elaborate without closed frames controlling their responses.

One-to-one interviews with one researcher and one informant were utilised in this study due to their ease of arrangement and their straightforwardness, in that I could locate one person's opinions and specific ideas. These types of interviews were easy to control with only one person being guided through the semi-structured interview agenda. (Denscombe, 1998). Although six participants were interviewed in six case study centres, I did not feel it would be appropriate to execute group interviews or focus group techniques. I was concerned that certain quieter participants would have their views drowned out by more dominant group members. Also, the participants might only present ideas that they think are *acceptable* to the rest of the group or feel inhibited or reluctant to become too emotional. They may have felt competitive towards the other course leaders in local school and colleges. I believed that the privacy of one-to-one interviews would not pose this difficulty.

The interviews took place during the 2005 autumn academic term with Drama course leaders who were able to comment on their teaching and learning from a number of years' experience. This time of the year was selected because the annual examinations had not yet started and preparations for Christmas performances were not yet underway. Prior to the interviews, participants were sent another personally addressed letter (*see Appendix 3*) reminding them of their verbal agreement to participate in the study. In addition, participants received an information sheet outlining the research title and detailing why they were asked to participate and what would be involved. They were then thanked and invited to contact me to arrange a convenient time for an interview lasting approximately 45 minutes in length. Interview questions were purposely not pre-issued, so the participants

could not formulate their responses prior to the interview. This could have possibly disadvantaged the research, in that the participants might not have been able to formulate a cohesive answer when presented with the questions during the interview. This approach was taken, however, because I wanted the interviewee to respond with their immediate thoughts rather than constructing an elaborate point based on what they think they should say.

The wording of the interview schedule and the order of the questions were given consideration prior to the execution of the interviews (see *Appendix 4*) and identical questions were asked of each participant to allow for easier analysis of data. I found that 11 questions allowed me to gain a wealth of valuable data, while still enabling the interview to be completed in under an hour in length. Questions were designed to be easily understandable, unambiguous and not leading. The interviews started with simple factual questions that were easy for the participants to answer (Anderson, Herr and Nihlen, 1994) in the form of 'How long have you been a Drama and Theatre Studies A Level teacher at the sixth form centre you are currently employed with and what experience of A Level teaching have you previously had in this subject?' Some questions were purposely open-ended and direct. Other indirect questioning was asked with, 'What do you think are the qualities that make a good Drama and Theatre Studies teacher?' rather than directly asking the interviewee if they felt they exemplified these characteristics. The two concluding questions purposely allowed for the discussion of further issues by the participant. Most questions invited opinions, rather than factual evidence. Ultimately however, the interview schedule reflected back to this study's aims and objectives. The original three research questions were focused on when I asked the interviewee about their Drama and Theatre Studies teaching background, their thoughts on their selected A Level awarding body specification, and their opinions on the proposed governmental change to Post-16 education.

Participants were asked to sign a recording consent form (see *Appendix 4*) that explained that the interview was confidential but could be used for the purposes of education and research (in an edited or abridged form) or for publication if further permission was granted. I audio taped the data rather than videotaping my respondents as I believed the hand held recorder was far less intrusive, put the interviewee at ease and did not require bulky equipment. I realise however, that 'the process of recording has a bearing on the freedom with which people speak, and the visual appearance of the equipment serves to

remind informants of the fact that they are being recorded' (Anderson, Herr and Nihlen, 1994, 124).

I also acknowledge that audio taping checks only speech and misses non-verbal communication. As a result, I also kept field notes and a diary during the interview process. Sound quality and the power source were checked but once the interview began I tried not to revisit or draw attention to the equipment. Instead, I made an effort to be attentive and sensitive to the informant's feelings. I used my personal judgement on whether to offer prompts, probes and checks throughout the session and was conscious of appearing non-judgemental. I worked at gaining trust and a rapport with the participant by starting with an introduction and continually monitoring the progress of the session by picking up clues, addressing inconsistencies, and referring to the interview schedule.

Throughout the interview process I was also aware of what Denscombe (1998) refers to as *the interviewer effect*. 'In particular, the sex, the age and the ethnic origins of the interviewer could have a bearing on the amount of information people are willing to divulge and their honesty about what they reveal' (Denscombe, 1998, 116). Although I was an insider researching the teaching of A Level Drama and Theatre Studies, I did not want to elicit answers from the case study participants based on my idea of a stereotype. Neither did I want to have the interviewee tailor answers to appeal to me. Realistically, I could not disguise the personal attributes that I brought to the interview but I could make an effort to be polite, punctual, receptive and neutral to the best of my ability. The relationships that I formed with my interviewees as a result of this approach are further documented in the Discussion and Analysis Chapter of my research. This *interview effect* is not the only disadvantage to conducting interviews in small-scale qualitative research projects. Interview transcriptions and coding of data analysis are time-consuming. Also, analysing responses is a highly subjective technique and therefore there is the danger of bias (Bell, 1987). I still believe, however, that interviewing was an effective method of data collection for this piece of research based on the in-depth study of six school and colleges.

My interviews were transcribed using a universal notation system devised by Pollard (2003). They were then analysed through a taxonomic interpretation classification system where a number of possible answers to the interview questions were considered and then put into categories and specifically defined. The answers of the respondents were indexed and then coded in line with Arksey and Knight (1999). This approach was chosen because specific quotes and details could still be acknowledged for individual case studies, but this method also allowed me to add structure in a largely qualitative process. Also, I believe that the

richness of the interview data remained after the interviews were coded. The analysis results and relevancy of the six completed case study interviews are later addressed in the Discussion and Analysis Chapter of this research.

This interpretative approach to my interview data arose from the six particular interviews and was grounded on information generated by the research act (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In line with grounded theory methodology, I initially attempted to develop categories in order to illuminate the data noted in my fieldwork diary. I then tried to saturate these categories with many appropriate cases in order to demonstrate their relevance. Then, I developed these categories into more general analytic frameworks with relevance outside the setting (Silverman, 2000). When triangulated with other methods that were used during my observational and survey processes, the grounded theory approach to the testing of emerging ideas helped me to induce theoretically based generalizations from my qualitative data. I was careful, however, to follow the advice of Strauss and Corbin in their book *Basics of Qualitative Research* when they write, 'If the researcher simply follows the grounded theory procedures without imagination or insight into what the data are reflecting... then the published findings can be judged as failing on this criterion' (1990, 256).

Observations

Unlike interviews, observations do not rely on what people *say* they do, or what they *say* they think (Denscombe, 1998). Instead, they draw on direct evidence from the eyewitness. The analysis of observations aided my informal process of triangulation and, as Southworth (1987) suggests, when I analysed observation data alongside material derived from other aspects of the case study (such as interviews and surveys) it was possible to develop 'a clarity of vision that only comes with hindsight' (1987, 86). Cohen and Manion (1994) argue that in qualitative studies there are two principal types of observation: participant observation and non-participant observation. They suggest that participant observation should occur with a researcher who has worked along side the group being studied, as the introduction of a new person into the classroom may hinder the observation process because the new person would infiltrate the situation. I believed that I could not realistically be an effective participant in a Drama and Theatre Studies class and be involved in every physical and vocal aspect of the lesson while executing my study. Due to these conflicts, this research employs non-participant observations, which allowed the researcher to be in the classroom noting exchanges between the teacher and students by means of a structured set of observational categories.

Observations allow the researcher to collect both non-verbal and natural behaviours and as a result, insights are gained into the social processes that occur in the classroom. Also, the interviewer has a more informal relationship with those being observed, as the observation often occurs in their natural environment and not under artificially created conditions. There are also disadvantages to the use of observations, however. Observations are not always reliable because the researcher takes field notes on certain occurrences and not others. What is recorded may be of personal interest to the researcher but may or may not coincide with the aims and objectives of the research. For example, as the researcher I may record what I am used to seeing in my own classroom, or instances that I am familiar with. I may also avoid recording classroom occurrences that I find to be annoying or undesirable.

It was important to consider how I would be introduced into the classroom environment so that students did not feel that they are being watched in a negative context or similarly, because they are in an exemplary Drama and Theatre Studies class. In either situation, the behaviour of the participants may be altered by the presence of an outsider who is writing information throughout the course of the observation. I intended for my introduction to be non-specific and to be identified as 'a researcher who is coming to watch an A Level example of Drama and Theatre Studies'. An additional adult in the room taking field notes may have still been unsettling to some of the students being studied, however.

Regardless of these factors, observations allowed me to visualise how the six Drama and Theatre course leaders led their A Level classes. I was able to triangulate this observational data with their interviews and student questionnaires to search for any inconsistencies to better understand teaching and learning strategies. It must be noted that I could not possibly view every lesson taught by the case study teachers and was only able to focus on a sample of classroom work over a specific period of time. My observations of AS and A2 lessons in each centre did not allow me to fully gain an insight into the normal day-to-day teaching processes, but I felt that my research still benefited from this additional method of data collection. I believe I observed a representative sample of the type of activities that regularly occur in the Drama and Theatre Studies classrooms of these six case study centres.

There were many logistical factors that influenced my lesson observations. I did not want to inconvenience my participants, so my only stipulation was that I hoped to view an AS and an A2 Drama and Theatre Studies lesson. The course leader was at liberty to select the

day, time and lesson subject matter. I hoped that this would allow me to view classroom work that was ongoing and not intentionally tailored to meet my research needs. I then needed a systematic observation schedule in order to minimize the variations that could arise from my data, based on my individual perceptions of the situation (Denscombe, 1998). I did not intend to fully pre-code what I saw, but instead I wanted to shape the observation by applying identical observational categories that helped me to structure what my note taking was focussed on. These categories were carefully selected based on Ofsted guidelines for the delivery of A level Drama and Theatre Studies and a regional lesson observation scheme, already adopted by many school and colleges in the sampled City and County.

One of the aims and objectives of this research was to better understand how Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels were being delivered in six urban and rural Post-16 centres. As mentioned in the Literature Review, as with all GCE subjects, the government's QCA created performance descriptions for the Drama and Theatre Studies A Level. This document (QCA, 2003) addresses boundary settings and assessment objectives but the QCA do not specify what should occur in individual lessons. The government specifies this subject specific information through Ofsted's guidelines for *lesson observation criteria* in the *teaching and learning* section of *Inspecting Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies with guidance on self evaluation* (Ofsted, 2001b). It is designed 'to help inspectors and staff in schools and colleges to evaluate standards and quality in drama and theatre studies for students Post-16' (Ofsted, 2001b, 1). In addition to acknowledging subject specific factors in my observational categories, I also wanted to recognise the regional teaching and learning observation schemes that were currently being implemented in the participants' schools and colleges. I discovered that schools and institutes of education have had to develop a sufficiently robust lesson observation strategy applicable for use with students of any subject and that can endure routine inspections from Ofsted. In this geographical area there is a HE institution that trained many of the educators in the six sampled schools and colleges. As a result, this university's strategy for observation tended to be used in this locality. The University of ___'s (Uo___) Lesson Observation Scheme was based on an initial design by Lawson and Harrison (1997), who observed teacher trainees in relation to Ofsted inspection criteria and standards of the then Teacher Training Agency (TTA). At that time, each HE institution was expected to develop an assessment criteria to see whether the TTA's standards had been reached in schools and colleges. The overall design benefited from the authors' experiences of being inspected by Ofsted as lecturers in a teacher trainee institution (Lawson, 2006). Together, these factors helped Lawson and

Harrison create a scheme that emphasised the developmental nature of the feedback and advice given to teachers who had been observed (Machon, 2006).

Fourteen observational categories are used in this research and directly link to the Uo__'s *Sixth Form College Lesson and Tutorial Observation Partnership: Observation Categories* (2005) and Ofsted's *Inspecting Post- 16 Drama and Theatre Studies with guide on self evaluation* (2001b) (see Table 3.1 and Appendix 5). In addition to noting *teacher to student*, *student to student* and *teacher to class* interactions, my observations address questions like 'Is there a relationship between the session and the overall [examination] specification?' (Ofsted standard 2.4 and Uo__ standard 1a) and 'Is the session varied?' (Ofsted standard 2.4 and Uo__ standard 2b). Then, in order to put my field notes into a systematic shape I involved a certain amount of quantification by treating my field notes as a lesson protocol, as pioneered by Berliner and Tikunoff in their *California Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study* (1976). My observational categories became *discriminators*, which were searched for in each individual line of my lesson protocol. After each line was scrutinised, specific *dimensions* (or variables) of these discriminators were listed and defined (see Appendix 5). Then a percentage told the frequency that each dimension occurred, when compared with other dimensions for the same discriminator. Originally, Berliner and Tikunoff designed this method for qualitative research so that they could offer a certain amount of objectivity by asking more than one reader to make judgements from the same protocol, independently of each other (Wragg, 1994). They also wanted to compare and contrast observations from institutions. I utilised this method of quantification because it lent shape to a large amount of descriptive text. The details of these semi-structured, non-participant observations are seen in the Findings Chapter of this research.

Table 3.1: Discriminators

Based on the Uo__'s *Sixth Form College Lesson and Tutorial Observation Partnership: Observation Categories* and Ofsted's *Inspecting Post- 16 Drama and Theatre Studies with guide on self evaluation*

A)	Is there a relationship between the session and the overall specification?	Ofsted 2.4/ Uo_ 1a
B)	Are the assessment criteria made clear?	Ofsted 1.2/Uo_ 1b
C)	Are learning strategies appropriate for all abilities?	Ofsted 1.4/Uo_ 1c
D)	Are key skills and work of work referred to?	Ofsted 1.1/Uo_ 1d
E)	How is the session structured?	Ofsted 1.4/Uo_ 2a
F)	Is the session varied?	Ofsted 2.4/Uo_ 2b
G)	Are resources and the venue used?	Ofsted 1.4/Uo_ 2a
H)	Is the session managed?	Ofsted 2.4/Uo_ 3a
I)	Is the material that is used appropriate?	Ofsted 2.4/Uo_ 3b
J)	Is the session delivered effectively?	Ofsted 2.1/Uo_ 3a
K)	Are assessment and evaluation feedback given?	Ofsted 1.2/Uo_ 4bc
L)	Did the students pay attention or participate?	Ofsted 2.3/Uo_ 5a
M)	Were individual student problems dealt with?	Ofsted 2.1/Uo_ 5b
N)	Did learners demonstrate subject knowledge?	Ofsted 1.3

Source: (Ofsted, 2001b)(Uo_, 2005)

Questionnaires

The questionnaire is a quick and effective way of gathering information from a number of people (Macintyre, 2000). When employed with other research procedures, the triangulation of findings can occur. I was interested in evaluating my data from personal discussions with teachers, first hand classroom observations and student opinions. Stake states, 'When there are multiple cases of intrinsic interest, then, of course, it can be useful to compare them' (2000, 444). Comparisons between the data found at a single centre would help me to discover any inconsistencies in my findings. For example, it would be interesting to note if I observed a lesson that was focused on stagecraft and theatre construction but students unanimously wrote in their questionnaires that they had no outlet for exploring technical theatre devices. This does not mean that I concentrated on identifying comparisons between my findings between centres, however. In my Findings Chapter, I judge each case and my results on an individual basis and continue to be mindful that, 'there are many ways of conceptualising cases to maximize learning from the case' (Stake, 2000, 444).

I believed it was important to include the thoughts and opinions of Drama and Theatre Studies students in this research. By only asking teachers about what occurs in A Level lessons, I would be ignoring insight from those who could offer objective assessments of their lessons on a day-to-day basis. Questionnaires were utilised as a method of eliciting information because approximately 90 students could possibly participate. Although questionnaires are ideal for large numbers of respondents in many locations, I only surveyed A2 classes so as to receive responses from those who had begun a second year of their A Level Drama and Theatre Studies specification. This was an ideal sample group because it limited the number of participants who were under the age of 18. Also, they could comment on both their AS and A2 experiences. Questionnaires allowed me to ask questions confidentially and anonymously after I had gained permission from each institution.

'Questionnaires may be used in schools or even within classes, wherever *anonymous* responses are the best ways of getting at the truth' (Macintyre, 2000, 74) There are some difficulties that must be acknowledged when using questionnaires, however. Researchers must be careful to design questionnaires with wording that is suitable for the respondents' age group and only about their personal experiences. Also, attention should be given to the possible misinterpretation of the questions (Mouly, 1978) and the students' interest level when answering. Other disadvantages of questionnaires are that they can often have

incomplete answers, especially if pre-coded questions stop the respondents from elaborating. Also in this case, students may not answer truthfully out of an allegiance to their teacher.

In regards to postal questionnaires, the researcher is not able to know if they have been completed privately or in the confidential manner that is hoped for. Another concern is that the postal return of questionnaires typically leads to low response rates (Oppenheim, 1992). In this study, every attempt was made to encourage a quick return of the completed student questionnaires. Course leaders were personally handed the sheets with verbal and written requests for their return by a specific date. Self-addressed stamped envelopes accompanied the questionnaires and electronic and telephone follow-up enquiries were made. Scott (1961) argues that although unreturned data should be traced, a small number of non-response is inevitable. Also, in *Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioural Sciences* (1956) Siegel advises researchers to mathematically ascertain the standard of error of the study and then, as a result, increase the sample size to allow for this predicted lack of response.

I chose to use questionnaires instead of alternative approaches like group student interviews because as well as requiring few materials and taking less time to produce, questionnaires are easy to distribute to large numbers. In the case of this research, teachers could give the sheets out in their own time and send the completed forms back to me in a self addressed stamped envelope. Also, the answers were standardised and therefore easier for me to analyse. The respondents did not need to think about how to express their ideas, instead they were given a range of uniform options. I was able to gain their opinions about questions that related directly to my research; a much more straightforward method than that of executing student interviews. In addition, there was the possibility that students would be more candid in their responses because the questionnaires were not personalised.

In order to avoid one of the weaknesses associated with questionnaires, I provided a background information cover page on the reverse of the survey (see Appendix 6). As with previous information sheets to the participants, it include polite language and information in four subheadings including *Purpose of the Study*, *Why I am asking you to participate*, *Do I have to take part* and *How will the results of the study be used*. Students were notified that their participation was on a voluntary basis and that they could decline as a respondent. They were made aware that their teacher would return the surveys to me, but that no identifiable features would be sought. At the bottom of the page, students were asked to turn over the

sheet to complete the questionnaire based on their Drama and Theatre Studies A Level course.

Although no examples were given at the start of the questionnaire, basic written instructions were featured. As the participants were less than 100 in number, I thought the addition of coding boxes would not be necessary and if featured, would lead to a confusing written format that was not easily readable. The final format was brief but allowed me to speedily ask questions that were about crucial issues relating to my research (Denscombe, 1998). I made the format as attractive and user friendly as possible. Also, I did not have duplicate questions. All the questions fit on one side of paper and the wording was spacious with italics and bold occasionally used. I tried to avoid leading, vague or offensive questions and to include sufficient options in the answers. In addition, I began the survey with three easier and more factual questions. For example, *Did you take a GCSE course in Drama or the Performing Arts prior to beginning your AS Drama and Theatre Studies course?* (see Appendix 6) allowed for a closed *yes/no* response. I later used open questioning when featuring a Likert scale showing the degree of agreement and disagreement. Although this is an effective method of data collection, I realise that when using a Likert scale rank order is all that can be inferred and I do not know the cause of the order or by how much opinions differ. Therefore, I also included four statement questions that allowed the students to elaborate and give their opinions.

In order to examine my questionnaires, I identified and eliminated possible errors by first using an editing method, as suggested by Cohen and Manion (1994). This process points to the three editing tasks of checking for completeness, accuracy and uniformity before the data is reduced by hand-coding in preparation for analysis. As my pre-coding was already completed for my closed-ended questions, only the open-ended questions required a coding frame. This was devised after the submission of all questionnaires, by generating a frequency tally of the range of responses. Percentages of descriptive statistics were also provided at that time.

Reliability, Validity and Ethics

Cohen and Manion state that ethical issues, 'may stem from the kind of problems investigated by social scientists and the methods they use to obtain valid and reliable data' (1994, 348). I had to consider the fact that I was studying a familiar setting as a Drama and Theatre Studies A Level teacher in the same community as my case study participants. Hammersley (1990) points out that *insiders* sometimes engage in a self-deception and

choose to interpret data in a way that fits in with preconceived viewpoints. He suggests that outsiders will find it easier to intellectually distance themselves and consider things from a wider context. However, I believe that my informal process of triangulation helped me, as an insider, to ensure a more balanced conclusion. Also, I adhered to the *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* published by the British Educational Research Association (2004). Their code recognises the academic tensions and complex issues that are generated by a multi-disciplinary community. It also covers action research in an educational context, which is featured in my pilot study. The framework addresses the researcher's responsibilities to the participants and to the wider community of educational researchers (BERA, 2004).

Hammersley (1990) also comments on another ethical issue that has relevance to this study. He talks about the ethics of practitioners gaining access to data because of their role within an institution and the danger of respondents providing answers that they feel they are expected to provide. Students might have felt pressurised when filling out a questionnaire for a teacher-figure from another school, participation in class might have not accurately represented the teacher or students' usual behaviour, and interview answers may have been guarded due to the competitive nature between my educational institution and the case study institution. As previously mentioned, however, precautions were put into place prior to the execution of the observations, questionnaires, and interviews. All participants were given information sheets telling them of my professional position at a sixth form college, but also the sheet detailed the purpose of the study and said that it would be used solely for research purposes. In addition, they completed a consent form to allow the audio recording of the interview. This sheet notified the participant that the interview may be used for research. The participants were also given the opportunity to indicate any additional restrictions that they wanted to be placed on the use of their contribution. I was aware of the ethical issues present if participants did not want their accounts published. Also, I was mindful that the, 'respondent's right to privacy and the right to refuse to answer certain questions, or to be interviewed at all, should always be respected, and no undue pressure should be brought to bear' (Oppenheim, 1992, 84).

After being audio recorded, my interviews were fully transcribed using a notation system by Pollard (2003). Extracts of these verbatim scripts were included in my research after they were analysed through a taxonomic interpretation classification system from Arksey and Knight (1999) in which all possible answers to the interview questions were considered and put into categories and specifically defined. Although a valuable asset to my research, I

recognise that my transcriptions may contain inevitable flaws. However carefully I transcribed my tapes I knew I would subsequently find inaccuracies, as transcription is often an inexact process. In order to combat this, I could have followed particular activities to further secure a more accurate representation of each individual's views that arose during the course of my study. An example of this could have been to organise a meeting with each participant to discuss my findings and invite them to comment on the accuracy of the interpretations made. I thought that this could possibly compromise my research findings however; their views may have added to the richness of the data but it was equally possible that by considering the participants' opinions of my findings it could challenge or alter my overall aims and objectives.

I was aware that as a researcher I was in a position of trust due to the fact that I was able to access private information. I operated a deliberate policy of anonymity for all respondents in interviews, surveys and observations. Transcripts of interviews were not circulated or discussed with those in the institution. Therefore, the trust shown by the participants agreeing to take part in the research was respected in that their anonymity was maintained. Pring states, 'To research them through deceptive methods would be to treat them as objects, things, not as persons worthy of respect' (2000, 3). In this study trust was handled with sensitivity and honesty. I kept in mind that, 'all personal data ought to be secured or concealed and made public only behind a shield of anonymity' (Christians, 2000, 139).

I tried to minimise the amount of bias in my research in order to consciously make my study more valid. Cohen and Manion write that bias can include 'the attitudes and opinions of the interviewer; a tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in her own image [and] a tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her preconceived notions' (1994, 281-282). They also warn researchers about misconceptions that may occur on the part of the interviewer about what the respondent is saying. Also, there may be misunderstandings on the part of the respondent about what is being asked.

I attempted to avoid obvious causes of invalidity in my research by including the interviews and questionnaires questions, excerpts from verbatim accounts and coded summaries of what occurred in observations and interviews in this research, so that it could be judged whether my conclusions were accurate or alternatively, misconstrued and taken out of context. I included my opinions in the recording of my data in the Discussion and Analysis Chapter of this research but was careful to not expose participants to these attitudes prior to their participation in my research. Also, I was careful to gain permission from schools

and colleges who acted *in loco parentis* and granted consent on behalf of those who were under 18 years old (Arksey and Knight, 1999). Although older students could also be influenced, it was more likely that under age participants were sub-consciously influenced by the interviewer as an authority figure and gave responses that they believe were *correct* or *pleasing* rather than being honest (Moser and Kalton, 1975). This was minimised, however, by the questionnaire layout. I also needed to consider that teachers may have had preconceived notions that may have hindered their responses about me as the researcher due to the fact that they were familiar with my work or my College's academic reputation. They may have been unaware that they were altering their statements to become comments that I would want to hear, or that their professional relationship with me could possibly influence their discussions. In order to alleviate such problems I made sure to emphasise that I had no pre-conceived ideas of what I thought they should say. They could therefore give their opinions honestly without trying to help or support me during my research.

