

Revisiting Heathcote's Rolling Role model through the Water Reckoning project: Pre-texts, dramatic materials and digital mediation

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Abstract

Dorothy Heathcote's work was centred on using drama to make learning meaningful and focused on things that 'matter'. She developed models and approaches that encouraged teachers to structure purposeful and relevant learning experiences through careful planning, framing, enactment and reflection. One such strategy was that of Rolling Role. This model is less well known than others but Heathcote herself believed that it had great potential to be utilized through something like a website. The Water Reckoning project was therefore initiated to revisit and reconceptualise the Rolling Role model in the lead up to the Heathcote Reconsidered conference. The project aimed to explore the potential of Rolling Role for international collaboration using digital platforms. The resulting project involved five different student groups, their teachers and researchers responding to a common pre-text. This paper will focus mainly on the development of the dramatic context, pre-text and decisions regarding the use of digital technologies. It will identify key factors and considerations for planning and working with the Rolling Role.

Keywords: process drama, rolling role, applied theatre, digital technologies, pedagogy

Introduction

Dorothy Heathcote's contribution to the field of drama in education was based on a substantial body of practice and has been foundational to the development of forms of drama such as Process Drama (Bowell & Heap, 2001; 2005; Haseman, 1991; O'Neill, 1995) and Mantle of the Expert (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995). Rolling Role was another model she developed in the early 1980s in an attempt to create a cross-curricular system for collaborative learning for secondary education. It is fitting therefore to explore the on-going relevance of her ideas and legacy through creative practice and so that is how the Water Reckoning Project was born. At the 2012 International Drama In Education Research Institute (IDIERI) Pam Bowell suggested it would be timely to initiate a project that explored the strategy of Rolling Role in the lead up to the Heathcote Reconsidered Conference. The strategy was seen as having particular relevance because of the range of digital tools now available that could enable international collaboration to occur. The project proposition drew support from a number of drama education researchers and so began a process of research, discussion and planning.

The Water Reckoning project started with most of the participating teachers and academics having a good working knowledge of Dorothy Heathcote's philosophy and strategies but little knowledge about the Rolling Role strategy itself. However, since the project was implemented archival research has informed our understanding of the concept with several uncanny parallels between past and present iterations revealed. This article will provide an overview of the Rolling Role concept and model, relevant principles drawn from Heathcote

and the work of others since and an insight into the creation of the context and pre-text for the Water Reckoning project. It will focus specifically on how the Water Reckoning project was conceptualized and the use of digital and online tools, with other conference publications and articles elaborating more on the project implementation and learnings.

The development of the Rolling Role concept

Throughout her decades of practice Heathcote developed several influential models or approaches to teaching. The most well known of these are probably teacher-in-role and Mantle of the Expert, however a later model she developed was that of Rolling Role. First trialled in the 1980s Heathcote saw it as an integrating pedagogical model that could transform the way teachers worked together and taught. In the 1990s she saw it as having particular strengths for linking the curriculum during the implementation of UK National Curriculum and so developed a set of 16 videos intended to be used as a form of professional development for teachers across the curriculum. In the first of the Rolling Role videotape series, Heathcote describes Rolling Role as:

A system of teaching in secondary school, whereby any number of members of staff can form teams of collaboration, whilst teaching their own timetable and curriculum area. The programme involves the team in devising a common context from which all their curriculum teaching can spring, and this context provides purpose and relevance for the curriculum work to be undertaken. The context is carefully structured so as to provide easy access to the arts, science and humanities curriculum at all levels relevant to the age, abilities and skills of pupils involved in the programme (Heathcote & Mills, 1993, Tape 1).

Heathcote further described the Rolling Role concept in her paper *Four Contexts for Active Learning* (Heathcote 2002). She argues that in a Rolling Role drama the initiators create and share a common context and agree to the key features, affairs and concerns of a fictional community. The students/children are then involved in building the community, often creating artifacts and texts. The work can roll from teacher to teacher and from class to class, with the participants creating and exploring different facets of a community. At some point in the process the community faces some kind of change and there should be a central tension that impacts on all the different contexts. The way the project actually 'rolls' is that work is often left incomplete, but published and shared, so other groups can use it and take it forward to continue the drama. Heathcote and Mills believed this factor significantly increased student motivation and commitment to the ongoing work. While the examples discussed in the 80s and 90s tended to share, or publish work on the walls of one classroom, Heathcote suggested that Rolling Role work lends itself to sharing through something like a website (Heathcote, 2002).

