**Transforming teaching and learning with active and dramatic approaches:**
*Engaging students across the curriculum*

**Summary of Chapter One:**
Be Active and Dramatic in Dialogue to Transform Learning

In Chapter One I introduce a model of active and dramatic learning that I argue can begin to transform learning. In reading this book I hope that P-12 teachers (both preservice and practicing) as well as teacher educators may experiment with what they do in the classroom, change how they view themselves as professionals, and thus positively affect students’ learning and their own learning about how to be better teachers. The model (further developed throughout the book) is represented in three figures (that build on each other) and a table. Collectively these show some of the relationships between four active learning modes (experiential, performative, reflective, and dialogic inquiry) and four related dramatic learning modes (dramatic playing, dramatic performance, dramatic reflection, and dramatic inquiry).

Using a theoretical framework drawn primarily from the works of Bakhtin, Vygotsky, Dewey, and Heathcote I analyze two examples of teaching and learning: one in a preschool working with the nursery rhyme *Jack and Jill* and the other with middle school students exploring the folktale *Brave Margaret*. The chapter concludes with an example of active and dramatic learning with university students.

Like every other chapter, this one is grounded by examples, practical suggestions, and references to photographic images, figures, and tables. However, Chapter One is the most theoretical of the book. Rather than summarize in a linear way using each chapter heading (as I do in the other chapter summaries), in this summary I take a more synthesizing approach as I draw together some ideas from across different sections.

**Dialogue**

I place dialogue at the center of all learning. People dialogue when they make meaning as they act and react to what others say and do (or have said and done). People make meaning, and over time author (or using other words, create, construct, or coauthor) understanding about a topic, as they address and answer one another. Dialogue happens in utterances at the meeting of two (or more) viewpoints, perspectives, or consciousnesses on the same event, as people take action using words and deeds. People can also dialogue with themselves. When people act in an event they draw on what they already know and they have choice about how they might act, and react, when they are aware of different possible outcomes. Active and dramatic learning modes used in context can make actions, consequences, choices, language, ideas, and meaning-making more visible.

I propose that classroom dialogue should be an ongoing conversation about important ideas. Conversations are extensive chains of dialogue or, in other words, dialogic meaning-making that can move back-and-forth between being active and dramatic in learning. I believe that much as possible conversations should be as authentic (people choose to participate), open-ended (teachers especially cannot hold on to predetermined understanding), dialogic (one person cannot be promoting a monologic fixed perspective), substantive (about something worth our attention), and polyphonic (involving multiple viewpoints).

**Active Learning**

Learning is always active. People must make sense of their situations and take action to create meaning – they cannot passively receive understanding. Active learning is physical and mental,
affective as well as cognitive, and social as well as individual. Being active can involve gesture, moving the body, and social interactions as much as it requires personal mental work. The younger children are the more they need to be physically and socially active in order to make meaning.

**Dramatic Learning**
Active learning becomes dramatic whenever people intentionally act ‘as if’ they are elsewhere and/or ‘as if’ they are someone else. Active learning happens in the ‘real’ classroom space whereas dramatic learning happens in a ‘real-and-imagined’ space that is always experienced by participants as both real and imagined.

Dramatic learning occurs via dialogue in which images of people, places, and events not actually present are created in imagination and treated as if they are, or have been, really happening. To be more deliberate about creating and interpreting images, people have to know, and may need to be shown, how to “move in and out” of an imagined space and also recognize, accept, and “play along” with others who are pretending to be elsewhere or be someone else. The idea is not to be lost in a fantasy but rather intentionally to experience and create images of other worlds in order to expand learning dialogically beyond what happens in the everyday.

**Mediating Tools**
We make meaning using mediating tools. When we use language, gesture, movement, and sound in ways that are meaningful to us these are tools that are ‘signs’ for ideas not actually present, which we use to mediate how we create understanding for others in dialogue as well as for ourselves. Additionally, we can use artifacts (like plastic pails or stethoscopes), book illustrations, video images, games, or anything we create (like a drawing or a model) to mediate our meaning-making and, using ‘higher-order thinking’ (and feeling), develop conceptual understanding. In dramatic learning, the possible mediating tools we may use expands exponentially and enriches dialogue. Now people’s words, movements, and props can create experiences and images of people, places, and events beyond what is actually present that we can use to make more complex meaning and conceptual understanding in ongoing dialogue.