Bell claims that, 'Reliability is the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions' (1987, 51). A factual question that may produce one answer on a particular occasion, but a different answer on another is unreliable. 'Questions which ask for opinions may produce different answers for a whole range of reasons' (ibid). Bassey (1999) argues that in case studies this is not problematic, however. He states that notions of reliability and validity are not vital concepts in case study research. He writes the case study 'is not chosen as a typical example in the sense that typicality is empirically demonstrated, and so issues of external validity are not meaningful' (Bassey, 1991, 75). Bassey then goes on to use Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concept of *trustworthiness*, 'to successfully illuminate the ethic of respect for truth in case study research' (ibid 75). Although I recognise the benefit of adopting a concept of *trustworthiness*, this research also makes every attempt to present valid and reliable case studies. I made an effort not to base my research solely on the responses from my interviewees, but also on the student survey results and my observational fieldwork notes. Taylor (1996) stated that reliability refers to the extent that a measurement is free of error and the consistency of a measure after several repeated uses. I took precautions in order to ensure that my research was reliable. For example, I did not interpret my interviewees' experiences solely for the relevance of my research. I believe that another researcher (with or without my background in Drama Education) would be able to replicate my findings, if he or she were to study the same six case study groups of teachers and learners.

Completion of the Pilot Study

Testing Research Methods

'Piloting is an integral part of any research... the information collected at the pilot stage can itself be of value with pilot procedures normally involving a small-scale application of the main method' (Youngman, 1984, 172). Although the pilot study employed differed from the main study in that it utilised action research methods in my own educational institution, the process of completing a pilot study proved highly beneficial and productive. Field notes were taken from the observation of one class, an interview of an Edexcel Drama and Theatre Studies teacher was executed and a student group completed the one-page student questionnaire. As a result of this work, valuable redrafting and editing of the interview schedule, questionnaire format and observation protocol later occurred that led to a more focussed study.

I used the pilot study as an opportunity to test out my research methods and analyse the effectiveness of my interview, observational and questionnaire procedures. I did not intend for the pilot study to be a way of studying my educational institution, prior to completing other case studies. I did not search for representational data, and believe that my findings relate to one instance and are not necessarily universally applicable. I also found that my involvement as a practitioner limited the scope and scale of this research. I was not sufficiently detached and impartial in my approach to this study for it to become anything more than a pilot study in preparation of the main body of research. As a result, the results of my pilot study are not included in the Findings Chapter of this research.

The decision to base the pilot work as an action research study was initially made because of the convenience of such a small-scale localized project, but later proved helpful because I received open and honest feedback from a teacher and students whom I trusted. I also found that through taking part in this small study participants appeared to reflect on and evaluate their role in the College's teaching and learning practices. The act of participating in interviews, observations and completing questionnaire led the sampled group to begin to discuss and evaluate their contribution to the Drama and Theatre Studies A Level course.

My research questions and overall objectives had to be slightly altered throughout the piloting stage. My original research questions analysed how the two-year Drama and Theatre Studies A Level was being delivered in classrooms and examined the potential implications of proposed governmental changes to Post-16 education. Also, I considered

how this change may impact the sampled Drama and Theatre Studies teachers and learners. These questions could not be fully addressed in my pilot study, though, because my sample group differed to those who would be in the main research project. I observed a lesson and issued questionnaires to an AS group taught by my colleague, although I too had previous experience teaching the students. Unlike my main research, the AS group were selected to participate because of the examination burdens facing A2 students during the implementation of the pilot study. This situation was not ideal, as I felt that an A2 group would have a broader knowledge base on which to form their comments. This pilot study made me realise that winter and summer examination demands would have to be taken into consideration prior to the execution of my main study. As a result, I entered my case study centres in the autumn academic term prior to the students' January examination leave but after the initial induction period into the A2 year.

Some may argue that due to action research conditions, my pilot study was not an accurate trial for the main case study research. Unlike the six case study samples, I was observing and interviewing a colleague who was not a course leader and who was line managed by the researcher at the time of the study. I had previously taught the students I was observing and they knew me as the Head of Department. This piloted study is similar to my main body of research in the methodological approaches used, however, in that it included the use of a semi-structured, non-participant observation. In addition, a semi-structured interview of a Drama and Theatre Studies teacher was included and semi open-ended questionnaires were distributed. Also, as in the main research project pilot study permissions were obtained, confidentiality was maintained and identities were protected (Denscombe, 1998).

Research Method Alterations

As previously mentioned, my pilot study interview was not representative of my main case study work as I was observing a colleague who was not a course leader, whom I line-managed. While the interviewee offered perceptive and insightful remarks due to the fact she was highly qualified in Drama Education, I realised that most questions were answered from her main background in charge of GCSE Drama courses and not based on her experiences in A Level teaching and learning, which unfortunately was largely pre-*Curriculum 2000*. Still this experience was of benefit to me, as in my main study I became aware that I would need to monitor whether or not Heads of Departments were basing their comments on their Drama and Theatre Studies A Level experience, rather than work done at Key Stage Three or Four. I was also mindful of the need to sensitively address

incorrect or inconsistent statements. In this case, instead of challenging mistakes I continued the interview and was left with a doubt whether or not the statement was a nervous error or represented a greater lack of knowledge of the specification.

My first use of Pollard's (2003) notation system was when I transcribed my pilot study interview (see *Appendix 4*). This method of conversation analysis offered an abbreviated set of instructions that were alternatives to more detailed transcription processes. I believed that by noting the interview's coughing, sighing, laughing and so forth, the written text was richer and more detailed. The interview data was then indexed using the grounded theory methods previously mentioned in this chapter. Arksey and Knight (1999) suggest reading through a sample of transcripts to find emerging themes and possible answers for each interview question. Unlike in my actual study, at this point I only had one interview so I took the interviewee's answers and formulated as many answers as possible that could be given for the same question. This was easy for 'How heavily do you rely on the course specification to influences your teaching?' as I could add 'always', 'never' and 'other' as possible answers to the pilot study interviewee's response of 'sometimes'. It became harder to predict answers to questions like, 'Are there any aspects of the specification that you feel should be covered by A Level students and aren't? These possible answers were then given a code and a taxonomic coding sheet was created detailing the interviewee's response as compared to others, while still acknowledging specific quotes or references to the individual's experiences.

Wragg states that, 'one of the problems faced by both experienced and inexperienced classroom observers is the matter of deciding what should be the focus of attention' (1994, 4). I was mindful of this when I created observational categories that informed what my pilot study field notes were directed towards. As previously mentioned, these categories were selected based on governmental guidelines for the delivery of A level Drama and Theatre Studies and a regional lesson observation scheme, already adopted by many school and colleges in the sampled area. Then, in order to put my field notes into an organised format I numbered each sentence and treated it as a lesson protocol, as pioneered by Berliner and Tikunoff in their *California Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study* (1976). As previously described, my observational categories became *Discriminators* which were searched for in each individual line of my lesson protocol. Then, more specific *dimensions* (or variables) of these discriminators were listed and defined. For example, Discriminator H was *Is the session managed?* This was noticed on a number of occasions in the observation protocol through *transition between activities* and *management of resources* (see *Appendix 5*). These

specific variables were then defined, in relation to how they were observed in this lesson. Next, a seven-point scale was used to compare the frequency of the variables for each dimension (see Table 3.2). I felt that quantifying in this way allowed me to add shape to a large amount of descriptive text (Wragg, 1994).

During the pilot study I discovered that although this was a valuable way of working, it was a time-consuming analysis procedure that was capable of producing confusing results. I felt that comparing the frequency of the variables against each other was misleading. For example, for Discriminator H there were only two dimensions that were apparent throughout the observation, which together, occurred 16 times: *transition between activities* was recorded 14 times and *management of resources* was recorded twice. A percentage labelled the frequency of occurrence for each dimension, when it was compared with other dimensions for the same discriminator. This told me that one variable occurred more often than the other, but did not detail if the variable occurred twice or 200 times. Likewise, a variable that occurred only six times in the observation received a frequency retain of 100 per cent because there was no other variable to compare it to for that Discriminator. I felt it was important to define the variables in my main study, but my research would benefit more from comparing the frequency of the Dimensions themselves in a proportional pie chart (see Appendix 5).

Table 3.2: Seven-point scale comparing the frequency of variables for each dimension of a Discriminator

H) Is the session managed? (Ofsted 2.4/UoL 3a)

- Definitions of Dimensions observed in Protocol 1 for Discriminator H:**
 - Transition between activities**
There is a transition between the activities that are introduced by the teacher within the sequence of the session.
 - Management of Resources**
Resources are effectively managed within the session.
- Frequency of Dimensions observed in Protocol 1 for Discriminator H:**

Transition between activities= 87.5%

Less ←	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More →
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Management of Resources= 12.5%

Less ←	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More →
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I learned a great deal from piloting the student questionnaires. The AS group were asked to complete the one page sheet approximately a week after I observed their lesson and completed fieldwork notes. This time span was also reflected in the main study, except the questionnaires were issued by the teacher in each location once I had left the centre. In the pilot study, I gave the papers to the 13 sampled students due to the absence of the Drama and Theatre Studies teacher, who had previously been interviewed and observed. Unfortunately, however, I believe that my presence inevitably influenced their responses. Students were given the option to complete a questionnaire about their experiences of their AS course and told that the results would be analysed along with the previous week's observational notes. (Any absent students from the previous week's lesson were encouraged to complete the questionnaire, too.) They were also told that I was the researcher and a PhD candidate at the local university. The students sat around a table in a classroom setting and received the two-sided questionnaire. They were told to read the instructions on the front page and, when ready, to complete the questionnaire on the reverse. Students read the Information for Participants page in silence (*see Appendix 7*) but did not ask any questions. In addition, no students declined to take part even though participation was optional and they had a sheet that stated there were 'no consequences for not taking part'. They also seemed to rush to turn the sheet over, even though 'Please take time to read' was written twice on the sheet. The students' hurried attempts in finishing the questionnaire was addressed prior to the completion of the main study, as some were left feeling rushed by the majority who had finished the questionnaire but were still being made to stay silent. Regardless of their hurried attempts, during the pilot study the entire class read the instructions and completed the questionnaire within six minutes.

Professional choreographer, Janesick likens the use of a pilot study to 'stretching exercises' (2000, 386). She believes that, as dancers stretch to move beyond the current starting point, researchers must stretch their imaginations as well as their bodies- 'their eyes for observations, their ears for listening, their hands for writing' (*ibid*). She states that the pilot study allows prospective qualitative researchers to refine their research instruments by implementing interviews, observation and writing reflections. Although the methodology utilised in this action research pilot study was not entirely representational of that which was used in the six sampled case study centres, the completion of the pilot process was still a valuable *exercise* that effectively *stretched* the researcher.

Conclusion

In my Literature Review, I define the urban and rural regions that were sampled in this study. My Methodology Chapter then builds on this information to highlight the practicalities associated with selecting a specific participant group. In this chapter, I also explain the research instruments that were used (and the procedures for applying these instruments) when studying the six case study centres. I emphasize the advantages and limitations that were present in the study as a result of choosing certain methods of working. Also, issues of consent and access are covered. Overall, this chapter is intended to leave the reader with an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of my research strategy, design and methods. I feel it is important to stress that the methodology helped me to organise my findings, but due to the qualitative nature of my research there was a richness that could not and should not be quantified. Now that the factors behind my choice to work in this manner have been explained, my findings can be presented. These findings form the key basis of my thesis and are contained in the following chapter. In the subsequent Discussion and Analysis Chapter, I analyse these findings and explore the richness of the data that was found.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

I utilised empirical forms of enquiry in an interpretivist paradigm in order to better understand Drama and Theatre Studies A Level teachers and learners in six urban and rural schools and colleges. My mostly qualitative case study research involved the use of multiple complementary methods and adopted the ethnographic principles of observing, questioning and interviewing participant groups in their natural settings. The data produced through these multiple methods is presented here, but is later triangulated and analysed in the next chapter to better understand each case study on an individual basis. As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter of this research, the six case study centres are labelled Centres A, B, C, D, E and F. It is my hope that the participants will not be easily identified and even though certain demographic differences were sought in selecting the sampled centres, these were not highlighted in this chapter in order to preserve anonymity. I do believe, however, that it is necessary to acknowledge that Centres A and B utilised *AQA's Drama and Theatre Studies specification* (AQA, 2003), Centres C and D used the *WJEC Drama and Theatre Studies specification* (WJEC, 2004) and Centres E and F delivered Edexcel's *Drama and Theatre Studies specification* (Edexcel, 2004).

It is important to note that the findings of my pilot study are not included in this chapter. Although the pilot study's process of completion proved highly beneficial, it was primarily seen by the researcher as a chance to test out research methods and analyse the effectiveness of methodology procedures. As a result, the Methodology Chapter details the coding categories, notation, and classification systems utilised during the piloting process. This action-research pre-study differed from the main six case studies and would not be able to stand up to the same levels of validity or reliability as the data featured in the main body of research. Therefore, the pilot study interview transcription, coded questionnaire results and observational schedule can be provided but are not included in the Appendix of this thesis. Also available upon request are the full transcripts of the six case study interviews, observations and questionnaires that are referred to throughout the body of this Presentation of Findings Chapter.

Case Study A

Observational Findings

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I put my field notes into a systematic shape by applying a certain amount of quantification. I did not pre-code what I saw, but instead

shaped my observations by applying identical observation categories that were selected based on subject specific factors in Ofsted's government guidelines and a regional teaching and learning observation scheme that was being implemented in the participants' schools and colleges. My field notes were further shaped through methods pioneered by Berliner and Tikunoff in their *California Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study* (1976). My observational categories were treated as *Discriminators* that were searched for in each line of the lesson protocol. After each line was scrutinised, specific variables (or *dimensions*) were listed that had been grounded in the results of all the classroom observations. These were defined and the proportion of these observed dimensions for each protocol was then measured according to its frequency of occurrence. For the remainder of this research the reader may refer to this information by viewing Table 3.1 in the Methodology Chapter (pg. 84) or Appendix 5.

Centre A's AS lesson was 55 minutes long and featured one teacher, two male students and seven female students. Although there was a black-box studio venue at the school, the lesson took place in a non-subject specific classroom. After a casual and unstructured start, the teacher led the lesson with a loud and powerful authoritative voice. This was a classroom based session which involved the students taking notes and contributing to the discussion about technical theatre design and the use of space on a stage. The teacher reviewed the previous lesson's content before discussing various elements of theatre design, which were then related to specific examination requirements. Each student had individual booklets of information on technical theatre design produced by the teacher, which they referred to during the discussion. Students were then asked to consider a visiting professional theatre company's use of space on stage. Both the teacher and the students mentioned the world-of-work in relation to the theatre. Also, students brought up subject-specific technical language like "a flat" during the group talk. Resources, in the form of handouts, played an integral part in the lesson and students had a mixture of both independent written work (about stage positioning) and group-based discussions and note taking. Although the session's aim was never stated, students appeared to leave the lesson with an understanding of how to write about effective uses of stage space in their AS Level examination. Both theatre practitioners and technical stage vocabulary were introduced to the students and they appeared to relate the topic to their recent live theatre experience. Finally, before the largely written session ended, the teacher asked the students to engage in a practical assignment to better understand the terms and concepts that had been recently covered.

When applying the specific observation discriminators to this AS Drama and Theatre Studies lesson, Discriminator L appears more than any other. When looking at this further however, during 50 per cent of its occurrence, it was noted because learners were off-task or non co-operative during the classroom session. Only in a minority of occasions was this discriminator recorded because of student participation. The second most frequent discriminator was A. Out of all the times this factor happened in the lesson, 41 per cent of the occurrences were in relation to subject specific language being used by both the teacher and the learners, leading to the demonstration of a knowledge, understanding or evaluation of aspects of theatre and drama. Discriminator A occurred a further 19 per cent of the time when theatre practitioners, techniques or methodology were identified by either the teacher or the learners.

Discriminators G and J had similar levels of frequency during the AS lesson, at 10.5 per cent and 10 per cent, respectfully. Mostly, G occurred because the resources that were used were non subject-specific and not primarily designed for the purposes of a practical course. 24 per cent of the occurrence of this discriminator was due to the teachers' use of the blackboard, 24 per cent was in regards to the distribution of prepared resources and 14 per cent was in relation to external influences that distracted the events that occurred in the classroom like the sound of a drum kit which played throughout the Drama and Theatre Studies lesson. Discriminator J was similar to L, in that it showed whether or not students were on-task and engaged. The discriminators that occurred the least, out of the 14 that were applied to each Drama and Theatre Studies lesson, were I and K. They both occurred during 1 per cent of this AS lesson, with only two occurrence of questioning used by the teacher to check that resource materials and scripted work were understandable, clear and at an appropriate level for the group. There were also only two instances where the teacher used positive feedback in relation to the task that had been completed by the learners when she stated, "I can't remember, you might be right and I might be wrong."

The A2 lesson at this centre was 50 minutes in length, had one teacher, two male students and eleven female students. The lesson took place in a purpose built black-box studio venue with visible technical theatre resources. Students sat with the teacher in a circle of chairs to discuss their recent research homework based on the production *Hedda Gabler* (Meyer translation from Ibsen, 2001 ed.) Students appear to be off-task and hyperactive during much of the lesson, but they offered comments on both theatre practitioners and theatre forms and demonstrated a subject knowledge through their use of technical terminology. Individual students presented their findings on European theatre and design

elements from the early-1900s, which were discussed in relation to the Ibsen text. Before the lesson concluded, a brief discussion on the costuming from the time period led the teacher to demonstrate the value of collapsible clothing. Handout resources provided by the teacher with visual sketches aided the group discussion.

After shaping my field notes with the previously discussed observational categories, I discovered that the discriminator that was the most frequent was L occurring 22 per cent of the time. Unfortunately, however, it occurred mostly because students were off-task or not co-operative during the lesson session. This accounted for 60 per cent of the labelling of this discriminator and was seen in instances such as when a student interrupted the teacher by saying, "I had a vision of playing musical bumps". An additional 35 per cent of the time, this discriminator was identified due to student participation or the teacher's use of subject specific skills. The next frequent discriminators seen in this lesson were F and M, both occurring 12 per cent of the time out of the 14 discriminators that were applied. Discriminator F showed that the teacher had changes in her approach so that teaching styles included both teacher-led and student-led activities. Also, there were various activities introduced by the teacher that led to solo, group or whole class work. Discriminator M was more in relation to student discipline and individual student problems that became apparent during the teaching and learning session: 63 per cent of the time that this was noted, was due to learners being disciplined by the teacher for being off-task or not co-operative. A further 42 per cent was because of distracting individual student issues. The discriminators that appeared the least were D, K and E. Discriminator D did not occur at any point in this A2 session and K occurred at one point when the teacher offered positive feedback to a student. Discriminator E was seen 1 per cent of the time on four occasions in the lesson when there was a change of structure and activity in the session. This was seen through the inclusion of an introduction, body of the session, summary or conclusion or when a new activity was introduced within the sequence of the session.

Questionnaire Findings

When asked 'Did you take a GCSE course in Drama or the Performing Arts prior to beginning your AS Drama and Theatre Studies course?' 92 per cent of the students surveyed at Centre A answered that they had, while 8 per cent had not had any experience in the Performing Arts at GCSE Level. Of this 92 per cent, 92 per cent felt that they were prepared for their AS course during the previous year and 8 per cent felt they were not prepared. Of the 8 per cent of students who had not had any Performing Arts or Drama at GCSE Level before their AS course, all felt they were not at a disadvantage.

When asked how their workload in Drama and Theatre Studies compared to other courses more than half (54 per cent) said the work amount in Drama and Theatre Studies was equal to the amount of work issued in other subjects, 46 per cent said that there was slightly more work in Drama and Theatre Studies than in other lessons. 77 per cent believed there was an equal amount of practical and written work issued on the course, whereas 15 per cent thought there was slightly more written work issued and 8 per cent thought there was much more written work assigned than practical work. Just less than half of the students (46.2 per cent) said they were aware of the assessment criteria that they were being marked on. 23 per cent said they were slightly unaware, 15.4 per cent said they were only slightly aware, while another 15.4 per cent said they were very aware of the assessment criteria.

Answers varied when the students were asked what the qualities are that make a good Drama and Theatre Studies student. 15 per cent of the answers totalled showed confidence was important, 12 per cent indicated passion for the subject was necessary and 12 per cent showed that hard work was needed. 9 per cent indicated that students needed to work with others and independence, listening skills, creativity, and an ability to focus each represented 6 per cent of the answers given. Qualities of commitment, imagination and being resourceful were mentioned. Other answers included having a willingness to take criticism, being motivated, energetic, outgoing, having a willingness to try new things and not being shy.

Out of the answers given to 'What aspects, if any, on your course did you feel were particularly important to learn' 29 per cent indicated a degree of knowledge of practitioners was important and 19 per cent listed an ability to do practical work. A knowledge of techniques accounted for 19 per cent of responses and an ability to write essays covered 14 per cent of answers. An understanding of theatre history was mentioned in 10 per cent of answers, while other answers included an understanding of design and directing methods. When asked what aspects (if any) were not necessary to learn, 69 per cent of students said there were no aspects that were not important to learn. Out of the remaining 31 per cent, 75 per cent indicated there were too many set texts and 25 per cent thought that the study of practitioners were not important to learn. In response to the option to change their course in any way, 46 per cent of students said there would be no change, while out of the remaining 54 per cent half said there should be more practical work, 12.5 per cent asked for less written coursework, 12.5 per cent requested equal amounts of devised and scripted

work, 12.5 per cent commented there were too many set texts and 12.5 per cent asked for more individual choice.

Interview Findings

At the time of her interview, Centre A's Drama and Theatre Studies course leader had been teaching at her sixth form centre for eight years, immediately following her ITT course. This interviewee had not held any other professional positions in the field of Drama and Theatre Studies outside of A Level teaching. She had come to the subject through a joint English and Performance Studies and Theatre Arts degree and had little practical performance experience other than, "I obviously did stuff on the course." It was apparent, however, that she valued the performance aspect of the Drama and Theatre Studies specification. When asked "What do you think are the qualities that make a good Drama and Theatre Studies teacher" she answered, "a good sort of practical understanding" and "performance perspective" as important elements in the A Level classroom. She also added that there should be an, "enthusiasm for the subject" and teachers should have an, "ability to teach to the specification." Following on from this point, the course leader added that she, "vastly" relied on the course specification. In very realistic terms, she stated, "You've got to teach to the exam and the specification tells you what's going to be in the exam." She continued, "and try and, you know, make sure all the tasks go very much kind of towards answering the specific exam questions."

When further questioned, Centre A's course leader stated that all of the aspects of the Drama and Theatre Studies specification were particularly important for students to learn at A Level. Specifically, however, she felt that the, "practical side of it is important" and talked about approaching the theory elements of the specification, "through a practical approach." "An appreciation of theatre," was also important to this interviewee and, "what is good drama." Although this course leader stated that all aspects of the specification were important to learn, she also later added that some elements of the specification are not necessarily needed at A Level. "My problem for unit six is that there's a HUGE amount [of theatre history content] that you kind of have to get through but that they don't really tell you, they don't make it explicit enough..." She spoke of feeling there was too much content in, "unit six... unseen bits" that needed to be covered. She thought there were unrealistic demands being placed on the students to learn a "huge amount" of theatre history, "because you haven't got the time."

Although the interviewee was aware of time constraints in delivering the specification's content, she spoke of wanting to cover "career awareness" in the Drama and Theatre Studies A Level specification. She added, "job awareness, like, you know, they're interested in drama, they're interested in theatre then they start thinking about careers and they haven't got a clue..." This course leader then went on to comment that there are aspects that she feels she should be teaching but isn't due to restrictions with time, training and accommodation. She said, "I kind of feel like I don't cover the technical stuff well enough 'cause I don't really know enough about it" and, "Um and that can feel sometimes that I don't really know (*laughing*) what I'm talking about particularly." She went on to add, "and no I don't feel like there's enough time (*laughing*), I wish, I definitely wish I had more time." Finally, the interviewee stated, "you just haven't got enough room to get on." When asked "Would you like to change the specification in any other way" Centre A's course leader reiterated her frustrations with the specification's content by stating, "I wish unit six wasn't so onerous." The interviewee showed her frustrations with the written examination element by claiming, "I think it's a really hard exam."

When I questioned the interviewee about whether she had been following the A Level reform process, she said, "I've kind of an awareness of it. I wouldn't say I've [been] looking into it [in] great detail." She explained this by using the metaphor of a "melting pot" and indicated that she will become interested in the changes when they occur. She stated, "whenever I do go into things in great detail (*laughing*) I usually find out they've changed their minds and done something different, so in terms of my time, I haven't got time to learn something that's going to change again." The interviewee spoke from the perspective of someone who had experienced governmental change during the implementation of *Curriculum 2000* and believed, "that has changed the way we teach and what we teach." She believed that the change has had a negative impact on education in that there is less time, but more to teach. She added, "Um, to be honest the main thing that I think has happened is that we have to teach far more in the same amount of time, so the pressure on the kids, the pressure on us..." It was apparent that she felt that classroom discussions had been affected, too, with statements like, "that I'm banging through stuff... and I don't want to be teaching like that" and "and you do all the research because you haven't got time to let them do it."

Case Study B

Observational Findings

Unfortunately due to time constraints, Centre B was only able to offer one afternoon of observations. The course leader honoured my request to view two sessions of Drama and Theatre Studies teaching, but both lessons were of AS classes due to an alternative weekly timetable involving double sessions. As a result, my observational findings for Centre B are solely based on an AS lesson delivered by the course leader and aided by an additional teacher trainee assistant. The lesson was 100 minutes long and involved three male students and nine female students in a large brick purpose built drama studio decorated with assessment criteria, photographs and world-of-work information. Technical theatre facilities were also apparent including lighting rigs, lanterns, black curtains and trestle tables.

