

# Milestone 3

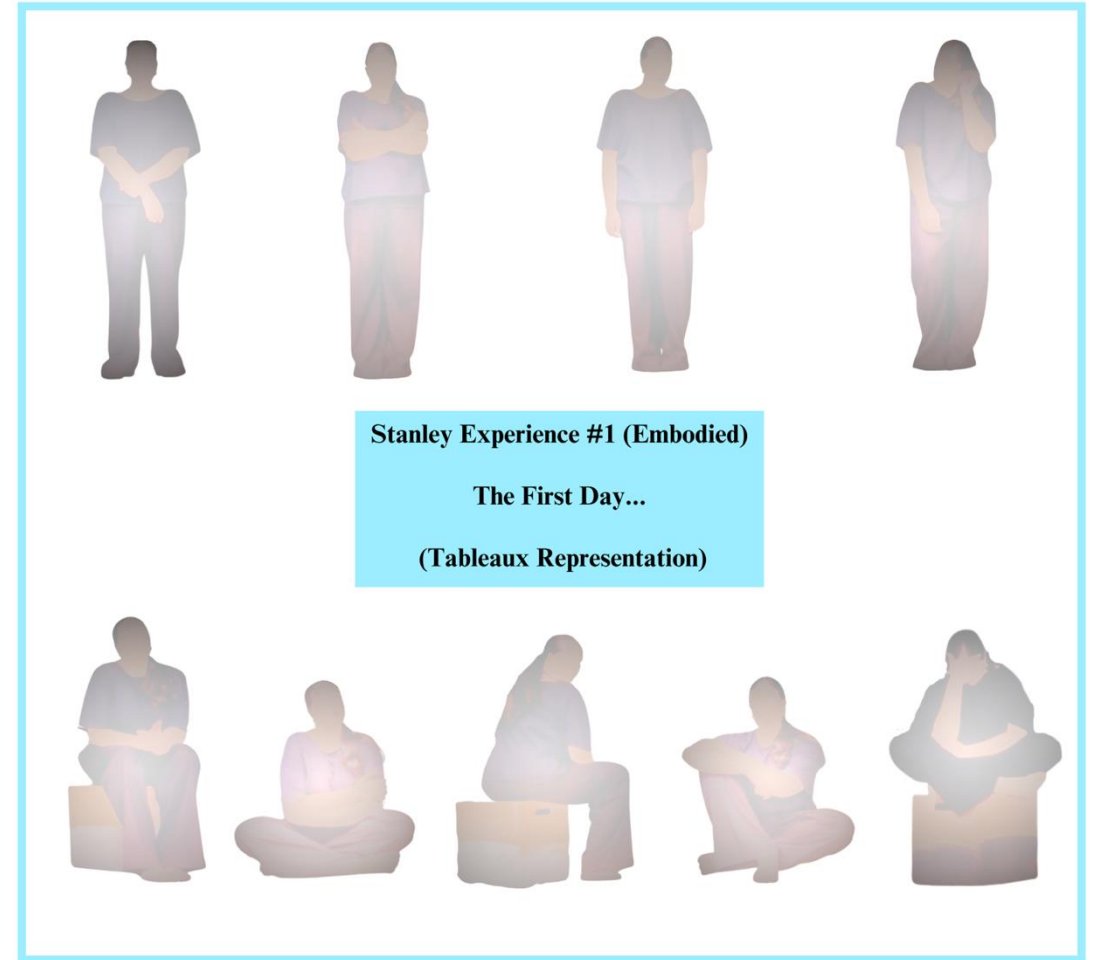
## A Teacher Without Capability, Do The Kids Miss Out?: Investigating Generalist Educators' Perceptions of their Impact on Drama Teaching

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**Course:** Master of Philosophy (Education)

**Supervisors:** Dr Carol Carter & Dr Lisa Paris

**Date:** April 20<sup>th</sup> 2026



*The First Day... (2026)*

Tableau coding map from Scene: The First Day...by Tayla Fordham created in conjunction with this Master exegesis

# Glossary

**Arts-Based Educational Research (ABER):** A qualitative approach that uses artistic processes and forms, such as drama and theatre, to investigate and represent educational phenomena (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

**Embodied experience:** Experience as lived and expressed through the body, including physical, emotional, and sensory dimensions (Csordas, 1999; Conquergood, 1991).

**Emic perspective:** An insider viewpoint reflecting participants' subjective meanings and interpretations of their experiences (Cohen et al., 2018).

**Ethnodrama:** A scripted theatrical representation developed from research data (e.g., interview transcripts), performed for an audience (Sallis, 2007).

**Etic perspective:** An external, analytical viewpoint adopted by the researcher to interpret patterns and meanings across the data (Fetterman, 2008).

**Generalist educator:** An individual who teaches across all subject areas (primary) or outside their area of specialisation (secondary).

**Image Theatre:** A non-verbal form of theatre using the body to create still images (tableaux) that represent experiences and meanings beyond words (Boal, 2002; 2008).

# Glossary

**Lived experience:** Individuals' first-hand experiences of a phenomenon and the meanings they attribute to them (Creswell, 2013).

**Positionality:** The researcher's stance and perspective within the research, requiring transparency in how this position shapes interpretation (Creswell, 2014).

**Reflexivity:** An ongoing process of critically reflecting on the researcher's role and influence within the research (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018; Berkovic, 2023).

**Self-efficacy:** Refers to an educator's belief in their capacity to effectively manage work-related tasks, responsibilities, and challenges (Barni et al., 2019).

**Specialist educator:** An individual with expertise and training within a specific subject area.

**Tableau:** A theatrical technique where actors freeze to create a visual representation of a moment; plural: tableaux (Flynn, 2020).

**Verbatim Theatre:** A form of theatre constructed from the spoken words of real people, often drawn directly from interview data (Anderson, 2007).

# Research Overview

## Focus

Generalist teachers teaching drama in Western Australia secondary schools.

## Aim

Explore perceptions of capability and influence on student engagement.

## Methodology

Arts-Based Educational Research (ABER).

## Non-Traditional Research Output

Ethnodrama performance using:

- Voice
- Movement
- Staging.