**Active and Dramatic Learning Modes**
I outline how in active learning we can move back-and-forth for brief or extended periods of time among different modes, or broad ways of making meaning. Learning is *experiential* (accumulating individual, social and cultural experience is the basis of all that is learned), *performative* (awareness of an audience makes people pay attention to how they communicate meaning and thus to what they understand), and *reflective* (being a spectator on current or past actions allows us to interpret events and make connections between prior and current understanding). Active learning becomes *dialogic inquiry*-based when we are curious about and focused over time in dialogue about a topic of inquiry that may be stated as inquiry questions (e.g. What does it mean to be “brave”?).

Each active learning mode has a corresponding dramatic learning mode. **Dramatic playing** is experiential and it’s not just for young children. Pretending to be someone else or imagining we are elsewhere opens us up to taking other perspectives and experiencing the world as if we are elsewhere or with another consciousness without the pressure of performance. **Dramatic performance** is performative. People are performing all the time in everyday life but are more intentional about their performance when they are acting as if they are someone else in a narrative event knowing that people are watching and are an audience to what they say and do. **Dramatic reflection** is reflective: spectators make sense of a performance of narrative events that are not actually happening. ‘Hotseating’ a teacher in role as a character is a very effective way of promoting students’ dramatic reflection. **Dramatic inquiry** extends dialogic inquiry: our ongoing conversations about events may include any that participants experience, perform, and reflect on using dramatic learning modes.
Summary of Chapter Two:  
Build Community

Whereas Chapter One is mostly concerned with academic learning, in Chapter Two I turn attention to the parallel and equally important social learning that both shapes the type of community that develops in a classroom and the quality of the dialogue that affects academic learning in whichever modes teacher and students employ. In this chapter I foreground what was mostly implicit in the previous chapter: engagement in shared tasks and collaborative activities involving all the adults and young people in a classroom has significance for learning. I show how building community can transform learning in two interrelated fundamental ways: collective experiences are different from individual ones; and each of us can learn collaboratively in ways that we cannot learn alone.

I illustrate how building community must take account of the dynamic tension between the needs of individuals and an evolving whole group experience of “we are in this together”. I use examples and quotations from teachers, especially one teaching in a diverse elementary classroom and one using dramatic inquiry in a high-poverty high school English classroom. I demonstrate how, when teachers work collaboratively with young people, a classroom can become a more caring, inclusive, and generous community.

Being and Learning Together in a Community
I propose that a shared inquiry project for everyone in any group is learning how to live together and build community. I show how community is built in tasks with shared goals in which people – adults and young people - create and build desired shared outcomes. I argue that community must also be built in honest reflective learning focused on shared experiences, performed products, and social challenges.

How to Build Community
I show how the active approaches of the arts, which may include dramatic learning, can focus groups on outcomes that dovetail people’s real world concerns with their imaginative explorations of how the world could be better. I illustrate how community expectations can be negotiated with groups in dialogue.

Make Core Values Visible With the Whole Group
I share four of the core values from my teaching stance that underlie my commitment to developing a democratic non-hierarchical classroom environment:

- physical and emotional safety
- mutual respect
- equality of ideas
- learning from mis-takes as well as successes

(I use the spelling mis-takes, like mis-steps, as I consider how teachers and young people can learn to embrace mistakes). These values are implicit, and when necessary I make them explicit, in any classroom where I have responsibility for learning. I show how teachers can read and respond to group dynamics by paying attention in interactions and use of space to who tends to dominate and who accommodates others’ ideas.