It was evident during the entire duration of the lesson that the teacher was highly organised and in control of the session. She led students with a powerfully loud voice by giving specific directions like, “Start... And slow down your pace... Good. Right... Now...” Physical warm-up activities began the lesson, but the teacher related these to previous Drama and Theatre Studies assignments and GCSE gesture and movement work. The students then sat and participated in a teacher-led discussion about the theatre practitioner Peter Brook and his rehearsal techniques. Students demonstrated their subject specific knowledge and used technical language about a number of design conventions and the theatrical practitioners Stanislavski, Brecht, and Artaud. The teacher then instructed them to practically realise these methods in groups throughout the space. The text *Metamorphosis* (Berkoff adaptation from Kafka, 1981) was introduced into the session through a series of video clips that the students watched and commented on, and then tried to adapt in their own group rehearsals. Although no formal performance or presentation of the rehearsed work was showcased, the teacher regularly moved throughout the space and offered praise and positive reinforcement by saying, “Well done” or “Excellent, ____... That’s good, ____.” After an hour of practical work, the students were asked to gather by the classroom whiteboard. Resource handouts devised by the teacher with information specific to the AS examination were given out and the topic of “staging” was introduced by the teacher. Students took notes and participated in a verbal discussion about this subject as related to the performance venues in the local area. The lesson’s objective of ‘Complete *Metamorphosis* (Berkoff adaptation from Kafka, 1981), Feedback Essays, and Preparation Essays’ was

written on the board by the teacher and the remainder of the session involved examination preparation in the forms of both teacher and student-led discussion and written work.

The discriminator that occurred the most in this lesson, was A. Its frequency rate was 20 per cent and was noted by the researcher if appropriate terminology was used in the classroom by the teacher or learners, leading to the demonstration of a knowledge of Theatre or Drama. It also recorded practical work that was imaginative or creative and could have resulted from a well-developed understanding of content, form, style or genre in acting or directing. Discriminator A was noted if students identified theatre practitioners, techniques or methodology. For example, one student called out, "So it's completely opposite of Stanislavski then? It's not like Brecht either?" when rehearsing group performances. In this instance, it was evident that drama methods and techniques from different time periods and of prescribed theatre practitioners were identified. The individual dimensions of group work (or paired work) were also recorded through Discriminator A. This lesson showed a number of examples where students were seen to contribute to the making of drama by developing confidence and competence in expressive and technical productions through a range of dramatic experiences including devising and working from texts. There were also references to the awarding body's specification when the teacher told the class, "I'll give you the examiner's marking scheme." The Drama and Theatre Studies specification of their selected awarding body was specifically mentioned during the course of the lesson.

Discriminator J was the next most frequent to occur in this observation. Out of the 14 discriminators, it occurred 15 per cent of the time due to the teacher's use of technical language and appropriate terminology during the delivery of the lesson. An example of this subject specific technical language was observed when the teacher said, "It's not at all naturalistic and breaks away from Stanislavski's form." Another dimension that was noticed was the teacher's use of subject specific technical language to deliver the lesson. A high level of student engagement was also recorded, as students appeared engaged and on-task. This was seen in Discriminator J but also seen in L, which had a 13 per cent frequency rate. Like J, this discriminator also addressed the issue of whether the students paid attention and participated. In addition, it recorded the amount of times the teacher utilised performance as a teaching aid.

The least frequent discriminators were D and I. D measured if key skills and the world-of-work were referred to. Although this accounted for none of the recorded dimensions, there

were two instances when the world-of-work was recorded in the lesson protocol field notes due to information sheets detailing jobs in 'The Performing Arts industry' posted on the classroom wall. Discriminator I accounted for 2 per cent of the discriminators and it addressed whether the material that was used was appropriate. This percentage rate represents 14 incidences when the teacher used questioning to check that resource materials were understandable, clear or at an appropriate level for the group. This was seen with such statements like, "Where's the link here to Artaud?" and when the teacher asked the class to name, "...in-the-round theatres."

Questionnaire Findings

When asked 'Did you take a GCSE course in Drama or the Performing Arts prior to beginning your AS Drama and Theatre Studies course?' all students sampled from Centre B answered that they had experience in the Performing Arts at GCSE Level. Of this 100 per cent, 93 per cent felt that they were prepared for their AS course during the previous year and 7 per cent felt they were not prepared for their AS Drama and Theatre Studies course. When asked how their workload in Drama and Theatre Studies compared to other courses 40 per cent said the work amount in Drama and Theatre Studies was equal to the amount of work issued in other subjects, 27 per cent said that there was slightly more work and 13 per cent said there was much more work in Drama and Theatre Studies than in other lessons. 20 per cent believed there was slightly less work in Drama and Theatre Studies than in other courses.

73 per cent of the students surveyed believed that there was an equal amount of written work compared to practical work on their Drama and Theatre Studies course. 13 per cent thought there was slightly more written work issued, 7 per cent thought there was much more written work assigned than practical work, but 7 per cent believed there was slightly less written work issued. Less than half of the students (40 per cent) said they were aware of the assessment criteria that they were being marked on. 13.3 per cent said they were slightly aware and 13.3 per cent said they were very aware of the assessment criteria. 33.3 per cent of the students surveyed said they were slightly unaware of the assessment criteria.

When asked what qualities make a good Drama and Theatre Studies student 19 per cent of the answers totalled indicated confidence was important, 11 per cent indicated commitment was necessary and 11 per cent stated that a willingness to learn was needed. 8 per cent indicated that students needed enthusiasm and another 8 per cent stated that creativity was important. Qualities of open mindedness, experimentation, imagination and

the ability to not get easily embarrassed were each mentioned in 5 per cent of the responses. Other answers included being persistent, enjoy working, dedication, and the need to have an appreciation for the theatre. Talent, loudness, a sense of fun, and an ability to equally balance written and practical work were highlighted.

When asked what aspects on the Drama and Theatre Studies course were important to learn, out of the answers given 30.4 per cent indicated an understanding of a historical timeline was important. 26 per cent of the answers showed students valued the knowledge of practitioners, 22 per cent indicated techniques were important to learn, and 13 per cent of the answers given said Method Acting was valuable to study. Other answers included essay writing skills and lighting as aspects that were important to learn on their Drama and Theatre Studies course. When asked what aspects (if any) were not necessary to learn, 67 per cent of students said there were no aspects that were not important to learn. Out of the remaining 33 per cent, 60 per cent indicated there was too much text work on a specific play and 40 per cent of the answers indicated there was too much work on practitioners. When asked if they would like to change their Drama and Theatre Studies course in any way, 86.7 per cent of students said there would be no change, while out of the remaining 13.3 per cent, half said there should be more improvisational acting and half said there should be less written assignments.

Interview Findings

At the time of the interview, Centre B's course leader had been working as a Drama and Theatre Studies teacher at her sixth form centre for 15 years after moving from another location, where she taught the same subject at A Level. Prior to becoming a Drama and Theatre Studies teacher, she, "was originally a PE teacher" who had Drama as a second subject. Then she went on to list a number of qualities that are needed to make a good Drama and Theatre Studies teacher. "I think you have to be versatile... I think you have to be able to negotiate." She continued to mention that teachers of Drama need to be able to, "work as a facilitator, rather than necessarily as an instructor." She believes that it is important for teachers to be "knowledgeable" while still being "flexible" and able to say, "I can't answer that question but I know where you can find the answer." She spoke of her involvement with the ITT programmes at Centre B and how Drama teachers need to be "creative" and not formulaic in their teaching approaches. "It doesn't work like that... It's organic basically."

When asked how heavily she relies on the course specification Course leader B stated, “very heavily... because you have to do the best by the students and inevitably that means you keep as close as you can to the specification.” She felt that only some of the specification was particularly important for students to learn at A Level, though. She felt that students needed to have a knowledge of “[theatre] practitioners” and added, “We always consider the practitioners as an essential part of the course because from that you can bring in lots of other things as well.” The elements that she felt were not important to learn at A Level were in relation to written examinations. “There is a real problem with [the theatre history element of] paper six... I think it’s to do with the way they’re marking paper six and the expectations that they have of the students.” The specification’s content was again addressed by the question “Are there any aspects of the specification that you feel should be covered by A Level students but aren’t?” This interviewee complained that the, “texts are very limited... to traditional... style.” She went on to add, “It would be better if there was a better choice of text.”

When asked if there are any aspects she felt she should be teaching but aren’t due to restrictions with time, resources or training, Interviewee B stated, “There isn’t anything I *should* be teaching... I want to spend more time on the things that are in it... it’s a chase at A Level.” She likened A Level teaching to a race by saying, “You run from the moment you start in September... and you never stop running... and you can’t get all of it done in the time that you’ve got.” When asked how she would change the specification, she affirmed previous statements by suggesting a change to paper six’s [historical theatre] written examination.

Centre B’s Drama and Theatre Studies course leader admitted to not particularly following discussions about A Level reform. She acknowledged that A Levels should change, but stated that she was more interested in the delivery of the IB diploma. “As a course I think it’s much, much better than anything that’s on offer at A Level.” She then discussed her support for Michael Tomlinson’s dismissed proposal. “I was hoping we were going to do like an English IB, you know...” She appeared doubtful that any change would occur when she said, “I mean do you think that whilst the government are having all these discussions, do you really [think] that they will come to fruition... Because I just don’t think that, you know, it will come through.” Interviewee B spoke as a Drama and Theatre Studies teacher with previous experience of governmental change and believes this has made her “incredibly versatile and adaptable.” She added, “you have to go with the flow on things” and added that governmental influence can have a positive affect because, “change is

good.” She said, “It’s ok and I can see the argument of change for change’s sake but I think, for me, A Levels have to change... they don’t work!” Before concluding the interview, Interviewee B wanted to reiterate that, “Drama teaching is organic and therefore develops and grows.” She continued, “It’s very easy to sit down and sort of look at things and be comfortable and in years that I’ve been teaching I see a lot of what I call comfortable teachers...and I think that’s unhealthy sometimes.” She ended by saying, “I don’t think change is bad.”

Case Study C

Observational Findings

Centre C’s AS Drama and Theatre Studies lesson had four male students, ten female students, a teacher (who was not the Drama and Theatre Studies course leader) and a teaching assistant. The lesson took place in a carpeted lecture hall, which featured raked seating and decorative posters labelling specification requirements and important technical theatre terms. There was also a visible free standing lighting rig and a lighting board at the back of the room. Students were given little direction from the teacher and teaching assistant but began their rehearsal work, as if they were continuing their practical assignment from a previous lesson. The teacher regularly offered comments of encouragement and praise to the actors, by identifying them by name. Eventually, the teacher gave them specific comments like, “Don’t turn away from her”, “Don’t go too far downstage” and rehearsal techniques to help improve the scene.

Questions about character motivation were asked of the actors. Then, scenes were repeated with different technical blocking, as directed by the teacher. Once the scene had improved the students were dismissed and another pair of students entered. They, too, rehearsed their scene work and then presented it in front of the teacher, who offered constructive criticism. A final group of students entered the room after waiting outside the door. They entered as the previous rehearsal group departed. They performed their scene work and received comments from the teacher on their tone of voice and how to physically block the scene with movement. Eventually, all students were admitted back into the lecture hall venue and additional rehearsal times were scheduled during free lessons and lunchtimes in preparation for an upcoming performance examination.

During this AS session the discriminators that were recorded the most were those of A, J and L. Discriminator A measured whether there was a relationship between the session and

the overall specification and had a frequency rate of 22 per cent. Practical group work accounted for most of the instances when this dimension took place, with students regularly contributing to the making of the imaginative and creative drama. It also showed the students' understanding of form, content, style and genre in acting. They developed competence and confidence through a range of dramatic experiences when working with texts. Other variables were also measured in regards to this dimension. Subject specific technical language was used by the teacher and also by the students, leading to a demonstration of knowledge and an understanding of aspects of theatre and drama. Theatre practitioners and their methods were also identified by the teacher during the AS session.

During 15 per cent of the lesson, it was apparent that Discriminator J was relevant. This looks at whether the session was delivered effectively and included variables that measured the occurrences of technical language and performance techniques used by the teacher. It also measured the instances where students appeared on-task and engaged. Teacher references to "blocking", "lines", "movement" and "tone of voice" indicated that the use of subject specific technical language was valued during the delivery of the lesson. Discriminator L had a similar frequency rate at 14 per cent, with 67 per cent of the times it was noted due to all students being engaged throughout each task. Students were off-task or not co-operative during 16 per cent of the recording of this variable. The researcher did not record any instances of Discriminator D or I in this AS lesson, which checks if materials are appropriate. There was only one instance of the teacher using questioning with, "Is everyone off book [and have your lines memorised]? Tell me if you're not." Another discriminator that received a low rate of frequency was H. There were only seven occasions when a transition occurred between activities, as introduced by the teacher within the sequence of the session.

The A2 lesson at Centre C was taught by the Drama and Theatre Studies course leader, with help from a teaching assistant. There were six female students and one male student in the lecture hall venue. The session began with a group discussion in a circle format about the values of *hotseating*, a performance technique involving actors answering questions about their character when in role. A whole group warm-up game was played before the teacher wrote the lesson objective of 'to develop characters in devised pieces' on the board. Most students were then dismissed and told to return to the classroom after rehearsing their performance pieces. For the students who remained, the teacher and the assistant questioned them about their character work. They then hotseated them in role with

questions like, “What do you do for a living?” and “What’s special about your love?” The students acted out their polished devised performances for the teacher and assistant. The performance group then left after receiving constructive comments about the physicality of the characters and their dramatic silences. Hotseating activities continued with another group who entered the room. Although the students found it difficult to answer in role, they were eventually able to improvise a discussion and work to develop their characters. The students then left and another group entered the room, on a rotational attendance system that seemed to be regularly utilised by the teacher so that she could focus on only one performance group at a time. After their improvised work, the group performed their devised scene work and the teachers looked over the scripted work until the lesson was dismissed.

The discriminator that was most evident in this session was L, which identifies if the students pay attention or participate. 62 per cent of the time, this was noted because students were engaged and paying attention. This may have been due to the fact that the teacher demonstrated subject specific performance techniques and skills when delivering the lesson. Students also showed that they had subject knowledge, as Discriminator N was the second most frequently recorded, at 13 per cent. This indicates that learners actively participated in teacher led classroom discussions and utilised their knowledge of the subject. The least recorded discriminator, D indicated that no mention of the world-of-work or key skills were present in the lesson. The low rate of K shows that there was little use by the teacher of positive verbal feedback in relation to the tasks that were completed by the learners.

Questionnaire Findings

When asked if they had taken a GCSE course in Drama or the Performing Arts prior to beginning their AS Drama and Theatre Studies course, 67 per cent answered that they had, while 33 per cent had not had any experience in the Performing Arts at GCSE Level. Of this 67 per cent, all felt that they were prepared for their AS course during the previous year. Of the 33 per cent of students who had not had any Performing Arts or Drama at GCSE Level before their AS course, all felt they were not at a disadvantage.

Half the students commented that the workload was slightly heavier in Drama and Theatre Studies compared to other courses, 33 per cent stated there was an equal amount of work in Drama and Theatre Studies to other courses, and 17 per cent said ‘slightly less than’. Half believed there was an equal amount of practical and written work issued on the

course, whereas half thought there was slightly more written work issued than practical work. Half of the students said they were aware of the assessment criteria that they were being marked on. 17 per cent said they were slightly aware and 33 per cent said they were very aware of the assessment criteria.

When the students were asked about the qualities that make a good Drama and Theatre Studies student, good acting ability, hard work, punctuality and determination each took up 8.3 per cent of the answers. Creativity, dedication, and concentration also each accounted for 8.3 per cent of the answers. Other answers included having commitment, enthusiasm, participating in team work, and a need to be inspired by the subject. Students said it was important not to be shy, have a willingness to express themselves and have an ability to learn lines.

When asked what aspects on the Drama and Theatre Studies course were important to learn, out of the answers given 16.7 per cent indicated time management skills and 16.7 per cent listed drama techniques. 16.7 per cent of answers indicated that 'all aspects' of the Drama and Theatre Studies course were important to learn. When asked what aspects (if any) were not necessary to learn, all students said there were no aspects that were not important to learn. However, when asked if they would like to change their Drama and Theatre Studies course in any way, half of the students said there would be no change, while out of the remaining half of the class said there should be more practical work, a quarter said there should be less written coursework and a quarter said there should be a change to the structure of the two-year programme.

Interview Findings

The Drama and Theatre Studies course leader at Centre C began teaching the A Level course when it was first introduced at her sixth form centre. After teaching the subject for two years, she took a temporary leave of absence and then returned to teach the course for an additional four years. She has not worked in another sixth form centre, but has previous A Level teaching in the subject of English prior to the introduction of the Drama and Theatre Studies A Level course at Centre C. This teaching background enabled her to work with Drama and also be "involved in Shakespeare schools festival," even though she had no experience of professional positions in Drama and Theatre Studies education.

Interviewee C listed a number of qualities that help to make a good Drama and Theatre Studies teacher. "Enthusiasm... commitment and a willingness to work more hours outside

the job,” were cited as advantageous attributes. Also, she added, “I think willing to take risks.” When asked about her reliance on the course specification she said, “I rely on it, it guides me where I am going” but then talked of speaking with other colleagues to, “get a lot of help.” Centre C employs an artist in residence who works in the Drama and Theatre Studies Department with A Level students. The course leader stated that her skills complement those skills of the artist in residence, “I think we have got the balance of my, me as an academic background... and I am hoping that between the two of us, we’re actually, I am sharing my skills with her and... I certainly gain a lot from her... in terms of drama.”

When asked what aspects of the specification are important for students to learn Interviewee C stated, “The different styles of theatre” and then talked about, “thinking outside the box” as opposed to simply participating in the type of musical usually performed at Centre C. “Our kids tend to be very, very, erm single minded about a musical... and they want to be on the musical stage.” She went on to say that although it is not a pre-requisite in the specification, she values talking the students to see live theatre to, “get as much experience at theatre as possible.” After stating that no element of the specification was not important to learn, she also commented that there were no aspects of the qualification that she felt should be covered by A Level students but aren’t. On a personal note, she believed that there were aspects that she thought she should be teaching but weren’t, due to restrictions of time, resources and training. She stated, “We’d love to do more technical stuff with the students... but we don’t have enough lighting... we don’t have a proper sound system.” She then continued to say that none of the Drama and Theatre Studies staff were “insured to go up” a “massive ladder [to the lighting rig]”. It was also stated that, “I don’t think you get enough chance to get out of school to see enough theatre productions” because, “we are encouraged not to go in school time.” Interviewee C then blamed, “the resources”. In addition, the Drama and Theatre Studies course leader at Centre C would ideally like to change the specification layout by moving the AS performance, “to be later on”.

Course leader C has experienced governmental change, since beginning teaching over 30 years ago and answered, “Slightly” when asked if she had been following the A Level reform process. She spoke of going to a standardisation meeting held by her awarding body, in which the teachers were told that the government were going to try to “squeeze the performance aspect of it out of drama and theatre studies.” She stated, “there was a big fear about the changes in schools.” Course Leader C continued, “I think we’ve got to the

point now, we are changing for change's sake. I think we need to be very careful about what we do for the students." She would like to see Drama, "into a much more cross-cultural thing" and believes that the subject, "doesn't get used enough" which has led her to believe Drama is not being valued at her centre.

Case Study D

Observational Findings

The Drama and Theatre Studies Course Leader at Centre D led the 1 hour 45 minute AS session with four male students and eleven female students. The lesson took place in a large purpose built brick room, which featured a lighting rig, costume area and various visible properties and set pieces. The lesson began with the teacher giving instructions on the upcoming examination. Both the examination board and the specification were mentioned in relation to the practical exam for both technical and performance candidates. A number of students exited the room and an accepted rotational attendance system began, which was maintained by the teacher. One student was responsible for running the lighting board as the teacher sat and watched a group of students perform their memorised scene work. The teacher then gave comments like, "It should be stronger... you should know your lines." He then talked about the movement, costuming and line memorisation. Students entered and exited the room during this time to get compact disk players and to ask the teacher various questions.

The performance group then exited and another group entered and began to rehearse their scene work. Again, the teacher watched the performance and cued students with lines that were forgotten. The teacher engaged the students in a conversation about characterisations and then he physically demonstrated to the students how to best realise the character's physicality. An additional teacher entered the room to ask about a student and then another group of students entered the room and arranged the set for their rehearsal session. After watching the group performance scene, which finished earlier than was intended, the issues of blocking and character motivation were brought up by the teacher. Another rehearsal group entered the room and began to present their piece. The teacher played one of the characters due to the absence of an actor. When the scene was over he was asked about monologue delivery and period costuming. The final rehearsal group performed their scene and then listened attentively to the teachers' comments on blocking and movement. During a review of the plot line student distractions multiplied, with people regularly entering and

exiting the studio space. The lesson ended with the teacher calling out, “OK. Everybody, thank you.”

The discriminators that occurred the most during this lesson were A and J. They measured the session’s relationship with the overall specification and whether or not the session was delivered effectively. Discriminator A showed that technical theatre language was spoken in the classroom, by both the teacher and the learners. The presence of this discriminator also showed that practical group work was produced in the form of acting, including devising and working from texts. Discriminator J was seen during 15 per cent of the lesson and its variables included the teacher’s use of technical language and performance techniques. On this occasion, however, 63 per cent of the time this dimension was recorded was in relation to the students being engaged in the lesson and on-task with their classroom activities. This was certainly reflected in Discriminator L, which had the third highest rate of frequency out of the 14 being monitored. It addressed whether students paid attention and participated. Neither Discriminator D nor I were seen in this AS observation. There were no instances of the world-of-work being mentioned or key skills. Also, the teacher never used questioning to check the students’ understanding of the play scripts that were used. In addition, Discriminator H and K did not often occur. There was not a high level of transition between the activities within the sequence of the session. Finally, assessment and evaluation feedback were seldom offered in relation to the task that was completed by the learners.

Centre D’s A2 lesson was also held in this classroom venue. Three male and thirteen female students were taught in the 1 hour 40 minute session that began with the student completion of an information sheet for school/college purposes. Groups of students then separated throughout the room after receiving the instructions to, “Find a corner and rehearse.” While some students rehearsed in groups on practical assignments, many others engaged in off-task talk and entered/exited the room, presumably to work in another rehearsal space. The teacher walked throughout the rehearsal space and asked one group, “You know what you are doing?” He then left the room with two students while other students were left to work independently. The teacher returned and engaged in discussions with pairs of learners about the storylines of various play texts. One group physically demonstrated their blocking to the teacher and discussed props and costuming. The teacher then left the room again to find a video player, during this point more students engaged in off-task behaviour.

When the teacher returned, he engaged in a discussion with the researcher until he was interrupted by a student asking a question with subject-specific technical language. Students approached the teacher to ask questions about character accents and costuming. The majority of the students were off-task when the teacher left the room to work with two individual students. He later returned to offer the researcher the opportunity to look at a sample student portfolio. The teacher then approached one group with, "Come on. Let's work with you lot." After a brief period, the teacher again approached the researcher to discuss the written examination element of the course. Three students asked the teacher for suggestions on an appropriate play script to adopt. The teacher agreed to leave the room with the students to use his library card to access the script. After an additional eight minutes, the teacher returned and addressed an off-task group with, "All we're doing is socialising now?" After talking with the researcher once more, the teacher concluded the lesson with, "OK. I'll see you on Friday."

The discriminator that was recorded the most during this lesson was L, which addresses whether or not students paid attention and participated. 62 per cent of the time this discriminator was noted because students were off-task or not engaged in the classroom activity. Student participation only accounted for 14 per cent of this discriminator. Also, 10 per cent of the time, this discriminator was noted due to the teacher's absence from the classroom and comments like, "This one's a madam" and "You've got this group here, who only come here to socialise... there's no work with them."

There was a relationship seen between the session and the awarding body's specification during 18 per cent of this lesson. Also, 68 per cent of Discriminator A was recorded because of the demonstration of practical paired or group work. There were no instances of Discriminators D nor I. In addition, there was only one case of K, which was seen when the teacher sarcastically stated, "Very good. Thank you, that was delightful" to a tap dancing student who was waiting for her group work to be viewed.

Questionnaire Findings

88 per cent of those surveyed at Centre D answered that they had taken a GCSE course in Drama or the Performing Arts prior to beginning their AS Drama and Theatre Studies course, while 12 per cent had not had any experience in the Performing Arts at GCSE Level. Of this 88 per cent, all felt that they were prepared for their AS course during the previous year. Of the 12 per cent of students who had not had any Performing Arts or Drama at GCSE Level before their AS course, all felt they were not at a disadvantage.