*The Foetal Position* (2025)

Scene: The Foetal Position by Tayla Fordham created in conjunction with this Master exegesis

# Research Question

*"I never want to teach drama ever again."*



*The Aftermath* (2025)

Scene: The Aftermath by Tayla Fordham created in conjunction with this Master exegesis

How do generalist educators' *perceptions* of their capability to teach drama influence students' engagement in Western Australian secondary schools?

# Research Questions

How do generalist educators' perceptions of their capability shape their confidence and to teach drama affect their confidence and potential to teach it.

Examine the lived experiences of when generalist educators have concluded that their absence of specialist training and drama knowledge impacted their self-efficacy to cultivate student learning and engagement.

Examine what generalist educators believe the benefits are when students engage in high-quality drama education and what they worry is lost when students do not engage in quality drama learning experiences.



Gallery 501 Work-in-Progress Exhibition

26<sup>th</sup> September 2023

# Research Aim & Objectives

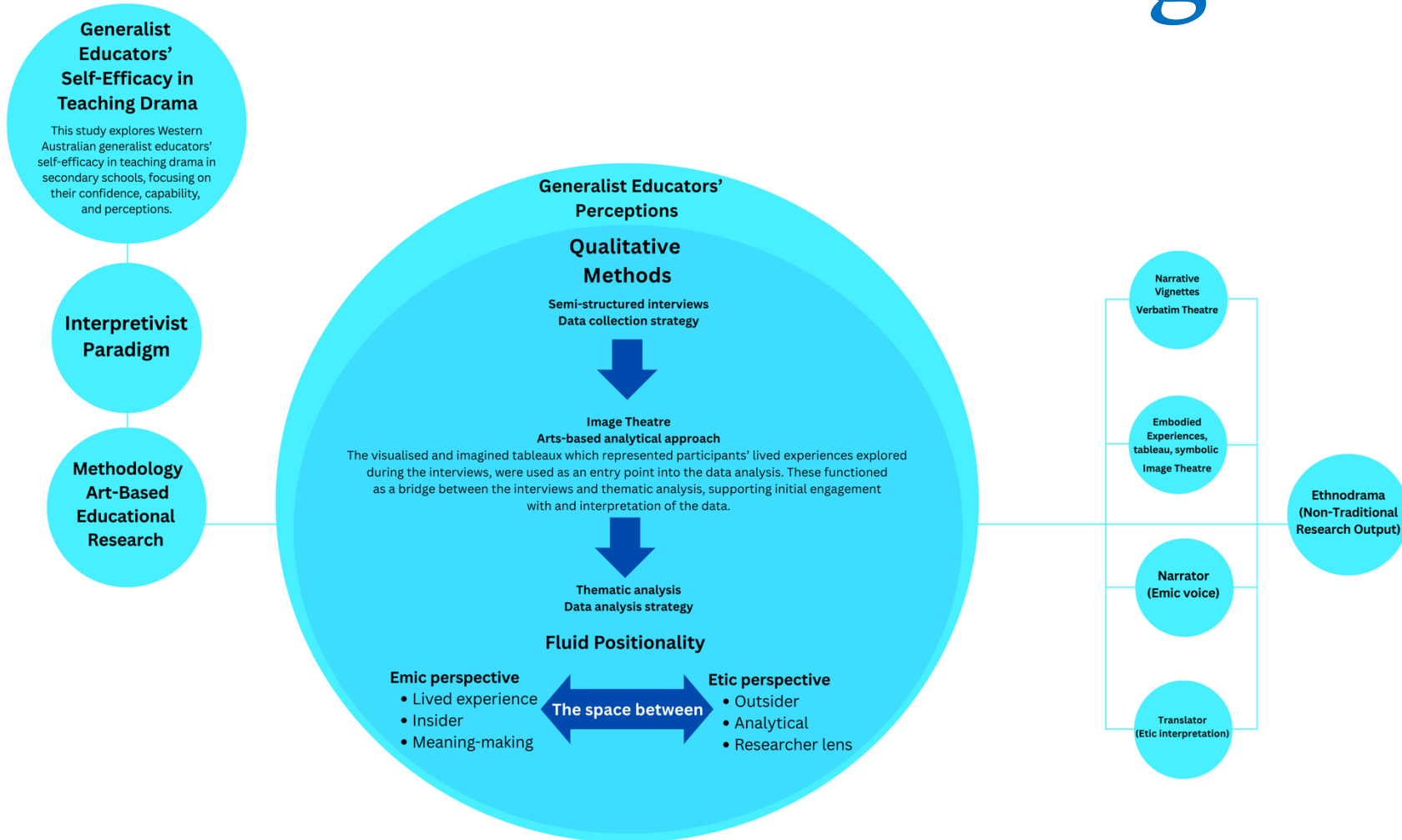
## Aim

To investigate how generalist teachers perceive their capability when teaching drama and how they believe this shapes student engagement.

## Objectives

- Explore teachers lived experiences of teaching drama
- Examine perceptions of capability and confidence
- Analyse how these perceptions influence classroom practice
- Identify implications for student engagement
- Inform support strategies for generalist educators

# Methodology Research Design



**WHAT underpins the study**  
**Self-efficacy**

**HOW it is understood**  
Interpretivist paradigm

**HOW it is explored**  
Arts-Based Educational Research  
(ABER)

**HOW data is collected**  
Semi-structured interviews

**HOW data is analysed**  
Image theatre  
Thematic analysis

**HOW I am positioned**  
Fluid positionality  
(emic & etic)

**WHAT is produced**  
Ethnodrama

# Data Analysis

| Phase                                     | Description of the process                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Familiarizing yourself with your data: | Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2. Generating initial codes:              | Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.                                                                                                              |
| 3. Searching for themes:                  | Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.                                                                                                                                                    |
| 4. Reviewing themes:                      | Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.                                                                                        |
| 5. Defining and naming themes:            | Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.                                                                                       |
| 6. Producing the report:                  | The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis. |

## *Braun & Clarke (2006)* *six phases of thematic analysis*

*Note.* From “Using thematic analysis in psychology,” by V. Braun & V. Clarke, 2006, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101 (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>). Copyright 2006 by Taylor and Francis Group.



Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Virginia Braun & Victoria Clarke)



Six-phase analytical framework



Themes identified as patterns of shared meaning across the dataset



Developed through iterative engagement and immersion in the data



Researcher subjectivity positioned as an analytical resource



Interpretation informed by theory and existing research



Ensures alignment between data, analysis, and ethnodrama output

# Data Analysis

## Phase 1: Familiarisation

Immersion in interview data prior to coding

Manual transcription of audio recordings

Close attention to verbal qualities and embodied expression

Repeated reading + audio-visual review

Post-interview journal reflections

Initial analytic notes (not formal coding)

Identification of salient and emotionally significant moments



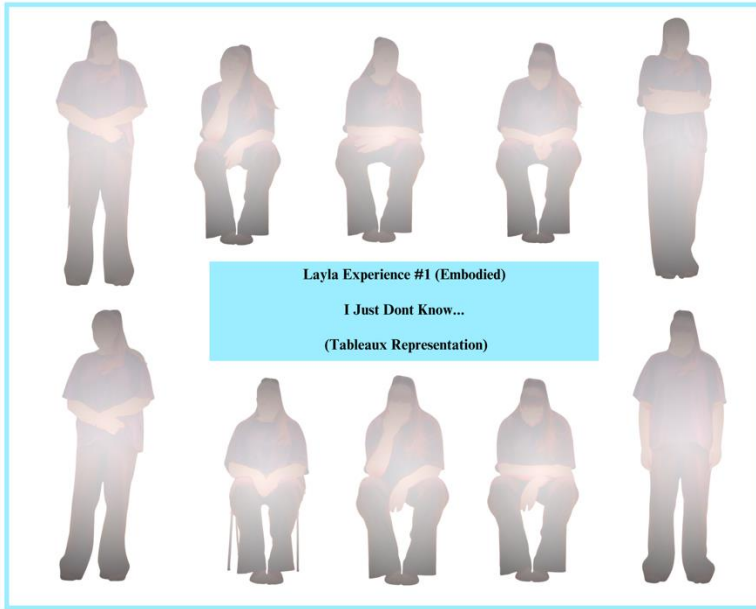
# Data Analysis

## Phase 2: Initial Coding

### Arts-Based Analytical Approach: Tableaux Coding Maps

**Tableaux coding maps functioned as a bridge between interviews and thematic analysis.**

- Used as an analytical tool to explore participants' lived experiences.
- Informed by arts-based and performance methodologies, particularly Image Theatre (Boal, 2002; 2008). A non-verbal, physical form of theatre using the body to create still images (tableaux) to represent emotion, relationships, and lived experience.
- Positions the body as a site of knowing and meaning-making (Conquergood, 1991).
- Performance enables the transformation and representation of experience through symbolic action (Fischer-Lichte, 2008; Saldaña, 2011).
- Supports engagement with both embodied and symbolic dimensions of experience, through focus on:
  - Physical positioning
  - Emotional expression
  - Symbolic and descriptive language.



# Data Analysis

## Phase 2: Initial Coding

### Arts-Based Analytical Approach: Tableaux Coding Maps

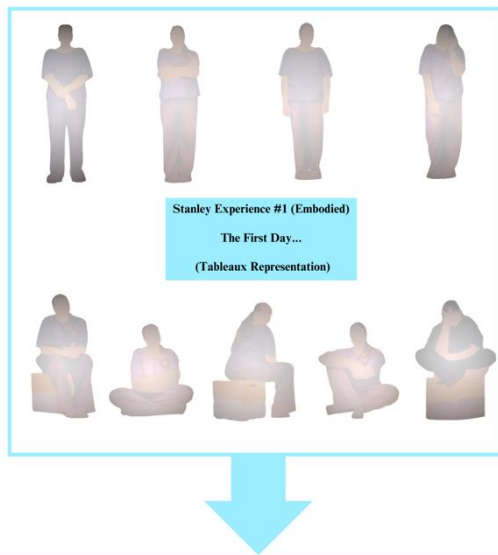
Participants' lived experiences were translated into two tableau coding maps as visual representations.

Three forms of tableau:

1. **Described tableau:** Directly described by participant
2. **Imagined tableau:** Interpretively constructed through the researcher-director role
3. **Visualised tableau:** Workshopped tableaux in coding maps to support analysis.

These tableau maps informed the identification of initial coded extracts, ensuring:

- Verbal and non-verbal dimensions of the data were attended to
- Meaning was explored beyond purely discursive language.



Stanley's experience reflects an embodied sense of fear, isolation, and not belonging as he enters drama for the first time. He positions himself physically apart from others, observing a group who appear confident and comfortable.  
The black box theatre is perceived as an intimidating threshold he does not want to cross, heightening his sense of panic. His response is further reflected in his refusal to sit down or remove his shoes, maintaining distance and control within a space that feels unsafe. Together, this is expressed through avoidance, withdrawal, and attempts to remain unnoticed.

That first day is a memory that always just sticks out in my head.

Just complete isolation.

Trying to cover myself up.

The teacher was almost too excited.

I remember her standing in the theatre doorway, and it is black inside.

I did not want to cross.

It looked terrifying, curtains all around.

I didn't belong there; that was so far out of my comfort zone.

Absolutely panic.

I remember trying not to make eye contact with anyone.

It was truly terrifying.

Pure terror.

Shocking.

It was fight, flight or freeze.

I felt very isolated.

I have blocked it out.

I didn't understand any of it.