Ensemble Tasks Build a Collaborative Community/ Building Community Takes Time and Commitment
I stress that building community takes time and commitment. I show how ensemble tasks that are central to dramatic learning also build community. I outline six dimensions of community building with examples from Chapter One and from ensemble games described in this chapter:

- **dialogue** in collaborative words/deeds using active and/or dramatic learning modes;
- **shared** longer-term **goals** (or shorter-term objectives) we care about;
- **choose to engage** at the same time;
- **shared bounded space**;
- **distributed leadership** among teachers and, at times, young people;
- multiple appropriate **collaborative tools**.

**Leadership in the Classroom Community/ Testing Community**
In considering the role of the teacher as a "servant leader" in community building I illustrate how to begin to build mutual trust and share power with students in order to create a space where it is safe for young people, and teachers, to take risks. Drawing on the ideas of Rancière I argue for the value of diversity of people's actions and ideas. In doing so I embrace experiences of **dissensus** (rather than an expectation of reaching an easy consensus) in the continual building and strengthening of a particular community that is tested by individual's actions.

**Complexity in Community Building**
In the second half of the chapter I explore some of the complexity of building community as I propose dimensions of the tension between collaborative tasks that people choose to do together (that can be characterized as ‘we are acting for us’) and individual actions by teacher and/or students. In tables I provide examples of ‘the language of community building’ related to each dimension.

- **being generous for our community** (‘I am acting for us’) which includes being generous in interpreting the motivation of others’ actions
- **caring for individuals** (‘I am acting for you’) which includes the use of a ‘solution-focused’ approach
- **including everyone** (‘We are acting for you’); which includes adapting tasks and using informal assessment

**Teaching and Community Building**
I use extended examples from my own experiences as learner and teacher and those of other teachers to explore the consequences of not building community as well to illustrate my experience that, despite inevitable challenges, community building is possible with any group.

**Conclusion: Build a More Hopeful, Strong, Proud, Sensitive Community**
I conclude by illustrating the importance for every student that, despite the difficulties, teachers adopt a hopeful stance viewing each person as mattering to the group and as part of an evolving classroom community.
Summary of Chapter Three: Plan for a Journey of Exploration

In this chapter I use an extended metaphor: planning is preparing for a journey of exploration – creating a map of intended and possible paths to follow with young people as we dialogue and inquire into a topic using active and dramatic learning modes. I contrast my view of planning with the dominant notion of planning as writing a ‘recipe’ to be followed regardless of what happens in the classroom.

I note that at its simplest my ideal planning map has a beginning collaborative task and a few choices of follow-up tasks aimed at exploring a narrative event to achieve an outcome valued by all participants. My core planning question is this: How will I plan for dialogue about our actions in collaborative sequenced tasks focused by inquiry questions that explore the meaning of events in a narrative text?

Using an example of planning and teaching with the book Amos and Boris in a second grade classroom, along with reflective comments by the classroom teacher, and via a sequence of figures, summary boxes, and illustrative photographs, I extend the model of active and dramatic learning (that I developed in Chapter One) to include planning: I place dialogic dramatic inquiry at the center and add a visual representation of the planning concerns of curriculum as well as those of goals (or objectives) and intended outcomes. I illustrate the planning tension between what I call the given and the emergent curriculum – what I want to (or must) address with a group and what they are (or become) interested in. Following ideas introduced in Chapter Two, I argue that curricular tasks are always social as well as academic so I must plan for explorations (including goals and outcomes) that are both social and academic.

Planning for a Particular Group
I illustrate how I plan for a particular group. As I imagine working with them, or when I am able to negotiate with them, I focus first on planning to build community and relationships: mine with the people in the group, theirs with each other, and everyone’s with a topic. I adopt a positive stance assuming academic and social competence as I wonder how well the group is likely to be able to collaborate, what they may be interested in, how individuals may need to be accommodated, and how I can give as much choice as possible.

Topic, Goals, Intended Outcomes, and Beginning Tasks
I introduce the five questions in ‘KWNIL planning’ (that extends the well-known KWL planning) by asking what I believe young people ‘Need to know’ about a topic (in addition to what they ‘Know’ and ‘Want to know’) as well as how goals/objectives can be restated as ‘Inquiry questions’ and how we might assess ‘Learning’ in process (as well as assess outcomes and other achievements).