When asked how their workload in Drama and Theatre Studies compared to other courses, 47 per cent said 'slightly less than' and 23.5 per cent said 'much less than.' 17.6 per cent said the work amount in Drama and Theatre Studies was equal to the amount of work issued in other subjects, 6 per cent said that there was slightly more work and 6 per cent said there was much more work in Drama and Theatre Studies than in other lessons. 64.7 per cent believed there was an equal amount of practical and written work issued, whereas 23.5 per cent thought there was slightly more written work issued and 11.8 per cent thought there was much more written work assigned than practical work. Over half of the students (52.9 per cent) said they were aware of the assessment criteria that they were being marked on. 23.6 per cent said they were slightly aware and 6 per cent said they were very aware of the assessment criteria. Only 17.6 per cent of the students surveyed said they were only slightly aware of the assessment criteria.

Answers varied when the students were asked what the qualities are that make a good Drama and Theatre Studies student. 17.2 per cent of the answers totalled showed confidence was important, 12.1 per cent indicated good attendance was necessary and 10.3 per cent showed that commitment was needed. 5.2 per cent indicated that students needed to be ambitious and another 5.2 per cent stated that a hardworking attitude was important. Qualities of creativity, team-work, dedication, passion, and acting talent were each mentioned in 3.4 per cent of the responses. Other answers included being original, disciplined, motivated, an ability to work well on one's own, and having a good sense of humour. Students said it was important not to be shy, have an ability to understand serious issues, have good ideas, have a good memory, be trustworthy and be willing to try new things. Some stated students need to have a willingness to accept criticism, be open-minded, be assertive and have good listening skills.

When asked what aspects on the Drama and Theatre Studies course were important to learn, out of the answers given 24 per cent indicated confidence and 16 per cent listed acting techniques. Group work, knowledge of directors and performers, and knowledge of plays and playwrights were each 12 per cent of the total answers. Also, essay writing skills accounted for 8 per cent of the total answers given. Other answers included body positioning, voice, communication skills, how to focus, how to set the stage, and how to interpret the script. One questionnaire indicated that 'all aspects' of the Drama and Theatre Studies course were important to learn. When asked what aspects (if any) were not necessary to learn, 94 per cent of students said there were no aspects that were not important to learn. Out of the remaining 6 per cent, all indicated there was too much

theory. Similarly, when asked if they would like to change their Drama and Theatre Studies course in any way, 59 per cent of students said there would be no change, while out of the remaining 41 per cent, 87.5 per cent said there should be more practical work and 12.5 per cent said there should be more essay practice.

Interview Findings

The Drama and Theatre Studies course leader at Centre D has been working at the same sixth form centre for 25 years. Prior to teaching A Levels, he previously taught Drama at another location, but not to A Level standard. Outside of the field of Drama and Theatre Studies, he has held a number of professional positions outside of A Level teaching. As well as directing for amateur groups, he did, “a bit of acting” and worked as a drama consultant. He also ran a children’s theatre company and held numerous drama workshops.

Course Leader D stated that “patience and humour” make a good Drama and Theatre Studies teacher. He then commented that it would help if the teacher were a little eccentric. Also, he added that an, “ability to part act” would be advantageous. When the specification was introduced into the interview, he stated that the department only occasionally relies on it. He added, “We do and we don’t.” The interviewee went on to add that the department uses it much more with AS than they previously did. He believed some of the specification is important to learn. For example, “theatre knowledge” and “examining a script” were considered to be important by Centre D’s course leader. He also valued “lighting and movement” and students’ trips to see live theatre. He quoted, “I think they should go to the theatre very often.”

The course leader also mentioned that some elements of the specification were not important to learn. He brought up the DR2 unit [written paper on directing an unseen segment from a play] as a burden and said the, “portfolio in Year 12... isn’t that useful.” Likewise, he felt that some elements should be covered on the specification for Drama and Theatre Studies but aren’t. He said that there should be a bigger focus on practitioners, like in other specifications. There were also elements like lighting, which he believed should be taught in Centre D’s classroom but aren’t being covered due to restrictions with time. Overall, he would only really like to change slight things about the specification. He would like to change the specification content by not having two person groups performing devised and scripted work during the AS examination year.

The Drama and Theatre Studies course leader at Centre D has been following the changes to A Level proposed by the government by consulting both his awarding body and reading the Times Educational Supplement (*TES*). He believes, “all sorts of things are wrong with the current education system” and “I’m very opposed to AS, it hasn’t convinced me” but then went on to say that he would have been in more favour of an English Diploma than what is being proposed in the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a). He concluded by saying that he was afraid Drama would lose its performance element.

Case Study E

Observational Findings

Six male students and five female students participated in Centre E’s 55 minute AS lesson in a large purpose built rehearsal studio at one of the city’s cultural centres. The lesson began with warm-up activities that allowed the students to move and work in groups while the teacher watched from the side. Next, a co-operation game occurred requiring the students to assign team leaders and problem solve by brainstorming ideas. The teacher joined the group to lead a focussed counting activity. The teacher ended the activity by asking, “Who fancies doing some drawing?” and then gave sugar paper and pens to two students to make human-sized *role on the wall* drawings, which involves drawing an outline of a character’s body with descriptive adjectives of the character’s personality written inside and outside of the sketch. Two groups of students gathered to hear the teacher talk about the play text. Then, the internal and external characteristics of the character were discussed in a teacher-led session. Next, students were instructed to write descriptive words on the sugar paper to represent the character. As the students worked in groups, the teacher moved throughout the classroom and made comments like, “We don’t actually know that he killed her, do we?”

The students were asked to circle words on the sugar paper that directly related to the areas in the script that they had previously been rehearsing. Students were then instructed to continue their practical group work, which began during a previous drama session. The teacher watched the student work from the side of the room and asked, “Can we give it some kind of levels and physicality?” to one group, while he asked a different off-task group, “And you are solving that by being a fool?” The session ended when the teacher announced that the rehearsal space was needed for another lesson.

The mostly frequently found discriminator during this AS lesson was A. The variables that were noted during this session acknowledged that subject specific language was used in the classroom by the teacher and the students. Although the specification was not specifically mentioned during the session, there was an abundance of practical work that was imaginative and showed that the students understood content, form, style and genre in the area of acting. Also drama methods and techniques of theatre practitioners were identified and students contributed to the making of drama in a group when devising and working from scripted texts. Discriminators L and J were the next most frequently recorded during the session. Both however, look at the variables of student engagement and whether the learner remains on-task. Another discriminator that had a high rate of occurrence was that of B. Instructions for each activity were regularly delivered to the students from Centre E's course leader. The intent of each activity was given by the teacher and often clarified in instances such as the physical warm up bridge-building task.

There were no instances of Discriminators D and H. Also, I and K only occurred 1 per cent each of the 14 discriminators derived from Ofsted and the Uo_'s observational categories. This indicated that there was little evaluation and assessment feedback given and the teacher rarely used questioning to monitor if the material were understandable or clear. It also became apparent that there were few resources and little transition between activities that were introduced by the teacher during the sequence of the session.

The A2 lesson at Centre E was 55 minutes long and involved four male and four female students. The teacher led the session in a newly purpose-built studio with wooden floors, mirrors and dance rails. Collapsible, tiered seating and a lighting rig were also visible. The session began with a student game of *tig* that evolved into a teacher-led warm-up of *cops and robbers*. Students were focussed on the physical activity as the teacher watched from the side of the room while completing paperwork. The teacher then shouted instructions for the students to move into their performance groups to practically rehearse scene work that had begun in a previous lesson. The teacher monitored student progress and asked, "Right. So what order have you got?" The students were spread throughout the classroom space and did not interact with students outside of their rehearsal group. Next, the teacher approached the researcher to share the visual images that were offered to the students as stimuli for their practical devised scene work.

Students went to the teacher to ask advice, while other students improvised scene work, read scripts, or discussed the rehearsal process. The teacher also approached specific

groups and asked the students to run their scene work. Issues of “comic contrast” were brought up. Specifically, they talked about the physicality that would be involved with a student “becoming the water.” Many of the conversations between the teacher and the students were on a one-to-one basis, with the teacher knelt down at the student’s level. Feedback was offered to each rehearsal group at some point throughout the lesson. Eventually, the lesson concluded with the teacher giving a homework assignment of a “rough outline” for the next lesson.

As with the AS session, the discriminator that appeared the most was ‘Is there a relationship between the session and the overall specification?’ Once again, subject specific language was used in the classroom by both the teacher and the students. Also, practical group work once again formed the basis of the session through devised work that was polished and rehearsed after being scripted. Discriminators J and L were again the next most frequently recorded during the session, accounting for 14 per cent and 13 per cent of all the recorded discriminators. This indicated that students were engaged and paid attention when participating in the session. There were also no occurrences of D nor I. Discriminators E and H occurred rarely, too, which indicates that there was little transition or change between classroom activities during the structure of the lesson.

Questionnaire Findings

Out of those students surveyed at Centre E, 62.5 per cent answered that they took a GCSE course in Drama or the Performing Arts prior to beginning their AS Drama and Theatre Studies course, while 37.5 per cent had not had any experience in the Performing Arts at GCSE Level. Of this 62.5 per cent, 80 per cent felt that they were prepared for their AS course during the previous year, while 20 per cent felt they were not prepared. Of the 37.5 per cent of students who had not had any Performing Arts or Drama at GCSE Level before their AS course, 33 per cent felt they were at a disadvantage while 67 per cent believed they were not at a disadvantage.

When asked how their workload in Drama and Theatre Studies compared to other courses half the students said the work amount in Drama and Theatre Studies was equal to the amount of work issued in other subjects and half the students surveyed said that there was slightly more work in Drama and Theatre Studies. 87.5 per cent believed there was an equal amount of practical and written work issued on their course, whereas 12.5 per cent thought there was slightly more written work issued than practical work. Over half of the students (62.5 per cent) said they were aware of the assessment criteria that they were being marked

on. 25 per cent said they were slightly aware and 12.5 per cent said they were very aware of the assessment criteria.

There were a number of answers when the students were asked what the qualities are that make a good Drama and Theatre Studies student. 26 per cent of the answers totalled showed commitment was important, 11 per cent indicated enthusiasm was necessary and 11 per cent showed that creativity was needed. Students mentioned the need for a focussed approach, a willingness to try, an ability to act, and a hard work ethic. They suggested that students need to be open and confident, have practical ability, need to be team members, should be easy to get along with and be able to communicate well.

When asked what aspects on the Drama and Theatre Studies course were important to learn, out of the answers given a knowledge of physical theatre, an ability to work together, and a willingness to overcome fear were each 14.3 per cent of the overall answers written by the surveyed students. Openness, discipline, a knowledge of theatre techniques and an understanding of various styles of acting also each accounted for 14.3 per cent of answers. When asked what aspects were not necessary to learn (if any), 87.5 per cent of students said there were no aspects that were not important to learn. Out of the remaining 12.5 per cent, all indicated 'how to act' wasn't essential to learn. When asked if they would like to change their Drama and Theatre Studies course in any way, 87.5 per cent of students said there would be no change, while out of the remaining 12.5 per cent, all said there should be a wider study of genres.

Interview Findings

The interviewee at Centre E had only been teaching Drama and Theatre Studies at his her sixth form centre for 13 months, prior to the interview. His experience of A Level teaching in this subject occurred in another location, where he also taught the subject but not at A Level, "I tended to teach vocational courses." When asked 'What professional positions in the field of Drama and Theatre Studies have you held outside of A Level teaching?' he talked at length about work in various professional theatres including jobs at, "The Vic... Shared Experience and at the National Theatre". He worked in Education prior to becoming a course leader but added that going into teaching, "was a complete accident." Community Arts Project work and part time teaching led him to apply for a Head of Department post in full time teaching.

Interviewee E stated that a good Drama and Theatre Studies teacher should have the ability to, “see the kind of academic demands of getting students through the qualification” and also have a capability to enthuse students by, “getting them motivated”. He added that the teacher should also, “make it different and distinct from anything else that the students might have studied before or might be studying currently.” He said, “I think it should be special, it should be their most important subject.” When questioned about how heavily he relies on the specification to influence his teaching, Interviewee E answered, “I’ve interpreted it as loosely as I could” and spoke of having three months’ preparation time to construct the Drama and Theatre Studies course and select an appropriate specification for his centre.

The interviewee believed that there were some aspects of the specification that were particularly important for students to learn. He spoke of the need for students to have an appreciation of live performance, “in terms of doing it and going to see it.” He also insisted that practitioners are studied by the students, “I kind of sneak that in really quickly at the beginning... I do loads of like theatre history and practitioners and all of that.” Some elements of the specification are not as important to learn, according to Course Leader E, “I’ll tell you the one thing that I’ve kind of kind of ignored and it’s the thing that’s at the back of the spec.[ification] that says by the end of the [year] students should know all these terms.” He was then asked, “Are there any aspects of the specification that you feel should be covered by A Level students and aren’t?” Interviewee E said, “Well, I guess it is about practitioners. It is about having that historical underpinning.”

The Drama and Theatre Studies course leader at Centre E stated that there were aspects of the course that he is unable to teach due to certain restrictions. Specifically, he mentioned the importance of time management and that, “We don’t have enough space,” since student numbers have doubled in size. If Interviewee E had the opportunity to change the course, he would address the content of the unit six written examination [based on *The Trojan Women* (Euripides, 2002 edition) or *The Beggar’s Opera* (Gay, 2002 edition)] “I can’t quite see the, uh, purpose of unit six... I’m not quite getting it.” He added, “Here are two seemingly random plays that you’re going to pretend that you’re a director of and I just think why, why those two?” There was also a concern over the timing of unit six. This unit requires students to learn a lot of new information when they are nearing the end of the A Level course. This course leader thought students could possibly benefit if the unit was placed earlier on in the year.

Centre E's course leader has been following the A Level changes proposed by the government and announced, "I think it's an absolute tragedy... that the Tomlinson report wasn't taken up in full..." His concern was the "barrier" that is between a "vocational course" and "A Level standard." He seemed disheartened by the changes and stated, "I have no idea what's happening." He spoke of previous exposure to governmental change in education and how he was affected and claimed, "You just hold on and ride the boat." He spoke of experiencing a number of changes and how many teachers will not alter their teaching styles because of "fear and (time?)." Interviewee E added that he tries to, "embrace any kind of change in spec.[ification] wholeheartedly." He concluded with, "I'm so used to change."

Case Study F

Observational Findings

Unfortunately, there was no other way to study the A Level candidates at Centre F other than by AS and A2 classroom observations, as the course leader did not return the requested questionnaire responses. The AS lesson was an hour in length and included four male and three female students who were instructed by the head of department but not the Drama and Theatre Studies course leader. The large carpeted studio room was an extension of the canteen area that had been separated off. A rehearsal space and a work area were divided with tables and chairs. The session started with a teacher-led talk about the importance of being focussed, with him stating, "We're going through this qualification individually..." and "Your performance is in the next two weeks." The students were then instructed to begin working on their performance scenes in a whole group teacher-led activity. The teacher very much served as the director and said, "I need a hooded person... then we've got the Sergeant, the guard, the prisoner... are we ready?" Students moved into an in-the-round formation with chairs according to the teacher's instructions like, "I need you here. Can you stand slightly off stage?" They held scripts and answered the teacher's questions about the playwright's intentions with non subject specific language. For example, in response to the teacher's question on movement, "Why from this direction? Why not together?" The student answered, "It's like speakers, in-nit? Surround-sound..."

Prior to the start of the group scene work, one student appeared reluctant to begin. The teacher discovered that it was due to the student's fear that the researcher would be offended by the language in the script. Once the scene work began, it was occasionally stopped by the teacher who, as the director, wanted the actors to reflect on their characters'

motivations. Students eventually began to engage in off-task behaviour and became disruptive when the teacher was giving help to other actors in the scene. The second scene was worked on and ended with all students silently reading their scripts. Some students were asked by the teacher to read aloud. This then led to a whole class discussion about character motivations. Students asked, "Does she know she is dead herself?" Both the students and the teacher debated the meaning of the play and then the scene work was once again performed by the class. The session ended with the teacher announcing, "That was good! That was good!"

Discriminators B, J and L occurred the most during this session and had equal frequency rates of 15 per cent. Discriminator B addressed the question 'Are the assessment criteria made clear?' and its high frequency rate shows that the students were aware of the activities that would be undertaken in the session. The teacher gave instructions that were often clarified and specifically directed the students, like when he said, "Your job before the scene starts is you are here and you need to deliver your lines to him." Discriminator J's frequency rate is indicative of a successful lesson delivery, as the variables of 'teacher use of technical language', 'teacher use of performance skills' made up 39 per cent of the presence of this discriminator. 61 per cent of the time this was recorded was in relation to the student's high level of engagement. This was also reflected in Discriminator L's variable of 'student participation'. Key skills and the world-of-work were not covered in this session. This was apparent in the absence of D. Discriminators K and H had equally low frequency rates, both only accounting for 1 per cent of the lesson. This indicates that the teacher seldom offered positive verbal feedback to the learners and that there were very few transitions between the activities. Also, the teacher was not seen to manage resources effectively within the session.

The A2 lesson at this centre was one hour long and had four male students and five female students. The Drama and Theatre Studies course leader held the lesson in the same studio venue as was utilised in the AS session. The lesson began informally with students sitting at two tables at opposite ends of the room. This arrangement led the teacher to address individual groups, rather than the class as a whole. Although the groups of students appeared to be on-task, individual students left the room without permission or without acknowledgement from the teacher. At one point the teacher appeared to follow the student out of the room, but instead returned with photocopied resource sheets for one of the seated groups of students. The teacher soon left the room again while groups of students read scripts aloud, organised paperwork and discussed devising possibilities. When

the teacher returned, another member of staff called him into a side office. The teacher then approached the researcher to discuss the centre's rehearsal facilities. One group of students discussed their scripts and the other group read their work aloud. A student approached the teacher to ask a question and once again he left the room stating, "That's two jobs I've done for you!"

Students gradually became off-task, for instance two students developed a short rap while beating on their table. The teacher returned to the room but departed once again to fix a broken stapler. When he came back to the classroom, he approached students to ask about their written work and commented on a professional theatre company who visited the school. The majority of the students appeared to be engaged in purposeful discussions about their drama tasks. Two groups of students worked independently of each other and the teacher watched their progress. The teacher and researcher then discussed the script work and the upcoming practical examination. Next, the teacher approached one student group to talk about the topic of their scripted pieces. When the end of the lesson was near, some students engaged in off-task behaviour. One student shouted, "Cock-a-too!" across the room and became disruptive. There was no formal ending to the session. Instead students took their bags and left the room while chatting.

Discriminator K, E and I each had a low frequency rate of 1 per cent each, compared to the 14 discriminators that were derived for this observation research. Their low rates of occurrence suggest that during this lesson the teacher did not offer much positive verbal feedback to the students. Also, there were few accounts when the session structure changed from an introduction to the body of the session, a summary and a conclusion. The teacher did not introduce many changes in activity within the sequence of the session. In addition, the teacher appeared reluctant to use questioning to check if the resource materials were understandable, clear and appropriate. As in Centre F's AS lesson, the students were not told of the world-of-work in relation to Drama and Theatre Studies. The absence of Discriminator D showed that key skills were also not mentioned.

The most frequent discriminator seen within this lesson was L. This occurred 20 per cent of the time, and indicated that students paid attention and were engaged throughout the majority of the lesson. Specifically, the researcher noted that students paid attention 70 per cent of the time, as opposed to students being off-task 30 per cent of the lesson.

Discriminator N was noted many times, too, if the variables 'student participation in discussions' and 'student subject knowledge demonstrated through lesson participation'

were noted by the researcher. An example of this was seen when one student discussed his/her devised script by saying, "We'll do it in this order... find the page that says..."

Interview Findings

Interviewee F answered that he had been a Drama and Theatre Studies teacher at his centre since, "we introduced Drama in 1982" and spoke of teaching the subject after qualifying in the subject of English with, "no formal qualification in Drama." He had no previous experience of A Level teaching in the subject of Drama and Theatre Studies but had previously taught A Levels since 1977 while doing drama work with, "various youth groups." Since teaching Drama and Theatre Studies, this course leader has come to believe that a good teacher of the subject should have both patience and creativity and, "You have to go with their creativity rather than yours, which I think is quite difficult because most teachers have got quite big egos."

He relies on the course specification because he worries "about breaking the rules." The interviewee said, "I will go back to the syllabus just to check, well, I say every so often" but spoke very highly of the course specification when saying, "I'm a big fan of the... syllabus." This appreciation of the course specification was apparent when he was asked "What aspect (if any) of the specification do you feel are particularly important for students to learn at A Level?" He responded by saying, "I think because this syllabus is better than any other syllabus that I have done, it's very much aimed at practical, practical point of view." Also, Interviewee F added, "There is no part of the syllabus of which I have a problem," when asked if there were any parts of the specification that were not important to learn. Later, however, this interviewee amended this statement by saying, "[*The Trojan Woman*] (Euripides, 2002 edition) would be what I would change" due to the fact, "I absolutely loathe the Greek Tragedy." Interviewee F said there are no aspects of the specification that he feels should be covered by A Level students, but aren't. He felt that a bigger "emphasis on practitioners" would be beneficial, however. There appeared to be no lack of resources at Centre F, but this centre's Drama and Theatre Studies course leader did complain of the, "usual sort of teacher problems about space." When asked if he would change the specification, he re-visited his concerns about the written examination of unit six when saying, "that's the one, that I would change."

Interviewee F admitted to following the changes to A Levels proposed by the government with a, "very distant passion." He explained that his concerns were more associated with the fact that a family member would be soon taking A Levels. He added, "I feel until

something is actually put in front of me and is a practical situation, I couldn't really care less." After experiencing years of governmental change, this course leader will most likely become more interested once the alterations occur. He believes, however, that A Levels have previously been affected positively by change. "Theatre Studies A Level [has moved away] away from a heavy academic direction, we are simply following the way students are and that's the only sensible thing to do." When asked, 'So you don't think that it needs to change drastically at all?' he then went on to say, "No" and later added that Tomlinson's idea of a diploma system seemed, "to be going in the right direction to me... a drastic change in the right direction." He concluded the interview by saying, "You've got to go with their interests."

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the case study findings from six schools and colleges in one geographical area. Three male and three female course leaders' interview comments were presented, which documented a snapshot of their experiences working as Drama and Theatre Studies teachers in both rural and urban schools and colleges. Also, questionnaire results from A2 students were featured reflecting their experiences of studying Drama and Theatre Studies with the specifications of Edexcel, AQA or WJEC. Finally, my observational field notes were presented in a quantifiable format through the utilisation of existing observational schemes as mentioned in the previous Methodology Chapter. In the following chapters, I attempt to provide an understanding of the data that was detailed in this Presentation of Findings Chapter. I discuss the external factors that influenced the overall outcome of the research. Also, ethical, practical and reliability issues that arose during the study are addressed. Most importantly, however, I look at my original research questions in more depth. I also explore in more detail the emerging themes and patterns that have developed over the course of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

I had the privilege of entering six schools and colleges to observe, interview and question Drama and Theatre Studies teachers and learners in their educational environments. In this chapter, I take the fieldwork that was detailed in the previous Presentation of Findings Chapter and find emerging themes, rather than simply describing what occurred in these urban and rural classrooms. As well as analysing my findings by identifying patterns and trends, I also provide commentary and argument about the implications of these findings (Wellington et al, 2005).

In *The Ethnographic Interviewer* (1979) Spradley suggests looking at contrasting elements between those who share the same cultural category. He compiled a systematic search for differing units of meaning associated with people within one category. My research identifies the *cultural category* in my research as teachers and learners of A Level Drama and Theatre Studies in the same geographical area. Care has been taken, however, in the interpretation and presentation of these small-scale case studies so that generalisation does not occur which could lead to uninformed discussions and unreliable or manipulated conclusions. This Discussion and Analysis Chapter serves to be illuminative rather than to be *generalisable*, as defined in the Methodology Chapter of this research. As espoused by Bassey (1981 & 1999), in this research the *relatability* of the case studies is more important than their *generalisability*. I intend to represent the teachers and learners who participated in this study while still being relatable to those in similar situations.

On a practical note, as previously mentioned in the Methodology Chapter of this research, just as the six case study centres are labelled Centres A, B, C, D, E and F, teachers and learners are also identified with corresponding letters. It is the researcher's hope that through this practice the participants will not be easily identified and can remain anonymous. Finally, readers who would like to access full transcriptions of the interview, observation or questionnaire data can request an additional Appendix of complementary materials.

Discussing Case Study Findings

Sampled Teachers

Drama teachers come to the classroom with considerable knowledge and experience of their specialist subject. As previously mentioned in my Literature Review, drama teachers

often have undergraduate degrees in drama, theatre studies or cognate disciplines. Many have worked in the theatre, media or arts in education and hold higher degrees or qualifications from other careers. The course leaders in this study differed from each other in their educational training backgrounds and expertise in the delivery of Drama and Theatre Studies. On a whole, their experiences of teaching A Levels ranged from 13 months to 35 years; with 83 per cent of the participants being in the teaching profession for over 20 years and at their current centre for the majority of their teaching career. Two teachers had trained in the subject of Drama with an additional subject; one specialised in PE and the other specialised in English. Others had little or no training in Drama, but instead trained in the subject of English. Also, two teachers had predominately taught Performing Arts classes after training to teach vocational syllabuses.