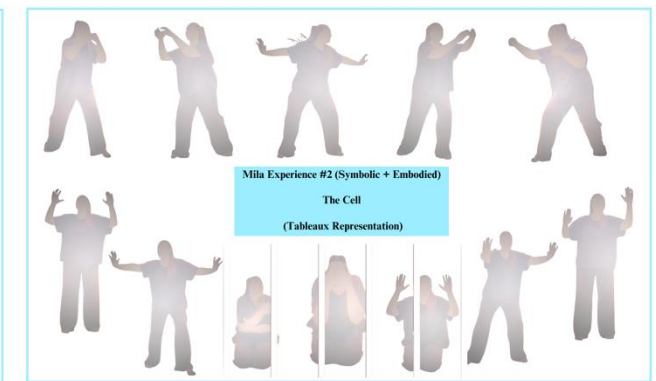
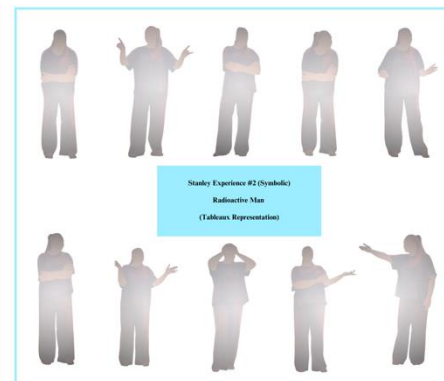
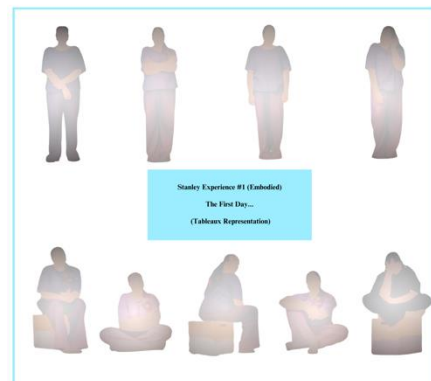
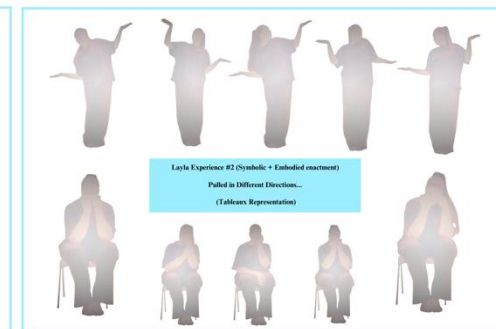
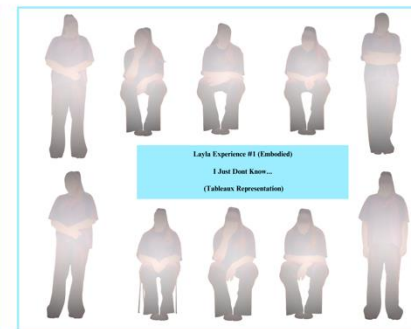
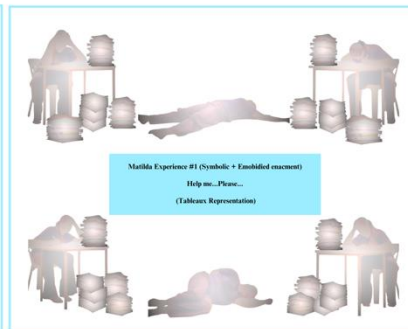
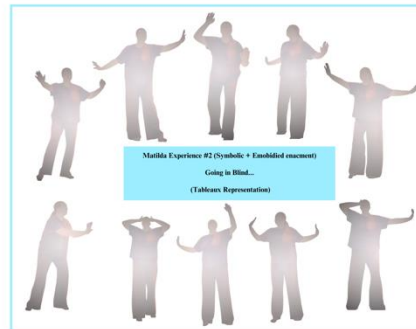
My body turned away from them.

I was very much head down.

I knew I was going to make a bad first impression in there because I am going to look worse than everyone else with whatever they're asking us to do, too.

Spotlight right on my face. Boom.

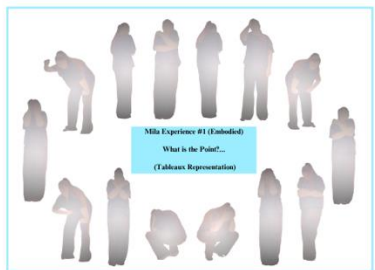
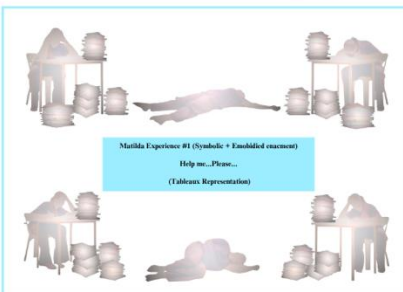
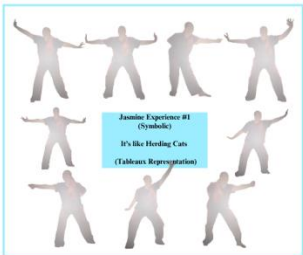
# Visualised Tableau Coding Maps



# Data Analysis

## Phase 2: Initial Coding

### Phase 2- Initial Coding Coding Maps Cross-participant patterning



- Tableau coding maps reviewed collectively across participants.
- Initial connections and similarities identified across cases.
- Shared patterns identified through connections between lived experiences (e.g., teacher vulnerability).
- Different contexts, but common underlying meanings identified.
- Individual lived experiences reframed as points of analytical connection.

### Indicators of teacher vulnerability

#### Emotional Indicators

- Expressions of overwhelm, distress, or anxiety
- Feeling on edge, panicked, or defeated
- Emotional withdrawal (e.g., shutting down, giving up)
- Frustration leading to resignation

#### Cognitive Indicators

- Uncertainty about what to do next
- Statements reflecting a lack of knowledge or clarity
- Questioning
- Doubting
- Difficulty making decisions

#### Embodied Indicators

- Collapsed or closed body positioning
- Stillness or freezing
- Restricted movement or containment
- Physical gestures indicating stress (e.g., hands on head, pacing, tension)

#### Control-Related Indicators

- Loss of control over the class or situation
- Inability to influence student behaviour
- Difficulty maintaining structure or direction
- Reliance on "just getting through" the lesson

#### Contextual / Structural Indicators

- Lack of support from leadership or colleagues
- Feelings of isolation
- System constraints limiting action
- Being placed in unfamiliar or unsupported teaching situations

#### Behavioural Response Indicators

- Withdrawing effort or lowering expectations
- Letting things go or choosing not to intervene
- Avoidance behaviours
- Overcompensating by trying multiple strategies without resolution

#### Role / Identity Indicators

- Feeling like a failure or questioning competence
- Tension between the expected and actual teacher role
- Pressure to perform or maintain control
- Shifts in confidence or professional identity

#### Uncertainty / Exposure Indicators

- Feeling exposed in front of students
- Not knowing what might happen next
- Anticipating disruption or failure
- Descriptions of unpredictability as threatening

# Data Analysis

## Phase 2: Initial Coding

- Coding maps functioned as an analytic lens.
- Highlighted key indicators to attend to within the data, including:
  1. Language used by participants
  2. Representations of lived experience.
- Informed Phase 3: systematic search for patterns.
- Contributed to the development of provisional themes across the dataset.