Selecting an Event
Extending the idea introduced in Chapter One, I show how any text can be considered a sequence of narrative ‘events’ – ruptures or crises for characters that they (and readers) desire to resolve in taking redressive action. Following Bakhtin, I note that events are experienced as having ‘eventness’ (a dialogic meeting of more than one consciousness) and ‘presentness’ (there are multiple ways of responding). When dramatized, if participants care about the rupture or crisis in an event they are engaged by an experience of ‘dramatic tension’ that presages them into taking ‘dramatic action’ to restore a sense of order. Dramatic action can be planned to be tasks that use any or all of the dramatic learning modes: dramatic playing, dramatic performance, dramatic reflection, or dramatic inquiry (in conjunction with any of the related active learning modes).
I show how events can be seen to contextualize facets of curricular topics. I illustrate and argue how important it is to include a careful selection of events likely to engage young people. I introduce the notion of ABCD events that ‘hook’ young people when they experience a big problem, that all of the children care about and could experience and dialogue about from diverse perspectives as they want to act to restore the order.

Tasks Designed To Build Background Knowledge/Develop Changed Understanding
In two sections I illustrate how I plan tasks oriented toward the complementary goals of the acquisition of background knowledge (that limits meaning-making) and the development of changed or new understanding (that opens-up meaning-making). I apply my approaches to planning in relation to a sequence of tasks focused by an academic goal of comprehension and inference and a social goal of the meaning of friendship. I illustrate how artifacts (material, performed, written, drawn etc.) created by and with young people can demonstrate knowledge and understanding and can be assessed as outcomes. I later show how both background knowledge and new understanding can be built from the social and academic dimensions of both the given and the emergent curriculum.

I show how the goal of tasks intended to acquire academic and social background knowledge and demonstrate understanding in intended outcomes can be limited by the need to understand only those events I expect will concern the group. Using the mapping metaphor, background ‘old’ knowledge is ‘known existing terrain’ and building that knowledge is ‘establishing shared understanding’ that most people already know, including some of the young people in the class. Inquiry questions operate like a compass or GPS that focus meaning-making on creating new (and related old) knowledge. I can recognize what children know and need to know via ongoing mostly informal formative assessment of learning.

I illustrate, in relation to additional diagrams and a table, how teacher planning for dialogue through the structuring of any task (using the six interrelated dimensions of ensemble tasks introduced in Chapter Two) assumes low, medium, or high student choice. The amount of teacher structuring needed can be determined by how much responsibility students can handle, how comfortable a teacher is in sharing power and improvising, and what tools the teacher and young people might use to mediate meaning-making when using different learning modes.

Selecting Strategies
I show how I select strategies and use them as tools for meaning-making. With an accompanying table, in the final section I describe the dramatic strategies I most commonly use when planning. I categorize these strategies both by dramatic learning mode and by the assumed high/medium/low amount of teacher structure and corresponding student choice.

Conclusion: Planning is Preparing for a Journey
I close with some planning advice from the classroom teacher.
Summary of Chapter Four:
Teach for Authentic and Critical Inquiry

I continue to develop my active and dramatic pedagogy model in two chapters oriented more toward teaching. In Chapter Four I analyze examples from a dialogic classroom in a STEM school where a teacher and students in 4th grade used dramatic inquiry, along with the other learning modes outlined in Chapter One, in order to explore narrative events from *Macbeth* over several weeks.

**Authentic and Critical Pedagogy**
I organize much of the chapter using the three dimensions or “standards” of “authentic” pedagogy proposed in research by Newmann i.e. disciplined inquiry, construction of knowledge, and value beyond success in school. I note that later I take up the question of the importance of pedagogy being critical.

**Disciplined Inquiry**
I consider the significance of inquiry in *sequenced* tasks extended across multiple sessions that is ‘disciplined’ in the sense that it is both rigorous and focused on disciplinary knowledge, such as a literary text or science content. I give examples and criteria for how inquiry questions may become regarded as ‘essential’ and thus more likely to sustain inquiry over an extended time.