The concept of Rolling Roll was first developed and realised in the early 1980s when the teachers Don McAra and Sally Pearse (from New Zealand) were struggling with the dilemma of having to work with multiple classes in a school for one drama lesson per week. They spoke to Heathcote about their desire to find a way to make learning less disconnected. The concept of Rolling Role was therefore proposed as "a way to relieve children and teachers of the tyranny of short lessons with frequent changes of curriculum area and class location so prevalent in high-school time-tabling" (Heston, 1994, p. 183). McAra wrote up that first major project for a 2D article (McAra, 1984) in which he describes the details. The

context was a fictional (but believable) one, which was centred on the discovery of a set of rock paintings in the highlands of Brazil. Different perspectives were explored by various classes as the paintings were threatened because of government plans to raise the level of the lake for a hydroelectric power station. He helps to further explain the ways to use the pre-text or stimulus material with different classes:

The principle of the Rolling Drama is that one set of stimulus material and one basic drama framework be planned and employed with a number of different classes (and perhaps over a substantial period of time). The work of each class is different because they are framed differently in relation to the material, and the work of one class can produce materials which provide a starting point for the work of another group. (McAra, 1984, p. 3)

The Rolling Role concept was further developed through projects involving other graduate students and teachers in the mid 1980s (Davison, Cochrane, & Berwick, 1990; Heathcote & Mills, 1993; Kerley, 1993; Mills, 1989-90). This included work by Joan Kerley (from Ireland) and those that Heathcote called the Jarrow Three (Malcolm Davison, Ida Cochrane & Norman Berwick) involving all their English and Theatre Studies classes over two weeks. A major development in clarifying Heathcote's thinking around this strategy was the development the Rolling Role videotape series with planning beginning in 1990 (Heathcote & Mills, 1993). Heathcote's major collaborator for the series and in the lead up was Claire Armstrong Mills who worked with Heathcote on planning and implementing Rolling Role dramas in her Birmingham school. Mills completed her M.Ed on the topic with Heathcote as an advisor (Bolton 2003), however this work was never published in other academic form. In the 1990s Heathcote also ran workshops on Rolling Role – one of which was written about by Theo Bryer for a National Drama article (Bryer, 1990). He noted that Rolling Role was similar to Mantle of the Expert but with a focus on secondary education and cross curriculum work. This indicates that at that point in time the concept had been shared and disseminated quite widely, however since then, there has been little in the way of publication and dissemination of this work.

Rolling Role - contexts, dramatic materials and pre-texts

A key point made by Heathcote and other practitioners about planning for a Rolling Role is the importance of finding or creating the main context. This must be sufficiently rich and complex enough to allow for a number of classes to work on it at the same time, with potential for them to be engaged in different subjects. In planning notes Heathcote and others often use what she called a 'trefoil' (or three overlapping circles) and in most cases three different communities/perspectives and timeframes are identified as being connected to one specific problem and point of tension.