# Data Analysis

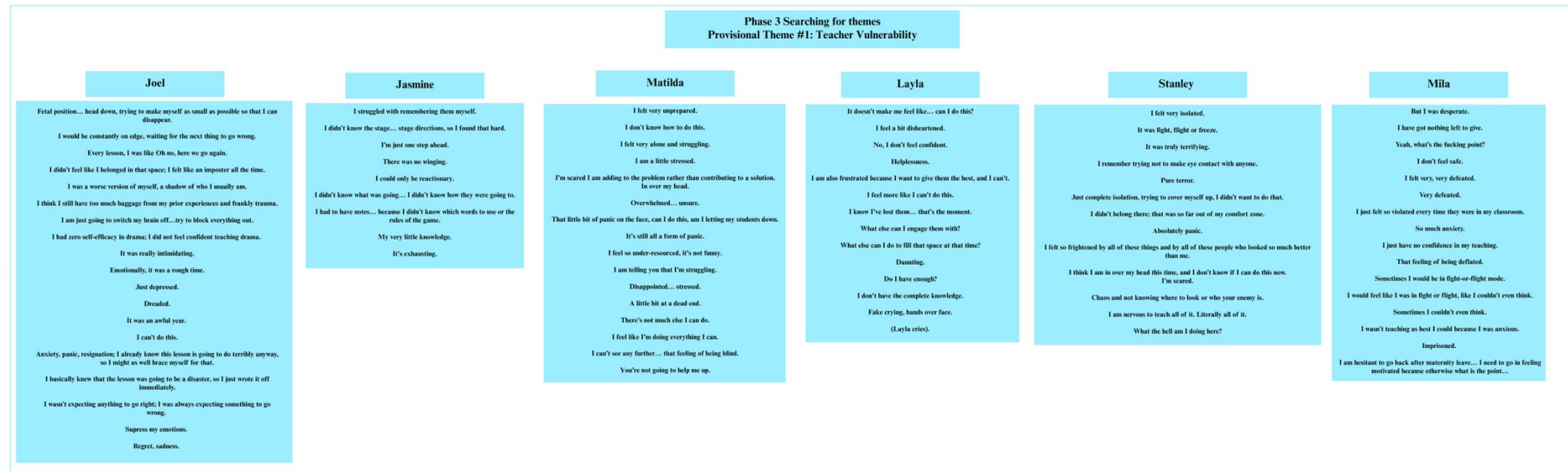
## Phase 3: Searching for themes

Tableau coding maps identified key indicators within the data.

These indicators guided a systematic search across the dataset.

Relevant extracts were identified where patterns were evident:

- Language reflected shared patterns
- Lived experiences aligned with emerging themes.



# Data Analysis

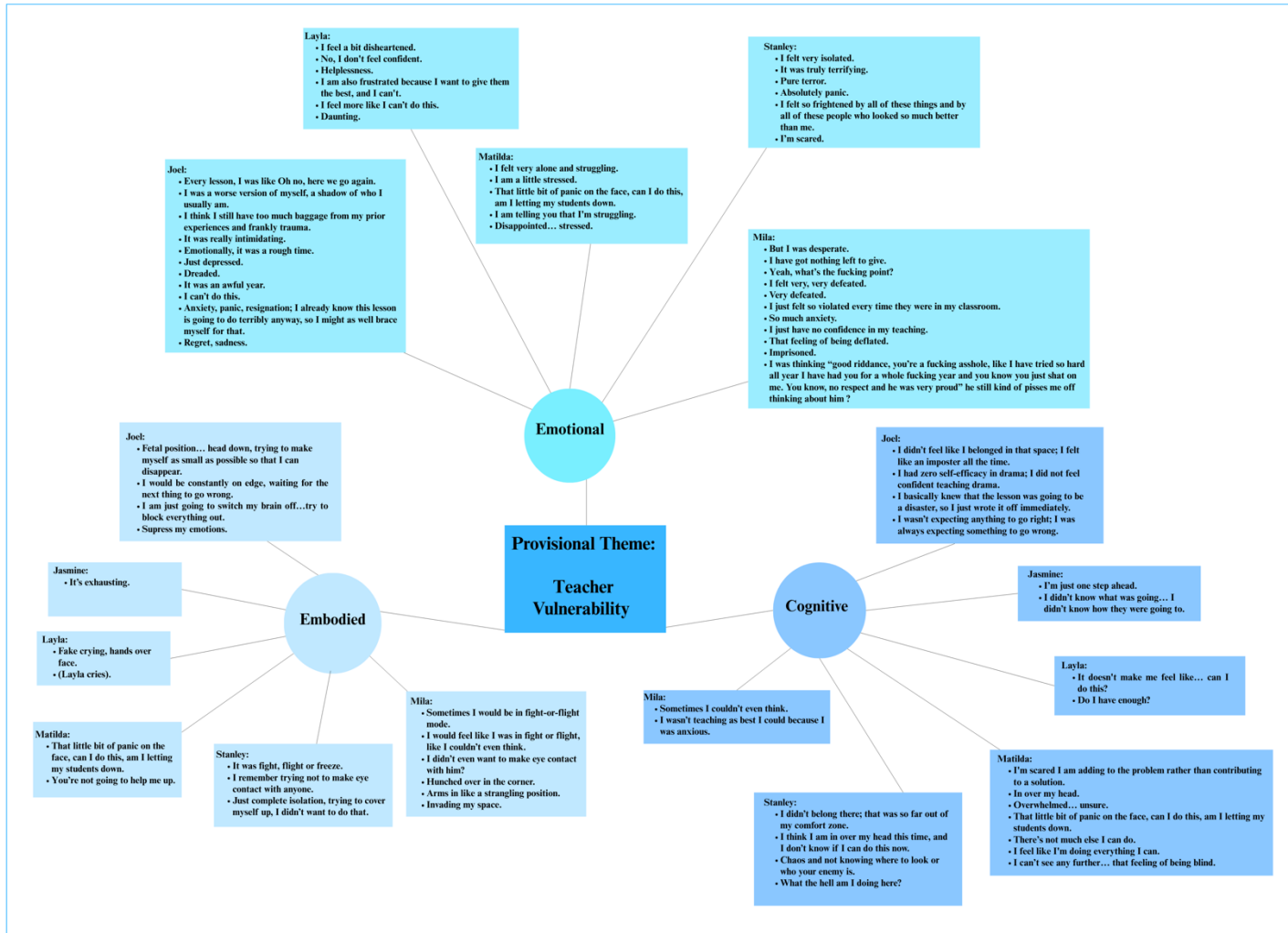
## Phase 4: Reviewing themes

Provisional themes reviewed for coherence and analytical clarity.