**Authoring Changed Understanding**
I illustrate how, when working with students several years older than those described in Chapter Three, using active and dramatic learning modes (including via ensemble games) background knowledge can be built in the contextualized sharing, use, and application of both teacher’s and students’ prior, or old, knowledge and understanding. I show how more complex, nuanced, deeper new understandings (factual, social, and cultural) can develop when the sorts of conversations I analyzed in Chapter One (authentic, substantive, open-ended, dialogic, and polyphonic) are threaded through extended dramatic inquiry to become more ‘elaborated’. I illustrate this in relation to the use and application of old and new meaning in sequenced tasks that move in and out of a real-and-imagined world, for example when students-as-servants planned how they might treat wounded soldiers from the battle that opens *Macbeth*. Further, I show how the young people authored understanding in dialogue as they moved back-and-forth between opening up and limiting their meaning-making.

I stress the importance, when working with the same group over time, of developing some of the skills they need to be able to use dramatic strategies with less teacher direction. Additionally, I emphasize connections (especially using imagination to create images) between arts-based dramatic inquiry processes and the design approach to science-based inquiry used in this school intended to promote higher-order thinking: imagine problems and possibilities, plan, design, and revise possible solutions that you test out, and share.
I stress two aspects of Heathcote’s use of the concept of ‘framing’. Teachers using dramatic inquiry can introduce students to different viewpoints on events. Additionally, teachers can share power with young people and position them in real-and-imagined spaces so that they may take up more responsibility to make decisions, influence events, make meaning, or create outcomes that may also be carried into, interpreted, and shared in the real world of the classroom and school.

Value Beyond Success in School
I illustrate how, when they enter into the story world with young people, teachers may shape, focus, affect, assist, and challenge learning beyond what can be done if adults do not join the young people in acting as if they are elsewhere. Using an extended transcript I illustrate how teachers using dramatic inquiry to explore with students the meaning of a narrative event (caring for a soldier who might be dying) were able to do what Newman in his research found rarely in classrooms (but that is valued in adult life): students made connections between substantive knowledge and either public problems or personal experiences.

Critical Inquiry
Turning to what makes inquiry ‘critical’ I show how and why critique and raising questions that doubt apparent agreement or certainty in ‘shared understanding’ can, and should, be an inseparable dimension of dramatic inquiry. Critique guards against didacticism and monologic thinking by teacher or students. Using an example of close reading of some of Shakespeare’s text I illustrate how dramatic strategies, like hotseating, can be used as tools to promote critical literacy – reading ‘against’ as well as ‘with’ a text. Returning to the preschool example from Chapter One, I illustrate how dramatic inquiry can be used even with very young children to critique an apparently shared understanding, in this case of a procedure (when to call the emergency squad), which needed a more nuanced interpretation.

Conclusion: Becoming a More Authentic and Critical Teacher
In conclusion, I return to the ideas of critique and authenticity in relation to who we are becoming as teachers. Referencing Heathcote, I stress that in order to come to know myself and what I stand for, be true to my values, and grow as a teacher I must be as challenging of my own apparently stable understandings as much as I am of young people’s.
Summary of Chapter Five:
Be Tactical and Strategic to Transform Teaching

In Chapter Five I continue to develop my model of active and dramatic pedagogy via detailed analysis of examples of my teaching in a 4th grade classroom reading the novel *Love That Dog* and a teacher’s reflections of her significant teaching with a boy in a kindergarten classroom. I present the final two figures in the sequence I’ve developed across the previous chapters: I add teaching modes and then introduce a synthesizing figure that shows connections among dramatic dialogic inquiry, teaching, learning, goals, intended outcomes, and building community. In a table that complements the table from Chapter Three I categorize teaching strategies by mode. In a second table I connect teaching modes with learning modes as different ‘dimensions’ of teaching that I use to analyze examples of my teaching.