Of all those who were studied in this research, however, only two course leaders acknowledged that they would benefit from more training in the areas of Drama and Theatre Studies. This is surprising, considering so few participants entered teaching through a Drama ITT course. Kempe and Nicholson (2001) believe that because drama is such a complex subject with such a wide range of practices, it requires those teaching the subject to undertake a rigorous process in learning how to teach it. Perhaps the majority of course leaders who were sampled felt that after a teaching career spanning over 20 years, they had fully experienced the complexities and the 'very richness of practices that may be included in drama' (Kempe and Nicholson, 2001, 1). It is important that Drama teachers continue to learn as new practices emerge, however. Existing teachers would benefit from updating their training 'as new theatre forms develop [and] as educational research and policies become integrated into the drama curriculum' (ibid, 2). In this study, Participant A felt that she should be teaching her students more technical elements but felt she lacked the subject knowledge. Also, C stated that she "has gained a lot" from a resident performance artist who works at her centre. This researcher hopes that those who feel they do not need any additional training still take advantage of professional development opportunities to refine their skills. This could be particularly beneficial to those who have worked in one centre for the majority of their teaching career and are unaware of the drama teaching and learning that is occurring outside of their school or college.

Regardless of their varied backgrounds and professional training, all course leaders showed that they valued the practical side of the Drama and Theatre Studies specification. They appeared to believe that good drama teaching 'entails both practical and theoretical knowledge of drama, [and] an understanding [of]...the creative exploration and

communication of new feelings and insights' (Kempe and Nicholson, 2001, 2). While only two teachers specifically mentioned that the teacher should have a "practical understanding" and an "ability to part act" many stated that the most important element of the specification for the students was the practical work. For example, F stated, "I think the practical content is excellent... they're so much more happier with the practical work" and A said, "I think the practical side of it is important, whether it's, not just the practical unit but looking at theory units through a practical approach." Ofsted's *The Arts Inspected* states, "The very best A Level teaching and learning combine background information, theatrical techniques and close textual study, all bound together in a very practical sequence of work (Ofsted, 1998, 56). It is encouraging that although some of the sampled course leaders do not have backgrounds in practical dramatic performance skills, they still recognise the need to accommodate their students' passion for performance. E would ideally like to deliver all of his sessions in the studio and even approach the theory work on the syllabus through practical means. A also spoke of practically delivering lessons that were in preparation for a written exam. She said, "...even though in a way that's a theory lesson because you're preparing for the written exam... you're doing it practically." One can infer that these sampled course leaders would welcome the practical component increase that is proposed in the three Drama and Theatre Studies A Level specifications that, at the time of this research, are awaiting accreditation from the QCA.

Delivering the Specification

Each centre dedicates between 4.5 and 5.0 hours a week for each A Level subject, but the overwhelming concern between the interviewed course leaders was the lack of time to completely deliver their chosen specification. Comments ranged from A stating, "I definitely wish I had more time... I'm banging through stuff... and I don't want to be teaching like that" to C who said, "and again that's the time constraints. I don't have the time to give them lesson time to work on explorations." Many were like D who is interested in trying out a different approach to teaching, specifically with new media forms, but said, "it's very time consuming." He later went on to add how helpful it is to teach a group of students who have taken GCSE Drama and have a basic knowledge of performance skills. Indeed, some of the sampled schools and colleges who have over-subscribed courses reduce their student numbers by insisting that students have experienced GCSE Drama prior to beginning the A Level course. No Drama and Theatre Studies specification includes this stipulation in their course requirements, however. Even in the draft A Level proposals, the exam boards make a point of stating, 'it must be

emphasised that GCSE is not a requirement for students wishing to take the GCE course' (AQA, 2007, 2).

Although teachers state that they do not have time to deviate from the specification or experiment with new methods of learning, they do appear to diligently cover their chosen specification. A announced, "You've got to cover everything on the specification, 'cause if you don't they can't get the marks." F also said, "well, in a sense I suppose like most people I am very pernickety about the rules, I worry about breaking the rules." E claimed that the sign of a good Drama and Theatre Studies teacher was one who understood the, "boundaries of the qualification and how to get students through it." It was particularly noted in Centre C that teachers feel it is their duty to work after college hours to deliver the course syllabus to the students. C stated that the sign of a good Drama and Theatre Studies teacher is one who will, "give, do extra hours." F also demonstrated that he regularly telephones students out of school/college hours and takes home written scripts to type them for the students.

Some course leaders believed that the amount of work included in the specifications, the limited amount of time to complete that work, and the need to increase A Level grades puts a huge amount of pressure on Drama and Theatre Studies teachers. B stated, "because of the pressures to teach... you do your lesson planning in this way." She continued, "You can't afford not to cover everything. You've GOT to do everything..." An example of this is the fact that the world-of-work was only mentioned in observational data by one teacher and appeared on one notice board, although it is recommended in both Ofsted's *Inspecting Post- 16 Drama and Theatre Studies with guide on self evaluation* (Ofsted, 2001b) and the local ITT university's *Sixth Form College Lesson and Tutorial Observation Partnership: Observation Categories* (Uo_,2005) (see Table 3.1 pg. 84 and Appendix 5) A, who included this topic in her lesson, stated that she was, "quite aware that that was a tangent from what we were doing... I had to kind of limit it... [because] there's nothing in AQA that says that." In ten out of the eleven classroom observations, Discriminator D (*Are key skills and world-of-work referred to?*) was the least recorded. Regardless of Ofsted policy, the sampled course leaders stated that they do not have time to teach outside of the requirements of the specification. According to B, "you keep as close as you can to the specification." This was certainly indicated by the high frequency rate of Discriminators A (*Is there a relationship between the session and the overall specification?*) across all observed centres.

Most of the sampled course leaders had a fondness for the Drama and Theatre Studies specifications that they were offering. Those delivering the Edexcel specification chose it because of the larger practical dimension to the course. In her article analysing A Level Drama and Theatre Studies specifications, Regan states, 'the real bonus of the Edexcel specification for many teachers is the autonomy it gives them to tailor-make a course that excites both them and their students' (Regan, 2006, 59). F stated, "I am a big fan of the Edexcel syllabus" and C discussed the WJEC specification by saying, "I am really pleased with it. I really like the specification." Those that delivered the AQA specification seemed less enchanted, with A saying, "I kind of end up thinking better the devil you now sometimes." AQA teachers complained about the unit six written examinations, claiming there was too much theatre history information for students to learn in a short period of time. In *A Level Exam Boards* (2006) Regan claims that AQA is seen as a more academic specification, but states that this is due, in part, to its inclusion of key practitioners. When the course leaders' interviews were completed in this study, this aspect was unique to the AQA specification, but in both WJEC and Edexcel's 2007 draft revised Drama and Theatre Studies GCE specifications there are now stipulations that students must demonstrate that they have studied the work of recognised theatre practitioners.

Resources and Facilities

Half of the centres that were studied had problems with the access to (and standard of) their resources. The AS lesson at Centre A was taught in a non-subject specific room in which the repetitive noise of a music class could be heard throughout. Centre E often uses a local cultural centre because, "I don't have the space." In his interview, E talked of teaching students outside on a field by the Centre's car park. C mentioned the problems with sharing her purpose-built studio with other departments in the school and how her lighting and sound equipment are unsafe. She said, "We don't have a proper sound system... the plugs are really dodgy."

Many of these problems have been caused by the popularity of the course and the increase in student numbers. Out of the eleven observed sessions, ten sessions involved student rehearsals of practical group work. Three of these sessions had large rehearsal areas that comfortably fit the number of students who were enrolled on the course. In these instances, the teacher was very much seen as the facilitator who floated around the room to aid student learning. B values this way of working and said, "I think you have to work as a facilitator, rather than an instructor." More than half of the observed lessons had problematic issues with the studio size for the amount of classroom learners, though. E

stated, “this year has been a complete nightmare because we’ve doubled in size we don’t have enough space.” It was also observed that both Centres C and D have adopted an unstructured appointment system that allows for groups of students to have access to the studio and the teacher’s individual attention while other students rehearse outside of the room. This was seen to be hugely problematic however, particularly in Centre C, due to students arriving late for their appointment sessions after rehearsing in corridors and outside classrooms. As previously stated, students at this centre were given approximately 14 minutes of the teacher’s attention during an hour-long session.

Examination Results

Most sampled centres earned A Level Drama and Theatre Studies pass rates of 100 per cent since the examination results of *Curriculum 2000* were published in June of 2001. A-C rates varied between schools and colleges, however. Centres A and B, who deliver the AQA specification, had average A-C grades of 44 per cent and 68 per cent, respectively, since 2001. Both course leaders complained that they don’t get very good written examination results. Specifically, A discussed the written examination and said, “AS and A2: I think it’s really hard to get good marks on it.” Also, B stated that even after requesting the return of test papers and having examinations remarked they still “haven’t had a grade A for two years now.” Centres C and D, who deliver the WJEC specification, are happy with their students’ levels of achievement. Unfortunately the course leader at Centre C did not provide her examination results for this research, but Centre D’s results (utilising the same WJEC specification) showed an average A-C rate of 73 per cent since *Curriculum 2000*. It is not known however, whether these high examination results are related to the delivery of the WJEC specification or due to the specific teaching and learning methods delivered at the centre.

The course leaders at Centres E and F both spoke about their learners not being particularly interested in the theory elements of the specification. F mentioned that the written examination was often challenging to teach because, “Greek tragedy is all distant from them.” Centre E received an A-C rate of 56 per cent during its first year of delivering Drama and Theatre Studies under new leadership, while Centre F received an average A-C rate of 57 per cent since the summer examinations of 2001. English national results show that the average A-C grade for males and females taking Expressive Arts/Drama since the implementation of *Curriculum 2000* in June 2001 is 73.1 per cent (JCGQ, 2006)(see *Table 5.1*). In this research, only Centre D managed to reach this average benchmark. It is

important, however, to acknowledge that each centre has individual value-added data that should be considered before these examination results can be fully representational.

Table 5.1: Cumulative Percentages of Expressive Arts/Drama Results by Grade for Males and Females

Year	Number Sat	% of Total No. Sat	Cumulative % by Grade					
			A	B	C	D	E	U
2001	14033	2.0	13.6	32.5	63.6	84.1	94.1	100
2002	14018	2.2	14.6	41.4	72.0	90.5	97.7	100
2003	16222	2.4	13.3	40.6	73.2	92.1	98.6	100
2004	16614	2.4	14.1	42.3	74.9	92.7	98.7	100
2005	17070	2.4	15.9	45.6	76.8	93.5	99.0	100
2006	17292	2.3	17.5	47.4	78.1	94.4	99.0	100

Source: (JCGQ, 2006)

My case study research data is in line with national results, which indicate that Drama and Theatre Studies A Level students taking the WJEC course are getting higher grades than those learning from AQA and Edexcel specifications. Course Leader D offered reasons why this may occur when he suggested that WJEC students do well because as the least delivered specification in the country, “the Welsh boys are very good with the service... they give you... hot from the press examples of exam essays.” The set text element of the WJEC specification could also add to its grade success, as a prescriptive syllabus allows for tailor-made support for the delivery of each text. He then went on to discuss the internal marking process that occurs during the practical component of AS Drama. He suggested that unfortunately in the past, many teachers were not aware of the marking process and simply, “marked it with heart... or gut feeling.” He continued, “there’s a lot of pressure on teachers today and everyone wants their students to do well... you are mother hen to your students...” and talked of how teachers who were not impartial were grading students, “everybody got 10/10... where I’m a little sceptical.” While WJEC have never commented on this possibility, they do now require the external moderation of first time internal examiners of the practical portion of the AS course.

Sampled Students

Student questionnaire results were consistent across the six sampled sites. Most students felt prepared for their course, as the majority had taken a Performing Arts or Drama course at GCSE level. Others may have felt prepared due to their experiences of taking Drama through secondary school English lessons or extracurricular activities. Interestingly though, once enrolled on their Drama and Theatre Studies A Level courses, in every sampled centre

the majority of students wrote that they were made aware of the criteria they were being assessed on. Even though teachers inevitably interpret their chosen examination specification and deliver the content in ways that supports their own praxis (Kempe and Nicholson, 2001) all the sampled teachers in this study appeared to value the importance of making the assessment criteria explicit to pupils as a way of making them actively involved in the evaluation of their own work. Kempe and Nicholson believe that the students' 'progression is enhanced if they are involved in the process of assessment' (2001, 119) and feel that by stating the assessment criteria for each unit there is a purpose and focus that is retained without negating creative responses or diverse creative interpretations. This was certainly seen during A's AS lesson when she referred to booklets detailing the examination requirements of AQA. When questioned in her interview about this she stated, "you've got to go through what the requirements are... so that they know exactly what, how the question is going to be worded, what they're expected to do and that sort of thing... with the slant the exam board are looking for."

With one exception, in each centre the majority of students claimed that their Drama and Theatre Studies workload was either *equal to* or *more than* that from other courses (whether *much more than* or *slightly more than*.) Also, across all centres most students believed that the written portion of their course was *equal to* or *more than* their course's practical portion. The only occasion when this was not the case was recorded at Centre B, with 7 per cent of students indicating that the written portion of the A Level was *slightly less than* the practical portion of the examination. This response is particularly interesting considering that AQA offers a 70 per cent written course, which consist of both coursework and written examinations. The reason for this 7 per cent deviation may be due to the fact the course leader at this centre approaches written exam preparation through practical means, as previously stated earlier in this chapter. This tendency to deliver the AQA specification practically was made apparent by students at Centres A and B. They made up the majority of those who wrote that 'confidence' was the most important quality for a Drama and Theatre Studies student. 'Confidence' was again reiterated when the students were asked for important aspects that they had learned on the course. It is interesting that this aspect was rated more important by AQA students than aspects like 'examination preparation' or 'essay writing skills' for this mostly written course. As seen in course leader interview responses, in all sampled centres most students indicated that they valued the practical elements of their specifications and regretted the fact that written work was *equal to* or *more than* practical work. The majority of those surveyed did not want to change their course in

any way, but out of those who did, most said they would increase the amount of practical work.

The Possible Impact of A Level Reform on the Sampled Teachers and Learners

Participant Views

As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter of this research, this study not only takes an in-depth look at how the two-year Drama and Theatre Studies A Level is being delivered in six schools and colleges but it also examines the potential implications of the proposed governmental changes to Post-16 education and considers how these changes may impact the sampled AS and A2 Drama and Theatre Studies teachers and learners. Before considering the potential impact, however, I believed it would be beneficial to ask the participants about their thoughts on (and experiences of) educational reform.

The course leaders who were interviewed for this research were asked if they had been following the changes proposed by the government to Post-16 education. Out of six teachers, only two could answer the question with any degree of certainty by either saying, "... I haven't been following it" or "I think it's an absolute tragedy." Other answers ranged from, "I've kind of an awareness of it" to "slightly", "you keep an eye on [it]" and "I have been following it with a very distant passion." This lack of awareness may help to explain why (as previously mentioned in the Literature Review) out of the 3252 online respondents recorded in the 2006 GCE AS/A Level *Consultation Summary Reports* (QCA, 2006f) only 51 identified themselves as teachers of Drama and Theatre Studies. When asked to clarify their reasons for not showing a great deal of interest in the proposed changes, F summed up the participants' general opinions by saying, "I feel until something is actually put in front of me and is a practical situation, I couldn't really care less." Similarly, B stated, "I just don't think that, you know, it will come through." A's comments of, "I usually find out they've changed their minds and done something different, so in terms of my time, I haven't got time to learn something that's going to change" were certainly reflected in the research process of this study. Since the beginning of this research in 2003, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has changed from Charles Clarke to Ruth Kelly, Alan Johnson and Ed Balls; each have differing ideas and policies. As a result, it is somewhat understandable that, as E stated, teachers feel they "...have no idea what is happening."

This is not to say, however, that the majority of the case study course leaders are opposed to educational change. Each course leader spoke of having previous experience of

governmental change during their careers in the field of education. B feels that it is important for teachers, particularly in the field of drama, to be flexible. She said, "I think you have to change, you have to develop, you have to always be ready to embrace things, you know." E agrees with this idea but went on to add that governmental influence has made change a regular part of teaching profession. He said, "You just hold on and ride the boat." C continued the point by adding, "I think we've got to the point now we are changing for changing sake." All interviewees seemed to be happy to change their teaching and learning practices if the government introduced an appropriate policy. The definition of such a policy differed from teacher to teacher, however.

Half of those interviewed had very strong views about the ineffectiveness of *Curriculum 2000*. Course Leader A stated, "the main thing I think has happened is that we have to teach far more in the same amount of time, so the pressure on the kids, the pressure on us... I'd much rather explore things with them and get them to find their own way there. And I find I'm having to just tell them stuff." B also believes that the current system of A Levels isn't successful. She said, "A Levels have to change... They don't work! It doesn't do what everyone said it would do... something has to change with AS and A2." D believed, "I'm very opposed to AS. It hasn't convinced me." Even Martin Ward, Deputy General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders stated, "The mistakes of the *Curriculum 2000* changes are still fresh in many minds" (Ward quoted in Finnegan, 2006, 3) as if it is common knowledge that the current system of AS and A Levels is problematic. Of those three interviewees who showed no strong opinion about the current system of A Levels, all voiced a preference for an English diploma over the adopted *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a). F believes that, "A Levels should follow the way society is" and said that Michael Tomlinson's idea of an English diploma was, "a drastic change in the right direction." B also liked Tomlinson's proposals that were introduced prior to the announcement of the White Paper. She said, "I thought the Tomlinson proposal was perfect."

Specifically, A and E believe that both vocational and academic learning should be better integrated than what is proposed in the governmental *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a). E said, "...the discrepancies in teaching drama between, you know, A Level standard and any other kind of vocational course is just ridiculous to have that barrier." Martin Ward also addressed this issue when he said,

...A Levels will still be offered alongside the diplomas, and have not even been brought into an overarching diploma system. There is therefore a real danger that the

new diplomas will be...taken by those who cannot succeed on the other route, and quickly seen as second class...(Ward quoted in Finnegan, 2006, 3).

Identifying Patterns, Trends and Emerging Themes

Both C and E believe that regardless of the government's change to educational policy, most Drama and Theatre Studies teachers will be reluctant to alter their approach to teaching and learning. E said, "I think the danger is a lot of people will not, won't change what they teach." B added, "I see a lot of what I call comfortable teachers... and I think it's unhealthy sometimes." While it is possible that my interview findings could be interpreted to support this opinion (for example, most interviewees indicated they did not feel the need to improve their teaching practices by taking additional training) both observational and questionnaire data suggested that this will not be the case. This study shows that regardless of its format, the sampled course leaders will embrace the proposed A Level because, as well as feeling pressure from their schools and colleges, they genuinely want their students to achieve good grades in Drama and Theatre Studies. The frequent recording of Discriminator A (*Is there a relationship between the session and the overall specification?*) and the high number of student responses who claimed they are *aware*, *slightly aware* and *very aware* of the assessment criteria they are being marked on suggests that teachers are diligently following their chosen specification in the hopes of seeing higher student grades.

Interview and observational data indicated that course leaders do not want to change for the sake of change, however. The sampled course leaders talked of their frustrations with years of governmental initiatives that, they believe, do little for teaching and learning. For example, this study found that the suggestion from Ofsted to include references to key skills and the world-of-work in day-to-day teaching is largely being ignored, as teachers focus on topics that will directly affect student examination grades. Martin Ward specifically referred to the integration of key skills as one of *Curriculum 2000's* "mistakes" and said, "One was the failure to embed key skills properly across the 16-19 phase" (Ward quoted in Finnegan, 2006, 3). The teachers in this study have prioritised the content that they deliver in their lessons. First, they address the requirements that are examinable in the Drama and Theatre Studies specification. If they have any time remaining, they then cover complementary materials that they believe will enhance student grades. When a teacher, like A, does find the time to make reference to "job awareness" she feels guilty because, "they're never going to be asked about that in the exam." Yet again, key skills feature in the revised A Level specifications, currently awaiting accreditation. WJEC deems them as

‘integral to the study of AS/A Level Drama’ (WJEC, 2007, 20). This research indicates that it is doubtful A Level teachers will agree.

This study indicates that the sampled course leaders would welcome change if it meant that they had more time to deliver the course. Both AQA teachers felt that they could not adequately prepare students for their unit six written examinations without designing additional theatre history lessons. B claimed, “they can’t learn it throughout the course because you haven’t got the time.” Additionally, many teachers in this study were meeting after school and outside college hours to rehearse work that wasn’t completed during the 4.5 or 5.0 hours of A Level class time. Unfortunately, although the content of *Curriculum 2000*’s Drama and Theatre Studies specifications appears to have decreased with the change from six units to four in the 2007 revised draft proposals, there is little to suggest that teacher workload will be reduced. As mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter, the proposed Drama and Theatre Studies AS/A Level units have been adjusted slightly in their balance between written and practical elements. This researcher believes, however, that if these specifications are accredited the sampled course leaders will feel that ultimately they are delivering the same subject matter which has simply been proportioned differently. Also, as mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter, teachers will have the added responsibility of monitoring the additional *Stretch and Challenge* elements of their students’ work.

It is likely that the sampled students and course leaders will welcome the practical component increase seen in all Drama and Theatre Studies specifications. This does not necessarily mean, however, that they will each find their revised specifications easier to deliver. This study has shown how those with limited resources and room availability for the number of enrolled students on the course, resort to creative timetabling so all students are eventually given teacher guidance (even if only for a matter of minutes per lesson) in a rehearsal space. Although the revised specifications do not indicate the facilities that are essential for the day-to-day delivery of Drama and Theatre Studies, they *do* specify the facilities that are required for executing the practical examination components. AQA states that centres should have, ‘a designated space, studio or hall, which is large enough to accommodate performers and their invited audience, blackout facilities, [and] a lighting and a sound system, commensurate in its capabilities with the candidates’ theatrical aims and intentions’ (AQA, 2007, 22). Also, lighting equipment should include a 12 channel lighting desk with pre-set programmable memory facility and assorted lanterns. Sound equipment should include, ‘as a minimum... a 6 channel mixer/amplifier, sound desk, loudspeakers

and microphones' (AQA, 2007, 22). This research suggests that for many centres these requirements are unrealistic. Most course leaders in this study have studio rooms that are too small for the number of students, share facilities with other departments, have "dodgy" equipment, or are required to use rooms that are non-subject-specific or off the school or college campus.

The lack of facilities and materials may also be what has discouraged most sampled teachers from offering the technical theatre elements of costuming, lighting, sound, setting/props and masks/makeup: options in all practical components of each specification. Across all sampled centres student numbers continue to increase, while for the most part, resources remain the same. Teachers may feel that they cannot do justice to the delivery of these technical aspects of the specification with less than adequate resources. There is also evidence to suggest, however, that the sampled teachers in this study may also lack the subject knowledge needed to deliver technical theatre skills at GCE standard. While only one teacher voiced her interest in developing these skills, others admitted to entering Drama teaching with no practical or technical theatre experience. As mentioned in the Literature Review, though, even those who have arrived in the classroom after completing a secondary Drama ITT course are not always adequately trained to deliver the technical theatre aspects of the Drama and Theatre Studies A Level course.

Some teachers in this study have realised that student grades are likely to improve if the specification is carefully selected according to their own training, their centre's resources and the particular strengths and weaknesses of their students' performance abilities. For example, it could be argued that teachers with educational backgrounds in English or Literature could be more suited to delivering Drama and Theatre Studies through the AQA specification, a 70 per cent written course covering a number of set texts. Likewise, this specification may be seen to disadvantage those students who are stronger performers than writers: the Edexcel specification (47.5 per cent practically based) may be more advantageous in this instance. Candidates at centres with large numbers of A Level Drama and Theatre Studies students may also benefit by delivering the Edexcel specification. This study has shown that for practical examination units, Edexcel candidates are required to be in groups of between three and nine performers at AS and three and six at A2, unlike students of the WJEC syllabus who can only have up to four students for both AS and A2. Therefore, under the WJEC specification centres with many candidates would have to put on more practical productions than if they were delivering the Edexcel or AQA specifications; ultimately resulting in the need for more rehearsal time, more space and

more teacher-student contact. One sampled course leader admitted that his awarding body selection was based on elements other than the specification design. D indicated that WJEC offers more personalised aid and advice because fewer centres deliver its Drama and Theatre Studies specification in favour of Edexcel and AQA.

These differences could be seen as positive features that allow teachers the opportunity to select a Drama and Theatre Studies specification according to what best suits both their needs and the needs of their students. There is an argument, however, that specification selection allows for unhealthy student grade manipulation. It could be stated that this lack of consistency across the awarding bodies should be eliminated so that students being examined through a particular specification are not penalised because of their centre's lack of rehearsal space for the size of the group, their teacher's lack of practical training, or the fact that their talents might lie in written work rather than in practical performance work.