Examination of how themes were constructed and represented within the data.

Teacher vulnerability refined as a multi-dimensional experience:

1. Emotional (fear, panic, distress)
2. Physical responses (withdrawal, tension, avoidance)
3. Cognitive (uncertainty, self-doubt, lack of confidence).



# Data Analysis

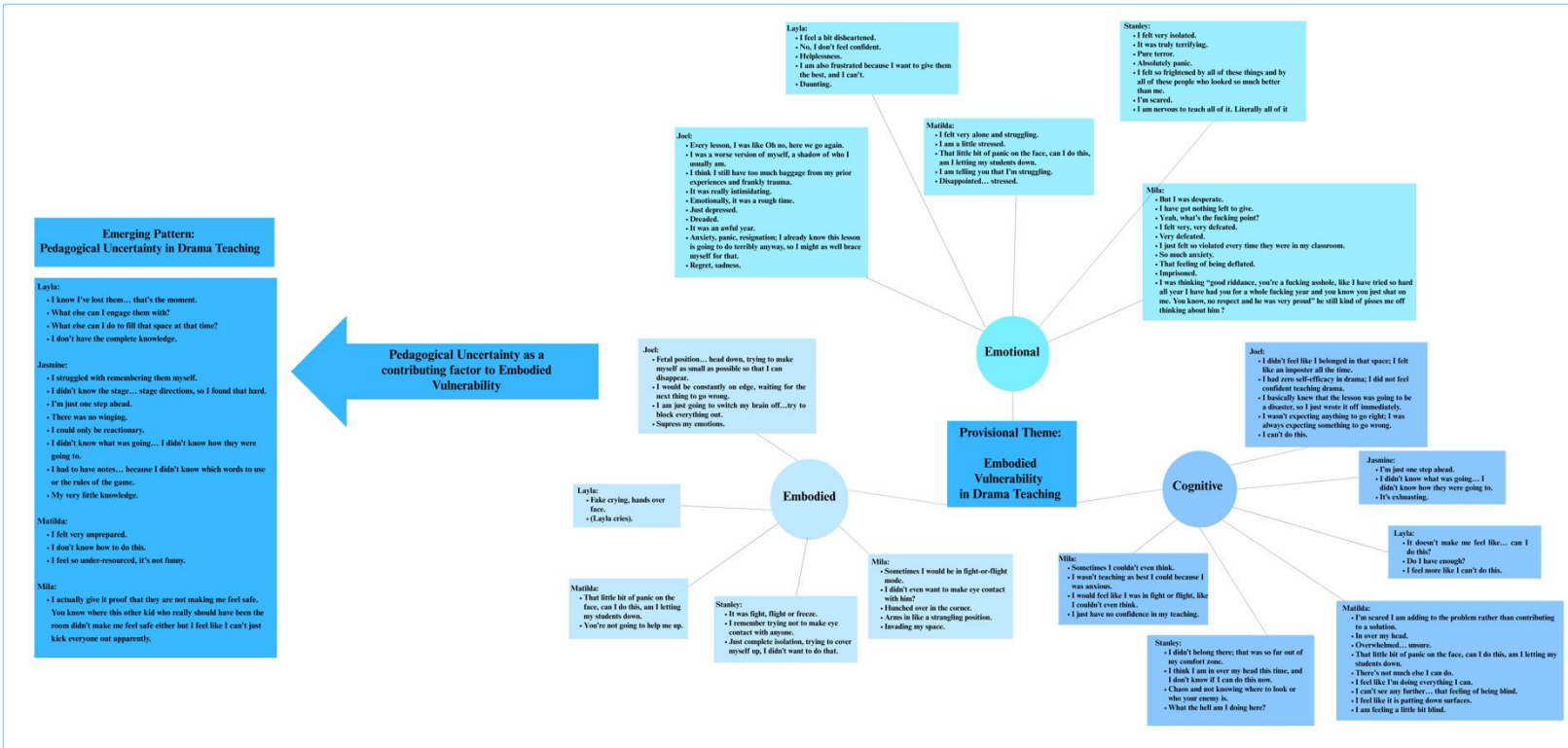
## Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

Themes refined to ensure  
clear and coherent patterns  
across participants.

Extracts organised by  
dominant meaning  
(emotional, embodied,  
cognitive).

Non-aligned extracts  
reconsidered or excluded.

Some extracts aligned more strongly with the provisional theme of pedagogical uncertainty, rather than vulnerability, supporting its development as a distinct but related theme.



# Written Exegesis & Ethnodrama

- This study is equally divided between a written exegesis and ethnodrama.
- 50/50 split in time and output to analyse and represent the research findings in a traditional written form and creative, visual form.



*The Foetal Position (2025)*

Scene: The Foetal Position by Tayla Fordham created in conjunction with this Master exegesis

*(After a pause, Stanley slowly turns back toward the imagined doorway. Head down, he walks into the space.)*

**[Lighting: As Stanley moves CENTRE STAGE, the light narrows. Surrounding space darkens.]**

I knew I was going to make a bad first impression and look worse than everyone else.

**TAYLA**

*(Tone becomes more analytical.)*

It was fight... flight... or freeze...

*(Beat. Looks toward Stanley.)*

...and he froze

*(Stanley turns to the audience and freezes)*

**[Lighting cue: A sharp spotlight snaps on and isolates Stanley. All other light fades to near blackout, leaving Tayla in shadow.]**

What he couldn't show... what he couldn't say... sat beneath the surface.

*(Pause. Tayla remains in darkness. Softer tone)*

This was not just fear...this was the pure terror of Stanley's first day in a university drama class.

**STANLEY**

*(Singing)* Went to class early one morning, I felt so frightened of all of these things and all of these people looking so much better than me

We went and sat in a circle, and I felt so frightened and didn't know what we were doing but everybody was doing it better than me

# Data Analysis

## Phase 6: Producing the report

- Themes presented through thematic analysis with illustrative extracts.
- Analysis moves beyond description to interpret shared meaning across participants.
- Findings translated into an ethnodrama as a performative representation.
- Draws on salient quotes from tableau coding maps.