**Tactical and Strategic Teaching**
I introduce the metaphor of ‘bifocal vision’ as I discuss tactical and strategic teaching. I argue that in teaching we need to have a long-term strategic viewpoint focused on planning goals (including inquiry questions) and intended outcomes (related to a sequence of tasks) as well as a view to how our relationships within and beyond the classroom could be different. At the same time we need a dynamically related reciprocal close-up in-the-moment tactical view focused on responding to the meanings (and actual outcomes) that are actually being made (or not) with participants using the tools at their disposal. I note how tactical teaching is especially concerned with paying attention to ‘cracks’ in meaning when people act or speak in expected ways. I illustrate how I may use tools (that include strategies) in any task or interaction strategically and/or tactically.

**Teaching and Learning as Improvisation**
I explore the significance for teachers and young people when teachers are able to embrace improvising in group dialogue – creating, or coauthoring, new meaning within the ‘semi-structure’ of sequenced tasks by combining, and recombining, what is familiar with what is unfamiliar (old and new knowledge). I illustrate the importance of teachers following, and teaching, the “Say Yes, and …” principle, especially within dramatic improvisation.

**Improvisation, Positioning, and Authorship**
I connect the practice of “framing” students (from Chapter 4) with the idea of socially “positioning” people. Dramatic teaching affects how teachers can position and thus frame students in both active and dramatic learning. Every utterance expresses a person’s attitude toward whoever is being addressed; every action (especially by teachers who have high authority) positions others (especially students with low authority) as more (or less) competent, to speak, act, interpret events, and make meaning in social interactions. I show how teachers positioning of students in relation to any task (including what tools, strategies, and learning modes they can use) affects how and what understanding may develop. I note how in a “positioning triangle” (of act, positioning and event) a teacher’s words and deeds affects how students frame events and thus not only their viewpoint in both their active and dramatic learning but also how they view themselves and the responsibility they are prepared to take on in a task.

I stress the connection between social positioning, improvisation, and identity formation and how this awareness affects my tactical teaching (in relation to positioning in-the-moment) and strategic teaching (in relation to positioning over time intended to promote community building and the values I outline in Chapter Two). I illustrate the significance of being tactical and strategic in dramatic teaching so that young people and teachers can play with, share, and reflect
on how people could position one another. I stress the significance of knowing whether or not people are ‘just pretending’.

**Teaching Modes**

I propose conceptualizing teaching in four modes: facilitating groups, facilitating individuals, instructing/directing, and dialogizing. I illustrate how, as part of ongoing dialogue, I move among teaching modes for periods of time that may be lengthy or very short. I show how a teacher in two modes facilitates student dialogue (in groups and with individuals) whereas in two modes a teacher participates in dialogue (either to provide information or direction or to provoke unanticipated dialogue and thus seek to ‘dialogize’ apparent agreed understanding).

I connect teaching modes with active and dramatic learning modes to propose an array of teaching ‘dimensions’. Presenting these in a table, I show how teaching modes can be used to categorize active and dramatic teaching strategies. To illustrate the significance of moving among the different dimensions of tactical teaching I analyze in detail a sequence of tasks across two sessions.

**Strategic Planning, Tactical Responses, Building Community**

By analyzing some tactical and strategic mis-takes in my own teaching I illustrate the importance of planning strategically and learning how to respond more tactically in-the-moment especially because of how community building is affected.

**Teaching Affects Agency in Real as Well as Imagined Worlds**

I analyze an example from a teacher working with kindergartners to show the significance of tactical dramatic teaching (and thus the positioning and framing of students) in affecting the identity and agency of one student.

**Conclusion: Teaching with a Sense of the Whole In Relation To the Parts**

I conclude the chapter by naming what has been alluded to throughout: teaching, and especially dramatic pedagogy, is an art. When I use bifocal vision my being tactical and strategic are interconnected: I pay attention to the whole experience of a group (my self included) across time in sequences of tasks as well as to in-the-moment experiences; I try to recognize how specific actions affect the whole and vice versa.