Conclusion

In this Discussion and Analysis Chapter I have attempted to shape and form the case study data that was gathered in six urban and rural Post-16 schools and colleges. Rather than compare and contrast the sampled centres based on my findings, I have instead highlighted the similarities and differences between the Drama and Theatre Studies teachers and learners in one geographical area. Interview data was analysed from when sampled course leaders spoke openly about the changes they would like to see occur to this specialist subject (as the fieldwork in this study was collected prior to the publication of the draft GCE Drama and Theatre Studies specification proposals and before the announcement of the implementation of a system of vocational diplomas in 2008). Teachers indicated that they would value more practically-based specifications, less content that can realistically be delivered over a two-year period, and an acknowledgement that they are often working with inadequate resources and facilities. Teachers talked of supporting the reform of *Curriculum 2000* only if they thought it was of value to both teachers and learners and not simply "for the sake of change". Additionally, the interviewees spoke of wanting a successfully integrated academic and vocational educational system. What has also been illuminated is not only how teachers take government approved specifications and deliver them to the best of their abilities, but also how the need for high student grades has led teachers to manipulate the awarding body selection process to find specifications that best suit the needs of their students, the facilities of their centre and their own educational and professional backgrounds.

Student questionnaire replies appeared to mirror teacher interview responses. The majority of students who were surveyed felt that the workload was either the same or greater than the workload on other A Level courses, with the written portion either equalling or outweighing the practical aspects of the course. Most also indicated that they felt prepared for their course due to their previous training and because of the fact their Drama and Theatre Studies teachers made them aware of the specific assessment criteria. Unlike the interviewed course leaders, the majority of students were happy with their existing Drama and Theatre Studies course and did not want to see it alter. The few who called for a change asked for more practical units, in line with course leader interview responses.

In my final Reflection and Conclusions Chapter, I assess the strengths and limitations of my study by completing an ethical assessment of this research with consideration of issues of reliability and validity. Matters previously mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter like educational policy making and the impact of government initiated reform on teachers and learners are discussed in more detail. Specifically, I address the contrast between the course leaders' interest in altering the existing Drama and Theatre Studies course and the apparent lack of awareness they displayed towards the reform process; which interestingly, was also reflected nationally through low public QCA online consultation responses. This next chapter also addresses the professional and academic implications of the findings. Finally, points of action are offered and recommendations and directions for future research in this field are given.

CHAPTER SIX: REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study's research questions were developed into three conceptual areas that were answered through qualitative, interpretative modes of inquiry and data collection. In this chapter, these key questions are reviewed and I look at my initial aims and objectives, which were very much influenced by my personal interests and concerns as a teacher of A Level Drama and Theatre Studies. This chapter also recognises research limitations and specific issues of ethics, reliability and validity are reviewed in relation to the case studies involving six schools and colleges. Finally, I evaluate the overall research process and consider if this study could have been improved if done differently.

Instead of being merely a summary of my research, this chapter explains the relationship between the work that was done and possible areas of further research that might follow on from my study. It gives implications for future policy and practice but also looks back over themes seen in the Literature Review. I consider how this original research could add to the perspectives of different theorists in Drama and Theatre Studies, A Level Education and Educational Reform. This chapter ends by underlining the significance of my analysis and by highlighting the importance of the study and its wider implications. I conclude by asking the reader to continue to examine the ways in which educational reform impacts on academic practice, both in and out of the Drama and Theatre Studies A Level classroom.

Addressing Aims and Objectives

Extending Our Understanding of the Issues

Researchers must not only address new questions that have been raised throughout the course of the study but also re-visit some of the initial hypotheses that were previously proposed. My Methodology Chapter first outlined the aims and objectives of my study and identified three areas, under which my research questions were formed and later examined in my Discussion and Analysis Chapter. The first of these areas included examining how the two-year Drama and Theatre A Level was being delivered in six sixth form centres. Second, I investigated the potential implications of the government's proposed changes on Post-16 education. Third, I considered how these changes could impact on the sampled A Level Drama and Theatre Studies teachers and learners.

Supplementary questions were also addressed throughout the course of this research. For example, in order to have a better understanding of the delivery of Drama and Theatre

Studies it became necessary to examine the training processes that many Drama teachers experience prior to entering the teaching profession. Also, I was able to put into perspective the delivery of this subject in urban and rural English settings when I considered how it was being delivered internationally, in other countries' schools and colleges. In addition, the implementation process of educational policy reform through governmental initiatives (Hennessy 1989) was questioned throughout the research process. Issues of Policy Development and Structure and Agency Theory (Giddens 1984 & 1995) were mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter as areas that would benefit from further research. I then explored subject specific questions about what skills and concepts were valued by Drama and Theatre Studies teachers and how they felt their day-to-day teaching practices could be improved.

Although this study addressed a number of additional research questions, many other questions were dismissed or set aside. This occurred, in part, because the issues were no longer relevant but also because at the time this research was completed the questions were unable to be answered. For example, I initially intended to ask how the government's *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) compared with the rejected English Diploma proposal by Michael Tomlinson's Working Group for 14-19 Reform, both written in response to the *14-19 Opportunities and Excellence* (2003) document. While I still believe it is important to acknowledge Tomlinson's contribution to the development of the delivery of A Levels, I feel that to focus on this particular dismissed framework would be limiting. Each Secretary for Education appointed since the government's failure to back an English Diploma has shown their support for the adopted White Paper and there is no indication that Tomlinson's proposal will be considered further. Indeed, even Tomlinson has shown his support for the educational reforms by accepting an appointment as a *diploma champion* (DfES, 2006a) by the then Education and Skills Secretary, Alan Johnson. Although the decision not to directly compare and contrast the impact of the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) and Tomlinson's English Diploma on the six case study centres has been made, that is not to say that this research does not acknowledge the voice of those participants who were in favour of an English diploma. Future researchers could certainly continue to monitor the country's interest in a diploma system. This would particularly be appropriate since the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, 'declared himself a fan... he praised the broader range of subjects it offered and called the A Level *too narrow*' (Stewart & Mansell, 2006, 9).

Research Question One: How is the two-year Drama and Theatre Studies A Level being delivered in six sixth form schools and colleges?

This study is unique in that it allows the reader to gain an in depth understanding of the delivery of Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels in a selection of schools and colleges. As I used a largely grounded theory method of analysis, I came to this research with no fixed or preconceived notions of what my outcome would be in these small-scale case studies. My Discussion and Analysis Chapter discusses the data that was compiled and integrated from observational field notes, interview transcripts and questionnaire responses. Although this research does not seek to compare centres, it does however outline points of similarity and differences between the centres in order to arrive at an understanding of the teaching and learning practices that are occurring in one geographical area. Certain conclusions can now be made from the analysis of these findings.

The variations in age and levels of teaching experience of the six sampled Drama and Theatre Studies teachers indicated that although the teaching of this specialist subject was certainly not a new phenomenon, it was being delivered by teachers who had different types of professional training. While some teachers previously worked as professional actors, others had little practical experience but instead approached the subject through a more theoretical view of the Theatre Arts. Many of the teachers had backgrounds in teaching English Language or Literature and two teachers trained in Drama with additional specialist subjects. While this made for an interesting study of the different ways one can work in the classroom, these different approaches to teaching the same subject might be viewed as inconsistencies that could ultimately disadvantage A Level students. As mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter, while the majority of Post-16 Drama and Theatre Studies teachers gain their QTS through a secondary school Drama programme, many teachers (including some in this study) have not trained to teach this specific subject or may not have QTS. There is therefore a worry that the complexities of this subject and the elements that make it unique, like the practical performance and design elements, may be lost if it continues to be delivered by teachers who are not seeking further Drama training.

Some teachers in this study acknowledged that they could better deliver their chosen specification with the help of additional training and one teacher enlisted the help of an actress in residence to help deliver practical units. Others are aware of their teaching style and carefully select their Drama and Theatre Studies specification to emphasise their strengths rather than their weaknesses. For example, one teacher with an educational

training background in English selected a specification with a higher percentage of written work, rather than practical work. Not only do teachers think about their own teaching abilities when selecting their specification, but the abilities of their students and the resources of their centres are also considered. The Discussion and Analysis Chapter of this research gives examples of how teachers with many candidates select specifications that allow them to have more actors in a production at one time, thus limiting time constraints and rehearsal space problems. There are also instances of course leaders who have selected specifications based on their students' performance talents. These teachers believe that they can somewhat manipulate student grades by picking a specification that has a higher percentage of practical work over coursework and written examinations.

Ideally, Drama and Theatre Studies specifications should be more consistent so that talented student performers taking the AQA examination (a 30 per cent practical course) do not get a lower grade than if they were taking the same A Level through the Edexcel awarding body (47.5 per cent practically based). Until this occurs, however, many teachers feel that they should take advantage of these differences in awarding bodies to enable their students to achieve high A Levels grades. This research has shown other examples of how the course leaders in this study work within the boundaries of their Drama and Theatre Studies course while still tailoring it to the students' needs and the facilities available at their centre. For example, some course leaders reduce over-subscribed courses by insisting that students have previous experience of GCSE Drama. AQA course leaders spoke of requiring student attendance at supplementary theatre history workshops in preparation for the unit six written examinations. Also, many teachers "do extra hours" by initiating after-school rehearsals. When limited rooming and resources are also apparent, teachers have to resort to creative solutions. Course leader E spoke of occasionally delivering lessons on a field by the Centre's car park. Other teachers have initiated appointment systems during lesson time so students have use of the studio without distractions from the others who are waiting or practising in corridors and outside classrooms. Also, due to their lack of resources, many teachers have not advertised the technical design aspects of the specification including costuming, lighting, sound, setting/props and masks/makeup to students during enrolment.

The participants in this study all spoke of being in favour of A Level reform if it meant teaching and learning would be improved. As well as wanting a more performance-based Drama and Theatre Studies course, most sampled students and course leaders would like less overall content so that the course can realistically be delivered during class hours. Each

teacher complained of not having enough time to complete the A Level subject requirements or explore new concepts. Even though, as previously mentioned, teachers somewhat tailor-make their courses to cover the specification while still keeping in mind their teaching strengths, the talents of their students and the resources of each centre, they all believe that they can not afford to eliminate a single element of the course. All agreed that there was no aspects of the specification that could be overlooked if the students were to receive an A grade. The teachers in this study also spoke of how disappointed they will be if the A Level reform process becomes nothing more than a government exercise that has little or no positive impact. Observational data from this research shows how existing additional requests that are being put on instructors (like the recommendation to mention the world-of-work and key skills in lessons by Ofsted and the local teacher training university) are, for the most part, seen as requirements that take away from classroom examination preparation.

Research Question Two: What are the potential implications of the proposed governmental changes to Post-16 education?

Both the Literature Review and Discussion and Analysis Chapters in this research explore the government's proposed educational changes and subsequent periods of consultation, based on the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES, 2005a) as first introduced in February 2005 by the then Education Secretary, Ruth Kelly. After the QCA interpreted the White Paper's proposals in their *Draft GCE AS and A Level Subject Criteria for Drama and Theatre Studies* (2006a) a period of online consultation then occurred which allowed interested parties the opportunity to give their opinions. A summary of these responses was published by the QCA in September 2006, but of particular interest were the low nationwide response rates that were received. Out of 3252 respondents, only 51 individual teachers throughout the country logged online to the QCA website to record their comments about the proposed Drama and Theatre Studies AS and A Level. Then, from these 51, not all respondents answered every question, with the consequence that the results appeared to many to be misleading. Regardless of these low response rates, the *GCE AS and A Level subject criteria for Drama and Theatre Studies* (2006g) was published by the QCA in September 2006. Awarding bodies then interpreted these guidelines when designing their draft specifications. At the time of this research, these are awaiting accreditation from the QCA with the hope of being delivered in school and colleges for 2008.

The three draft Drama and Theatre Studies specifications are alike in content but differ in their balance of practical and written requirements, course structure and the demands made on AS students. (*see Table 2.10, pg. 50*) Edexcel and AQA both require coursework from AS students and insist that performances are scripted and not devised. This is unlike WJEC's specification that requires both scripted and devised performances, although no coursework is completed in the AS year. AQA and WJEC are alike in that both include written examinations based on set texts and live visits to the theatre in the AS year. Also, WJEC and Edexcel are similar in that they both require students to focus on the work of a specific practitioner. Edexcel students instead take their written exam on a set text and seeing a piece of live theatre in their A2 year. Along with AQA students, Edexcel A2 students also perform a piece of devised theatre and submit coursework. AQA candidates have the additional requirement, as WJEC A2 students, of being examined on set texts and the staging of an extract. WJEC must also perform additional scripted and devised scenes and complete coursework in the A2 year. At the time of this research, only AQA has published the weightings of the practical and written elements of their Drama and Theatre Studies specifications. It appears likely however, that each awarding body will decrease the specifications' written components (whether through examination or written coursework elements) and increase practical assignments.

As well as the reform of A Levels, the government proposed a series of vocational diplomas that will affect many Post-16 learners in schools and colleges. The Creative and Media Diploma strand is featured in the Literature Review Chapter of this research because it is the only diploma strand that delivers elements of the performing and expressive arts. Out of 15 proposed diploma strands, it will be included amongst five diplomas to be introduced in 2008. As with all strands, this diploma has elements of Principal Learning, Generic Learning, Additional/Specialist Learning and the Extended Project (*see Figure 2.1 pg. 54*) but it also specifically covers a diverse range of sectors in creative and media industries in the performing arts, visual arts, music, film, animation and fashion design. Although this research is primarily concerned with teachers and learners of A Level Drama and Theatre Studies, this diploma strand is detailed in this research due to comments that A Levels will be "offered alongside the diplomas" (Ward quoted in Finnegan, 2006, 3) and diplomas will intertwine with academic routes (SSC, 2006a). At the time of this research, however, little has been published about how this will occur and questions about the specifics of these pathways of assessment remain unanswered. This lack of information has been described as being 'muddled' (Blair, 2007, 26) by the Commons Education Select Committee and the diplomas have been criticised for lacking practical content due to being

'rushed through without being properly tested' (Blair, 2007, 26). As mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter, it is unlikely that information will be known about how the diploma structure could possibly integrate with A Level qualifications until more schools and colleges form consortia in their local community and a *gateway* process is undertaken.

The only component of the Stretch and Challenge element of the A Level reform process that has been published at the time of this research, is the inclusion in draft specifications of an A* grade for students who have achieved a grade A and have gained a minimum overall point score which will later be specified. Also, the draft AQA Drama and Theatre Studies specification (2007) has indicated how its synoptic elements meet Stretch and Challenge requirements. Additionally, at the time of this research AQA and Edexcel awarding bodies are piloting extended essay projects in selected centres until July 2008. Questions still remain unanswered, however. Drama and Theatre Studies teachers are not aware of the additional assessment burdens that will likely occur when the extended project and harder *open ended* questions are available for the more-abled students. Although some answers about the integration of HE courses into Post-16 education were addressed in January 2007 (QCA, 2007a), questions still remain regarding the practicalities of these reforms.

Research Question Three: How might the proposed Post-16 educational change impact the sampled Drama and Theatre Studies teachers and learners?

By investigating my first research question, valuable information was gained about how the two-year Drama and Theatre Studies A Level is being delivered by course leaders at six sampled schools and colleges. It was made apparent that this subject is being taught differently in each centre due to a number of factors; including the professional experience and the educational training of the teacher. It was also acknowledged that while there were a number of diverse teaching methods being employed, some A Level students could possibly be disadvantaged if their teacher lacked training in this complex and unique practical subject. What also became evident was that, rather than search for additional training, most teachers select their specifications according to their teaching strengths, the practical or written talents of their students and the resources at each centre. For example, teachers are aware that students who have strengths in design or performance often gain lower grades if taking a specification with a higher written component. While this could be seen as manipulating student grades by the selection of a specification, most teachers think they are simply being realistic. Their first priority is that their students gain high A Level

marks; often tailor-making their courses by limiting students who have not completed GCSE Drama, discouraging design students due to lack of resources, requiring attendance at additional workshops, and even delivering lessons in car parks to gain more rehearsal space. Ideally, the teachers and students sampled in this study would like more practically based specifications, less overall content and fewer governmental requirements that take away from classroom examination preparation.

My second research question uncovered the fact that many answers have not been addressed in regards to the implementation of the Stretch and Challenge aspect of the government's changes to Post-16 education. Also, little is known about the intertwining of the vocational diploma system with A Level qualifications. It is still possible to hypothesize, however, about my third research question: how the reform of Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels might impact on the sampled teachers and learners in this study. This research indicates that regardless of the changes to Post-16 education, they will be accepted because realistically teachers must enable their students to achieve high grades. Ideally, the sampled course leaders would like the reforms to improve the teaching and learning of this specialist subject but if not, they will most likely continue to tailor-make their courses and work within the boundaries of the specification to best suit their students' needs.

The participants in this study will welcome the increased practical elements that are likely to be included when the draft specifications are accredited by the QCA. While the awarding bodies still differ in their weightings of practical assignments and written work (so teachers can still select qualifications that slightly favour talented performers who may not excel at written examinations or coursework) there has been no loss of the practical element that makes this qualification unique. Many teachers will also be pleased that students studying for Edexcel and WJEC examinations will be tested on their experiences seeing live theatre and the teachings of theatre practitioners. Also, there has been a slight change in the minimum number of students allowed on stage during practical examinations for the AQA specification. This could mean that some larger centres could produce less practical examination pieces, thus reducing rehearsal time and the need for space and resources.

As mentioned in the Discussion and Analysis Chapter, it is likely that the sampled course leaders will not be pleased with other changes to the Drama and Theatre Studies specifications. Although units have been reduced from six to four, the course content appears to have simply been reorganised. It is likely that course leaders will feel that ultimately they are delivering the same subject matter that has been proportioned

differently. Key skills non-examinable requirements remain and students are still not required to have GCSE Drama training. Also, teachers may experience added pressures when more is announced about diploma elements and Stretch and Challenge components like extended essays, HE units and questions for more-abled students. At this point, it looks unlikely that those who are not Drama specialists will be able to find the time to gain extra training, teachers will not be able to experiment with new classroom methods, and students will not complete rehearsals within school and college hours.

Recognising Research Boundaries

Ethical Issues

The Methodology Chapter in this research outlined the initial concerns that I had with issues of ethics, validity and reliability prior to gathering my data. One of my largest apprehensions was the fact that I was working as a Drama and Theatre Studies teacher in largely the same area as my case study participants. I felt that our peer relationship might help me to access data more readily but I worried if respondents would modify their answers according to what they thought they were expected to provide. I was also afraid that interview answers would be guarded due to the competitive nature between educational institutions. For example, I did not think it would be likely that a teacher from a sixth form college would admit that his or her resources or Drama and Theatre Studies provision were inadequate, with the knowledge that a few months later we could both be vying for some of the same students during our centre's enrolment processes. Also, I was concerned that students would feel pressurised to respond differently when filling out a questionnaire or participating in a lesson, if a teacher from a school in a nearby community was observing.

A number of precautions were therefore put in place both to help me to not carry out and interpret my research as an insider with pre-conceived viewpoints, and also to aid the execution of the observations, questionnaires and interviews. As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, I utilised a triangulated process that helped me to come to a more balanced conclusion. I also adhered to the *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* published by the British Educational Research Association (2004). All participants were informed of my position at a college in the vicinity but told that all data would be used solely for research purposes. Also, they completed consent forms and were notified in detail of the purpose of the study. They knew that a policy of anonymity was in place for all respondents and that the transcripts and field notes would not be circulated. Additionally,

they were aware that any extracts that were to be used in the final thesis were to be anonymous.

This policy of anonymity and confidentiality was difficult to uphold, however, due to the close community of Drama and Theatre Studies specialists within the geographical area of the study. In one sense, communication between teachers and word-of-mouth became advantageous when one teacher was reluctant to participate. Although I did not divulge my participants' names when asked, there became a sense that my study was a largely positive experience to be involved in. The dialogue that occurred eventually enabled me to gain access to all six case study centres. Ultimately, the two centres that delivered the same awarding body knew of each other's participation in the study. Whether these course leaders spoke at a professional development meeting, arts event or during mentoring sessions, without input from me each teacher acknowledged to at least one other participant that they were involved in the research. This is not to say, of course, that the content of what was being said in each interview was revealed amongst the individual participants. The course leaders were aware that their statements would not be disclosed to others and, as a result, they appeared to feel comfortable speaking freely during their interviews. Also, they seemed to feel at ease when telling their opinions of educational policy and detailing how their specialist subject was being delivered in the classroom. It could possibly be stated however that, at times, the respondents appeared too informal when making references to people or issues known only to the researcher (or those working in the immediate geographical area). It did not appear that they were restricting their comments for a recorded interview, but it was noted that after the recording stopped most participants elaborated further in off-the-record conversations about their thoughts and feelings on the topics that had been covered. Usually, this was because they began to talk about how valuable they felt the experience of being interviewed was.

Validity and Reliability

I made a conscious effort to reduce the amount of bias in my research by being aware of my own attitudes and opinions. There were limited occasions during the course of my study where, as a professional Drama and Theatre Studies teacher, I disagreed with a course leader's comments or actions when he or she was delivering a lesson. I recognised that this situation would be likely, but that it must not influence my research as long as I acknowledged my predisposition and I retained a level of professional objectivity. The validity of this research was further helped by the fact that I did not have a preconceived idea of what I was going to discover during the research process. This helped me to not

look for evidence to support any set concept or intended outcome. In order to seek to ensure that my conclusions in this study were not taken out of context or inaccurate, I included in the Appendices the questions from my interviews, questionnaires and also excerpts from verbatim accounts. Also, fully coded transcripts of interviews and observational data can be requested so that my conclusions can be further assessed for validity.

I gained the centre's permission to include students who were under the age of eighteen prior to beginning the study. Also, I purposely worded the questionnaire so that students were not sub-consciously influenced to give responses that they believed were *accurate* rather than being their honest opinions (Moser and Kalton, 1975). I realise that by meeting me in their classrooms prior to completing the questionnaires, my position as a researcher could have influenced the students' responses. As a result, I was wary of voicing any opinions to my student participants prior to the study. I include my opinions in both the Discussion and Analysis and Conclusion Chapters, but the participants were not aware of my attitudes during the research process. I did not want them to alter their statements in their attempt to aid my study, by saying things they thought I wanted to hear.

Although I was intentionally guarded about my opinions during the data gathering process, I found that my participants still had preconceived ideas of me due to my position as a teacher in the community. Whether the course leaders referred to my centre's academic reputation or other external factors during their interviews, quotes like, "it must be worse when you're a sixth [form] college than for me," reflected the fact that my participants had a previous professional knowledge of me that could possibly influence their recorded interview. I chose to not discourage this type of interaction, though, and openly acknowledged my teaching experiences in the interviews. I believe that these types of potential problems are inevitable in a piece of case study research. It does not mean that the participant's comments should be disregarded or that the study is on the whole invalid.

While reliability and validity are concepts that researchers should always strive to adhere to, both Bassey (1999) and Bell (1987) believe that case studies are not chosen because they are representative examples of the whole. They support Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concept of *trustworthiness* that focuses on the specific truth in each individual case study. Although this research was not made up of facts and figures that could be mathematically tested to get reliable tabulations, as a researcher I still tried to be free of error and consistent in the execution and analysis of my study. I tried to not interpret my participants' thoughts or

experiences to suit the needs of the research. I also adhered to a systematic research process with a degree of dependability when the observations, interviews and questionnaires were completed, coded and later analysed. Care was also taken when this data was then transformed into written field notes and transcripts, with the inclusions of intricate details like pauses, overlaps and laughs.

Bias can never be fully eliminated but in this study it was further reduced by the initiation of a pilot study which enabled me to see if my questionnaires and interview questions were being understood by others as I had initially intended (Macintyre, 2000). While this was a helpful process, there were still some misinterpretations that became evident throughout the analysis of my questionnaire data. An example of such a concern was when a student wrote that they did not understand the phrasing of the answer options that asked them to select from *very aware*, *slightly aware*, *aware*, *slightly unaware* and *unaware*. He or she felt that *slightly aware* should be placed between *aware* and *slightly unaware* rather than on the other end of the Likert scale. I must consider the fact that other students may have had difficulty interpreting this question, too, even if they circled an answer and appeared to understand the question. Given the relatively small instances of concern, though, I believe that if this study were completed again with the same six case study groups of teachers and learners it would produce similar results.

As mentioned in my Methodology Chapter, I recognise that my findings may not be widely generalisable outside these sampled urban and rural English schools and colleges in this geographical area. I do however feel that my data is relatable, as defined by Bassey and is 'aimed at the improvement of education [and the] extend the boundaries of existing knowledge' (Bassey, 1981, 86). After analysing my data I have considered how my work 'relates to broader issues rather than my research topic' (Silverman, 2000, 253). Also, after analysing my qualitative data's internal patterns and forms I have considered broader social processes and developed theoretical ideas. These ideas have relevance beyond the data of my small-scale case study work.

Acknowledging Research Limitations

Although I had verbally agreed on being casually introduced to the students by their teacher as *someone who was going to watch the lesson because she is doing research on Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels*, inevitably some teachers mistakenly later mentioned the college that I was affiliated with. As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, I believed that I could not ethically conduct this research without notifying the participating course leaders of my

position in the community. I was naïve in thinking that I could keep my identity anonymous from the sampled AS and A2 students, though. In practice, I not only found that I was observing students whom I had taught before, but there were also instances in which the observed students knew someone I had taught or had met me previously at a local community theatre event.