Stanley's experience reflects an embodied sense of fear, isolation, and not belonging as he enters drama for the first time. He positions himself physically apart from others, observing a group who appear confident and comfortable. The black box theatre is perceived as an intimidating threshold he does not want to cross, heightening his sense of panic. His response is further reflected in his refusal to sit down or remove his shoes, maintaining distance and control within a space that feels unsafe. Together, this is expressed through avoidance, withdrawal, and attempts to remain unnoticed.

That first day is a memory that always just sticks out in my head.

Just complete isolation.

Trying to cover myself up.

The teacher was almost too excited.

I remember her standing in the theatre doorway, and it is black inside.

I did not want to cross.

It looked terrifying, curtains all around.

I didn't belong there; that was so far out of my comfort zone.

Absolutely panic.

I remember trying not to make eye contact with anyone.

It was truly terrifying.

Pure terror.

Shocking.

It was fight, flight or freeze.

I felt very isolated.

I have blocked it out.

I didn't understand any of it.

My body turned away from them.

I was very much head down.

I knew I was going to make a bad first impression in there because I am going to look worse than everyone else with whatever they're asking us to do, too.

Spotlight right on my face. Boom.

# Synthesis of Ethnodrama Script

Yeah, I mean that first day was...that memory always just sticks out in my head.

I felt very isolated for a start.

Just complete isolation, trying to cover myself up, I didn't want to do that.

The teacher being almost too excited, she wasn't physically in my space, but it felt like she was with her requests.

I remember her standing in the doorway to the theatre and it is black on the inside, black box theatre which I only learned the other day.

So that to me what the threshold that I did not want to cross.

Yes, well that is exactly, I had never been in one. I had never been in a black box theatre, so It looked terrifying, curtains all around.

And because I was so scared to go to uni to start with anyway, because I didn't belong there that was so far out of my comfort zone.

Absolutely panic yeah

Ahhh I think I have blocked it out

I remember trying to not make eye contact with anyone

Pure terror that was. It fight, flight or freeze.

Avoiding eye contact.

I would have my body turned away from them.

I was very much head down.

STANLEY

*(Stanley sits DOWNSTAGE LEFT on a plastic school chair, body turned to the side, distancing himself from the audience. Shoulders hunched, gaze down, avoiding eye contact.)*

[**Lighting: low, cool wash. Stanley partially in shadow.**]

Trying to cover myself up...turning my body away from them...head down...avoiding eye contact

TAYLA

*(Tayla stands far DOWNSTAGE RIGHT far from Stanley, observing. Soft reflective tone.)*

[**Lighting: Tayla remains in low light.**]

Stanley recalled that the teacher was almost too excited. She stood in the theatre doorway...

*Gestures towards the imagined space CENTRE STAGE)*

...and it was just black inside.

[**Lighting: A soft light begins to illuminate CENTRE STAGE, suggesting the doorway, while the surrounding space dims.**]

*(Pause)*

He did not want to cross...

STANLEY

*(Stanley hesitantly stands from his chair, nervously glancing toward the centre of the space where the imagined doorway to the black box theatre lies. He pauses, then withdraws, folding his arms tightly across his body.)*

Curtains all round...I didn't belong there...that was so far out of my comfort zone...

*(Pause; Stanley sits back down, head in hands)*

*(Stanley snaps and stands up again- said quickly and firmly, as if certain, though nervous energy sits underneath)*

Absolutely panic. Truly terrifying.

## Example

- Stanley's first university drama class lived experience.
- Represented through verbatim theatre using participant dialogue.
- Draws directly on his account of his first drama class experience.
- Translates this lived experience into a scripted, performative form.

# Themes

## Near Finalisation

### Theme 1: Embodied Vulnerability in Drama Teaching

#### Sub-themes:

- Teacher Vigilance
- Emotional, cognitive and physical responses

### Theme 2: Pedagogical Uncertainty in Drama Teaching

#### Sub-themes:

- Lack of subject knowledge
- Juggling demands

### Theme 3: Contextual Pressures on Drama Teaching

#### Sub-themes:

- Lack of institutional support
- Student misbehaviour

These themes have been developed through iterative analysis and are now in the final stages of refinement.

Ongoing work is focused on clarifying their definitions and translating them into ethnodrama.

# Participant Checking & Feedback

- Performance-based research has two intertwined issues: validity and aesthetics. To ensure validity can be assessed, I have employed Cho & Trent's (2006) strategy of dialogical performance style, which ensures dialogue between multiple people has occurred to enable a breadth of perspectives; to create an open and co-existential understanding of the research phenomena (Leavy, 2020).
- Chilton and Leavy (2020) support the above and believe that 'artful authenticity' is powerful in creating truth and trustworthiness within the research.
- Chilton & Leavy (2020) also highlight 'participatory and transformative' as important criteria when evaluating ABR. This technique asks participants to be active collaborators in shaping the research findings by discussing and reflecting on my interpretation of the interview data and its visual representation to ensure the authenticity and integrity of their voices are captured (Morris & Paris, 2022).
- These approaches hope to build trust and a collaborative relationship between myself and the participants (Summerskill, 2020; Morris & Paris, 2022) and encourages open dialogue in their responses (Sinner et al., 2006).