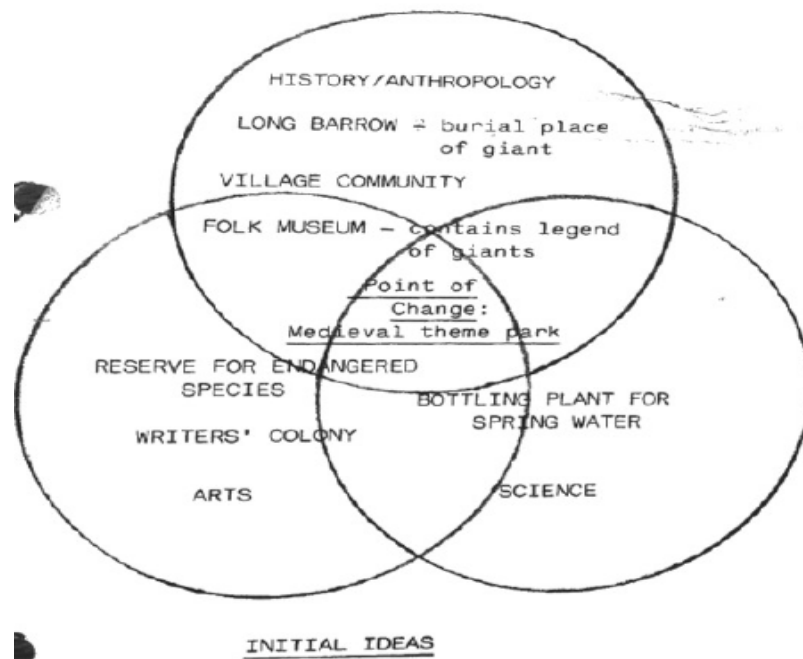


Figure 1 Initial plan for a Rolling Role drama by Claire Armstrong Mills

Kerley, as well as Mills and Heathcote all highlight that once these initial frames are determined; they then become non-negotiables (Heathcote & Mills, 1993; Kerley, 1993; Mills, 1989-90). They help situate the drama and create the logic for the unfolding action.

This thinking is an extension Heathcote's earlier work where she discussed the 'high selectivity' required by the teacher/initiator in finding a sufficiently interesting context for activity. She encouraged teachers to create dramatic materials that would focus and guide attention through providing useful parameters that would isolate and particularize (Heathcote in Johnson & O'Neill, 1984, p. 35). She also advised that the drama should have contemporary relevance for the participants with issues often explored through an historical lens. In her Masters thesis Kerley summarized these framing considerations and the value of three key features for planning Rolling Role:

1. A community that exists in the present;
2. An event in the past, with links to the present (through the existence of, for example, a building, a ruin, a myth or a legend);
3. A plan for the future of the community. This hinges on a 'point of change' and is the immediate focus of the drama. (Kerley, 1993, p. 89)

To situate the context/s the facilitator often engages in selecting and creating quality pre-texts or dramatic materials. For Heathcote it was very important to select and organise different signs and objects to create "arrangements of significance" (Heathcote & Mills, 1993, tape 1). These are important for introducing the initial context but also throughout the various parts of the process. They provide the mediating links between the 'real world' and the world of the drama. The concept of pre-text is not a term that Heathcote used, but

was developed by O'Neill as part of her reworking of Heathcoteian style processes (O'Neill, 1995; Taylor, 1995). It has since been widely embraced by drama education and applied theatre practitioners. In practical terms, pre-text is often regarded as a type of 'text' or stimulus, but really it goes beyond that and is more of a framing and 'launching strategy'. It is used to describe the various texts and strategies, which can be used as springboards to initiate a drama and frame possibilities for dramatic action. Pre-texts are generally rich, but open texts, they suggest possible roles, landscapes, relationships, attitudes and dilemmas.

An effective pretext is simple and functional. It sets in motion situations in which appearance and reality, truth and deception, and role and identity may be contrasted and explored. (O'Neill, 1995, p. 20)

[A good pretext has the] ... power to launch the dramatic world with economy and clarity, propose action, and imply transformation (O'Neill, 1995)

A pre-text generally is realized in material form, and may be an artwork, a letter, a photograph, a piece of music, a historical document or map, a video clip or other such form or combination. They are often emotionally evocative and also aesthetically charged. Several Rolling Roll project descriptions found at the Heathcote archives further demonstrate the importance of creating artifacts to help situate the 'reality' of the fictional contexts and ground the actions for the drama. Artifacts found with Rolling Role examples include maps of villages, letters seeking assistance, archival documents, photographs of buildings and so forth (Davison, Cochrane, & Berwick, 1990; Heathcote & Mills, 1993; Kerley, 1993; Mills, 1989-90).