I end with three aspects of artistic teaching: how the energy of the group ebbs and flows depending on how I make tasks fast/slow, loud/quiet, and dark/light; how dialogue is like the ‘pulse’ of teaching that I can shape via the dimensions of teaching; and how movement from collaborating as a whole group to small groups to individuals and back to the whole is like the ‘heart beat’ of teaching.
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I end with three aspects of artistic teaching: how the energy of the group ebbs and flows depending on how I make tasks fast/slow, loud/quiet, and dark/light; how dialogue is like the ‘pulse’ of teaching that I can shape via the dimensions of teaching; and how movement from collaborating as a whole group to small groups to individuals and back to the whole is like the ‘heart beat’ of teaching.
Summary of Chapter Six:
Assess What You Value in Achievement

I begin with an example of the sort of authentic, dialogic assessment I value in relation to teaching and learning – reciprocal, contextualized, assessment that happens in dialogue between people about the meaning to each, and to significant others, of what is being achieved in tasks related to a topic that is important to them. Assessing was embedded in the ongoing performance of achievement within a sequence of tasks and was not separated out from them.

I offer a broad critique of the current culture of testing as I stress that assessment is not synonymous with norm-referenced, high-stakes, summative, standardized tests. I note the potentially dis-empowering effects of testing on classroom relationships because students are positioned as objects vs. positioning young people as authors of meaning who have agency in relation to learning and related assessments.

Throughout the chapter I analyze examples from the same 9th grade English language arts and literature class in a high-poverty neighborhood that I referenced in Chapter Two as they explored The Other Wes Moore: One Name Two Fates. I also return to Newman’s research findings that I introduced in Chapter Four; again I use his three categories of authenticity in my analysis (i.e. disciplined inquiry, construction of knowledge, and value beyond success in school) though now in relation to assessment of achievement.

I outline different types of assessment and give examples. First, I distinguish between formal (preplanned) and informal (in-the-moment) assessments of learning; and between formative (in the midst of a sequence of tasks and embedded within authentic tasks) and summative assessments (at their conclusion e.g. at the end of a session, week or semester). I note that formative assessment (especially when it is dialogic) can improve teaching when valued learning is assessed.

I compare norm-referenced assessments (creating an A-E spread in any group graded on a curve) with criterion-referenced assessments (where anyone can be successful when the criteria are clear e.g. in a rubric). I note that when assessments are performative people can show or demonstrate their understanding in process (as in any task in an active or dramatic performance mode). Finally, in addition to teacher-initiated assessments I note the value of students’ self-assessments.

Dialogic Assessment
Applying Bakhtin’s ideas of authorship in dialogic and polyphonic meaning-making, that I’ve used in previous chapters, I note that teacher assessment (like any learning) is always in process since it can be understood to be shifting in dialogue between opening-up and closing-down understanding about a person’s achievements. I add Bakhtin’s ideas of outsidedness and surplus of vision to clarify how a teacher (or peer) may ‘see’ what a student may not (and vice versa). Additionally, I note that what are achieved as actual outcomes are rarely the outcomes intended and are always in surplus – more (and less) is achieved than was expected.

For assessment to be authentic I argue we must attempt to assess what is actually achieved in tasks that, as always, are structured to give as much student choice as possible and that are not separated out from ongoing learning. For assessment to be valued by teachers – and students - as much as possible I believe we must assess what we value (and not what others value that we don’t). In the conclusion to Chapter Four I stressed the importance of knowing my social and academic and values. Knowing those allows me to dialogue with students to agree on
achievements we value in common and agree are worth assessing (for example, classroom expectations or a tableau showing a theme).

I return to consider social positioning (introduced in Chapter Five) to stress that assessments are always evaluative – how one person addresses and positions another reveals what they value – and always affects relationships and the quality of the developing classroom community. I note how, as teachers, we have most control over our ongoing informal assessments and I provide an example of the importance of making these as dialogic as possible so that we are less likely to make errors of judgment. In addition, I show the significance of shifting in tactical teaching into a dialogizing mode in order to recover from an informal assessment that could undermine a relationship with a young person.

**Authentic Assessment Tasks**
I connect Newman’s term “authentic” with Wiggins’ “educative assessment” as examples of a movement dedicated to making assessments more connected to the sorts of worthwhile disciplinary problems and high-quality outcomes that professionals and others deal with in the real world. I return to Vygotsky as I provide examples of why we should be assessing people’s social and academic potential in collaborative social situations (rather than just outcomes from independent work).