# Progress



## *The Foetal Position (2025)*

Scene: The Foetal Position by Tayla Fordham created in conjunction with this Master exegesis

# Progress to Date

2023

- Milestone 1 Presentation
- Work in Progress Pop Up Exhibition
- Milestone 1 Application Approved

2024

- Application for Part-time study approved
- Ethics Approval- HRE2024-0218
- Leave of Absence 9th July 2024- 13th January 2025

2025

Six participants recruited  
Completion of both interview cycles  
Data collection, thematic coding, and analysis commenced  
Initial development of ethnodrama scenes (Joel and Stanley)

2026

- Continued exegesis development
- Ongoing data analysis and thematic refinement
- Continued development of participant ethnodrama scenes
- Funding approved
- Theatre booked



Gallery 501 Work-in-Progress Exhibition  
26<sup>th</sup> September 2023

# Significance

- Literature identifies that many generalist educators lack specialist training and drama knowledge, impacting confidence and self-efficacy in teaching drama (Carter & Hughes, 2016; Fleming, 2006; İşyar & Akay, 2017; Kerby et al., 2021; Kim-Bossard et al., 2025; Lemon & Garvis, 2013; O'Toole, 2011; Pascoe, 2022; Salti, 2021).
- In the Australian context, research has primarily focused on preservice or specialist educators.
- Limited attention has been given to in-service generalist teachers (Lummis et al., 2015; Russell-Bowie, 2013; Lovering et al., 2015; Gray et al., 2019).
- Addresses a gap in the Western Australian context, exploring in-service teachers' perceptions of capability and impact.
- Provides insight into how generalist educators navigate teaching outside their area of specialisation.
- Identifies implications for:
  - Teacher education
  - Professional development
  - Support structures in drama education
  - Insight into the perceived benefits of drama and what students may miss when they do not engage in drama learning experiences
- Demonstrates the value of arts-based approaches in exploring and communicating lived experience (Eisner, 2002; O'Toole, 2006; Paris et al., 2022).

# Contribution

- Provides insight into generalist educators lived experiences of teaching drama in secondary contexts.
- Extends understanding of teacher self-efficacy through embodied and lived dimensions.
- Contributes to the use of ethnodrama as both analysis and dissemination (Sallis, 2007; Saldaña, 2011).
- Offers a methodological contribution through the integration of Arts-Based Educational Research (ABER) within education research (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2020).
- Demonstrates the use of tableaux coding maps as an arts-based analytical approach.



*Going in Blind...(2026)*

Tableau coding map from Scene: The Cell by Tayla Fordham  
created in conjunction with this Master exegesis

# Dissemination Plan

The ethnodrama serves as a key mode of dissemination in this ABER study.

**Performance scheduled: The Jonesway Theatre- Saturday, 15th August 2026 (advertising commencing to recruit audience).**

The ethnodrama will be performed to a recruited audience, including:

- Preservice generalist educators (primary and secondary)
- Preservice and qualified drama specialists
- Key stakeholders (e.g., Heads of Learning Area, Principals)
- Interested audience members will complete a demographic survey to capture background information and perspectives on drama education.
- This process supports the inclusion of diverse viewpoints within the audience sample.
- Participants will also provide consent to complete a post-ethnodrama feedback form.
- Feedback will be collected via Qualtrics or hard-copy format.



Gallery 501 Work-in-Progress Exhibition

26<sup>th</sup> September 2023

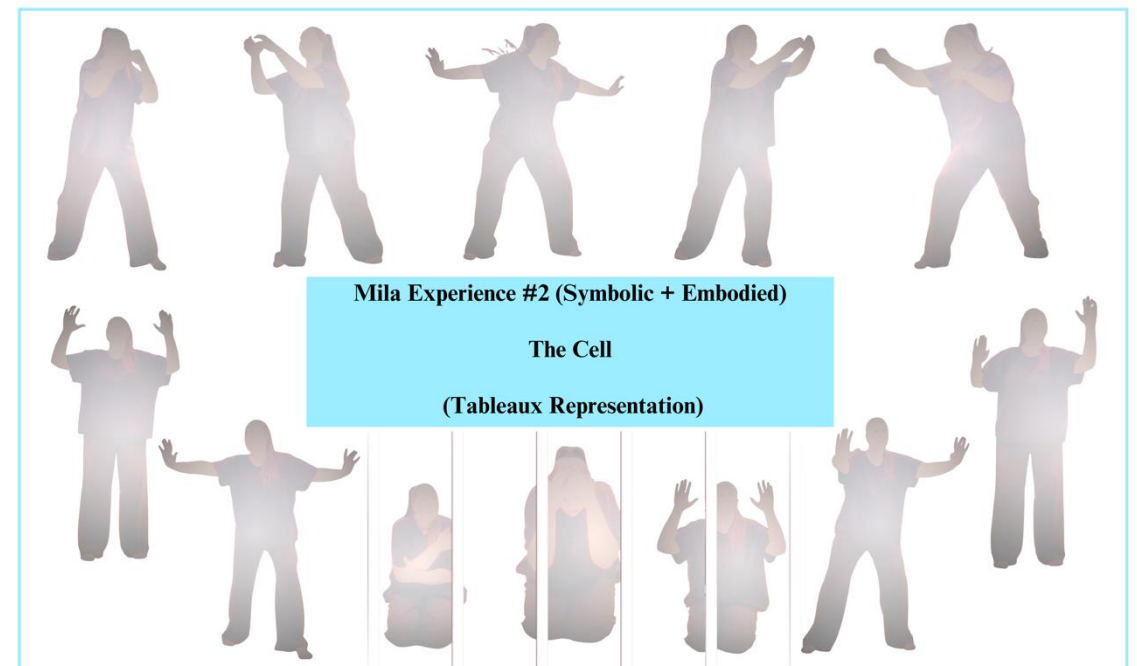
# Future Dissemination Plan

- Potential extended run of the ethnodrama.
- Exploration of Fringe Festival 2027 as a performance platform.
- Potential conference presentations and journal publication (DramaWest, Drama Australia, JACE).



*What is the Point?...* (2026)

Tableau coding map from Scene: The Cell by Tayla Fordham  
created in conjunction with this Master exegesis



*The Cell* (2026)

Tableau coding map from Scene: The Cell by Tayla Fordham  
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# Timeline & Completion Plan

| Gantt Chart Milestone 3 Timeline                                               | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | July | Aug |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| Milestone 3 Presentation                                                       |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |
| Recruit ethnodrama audience                                                    |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |
| Finalise thematic coding, analysis and findings                                |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |
| Continued development and finalisation of ethnodrama script                    |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |
| Devising and rehearsal of ethnodrama performance                               |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |
| Continued writing of exegesis                                                  |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |
| Finalise ethnodrama performance                                                |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |
| Ethnodrama performance- recruited audience and filmed for reviewers 15/08/2026 |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |
| Refinement and final review of exegesis before submission                      |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |
| Thesis submission due 23/08/2026                                               |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |
| Ethnodrama public performances in late 2026 or early 2027 (TBC)                |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |     |

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**M<sub>3</sub> Creative Practice**

**Work**

**Live Performance**

**Scene: The First Day...**