Drawing from the body of work about Rolling Role, there are several key points that can be identified as central to the planning and set up of a Rolling Role project:

- The development of the central context that has the potential to be explored by a number of groups
- The rolling nature of the process and opportunity for different groups to see and respond to the work of others
- The importance of aesthetically rich dramatic materials and artifacts for initiating and using within the drama
- Creating a number of inter-related contexts (past, present, future) and entry points for participating groups
- The key role of ongoing publishing of work throughout the process.

These have been identified and elaborated upon in the context of discussing a recent project entitled The Water Reckoning. This project sought to explore how a Rolling Role process might be run using contemporary digital technologies and online spaces.

The Water Reckoning project – context selection and dramatic material

The proposal for what became The Water Reckoning project emerged from a Special Interest Group (SIG) discussion at IDIERI 2012, with Pam Bowell suggesting that Rolling Role would provide an appropriate model for an international drama collaboration using digital and online technologies. The Water Reckoning project was therefore initiated as a creative project that would involve young people, teachers and academics in a contemporary

practical exploration of Dorothy Heathcote's philosophy and strategies, in particular that of Rolling Role. The goal was to have the project culminate at the Heathcote Reconsidered conference in London. This resulted in five educational and research sites participating, including two in Australia, one each in Greece, Singapore and the USA (for further detail and materials see the project website <http://www.water-reckoning.net>).

Before leaving the IDIERI conference it was agreed that some parameters for the work should be decided upon. The initial discussion highlighted that the project should involve secondary school groups or similar, it should be about something that 'matters' and have contemporary relevance in multiple locations. Suggestions for a possible focus context included: trees and the natural environment, a lost civilization, a development impacting on a particular place or something to do with water.

This last topic resonated as around that time there had been many significant water related events and issues occurring around the world. These included intense weather events and catastrophes, floods, tsunamis, but also droughts. Further investigation revealed that 2013 was to be the UN year of water collaboration. This recognition of the importance of human elements and interactions for dealing with resource management and crisis management issues was seen as significant for a drama process.

During the early planning weeks an initial set of considerations for developing a context and pre-text were developed and included the suggestion that the focus context should have historical, contemporary, and future relevance. It is interesting to note how much this and other principles aligned with Rolling Role ones to be found in the Mills and Kerley work and Rolling Role tapes. However, at that point in time all that the planning group had to work from was the 2002 Heathcote document.

The 'rolling' nature of the process

The creation of the dramatic focus for this project involved a lengthy process and probably more complex than many Heathcote experienced which were designed around one school or teacher's classes. There were three main phases of idea proposition and development, with some aspects of each phase rolled through into the final set of launching material. This was not an unproblematic process as at the same time this creative process was occurring, the community of researchers and teachers for the project was still being formed. Different participants entered the process at various points across the whole project, and some could not always participate in synchronous and asynchronous communications. Therefore the community was not necessarily consistent and stable until the final implementation phase of the project. One of the authors (Davis) undertook a coordination role and the other (Simou) was a constant participant and so it is from these perspectives we will outline some of the main steps that occurred through the development phase.

In reviewing this process what has been apparent is that the 'rolling' nature of the project started not when the students began their engagement with the project, but when the emails and Skype sessions began during the planning phase. The use of emails and the creation of documents that were saved in a shared Google drive folder, also acted as a form of publication, so that work could be referred to and extended upon. To draw on the language of improvisation what can be identified as occurring are some major offers that

were made for contexts and framing, some were rejected, some were accepted and extended upon, some were refined and adapted. The following account will identify key offers made, what was rejected and why and what informed the decision-making regarding the final set of dramatic materials and pre-text.

Aesthetically charged pre-text and dramatic materials

In the first set of Skype sessions, some of the concerns discussed by participants centred on the practicalities of finding a context where diverse communities in different parts of the world could explore contemporary manifestations of water issues. There was a desire that project participants could learn about their own culture as well as that of others through the process. Practical planning and scheduling discussions were also occurring, but finding a primary creative context was seen to be an important step in making an elusive idea more concrete.