Given this situation, I still felt that the students were not altering their behaviour due to my presence in a way that was threatening to the research's validity. This could be partly due to the many external visitors that routinely observe lessons. The course leaders spoke of welcoming ITT students, teaching assistants and inspectors into their lessons on a regular basis. This is not to say, though, that my presence had no bearing on the delivery of the lesson. On one occasion a teacher approached me in the classroom after ending an AS lesson. I casually asked why the lesson had ended twenty minutes before its scheduled finish and she then realised she had confused the two-week timetable. The students were less than happy when she called them back into the lesson and pointed out that I had reminded her of her mistake. In that particular instance, I was no longer a non-participant observer, but one who had an impact on the delivery of that particular session.

Although I made the decision to be identified to my participants as a Drama and Theatre Studies teacher this decision was not without its problems: during my interviews some participants regularly mentioned the names of practitioners known only to the interviewer, interviewee, and those working in the sampled area. This information was not relevant to a larger audience and could not be featured due to reasons of anonymity and confidentiality. Also during observations, I was welcomed and integrated into the classroom environment but teachers would often begin their lessons and then sit with me to discuss the specification or point out resource problems. From this I inferred that they were simply enthusiastic about sharing their daily work with a visiting subject specialist, rather than realising their communication with me might possibly hinder my research process. On another occasion, I was approached by both teacher and students for my suggestion of an appropriate text that could be performed for examination. My lack of anonymity was most obvious during an AS lesson when a male student was about to perform in front of the class but stopped to sheepishly whisper in the teacher's ear. The teacher then looked over to me in the corner of the room to say, "___ here is afraid you might be upset by some swearing." Other instances where my integration into the classroom unit were awkward, involved teachers leaving me alone in the classroom with students for lengthy periods of time. Some course leaders appeared secure in their knowledge that I was a qualified and

experienced teacher of Drama and Theatre Studies and appeared to have little concern for health and safety issues had something gone wrong. While (as a researcher) I felt frustrated and a sense of being put-upon, I did feel that I was given an interesting glimpse into activities in the classroom both when the teacher was and was not present.

There was one occasion when I purposely did not maintain an explicit separation between my role as a researcher and my position as a Drama and Theatre Studies teacher in the local community. As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter of this research, I asked each centre's examinations office for their Drama and Theatre Studies A Level results since the implementation of *Curriculum 2000* in June 2000. Only four responses were returned in self-addressed stamped envelopes even though the centres were told that the data was being requested for a research study approved by their school or college's principal and course leader for Drama and Theatre Studies. It was only when I telephoned the two remaining examinations offices and mentioned my affiliation with a local college did a paper response follow from one centre and a telephone response was received from the other. I found that both colleges were more eager to be of assistance to a peer from a similar academic community.

Considering a Different Approach

Some of these aforementioned limitations could have possibly been elevated during the research process. For example, my questionnaires could have been more carefully piloted to ensure that the Likert Scale definitions were understood by all students. Unlike the six case studies, my pilot study was a piece of action research. I handed out questionnaires to the student participants, both as the researcher and their teacher. Although I did not voice any additional instructions other than what was written on the questionnaire, it could be argued that my students instinctively understood the phrasing of the document because they were accustomed to my written and verbal language. The student participants at the six case study schools and colleges may not have the same understanding of the questionnaires language. Alternatively, I could have asked my pilot study students to verbally explain the Likert Scale definitions to ascertain whether or not their understanding of the featured terms was what I had intended.

Two centres failed to return data during the course of the research process. Centre F neglected to return the completed student questionnaire sheets and Centre C failed to submit a written account of the centre's examination results for their Drama and Theatre Studies A Level students since the implementation of *Curriculum 2000*. As mentioned in my

Methodology Chapter, every attempt was made to access this information, including personally giving the questionnaires to the course leaders with verbal and written requests for their return by a specific date. I included self-addressed stamped envelopes and made electronic and telephone requests to the course leader, the head of sixth form and the examinations officers at the two centres. As previously mentioned, Scott (1961) argues that while every attempt should be made to obtain non-returned data, if the rate of non-response is as low as 10 per cent, rates will not be distorted. In this research, however, with only six case study participants one centre accounts for 16.6 per cent of the data collected. Siegel (1956) believes that researchers should realise that a certain level of non-response is inevitable. He espouses that prior to beginning any research an experimental design should be executed to mathematically ascertain the standard error of the study. The sample size should then purposely increased to allow for this predicted lack of response. Although the rate of non-response was larger than 10 per cent, according to the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys a '70 per cent to 80 per cent response level should be possible' (Cohen and Manion, 1994, 98) after a total of three reminders. My research falls within these guidelines of a 'typical pattern of response' (ibid, 99); 83 per cent of course leaders submitted data results and 83 per cent returned their student questionnaires.

Areas for Further Research

Drama in Education Literature

In this research, out of the six participants a third of those interviewed had no formal qualifications or training in the field of drama. An additional third had studied the subject as a secondary option. Fortunately as mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter, more universities each year are offering Drama ITT courses. However, many teachers are still delivering this specialist subject without adequate subject training or without QTS. Fortunately, there are a number of organisations both nationally and internationally who recognise that the field of Drama in Education has grown and are dedicated to helping primary and secondary Drama teachers. As previously mentioned, organisations like National Drama encourage its members to 'share theory and practice, debate key issues, publish research, engage in critical analysis and express personal issues' (McNaughton, 2006, i). This thesis also refers to a number of journals, magazines and reference materials available to those interested in drama in education, and specifically in Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels. It is this researcher's hope that in the future similar organisations, websites and publications will address the reformed Drama and Theatre Studies A Level, once specifications have completed the accreditation process.

Educational Reform Policies

In *The Art of Action Research in the Classroom* (2000) Macintyre suggests comparing the overall case study findings to the themes and theories that were previously presented. A number of areas were investigated in the Literature Review for this piece of research. One section covered a historical perspective of A Level education that included a detailed introduction of the qualification in 1949 and later explained the Crowther Committee reforms in 1956. I then discussed the period of change for the Post-14 curriculum, leading up to the *A Basis for Choice* (FEU, 1979) document. The Higginson Committee's review of A Levels and the *Education and Training for the 21st Century* White Paper (DES, 1991) was explained. More recent reviews of qualifications for 16-19 year olds were also featured, including the Dearing Report that led to *Qualifying for Success* (DfEE/DENI/WO, 1997) and the implementation of *Curriculum 2000*. Current international educational policies were compared to Michael Tomlinson's diploma framework as a response to the government's *14-19 Opportunities and Excellence* (DfES, 2003) report. Finally, the proposed system of specialised diplomas under the *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper (DfES, 2005a) was outlined along with a plan for its implementation.

When looking at the wider historical picture, one can find similarities between previous reforms and the current proposed changes to 14-19 education. Specifically, critics of current government changes mirror comments made to The Crowther Committee in the 1950s and 1960s about a system that was thought to be too narrow and constricting. Documents like the *Robbins Report* (Committee on Higher Education, 1963) stated that Crowther's document did not allow students to take a broad range of academic subjects or have a breadth of curriculum. The current government's attempt to re-address the delivery of vocational qualifications is something that has been featured in the 1970s and 1980s with the proposal of the *Certificate of Extended Education* and the forming of the *National Council for Vocational Qualifications*, *National Vocational Qualifications*, the *Training and Enterprise Councils* and the *General National Vocational Qualification*. Documents like *A Basis for Choice* (FEU, 1979), *The New Training Initiative* (MSC, 1981) and the *Youth Training Scheme* (MSC, 1983) also emphasized the need for Post-16 vocational provision. In addition, my research considers the effects on education when the government rejects a widely supported policy. Like the Higginson Committee's dismissed suggestions for a system of core courses with modular syllabuses, Michael Tomlinson's working group's concept of a broad ranging English diploma was largely supported by the teaching public but disregarded by those in government.

Identifying Areas for Further Research

This research not only analyses yet another governmental policy of education (placing it at the end of a chronological list of previous strategies) but it also focuses on the effects these policies have on teachers after years of reform. Interview transcripts from course leaders who have been teaching over twenty years indicate that if they appear to have a lack of interest in educational policy it is because they have experienced years of change in practice. As mentioned in the Presentation of Findings Chapter, one participant quoted, “I remember a lot of change, constantly changing, constantly re-inventing things, re-inventing the focus... I think we’ve got to the point now we are changing for changing sake.” This lack of interest in the reform process was also certainly indicated by the low response rates to the QCA’s nationwide online consultation process. This research suggests that teachers failed to respond because of the over abundance of educational policies that have been introduced during their careers in the classroom.

Those sampled in this study were not afraid of educational change, but did believe it should be done for a purpose and not become a tick-box exercise that does not improve teaching and learning. The participants in my study were reluctant to participate in the reform process because they were doubtful that policies would be put into practice due to what they perceived to be endless governmental strategies and educational programmes. Hennessy states that this trend to produce a constant flow of initiatives and to positively equate that to an affective government is a common approach. In his book about the British Civil Service he notes ‘New men would bring new methods...’ (Hennessy, 1989, 726) and continued on to state that ‘departmental needs alter when there is a change of government or a policy review shifts priorities...’ (ibid). Indeed, since the start of this research in 2003, ‘departmental needs’ altered and ‘new methods’ were brought by many different Secretaries of State for Education and Skills. Since the start of this research Charles Clarke, Ruth Kelly, Alan Johnson and Ed Balls each had different ‘policy reviews’ that shifted priorities. For every reshuffling of politicians within governmental offices, a new educational initiative appeared to have been implemented.

It could be possible that teachers were eager to participate in the consultation process but had little time to respond. This was also one of the criticisms made by the Commons Education Select Committee who claimed ‘too often in the past, initiatives have been rolled out in a rushed manner, with negative consequences in terms of quality’ (Blair, 2007, 26). Although this comment was made in regards to implementing vocational diplomas, many

Drama and Theatre Studies teachers may agree that ‘teachers, lecturers and exam boards have also had too little input’ (ibid) on the A Level reform process. A representative from The National Union of Teachers Education and Equal Opportunities Department believes that while the QCA consider ‘the most far ranging change to hit schools since 1997, large numbers of schools are neither aware, nor prepared for, these changes’ (Hill, 2007, 20). It appears that educators were simply not made aware of the government’s online request form. Yet this source proved to have an integral impact on the way subject specifications were designed. The QCA’s process of consultation draws attention to the general complexities of policy formulation and implementation. Although it is not the researcher’s intention to give a detailed exposition of theories involving policy development, nevertheless, it is important that I acknowledge the insights into such complexities offered by Structuration Theory (Giddens, 1984 & 1995). This theory privileges the *framed options* imposed by legal structures and the choices made by those, teachers in this instance, operating as agents within those structures. It is the researcher’s opinion that further study into this governmental approach would be of benefit.

Conclusion

This chapter does not introduce new material, but instead emphasizes what has been shown through this thesis as a whole. This research is different in that it stimulates a debate about how to deliver Drama and Theatre Studies in the sixth form setting rather than focussing on the affects of process drama techniques in primary and secondary school classrooms. Not only is this study relevant to teachers and learners of Drama and Theatre Studies, but it is also an important piece of research due to the newness of the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper* (DfES, 2005a) hailed as ‘the most significant curriculum reforms taking place anywhere in the world’ (Marley, 2007, 6). It comes at a pertinent time of educational change when researchers independent of the government have not yet been able to consider the implications of these proposals on classrooms in the country. Although much has been written on educational policy making, my findings also contribute to debates about how governmental policies should be developed and disseminated into day-to-day teaching practices. In addition, it includes personal accounts from Drama teachers who ‘have been on the receiving end of over a decade of curriculum policy change [and who] wince at the prospect of even more’ (Hill, 2007, 20).

As a researcher, I have learned things that I did not know before: A Level Drama and Theatre Studies teachers have a variety of training backgrounds and experiences and therefore often select specifications based on both their and their students’ strengths and weaknesses; a lack of time and resources means that teachers often work additional hours simply to deliver the specification; students and teachers value some specification elements but generally would like to see *Curriculum 2000* A Levels changed; teachers are tired of educational reform and most do not respond to government consultation processes. These issues have wider implications in areas of Drama in Education and Educational Reform. In the future, I intend to investigate the issues that were identified in this study as areas that would benefit from further research: the training of Drama and Theatre Studies teachers, the overabundance of educational initiatives, and the process of disseminating policy information to those in the classroom. Anderson, Herr and Nihlen believe teachers are well suited to research because they often have a ‘researching, learning spirit’ (1994, 182). As mentioned in the Methodology Chapter, my personal interests and concerns as a Drama and Theatre Studies teacher prompted me to begin this research. Now that this study has been completed, I look forward to continuing my path of research and lifelong learning.

Glossary of Acronyms

A:	Arts Specialist College Status
ACCAC:	Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
AEA:	Advanced Extension Award
AEB:	Associated Examining Board
A Level:	Advanced Level
AO:	Assessment Objective
AO Level:	Alternative Ordinary Level
AQA:	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
AS:	Advanced Subsidiary
AS*:	Advanced Supplementary
ASCL:	Association of School and College Leaders
AVCE	Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education
AWI:	Area Wide Inspection
A2:	Second year of an Advanced Level qualification
BSF:	Building Schools for the Future
BTEC:	Business and Technology Education Council
CBI:	Confederation of British Industry
CCEA:	Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
CEE:	Certificate of Extended Education
CKSA:	Common Knowledge, Skills and Attributes
CMD:	Creative and Media Diploma
COMP:	Comprehensive
CSE:	Certificate of Secondary Education
CY:	Community school
DCSF:	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DDP:	Diploma Development Partnership
DENI:	Department of Education Northern Ireland
DES:	Department for Education and Science
DfEE:	Department for Education and Employment
DfES:	Department for Education and Skills
ED:	Employment Department
EiC:	Excellence in Cities Partnership
ERA:	Education Reform Act
FE:	Further Education
FEFC:	The Further Education Funding Council
FESI	Further Education Sector Institution
FHEA:	The Further and Higher Education Act
GCE:	General Certificate of Education
GCSE:	The General Certificate of Secondary Education
GNVQ:	General National Vocational Qualification
HE:	Higher Education
HMSO:	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
HND:	Higher National Diploma
IB:	International Baccalaureate
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology
IDIERI:	International Drama in Education Research Institute
IT:	Information Technology
ITT:	Initial Teacher Training
L:	Language Specialist College Status
LA:	Local Authority

LEA:	Local Education Authority
LIG:	Leadership Incentive Grant
LLMA:	Local Labour Market Area
MSC:	Manpower Services Commission
N/A:	FE Sector College- takes students regardless of ability or aptitude
NATE:	National Association for the Teaching of English
NCVQ:	The National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NEAB:	Northern Examinations and Assessment Board
NTI:	The New Training Initiative
NVQ:	National Vocational Qualifications
OA:	Output Areas
OBE:	Order of the British Empire
OCR:	Oxford, Cambridge and RSA
OFSTED:	Office for Standards in Education
O Level:	Ordinary Levels
PE:	Physical Education
PGCE:	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PPH:	Persons per hectare
Pre-U:	Pre- University
PSHE:	Personal, Social and Health Education
QCA:	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QTS:	Qualified Teaching Status
S:	Sports Specialist College Status
SAT:	Standard Attainment Tests
Sc:	Science Specialist College Status
SCAA:	School Curriculum and Assessment Authority
SCUE:	Standing Conference on University Entrance
SFCF:	The Sixth Form College's Forum
SSC:	The Sector Skills Council
T:	Technology Specialist College Status
TEC:	Training and Enterprise Council
TES:	The Times Educational Supplement
TTA:	Teacher Training Agency
TTWA:	Travel to Work Areas
ULEAC:	University of London Examinations and Assessment Council
Uo_:	University of ____
VA:	Voluntary aided school
VC:	Voluntary controlled school
VCE:	Vocational Certificate of Education
WJEC:	Welsh Joint Education Committee
WO:	Welsh Office
YTS:	Youth Training Scheme

APPENDIX ONE:

Example introductory letter to possible case study participants

25 May 2005

Head of Performing Arts

_____ College

_____, _____

Dear Mr _____;

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am the Head of Performing Arts at _____ College in _____.

In addition to working as a fellow Performing Arts practitioner, I am also a Part Time PhD candidate at the University of _____'s School of Education. My research involves looking at how Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels are being delivered in the locality of _____. Also, I will be investigating the government's recent *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper and questioning how it could possibly impact the delivery of Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels.

If at all possible, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you this term to discuss my research and the Drama and Theatre Studies AS and A2 courses that are currently being offered at _____ College.

Please feel free to contact me at _____ or direct telephone number 01 _____. Alternatively, you could write me with the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope to notify me of a convenient time when we could possibly meet.

Thank you in advance, for any help that you can offer.

I look forward to hearing from you soon,

Kate McCauley

Head of Performing Arts

_____ College

_____ Road

_____, _____

Tel: 01 _____

Fax: 01 _____

APPENDIX TWO:

**Example introductory letter to principals and headteachers of
participating schools and colleges**

4 July 2005

Mr _____
Principal
_____ College

_____, _____

Dear _____;

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am the Head of Performing Arts at _____ College in _____.

In addition to working as a Performing Arts practitioner, I am also a Part Time PhD candidate at the University of _____'s School of Education; my research centres on how Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels are being delivered in _____ City and _____ and in particular how the government's recent *14-19 Education and Skills* White Paper could possibly impact the delivery of level three courses in this subject area.

Recently, I met with your Drama and Theatre Studies course leader, _____, who has offered to participate in my study. We arranged to meet in the 2005 Autumn Term for a confidential semi-structured interview. We also discussed my interest in observing an AS and an A2 Drama and Theatre Studies class and leaving one-page questionnaires to be completed by a group of A2 students.

The identity of both students and staff will be anonymous at all times and only I will have access to any tape recordings of staff interviews or student observation notes. Also, these voluntary participants will not be asked to divulge any personal information and they will be fully informed of the study's purpose and the implications of their contribution.

I would be grateful if you would notify me of any concerns or objections that you might have in regards to my study of the AS and A Level Drama and Theatre Studies courses at _____ College. Please feel free to contact me at _____ or direct telephone number 01_____. Alternatively, you could write me using the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope if you would like to further discuss any of the above information.

Yours Sincerely,

Kate McCauley
PhD Education Candidate
University of _____

Head of Performing Arts
_____ College
_____ Road

Tel: 01_____
Fax: 01_____

APPENDIX THREE:

Example reminder letter and information sheet for participants

19 September 2005

Mr _____
Head of English
_____ College

Dear _____,

I hope this letter finds you well and you have enjoyed a restful summer prior to the start of the new academic year!

Since we spoke last term, protocol required me to request permission from Mr _____ to complete my case study at _____ College. I'm writing in the hopes of arranging a time to visit you now that permission has been granted.

As I mentioned before, I am hoping to interview you for approximately 45 minutes about your experiences in A2 Drama and Theatre Studies teaching. Also, I would like to observe an AS and an A2 Drama and Theatre Studies class, preferably all on the same day. Finally, I have a questionnaire sheet for the A2 class to complete that can be posted back to me.

I would like to come to _____ College at a time that is most suitable to you and your students. As a result, I would appreciate it if you could email me at _____ or telephone me on direct phone number _____ to tell me of two or three options of possible dates this term for my visit. Hopefully, we can then come to some agreement on one date that incorporates both our teaching schedules. (For example, Wednesdays would be a convenient day for me to visit due to a lighter teaching timetable.)

Again, I'd like to thank you, ____, for agreeing to take part in this study. I've enclosed an information sheet that should answer any questions you may have. Also, feel free to contact me if you have any additional concerns.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Kate McCauley
PhD in Education Candidate
University of _____

Head of Performing Arts
_____ College
_____ Road

Tel: 01 _____
Fax: 01 _____

Information for Participants

1) Study Title

A Level Drama and Theatre Studies in _____ and _____ and the potential implications of governmental change to Post- 16 education

2) Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and contact the researcher to clarify anything which you are not clear of or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

3) Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to discover how Drama and Theatre Studies specifications are being delivered in six _____ City and _____ schools and colleges. The researcher will also look at proposed governmental change to Post- 16 education and consider the potential implications these alterations may have on the case study participants.

4) Why I am asking you to participate

There are three Drama and Theatre Studies specifications in this country: EdExcel, AQA and WJEC. You are being asked to participate because you deliver one of these specifications to A Level students in either a _____ City or _____ school or college.

5) Do I have to take part?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and there will be no consequences for not taking part.

6) What is involved in taking part of this research?

If you agree to take part in this research, you will be invited to take part in a recorded face to face interview from between 45 minutes to an hour in length. The interview will address issues such as your professional role, challenges you face when teaching A level Drama and Theatre Studies, and your thoughts and feelings on governmental change. In order to study and analyse the interview answers accurately, the interview will be tape-recorded.

The researcher will also observe the teaching and learning of a typical A Level lesson. Notes will be taken by the researcher and the students will be notified of their participation in the study, but the researcher will not participate in the execution of the lesson in any way. Students will also be given questionnaires with short open-ended questions to be completed after the initial observation.

7) What are the possible benefits of taking part in this research?

You may find the opportunity to discuss teaching and learning objectives with another Drama and Theatre Studies practitioner both personally and professionally beneficial and rewarding. Also, this research will be used to help enhance the provision of Drama and Theatre Studies delivery in the _____ area and possibly have implications for the teaching and learning of the subject on a national level.

8) Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Should you agree to participate in this research, your identity and involvement in the study will be kept anonymous at all times. The tape recording of the interview will be transcribed and coded. Only the researcher will have access to the actual tape recording of the interview.

9) How will the results of the study be used?

The results of the study will be used to develop an understanding of the teaching and learning of Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels in six _____ City and _____ schools and colleges. Findings will be used towards the researcher's PhD in Education, which will be made available in the University of _____ library. The results may further be used to produce articles for publication in journals.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

K. McCauley
PhD Education Candidate
University of _____

APPENDIX FOUR:

- Interviews:**
- **Example recording consent form**
 - **Transcription notation system**
 - **Taxonomic coding**
 - **Transcription excerpt example (Centre B)**
 - **Taxonomic coding example (Centre B)**

Recording Consent Form

Date(s) and location(s) of recording _____

Details of contribution _____

I have read the information sheet providing full details of this study and understand what would be expected of me if I were to participate in this research. I hereby consent to the recording of my contribution. My confidential interview may be used, in whole or in part, in any or all of the following ways:

- 1) For purposes of education and research
- 2) In an edited or abridged form
- 3) Publications (*further consent may be requested*)

I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this study at any time and will suffer no penalty as a result.

Please indicate any additional restrictions in which you wish to place on the use of your contribution.

Participant:

Name _____ Signed _____

Date _____

Researcher:

Name: _____ Signed _____

Date _____

Transcription Notation System

Source: Pollard, Blake (2003) 'Transcription Quality' in Holstein, J. and Gubrium, J. (eds.)
Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns, California: Sage Pub., 267-287.

(..)	A pause of less than half a second
(...)	A pause of one second
(....)	A pause of one and a half seconds
(pause)	A pause of two to three seconds
(long pause)	A pause of four or more seconds
(coughing)	Coughing
(sigh)	Sighing
(sneeze)	Sneezing
(laughing)	One person laughing
(laughter)	Several people laughing
(-)	Indicates that the speech has been broken off mid sentence
(overlapping)	One speaker interjects into the speech of another
[?]	Words were garbled or not clear
xxx	Words cannot be deciphered
CAPS	Capital letters (in the body of the text) used to denote strong emphasis
_____	Names of people and institutions have been withheld to maintain anonymity

Taxonomic Coding

Source: Arksey, H. and Knight, P. (1999) *Interviewing for Social Scientists*, Sage Pub.: London.

**Please refer to transcription explanation in Methodology Chapter*

1. a. How long have you been a Drama and Theatre Studies A Level teacher at the sixth form centre you are currently employed with and
 - a) 0-5 years
 - b) 6-10 years
 - c) 11-15 years
 - d) 16-20 years
 - e) over 20 years
- b. what experience of A Level teaching have you previously had in this subject?
 - a) none
 - b) previously training to teach
 - c) previously teaching A Level but not this subject
 - d) previously teaching this subject but not A Level
 - e) previously working with A Level aged students but not in an exam situation
 - f) previously taught this subject at A Level in another location
 - g) other
2. What professional positions in the field of Drama and Theatre Studies have you held outside of A Level teaching?
 - a) none
 - b) professional/amateur actor
 - c) workshops/festival work
 - d) children's theatre/youth work
 - e) previously teaching this subject but not at A Level
 - f) previously teaching A Level but not this subject
 - g) previously worked with Drama through the subject of English
 - h) previously training in the subjects of Drama and Theatre
 - i) other
3. What do you think are the qualities that make a good Drama and Theatre Studies teacher?
 - a) none
 - b) patience
 - c) creativity
 - d) humour
 - e) eccentric
 - f) a love of the subject/commitment
 - g) ability to be flexible/versatile
 - h) good subject knowledge
 - i) practical understanding/performance background
 - j) ability to take risks
 - k) enthusiasm
 - l) caring and personality
 - m) motivation
 - n) other
4. How heavily do you rely on the course specification to influence your teaching?