**Value Beyond the Classroom**
I compare examples of how student engagement increased in tasks that had perceived value for students including a connection with their lives outside school with examples of a lack of engagement in tasks perceived to be just ‘doing school’. I show how sequenced tasks using active and dramatic approaches deepened engagement and I provide an example of how an engagement assessment tool was used.

**Assessing Disciplined Inquiry**
I illustrate how the classroom teacher developed goals (including inquiry questions), intended outcomes, and a sequence of tasks with embedded formative dialogic assessments all in relation to disciplinary study of English language arts. This is followed with analysis of an extended example that includes transcripts. I conclude with examples of how inquiry became critical as students critiqued a previous largely agreed-upon understanding of how racism might (or might not) operate in the criminal justice system.

**Assessing as Part of Authoring Understanding**
Because I regard students as authors of meaning then, like Newman, I need them to have mediating tools available that they can use both to present, and continue to develop, their understandings from more than one perspective. I illustrate how students used active and dramatic tools in these ways to create oral and written outcomes that I analyze. I end with an example of how one student’s attitude to classroom tasks changed radically, along with his ability to critique his own previous perspective, as I analyze how I believe this was connected with the tools made available to him in dramatic dialogic tasks and assessments.

**Conclusion: Assessment as Authoring Understanding About What We Value**
I conclude by outlining the significance of how the classroom teacher positioned students and used active and dramatic teaching and learning modes. I end with a quote from Yong Zhao who provides a global perspective as an alternative to the current testing mania and with a quote from Bakhtin who reminds us that as humans we produce meanings from what we value.
Chapter Seven is by way of a conclusion to this book. Though the book’s title is *Transforming teaching and learning through active and dramatic approaches* I have explored more than “approaches”. The title of this chapter refers to the dramatic pedagogy I employ, which I have introduced, described, analyzed, and illustrated in the preceding chapters as an extension of a pedagogy that is only “active”.

I begin by explaining why I use the term dramatic pedagogy and the related terms dramatic teaching and dramatic learning. I stress my debt to the practice and theory of two giants in the field who have complementary stances on classroom drama: Heathcote, who foregrounds the educational use of drama, and O’Neill, who coined the term process drama that she views primarily as dramatic art. I begin this book aligned with Heathcote’s viewpoint and end by exploring O’Neill’s. Because my intended audience are primarily actual and aspiring classroom teachers not already knowledgeable about the use of dramatic approaches in classrooms I choose to emphasize that this work is always pedagogical – it’s about teaching and learning from a social, cultural, linguistic, imaginative, and aesthetic theoretical framework that I have outlined in this book. I want them to know that the dramatic dimension is always in service of teaching for learning. However, I also note connotative problems of the term with people who have had superficial or negative experiences with children theatre, skits, or embarrassment as a child. I also acknowledge my theoretical debt to Bakhtin for his theories of dialogue. In summary, I stress that dialogue, inquiry, and dramatic art at the roots of my dramatic pedagogy.

I acknowledge that using dramatic pedagogy may be challenging in the current testing and surveillance regimes. I give an example from the practice of a beginning teacher being observed by his principal who was able to answer convincingly the principal’s questions about why he was using dramatic inquiry: he was enhancing the academic and social lives of the students. I tell this story to reassure readers who may baulk at using dramatic pedagogy in order to illustrate how significant changes in teaching stance can come before a substantial change in pedagogy. I stress the power of adopting dialogue, inquiry, and dramatizing stances since these can transform brief encounters in any classroom context and support ongoing conversations across tasks and sessions that affect learning.

I conclude the chapter with a story about my fiddle playing that I parallel with my teaching in order to illustrate how people can be transformed in how they understand themselves - as teachers and learners - when in a community they work in unity and collaboratively create as an ensemble. I end by recognizing that when pedagogy is also understood to be an art, as dramatic pedagogy is, using the well-known phrase, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. I allude to the transformational power of teaching and learning with dramatic pedagogy as I make reference to a poem by W.B. Yeats. I close, as I opened the book (after my dedication to Dorothy Heathcote), with another of my synthesizing poems.