The first context proposed (August 2012) was the idea of a WATER Council (**Water And Time Earth Reckoning Council**), a kind of futuristic group who had the power to go back in time. Their invitation to others would be to identify times in history where water catastrophes had occurred and to see if it were possible to effect change or alternative solutions. This context offered the potential for different groups to investigate a water issue or story from their own region (past, present or future) and to use drama, media and other art forms to tell those stories. Another context for the drama could then focus on developing the culture and history of the council – its successes and legends. The question of what might ‘roll’ (apart from developing the history of the ‘council’) and what was the key point of tension was not easily resolved however. One option for rolling was that groups continue on the storytelling of the ‘council’ one after another and so forth. To help concretise the idea an initial invitation was created and a short voki animation.

There was not a lot of direct response from the initial planning group to this idea. After requesting ‘honest and direct’ feedback from several participants, they shared their opinion that they were not that keen on the name for the group being a ‘water council’ as it sounded like some form of utility company. There were also concerns that the work created by students could be quite documentary style (of local water related events and histories) and perhaps there was not enough potential for tapping in to the imagination. There was also a question about ‘logic’ and dealing with going back in time and changing history - how could that work?

At this time other ideas introduced included that of an archaeological discovery where each group would become a different group engaged with investigating an archaeological site. Different activities for groups could include creating the myths and legends of the civilization recovered. Rolling aspects proposed included one group creating the mythology that another group could later unearth and interpret. There was interest in the idea but at that stage there was no clear idea of how to connect it to contemporary water concerns and events.

Another idea suggested by Simou was that of a Water Museum - as a site, which could be used to honour and remember the stories of water. This offered the potential of having an online space for sharing images, stories and artifacts that recall the history of water from

different contexts and history. This was an idea strongly supported as an element to use within the project. However, the question of what was the dramatic frame and source of tension still remained.

At this stage a specific creative context and pre-text were still not apparent - the dramatic context was still very fuzzy. There was a sense of not having found the 'key' yet, and no identification of appropriate tensions or a sufficiently rich pre-text. There were some elements that were garnering support however. The idea of a Water Museum - especially as the space for hosting the stories and memories - remained strong. Other ideas for focus activities and phases were supported:

- Building the history of the group with objects and events recorded in the 'museum of water memory'
- Making an important discovery related to artifacts from an unknown culture – perhaps this indicating a water crisis
- Early participating student groups creating rituals and symbols which may be passed on
- Identifying what can be learnt from that culture's story
- Having a major challenge for the culture – a source of tension.

It is important to note that any creative planning process often involves different phases and these include periods of struggle and frustration. One of the ways we informed this process was through looking back at other accounts of Heathcote's work in books such as "Drama as a learning medium" (Wagner, 1976), "Collected Writings" (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984) and "Mantle of the Expert" (Heathcote & Bolton, 1995) looking in particular for examples where she drew together scientific or factual learning and imaginative work. Specific examples referred to include an example Heathcote described in *The Left Hand of Knowing* (in Johnson & O'Neill, 1984) where she incorporated drama work the goddess Pele into scientific learning about volcanoes in Hawaii. This affirmed for us the possibility of working aesthetically and scientifically and the importance of coming to know both emotionally and intellectually.

Looking for other stimulus materials that could help set up the drama and invite responses, a video entitled 'Human Nature' depicting work from underwater sculpture parks by Jason deCaires Taylor was introduced. Davis has seen the beautiful and highly evocative video on YouTube <http://youtu.be/vKxrVmfU3-E> and shared it with the planning group. The video depicts deCaires underwater sculptures of people in everyday settings but which evoke many other layers of possible meanings. The artist's overarching message is concerned with climate change and the idea that 'people can't live underwater'. This and other photographic evidence of his work (<http://www.underwatersculpture.com/sculptures/overview/>) seemed to provide a set of materials and artifacts that was rich aesthetically and conceptually and ideal for our purposes. Upon sharing this video, the response from other participants was extremely positive and it appeared we had found the evocative pre-text we had been seeking. From there the creation of an additional fictional frame was added and contextual details were shaped up to initiate our drama.