- a) always
 - b) sometimes
 - c) never
 - d) other
5. What aspects (if any) of the specification do you feel are particularly important for students to learn at A Level?
- a) all
 - b) none
 - c) some
 - d) practical elements
 - e) live performance appreciation
 - f) practitioners
 - g) genres of theatre
 - h) technical functions
 - i) terminology
 - j) improvising
 - k) scripted analysis
 - l) directing
 - m) other
6. What aspects (if any) of the specification do you feel are not important to learn at A Level?
- a) all
 - b) none
 - c) some
 - d) structured records/portfolios/coursework
 - e) written examinations
 - f) practical elements
 - g) live performance appreciation
 - h) practitioners
 - i) genres of theatre
 - j) technical functions
 - k) terminology
 - l) improvising
 - m) scripted analysis
 - n) directing
 - o) other
7. Are there any aspects of the specification that you feel should be covered by A Level students and aren't?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) maybe
 - d) world literature
 - e) more practitioners
 - f) career awareness
 - g) technical theatre
 - h) modern day productions
 - i) wider genres/better choice of texts
 - j) other

8. Are there any aspects you feel you should be teaching but aren't due to restrictions with time, resources, training?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) maybe
 - d) multi-media techniques
 - e) technical theatre
 - f) more rehearsal time
 - g) Shakespearean theatre
 - h) opportunities to view live performances/professional workshops
 - i) restricted due to lack of space
 - j) restricted due to lack of time
 - k) restricted due to lack of money
 - l) restricted due to lack of training
 - m) restricted due to lack of staff
 - n) restricted due to lack of resources
9. Would you like to change the specification in any other ways?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) maybe
 - d) change the specification layout
 - e) change the specification content
 - f) specifically, change the written examination element
 - g) specifically, change the practical element
 - h) other
10. Have you been following the changes to A Levels proposed by the government? If so, what are your thoughts? If not, why not?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) sometimes
 - d) interested in both the English Diploma and the White Paper
 - e) interested in the English Diploma but not the White Paper
 - f) interested in the White Paper but not the English Diploma
 - g) doubtful any change will occur
 - h) expect many more changes in the future
 - i) will become interested after the change occurs
 - j) looking forward to the governmental change
 - k) not looking forward to the governmental change
 - l) other
11. Do you have experience of governmental change on your teaching and learning in the past? If so, how were you affected?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) maybe
 - d) positively
 - e) negatively
 - f) teaching and learning is now less academic
 - g) teaching and learning is now more academic
 - h) the written examinations element of the course has been affected
 - i) the practical element of the course has been affected

- j) there is less time but more to teach
- k) there is less to teach but more time
- l) classroom discussions have been affected
- m) versatility has emerged from the changes
- n) change should occur
- o) change should not occur
- p) Drama is no longer valued
- q) Drama is valued more
- r) other

CONCLUSION

- Would you like to ask any further questions or give any additional information?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) other

- Do you feel comfortable about the interview ending at this point?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) other

Interview Transcript: Centre B

(Full transcriptions are available upon request)

Interviewer – INT

Interviewee – B

Question 1

INT - Okay, so, um, the first question is how long have you been a Drama and Theatre Studies A level teacher at this sixth form and, uh, what experience have you had of A level teaching before, um (-)?

B – (here?)

INT - Yeah.

B – I've been fifteen years here, so fifteen years teaching A level

INT - Mmm.

B – and experience of A level teaching I've had in this subject then, um, was at the previous school, um, don't know how many years because of course, um, well really as long as A level's been going.

INT - Okay. You mean A level

B – (Overlapping) AEB it was in those days.

INT - Oh right, okay, so the full curriculum (xxx)

B – (Overlapping) Yeah, absolutely, oh God yeah (xxx)

INT - So you were doing AEB, um, before

B – (Overlapping) Yeah, AEB Theatre Arts as it was called I think in those days.

INT - For a number of years or just as long (-)

B – (Overlapping) Yeah, I can't remember, as long as I've been teaching, I've been teaching A level.

Question 2

INT - Okay, what professional, um, positions in drama and theatre studies have you had outside of A level teaching.

B - (...) oh so you mean like Head of Drama for example?

INT - Yeah, or even like in the field, if you worked in a theatre when you, you know, before you

B - (Overlapping) No I haven't.

Taxonomic Coding: Centre B

Source: Arksey, H. and Knight, P. (1999) *Interviewing for Social Scientists*, Sage Pub.: London.

**Please refer to transcription explanation in Methodology Chapter*

1. a) How long have you been a Drama and Theatre Studies A Level teacher at the sixth form centre you are currently employed with and
 - 15 years (c)
- b) what experience of A Level teaching have you previously had in this subject?
 - previously taught this subject at A Level in another location (f)
2. What professional positions in the field of Drama and Theatre Studies have you held outside of A Level teaching?
 - "I was originally a PE teacher" (f)
 - "Drama was my second subject", "Did a Diploma in Drama Education", "Head of Drama" (h)
3. What do you think are the qualities that make a good Drama and Theatre Studies teacher?
 - "be creative" (c)
 - "like the subject" (f)
 - "versatile", "very flexible" (g)
 - "knowledgeable" (h)
 - "able to negotiate", "work as a facilitator", "clearly instruct", "it's organic" (n)
4. How heavily do you rely on the course specification to influence your teaching?
 - "very heavily" (a)
5. What aspects (if any) of the specification do you feel are particularly important for students to learn at A Level?
 - "some" (c)
 - "practitioners" (f)
6. What aspects (if any) of the specification do you feel are not important to learn at A Level?
 - some (c)
 - "paper 6" (e)
7. Are there any aspects of the specification that you feel should be covered by A Level students and aren't?
 - yes (a)
 - "texts are very limited... to traditional... style" (i)
8. Are there any aspects you feel you should be teaching but aren't due to restrictions with time, resources, training?
 - maybe (c)
 - "spend more time on the things that are in it" (j)

9. Would you like to change the specification in any other ways?
- yes (a)
 - “paper 6”(f)
10. Have you been following the changes to A Levels proposed by the government? If so, what are your thoughts? If not, why not?
- sometimes (c)
 - “hoping we were going to do like an English IB” (e)
 - “do you really [think] that they will come to fruition? (g)
 - “interested in International Baccalaureate (l)
11. Do you have experience of governmental change on your teaching and learning in the past? If so, how were you affected?
- yes (a)
 - “change is good” (d)
 - “I think you have to be incredibly versatile and adaptable” (m)
 - “A Level have to change... they don't work!” (n)

CONCLUSION

- Would you like to ask any further questions or give any additional information?
 - yes (a)
 - “Drama teaching is organic”, “I think you have to change, you have to develop, you have to always be ready to embrace things”, “Maybe it is change for change's sake but actually I still don't think that's bad” (c)
-
- Do you feel comfortable about the interview ending at this point?
 - yes (a)

APPENDIX FIVE:

- Observations:**
- **Discriminators**
 - **Definitions of dimensions**
 - **Lesson protocol excerpt example (Centre A)**
 - **Proportion of discriminators identified pie chart example (Centre A)**

Discriminators:

Based on the University of _____

*'Sixth Form College Lesson and Tutorial Observation Partnership: Observation Categories'
and Ofsted's 'Inspecting Post- 16 Drama and Theatre Studies with guide on self- evaluation'*

- A) *Is there a relationship between the session and the overall specification? (Ofsted 2.4/ Uo_ 1a)*
- B) *Are the assessment criteria made clear? (Ofsted 1.2/Uo_ 1b)*
- C) *Are learning strategies appropriate for all abilities? (Ofsted 1.4/Uo_ 1c)*
- D) *Are key skills and 'work of work' referred to? (Ofsted 1.1/Uo_ 1d)*
- E) *How is the session structured? (Ofsted 1.4/Uo_ 2a)*
- F) *Is the session varied? (Ofsted 2.4/Uo_ 2b)*
- G) *Are resources and the venue used? (Ofsted 1.4/Uo_ 2a)*
- H) *Is the session managed? (Ofsted 2.4/Uo_ 3a)*
- I) *Is the material that is used appropriate? (Ofsted 2.4/Uo_ 3b)*
- J) *Is the session delivered effectively? (Ofsted 2.1/Uo_ 3a)*
- K) *Are assessment and evaluation feedback given? (Ofsted 1.2/Uo_ 4b.c.)*
- L) *Did the students pay attention or participate? (Ofsted 2.3/Uo_ 5a)*
- M) *Were individual student problems dealt with? (Ofsted 2.1/Uo_ 5b)*
- N) *Did learners demonstrate subject knowledge? (Ofsted 1.3)*

A) Is there a relationship between the session and the overall specification? (Ofsted 2.4/ Uo_ 1a)

- **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator A:**

1. Subject specific language used

Appropriate terminology in the classroom is used both by the teacher and the learners, leading to the demonstration of a knowledge, understanding and evaluation of aspects of theatre and drama.

2. Practical work

Work is produced that is imaginative and creative that often results from a well developed understanding of content, form, style and genre either in acting or directing.

3. Theatre practitioners, techniques or methodology identified

Drama methods and techniques from different time periods or of a prescribed theatre practitioner are identified.

4. Group work/ paired work

Students contribute to the making of drama in a group or pair by developing confidence and competence in expressive and technical production through a range of dramatic experiences including devising and working from texts.

5. Reference to the specification

The Drama and Theatre Studies specification of the selected awarding body is specifically mentioned (by either the teacher or learner) during the course of the lesson

B) Are the assessment criteria made clear? (Ofsted 1.2/Uo_ 1b)

- **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator B:**

1. The learning outcome of the session is made clear

Students are made aware of the activities that will be undertaken during the learning session

2. Instructions/ information about each activity are delivered to the students

Instructions or information detailing the intent of the activity are given by the teacher and often clarified

3. Previous work is referred to

Previous activities are referred to by the teacher to aid student understanding and allow for a continuation of learning

C) Are learning strategies appropriate for all abilities? (Ofsted 1.4/Uo_ 1c)

- **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator C:**

1. Questioning

The teacher uses questioning to check the range of attainment within the group. Individual strengths and shortcomings of student achievement are monitored.

D) Are key skills and 'work of work' referred to? (Ofsted 1.1/Uo_ 1d)

- **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator D:**

1. World-of-work

Careers in the performance fields of Drama and Theatre Studies are referred to by the teacher and related to the work being covered in the classroom

2. Key Skills

Key Skills requirements are formally emphasised, developed or assessed

E) How is the session structured? (Ofsted 1.4/Uo_ 2a)

• **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator E:**

1. Change of structure

The structure of the lesson changes through the inclusion of an Introduction, Body of the Session, Summary and Conclusion

2. Change of activity

A new activity is introduced by the teacher within the sequence of the session.

3. Timing is apparent

Timing constraints are made apparent

F) Is the session varied? (Ofsted 2.4/Uo_ 2b)

• **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator F:**

1. Change in teaching approach

There is a variation of teaching styles from T-S, S-S, T-Cl, T led or S led activities.

2. Variation of activity

Opportunities are introduced by the teacher that lead to solo, group and whole class work.

G) Are resources and the venue used? (Ofsted 1.4/Uo_ 2a)

• **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator G:**

1. Equipment

Subject specific equipment is apparent and ready to be used by students and staff.

2. Resources

Prepared resources are integrated into the lesson.

3. Purpose built studio space

The classroom venue is a purpose built space or a black box studio suitable for the purposes of a practical course

4. Non subject-specific resources

Some resources that are being utilised in the classroom/ studio setting are not primarily designed for the purposes of a practical course

5. External Influences

External factors are distracting the events that are occurring in the Drama and Theatre Studies classroom

6. Use of whiteboard/ blackboard

The teacher or learner utilised the white/ black board during the course of the lesson

H) Is the session managed? (Ofsted 2.4/Uo_ 3a)

• **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator H:**

1. Transition between activities

There is a transition between the activities that are introduced by the teacher within the sequence of the session.

2. Management of Resources

The teacher effectively manages and hands- out resources to learners within the session.

3. Unplanned change

The lesson delivery is altered due to an unplanned change instigated by the Teacher

I) Is the material that is used appropriate? (Ofsted 2.4/Uo_ 3b)

• **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator I:**

1. Understanding of Resource materials

The teacher uses questioning to check that resource materials and scripted work are understandable, clear and at an appropriate level for the group.

J) Is the session delivered effectively? (Ofsted 2.1/Uo_ 3a)

• **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator J:**

1. Teacher use of technical language

Appropriate terminology and subject specific technical language is used by the teacher during the delivery of the lesson.

2. Teacher use of performance techniques

The teacher delivers the lesson utilising subject specific performance skills

3. Student Engagement

Students appear engaged and are on-task

K) Are assessment and evaluation feedback given? (Ofsted 1.2/Uo_ 4b.c.)

• **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator K:**

1. Positive feedback

The teacher uses positive verbal feedback in relation to the task that has been completed by the learners.

L) Did the students pay attention or participate? (Ofsted 2.3/Uo_ 5a)

• **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator L:**

1. Student participation

All students are paying attention and are engaged throughout each task.

2. Teacher demonstration of subject specific skills

Subject specific performance techniques are demonstrated by the teacher for the audience of learners

3. Off-task learners

Learners appear to be off-task or not co-operative during the classroom session

4. Off-task teachers

Teachers appear to be off-task or not co-operative during the classroom session

M) Were individual student problems dealt with? (Ofsted 2.1/Uo_ 5b)

• **Definitions of Dimensions for Discriminator M:**

1. Punctuality and Attendance

Issues of student punctuality and attendance are visibly addressed by the teacher and school management responsibilities are addressed

2. Student identification

Students are individually identified by name in the lesson

3. Student discipline

Learners are disciplined by the teacher for being off- task or not co- operative

4. Student problems

Individual student problems have become apparent during the teaching and learning session

5. Rotational Attendance

The teacher has implemented a rotational attendance system, with learners reporting to the classroom throughout the teaching session

N) Did learners demonstrate subject knowledge? (Ofsted 1.3)

• **Definitions of Dimensions observed for Discriminator N:**

1. Participation in discussions

Learners actively participate in teacher- led classroom discussions.

2. Subject Knowledge demonstrated through lesson participation

Learners utilise their knowledge of the subject when actively participating in assignments.

School A: AS Observation

8 November 2005: 11:00am- 11:55am

2 males, 7 females

(Full transcripts are available upon request)

T-S: Teacher to Student interaction

S-S: Student to Student interaction

T-Cl: Teacher to Class interaction

T led: Teacher led

S led: Student led

S: Student

Ss: Students

T: Teacher

R: Researcher

11:00- 11:10

1- T&R enter black box studio and T gathers AS Ss to tell them they are in the wrong

G3, H3

2- venue for the lesson. Ss, T & R walk the corridor to carpeted classroom with one table,

G4

3- blackboard and chairs. Other Ss are already in the large classroom waiting for the T.

G4

11: 10- 11:15

4- There is a casual start to the lesson with Ss talking and singing. The T addresses the

E1, F1, L3

5- class with, "Right, OK, Let's have it quiet in here, please" with a loud, powerful voice.

B2, M3

6- The T tells the Cl to move forward and is greeted with, "I can discuss things from

B2, L3

7- here." The T give the Cl a handout while 5 Ss sit around a central table and 1 S sits

E1 & 2, G2, H2

8- isolated to the side. The chairs are unorganised, furniture is broken, a main curtain is

G4

9- ripped, drum equipment is noticeable, and Music posters decorate the room. The

G4

10- sound of a drum kit playing is heard throughout the lesson from the neighbouring

G5

11- room. T talks to Cl over their chatting and then waits after saying, "Simon." He

M3

12- replies with, "Sorry, ____" and the lesson continues.

L3

11:15- 11:27

13- T takes register by laptop and asks where particular Ss are. There is a casual T-Ss

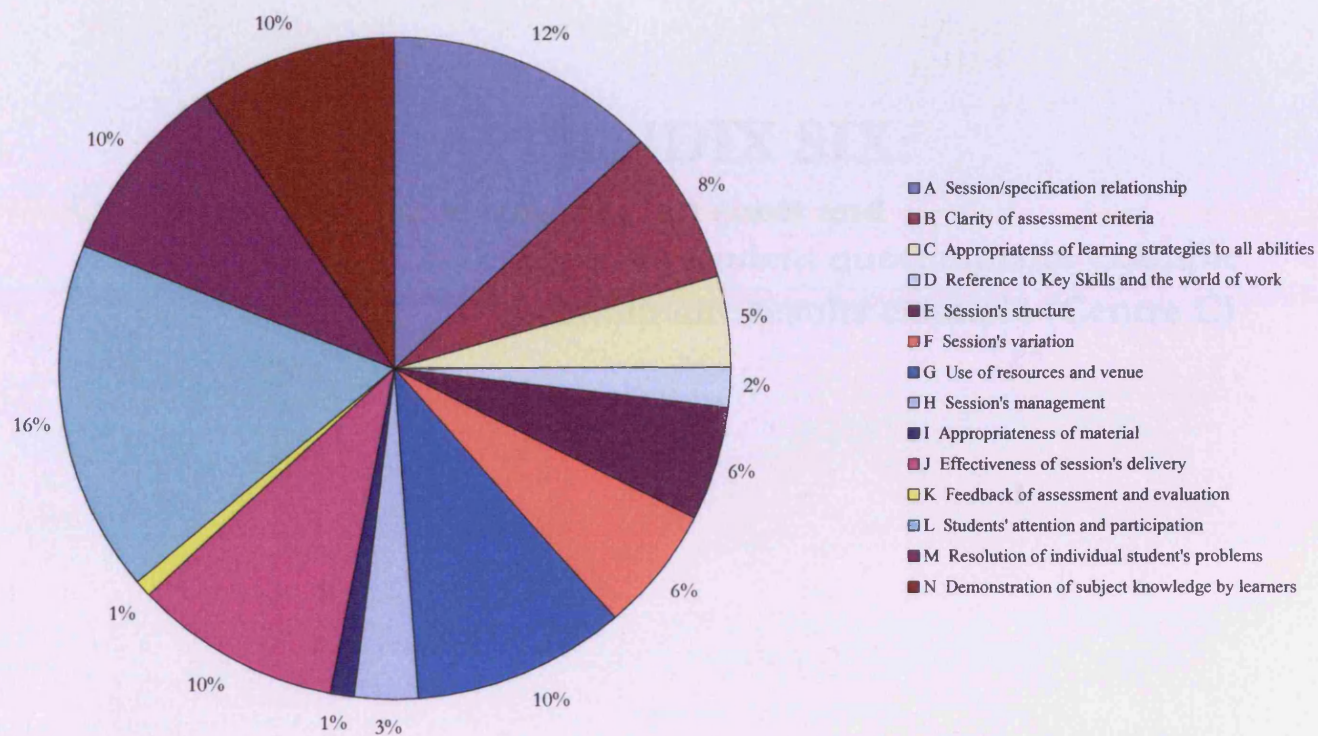
M1

14- relationship. T led discussion begins with the T stood in front of the class at the

E2, F1 & 2

15- board saying, "Just to recap..." Ss answer questions by raising hands even though 1 S

Proportion of Discriminators Identified Centre A: AS Observation



APPENDIX SIX:

Questionnaires:

- **Information sheet and completed student questionnaire example**
- **Questionnaire results example (Centre C)**

Information for Participants

You are being invited to take part in a research study by completing a questionnaire. Before you begin, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and decide whether or not you wish to complete the questionnaire.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to discover how Drama and Theatre Studies A Level specifications are being delivered in six _____ City and _____ schools and colleges. The researcher will also look at proposed governmental change to Post- 16 education and consider the potential implications these alterations may have on the case study participants.

Why I am asking you to participate

There are three Drama and Theatre Studies specifications in this country: Edexcel, AQA and WJEC. You are being asked to participate because you are currently taking one of these A Level specifications in either a _____ City or _____ school or college.

Do I have to take part?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and there will be no consequences for not taking part. As you are not giving your name or any personal information, there is no way to identify you and the questionnaire will be completely anonymous.

How will the results of the study be used?

The results of the study will be used to develop an understanding of the teaching and learning of Drama and Theatre Studies A Levels in six _____ City and _____ schools and colleges. Findings will be used towards the researcher's PhD in Education, which will be made available in the University of _____ library. The results may further be used to produce articles for publication in journals.

Thank you, in advance, for taking the time to read this information and complete this questionnaire.

K. McCauley

PhD Education Candidate

University of _____

Please turn over if ready to complete the questionnaire

Please answer the questions below based on your AS Drama and Theatre Studies course

- 1) Did you take a GCSE course in Drama or the Performing Arts prior to beginning your AS Drama & Theatre Studies course?
(Tick one) Yes ☒ No ☐
- 2) If yes, do you feel that it prepared you for your AS Drama & Theatre Studies course?
(Tick one) Yes ☒ No ☐
- 3) If no, do you feel that you were at a disadvantage on your AS Drama & Theatre Studies course?
(Tick one) Yes ☐ No ☐
- 4) How did the work load you had on your Drama & Theatre Studies course compare with the work load you had on your other courses? (Circle one)

Much more than Slightly more than Equal to Slightly less than Less than

- 5) What is your opinion about the amount of written work compared to the amount of practical work on your AS Drama & Theatre Studies course? (Circle one)

Too much Slightly too much A normal amount Slightly too little Too little

- 6) How aware were you of the assessment criteria that you were marked on for each Drama & Theatre Studies unit during your AS year? (Circle one)

Very aware Slightly aware Aware Slightly unaware Unaware

- 7) What do you think are the qualities that make a good AS Drama & Theatre Studies student?

Creative, independent but works well in groups

- 8) What aspects, if any, on your course did you feel were particularly important to learn?

methods of acting

- 9) What aspects, if any, on your course did you feel were not important to learn?

Too many set texts

- 10) Would you have liked to change your AS Drama & Theatre Studies course in any way?

more practical work
less essays

Too much work in one year - too many set texts
When you are finished please hand this sheet to your A Level teacher.
Thank you, again, for your time in completing this questionnaire.

how can they expect us to have a deep understanding of each text

Questionnaire Results
Centre C

1.
 - 67% had Performing Arts or Drama at GCSE Level before their AS course
 - 33% had not had any Performing Arts or Drama at GCSE Level before their AS course
2.
 - Of the above 67%, 100% felt they were prepared for their AS course
 - Of the above 67%, 0% felt they were not prepared for their AS course
3.
 - Of the above 33%, 0% felt they were at a disadvantage
 - Of the above 33%, 100% felt they were not at a disadvantage
4.

When asked how their workload in Drama and Theatre Studies compared to other courses: *(Please refer to the following chart)*

 - 0% said much more than
 - 50% said slightly more than
 - 33% said equal to
 - 17% said slightly less than
 - 0% said much less than
5.

When asked to compare the amount of written work compared to practical work on the Drama and Theatre Studies course: *(Please refer to the following chart)*

 - 0% said much more than
 - 50% said slightly more than
 - 50% said equal to
 - 0% said slightly less than
 - 0% said much less than
6.

When asked how aware they were of the assessment criteria that they were being marked on:

 - 33% said very aware
 - 17% said slightly aware
 - 50% said aware
 - 0% slightly unaware
 - 0% said unaware
7.

When asked what the qualities are that make a good Drama and Theatre Studies student, out of all the answers given:

 - Good acting ability: 8.3% of answers
 - Hard working: 8.3% of answers
 - Punctuality: 8.3% of answers
 - Determination: 8.3% of answers
 - Creativity: 8.3% of answers

- Dedication: 8.3% of answers
- Concentration: 8.3% of answers
- Other answers included: commitment, enthusiasm, team work, inspired, not shy, can express themselves, can learn lines

8.

When asked what aspects on the Drama and Theatre Studies course were important to learn, out of the answers given:

- All of them: 16.7% of answers
- Time management: 16.7% of answers
- Drama techniques: 16.7% of answers

9.

When asked what aspects on the Drama and Theatre Studies course were not important to learn, out of the answers given:

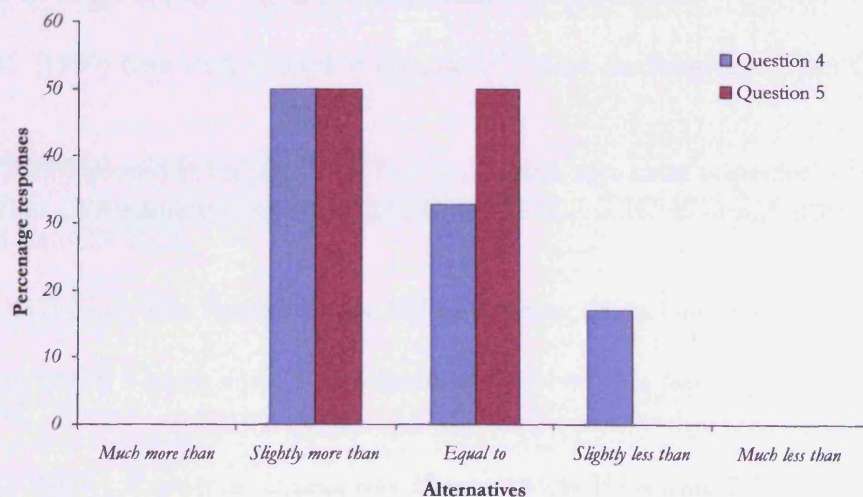
- 100% of students said there were no aspects that were not important to learn

10.

When asked if they would have liked to have changed their AS Drama and Theatre Studies course in any way:

- 50% of students said there would be no change
- Out of the remaining 50%:
More practical work: 50%
Less written coursework: 25%
Change the structure of the two-year programme: 25%

Responses to Questions 4 and 5



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