The idea was to set up a fictional researcher frame in the near future, with the events of a great catastrophe having occurred in the not too distant past (pre internet). A name for the community was proposed, that of Ardu Unda, drawing from latin words *Ardu* – meaning water or difficult and arid, and *Unda* – meaning water, ripple or wave. The fictional framing (which was then used on the project website) was as followed:

It is a time of renewal after the climate change apocalypse, an era when catastrophic events reshaped landscapes, cultures and economies. We seek to understand events, recover histories and rebuilt communities. A recent discovery has come to light with clusters of frozen people found under the sea. Who were they and what happened to them? What can we learn from their stories about human folly and mistakes, about courage, cooperation and resilience? Join us as we investigate the mystery of 'Ardu Unda'.

The linking artifact was to be a message found in a bottle. An actual document would be created that included details that would set up some key constraints for the drama and signal the importance of water in the devastating events the had community faced. It also aimed to engage the emotions of the reader and provide possible pathways into action and drama:

In the years following The Great Thirst our people were cursed by catastrophe and decline. Our neighbours turned from our sorrow, their generosity spent. Some emissaries sailed the globe, seeking help and compassion, seeking a refuge in our time of trial... But we waited in vain for salvation.

Our guardians conceived a plan to buy more time. Drawing on ancient knowledge and modern technology they determined that we would be frozen in time. And so would wait... for the right time, the right solution, and another chance at life.

If you find us fixed and unmoving, let your heart be moved and compassion abound. If you have the answer, we have the elixir.

An actual message in a bottle was created, a video from a researcher in role filmed and photographs taken of discovering the message on a beach.



Figure 2 Building the fictional frame - image created of the message in the bottle

Different contexts and entry points for participant groups

Through ongoing planning team discussions the pre-text started taking form with the potential for three different contexts or frames of activity (which is interesting because at that stage we had not read any of the Rolling Role material that also discussed having three contexts). One context would be the inhabitants of that civilisation up to and at the time of their becoming frozen. The second context would be a team of researchers who are investigating the discovery of an underwater civilisation that has been frozen in time. The third context would be emissaries and descendants of that culture who had gone out into the world, possibly looking for solutions to take back to their frozen culture (See figure 3). Some proposals for key points of tension for the more present time context included the possibility that the Ardu Unda site was under threat because of tourism proposals. In actuality this type of tension was only drawn upon towards the later stages of project implementation, as at the time we were not aware of how important the notion of a present time context and tension were within the original Rolling Role model.

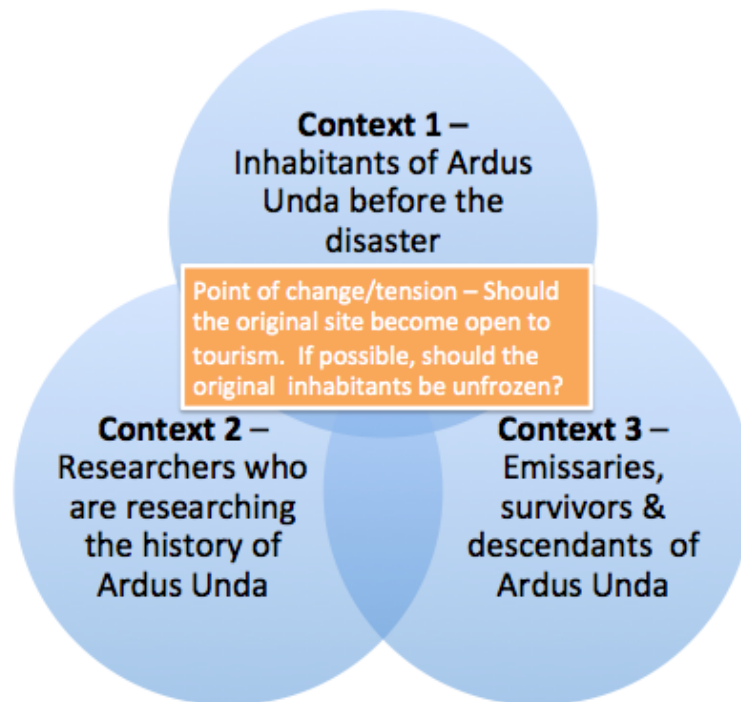


Figure 3 The three contexts created for The Water Reckoning project

Rolling with the participant groups

Another key discussion was concerned with what would ‘roll’ and how. There had been proposals that early participant groups make objects and artifacts that were handed over for others to then use. Another issue was the fact the groups would all be drama groups, not coming from different curriculum areas as in the earlier iterations of Rolling Role. There was a concern that groups would all want to work within the context of the Ardu Unda culture at some stage and so we should try to sequence that to ensure there weren’t conflicting offers being made at the same time. However it was difficult to create a sequential structure for who would look at what and when because different groups were starting at different times with time out for exams and vacations. One of the participating teachers suggested that each group should identify which frame they would prefer to start with and begin with different frames. A timetable in a spreadsheet was then set up so everyone knew when other groups would be working. The agreement or ‘rule’ created was that before each group started a frame of action they should check the content posted within the Water Museum. The new group should then try to ‘roll’ some aspects of the work wherever possible. To document the process and allow the project to ‘roll’ the function of the digital Water Museum became even more important and it became a type of rolling pre-text, providing a growing bank of material for other groups to work with.

It should also be noted that the dramatic or pre-text materials that were drawn upon did not only relate to these initial materials or work produced by the participants. As the project unfolded, factual information about global water issues was also incorporated and shared. Nearly all sites also found examples of actual ‘lost’ underwater cultures, often near their own country or continent (Simou found out about the lost culture of Pavlopetri in

Greece, Tan found the Lost City of Dwarka in Asia and Kulik found the Brazilian Atlantis off the American coast). Another key video that helped connect the fictional world to current real-world issues was one about recent experiences for people of the Pacific Island of Tuvalu. Many students found it to be a very moving experience when they realised that 'real' people are currently facing the loss of their homes and culture due to the effects of rising sea levels.

Publishing and interacting - digital spaces and affordances

The use of technology and digital platforms for revisiting Heathcote's Rolling Role model was a significant innovative for a number of reasons. These tools allow for ongoing collaboration and interactions, essential for both the planning processes, but also for enacting the project. Secondly they provide the spaces for publishing and documenting dramatic practice – a key feature of the Rolling Role model. Therefore considerable effort was devoted towards decisions regarding what online spaces would be used and for what purposes.

Spaces for responsive interactions

The first need that emerged was the one of online spaces where the facilitators and researchers could share planning and also meet for live interactions. Emails and Skype were the first modes of communication used and then Google documents and Google drive were used as a space to publish planning documents, which could be edited by others. The reliance on emails initially was not always ideal for discussing concepts and working on the creative framing. Sometimes there was not a lot of direct response from participants to ideas and this absence of response was difficult to read. Did it mean the idea proposed was no good, did it mean people were too busy to respond, or were they uncertain about whether a negative response might hurt the feelings of the person who proposed it? All options were possible within a community still in the stage of formation and getting to know each other but they highlight the ongoing importance of responsive interactions within the Rolling Role process.

We decided we needed a real-time communications option that allowed for all participants to 'see' each other to engage in these important discussions and negotiations and so investigated several possibilities. These included online collaborative tools such as Water-wheel TAP and Blackboard Collaborate. Both offer the potential for video communications, but in both cases there were issues with technical difficulties or aspects that were too complicated for initial users. As we were already using some Google functions, it was suggested (by occasional project advisor Paul Sutton) that perhaps it would be worth investigating the Google suite of applications. A Google+ community was then set up, that allowed the people involved to keep in touch and share the products of their work. Google hangout was also adopted for live communications sessions and it became our place of meeting for fortnightly Sunday meetings. Google hangout is a free collaborative tool that provides the possibility for video image and sound for approximately 10 people to collaborate at the same time (there is also the possibility of broadcasting to a wider audience though we did not end up using that facility). When the five groups started their drama work on site this platform was also used for online interactions between the participant school groups, even though high jumping the technical walls within school educational platforms was not always easy.

There had been ongoing discussions about ways to set up a closed space for sharing and interactions between school groups (for example through a Ning site) and many of the students wanted to meet their 'colleagues' through social media. Students could then engage in direct student-to-student communications. This was made very difficult though because in Australian schools (and other countries) any sites where students can collaborate with others outside their school education network tend to be blocked (and cannot readily be unblocked). Social network sites such as Facebook also tend to be blocked in schools. As educators we wished (and were required to ethically) to use cyberspaces in manageable and responsible ways and so in the end it was only the teachers and researchers who were posting to the shared spaces. Students were involved in creating content but were not able to have student-to-student contact outside of moderated sessions. Several live Google hangouts allowed for collective sharing of work and that was highly engaging for students.

Space for publishing and sharing creative work

As for the main 'publishing' spaces for the project, a web site served as the key public space and gateway for the project. This was set up as a Weebly based website (<http://www.water-reckoning.net>) one of the freely available tools that can be edited by multiple editors. That had embedded within it content from multiple sites, including the 'Water Museum' content which was actually hosted on another site called PlaceStories (<http://placestories.com>). We selected that space, as it is a platform that had been created by the community arts company Feral Arts as a community story-sharing platform. It allows for the sharing by multiple users of key content such as videos, audio, text and images, and for content to be geo-located and viewed on a map. It is also possible to embed content from PlaceStories into other sites. Several different projects were then created in PlaceStories and facilitators on each site began experimenting with posting material that could be regarded as predominantly 'in-role' content. As material was uploaded the most recent content published was clearly evident in the project thumbnails (see Figure 4) and so each group could review what had already been posted and consider ways to 'roll' the action forward. In a way, the pre-text or bank of dramatic materials grew and kept rolling. Even now other groups could use that dramatic material as pre-texts for other new processes.



Figure 5 Example of 'rolling' within the content created

Concluding comments

The experience of creating and enacting the Water Reckoning project, considered in the light of prior documentation regarding Rolling Role, has affirmed and informed understanding about contemporary applications of the model. Certainly the Rolling Role model is one that is worth revisiting and continuing to reinvigorate as a useful integrating strategy. It offers great potential for collaborative creative work between teachers in one school, but also for cross-site and international collaboration. Our work confirmed certain principles as identified by Heathcote's and her collaborators and extended upon them.

We would affirm the value of finding a central context that may be explored through at least three different frames including past, present and future with a connection to a contemporary context where a decision must be made. Coming up with those different overlapping frames and a common point of tension takes time and will require discussion and negotiation when multiple participants are involved. From our experience, which also concurs with examples from the Heathcote archives, it is very important to find or create high quality, aesthetically charged dramatic materials. These may include video, music and objects that serve to engage the emotions and the senses. The aesthetic power of Jason deCaires Taylor pre-text, the music selected and associated artifacts helped capture the imagination of participants (initially those planning the process, and then the student participants) and enabled them to engage and build commitment to the process.

Another point we would like to make is that the rolling nature of the process is ongoing, beginning from the planning phases and involves ongoing interactions and responses from collaborators. The planning and implementation of such projects requires considerable effort and careful attention to high selectivity, sequencing, reflection and responsive action.

Once the parameters for the context have been created, as the work unfolds, participating groups need to share and publish material and ensure they respond to and 'roll' with aspects from the work of others. Online sites now offer up the ideal opportunity for publication and interaction to occur between multiple groups, and for collaboration across sectors and national boundaries. The use of technology for recording, editing, publishing and sharing drama work was important with students reporting that they enjoyed new creative possibilities and opportunities to share their work. We further note that the facilitator or teacher has an important role to play as an editor and curator, selecting and weaving together materials and experiences.

Finally we could concur with Heathcote's belief, that the Rolling Roll model is well suited to collaborative learning, sharing and implementation through using web-based technologies. There are many different ways that Rolling Role can be further explored and experimented with in the future, by one teacher/facilitator across multiple classes, by multiple teacher/facilitators based at one site, or across multiple sites. As with much of Heathcote's work, there is a solid foundation to be found in her praxis and writing about this concept. The early work by Heathcote and her students has now been complemented by this recent iteration and together they provide models and materials which will stimulate ongoing reflection, reinterpretation, creative practice and research.

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