



FACE

TO

FACE

BY EMILY WELLS

EDUCATION SUPPORT MATERIALS

Written and compiled by Stephanie Tudor

Face to Face

by Emily Wells

Education Notes

by Stephanie Tudor



A Playlab Theatre Publication

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These materials have been compiled by Playlab Theatre in conjunction with the premier production of *Face to Face* by Emily Wells



About the Show

Moxie, passion, drive; whatever you want to call it, Leila's got it and it compelled her hundreds of kilometres from the remote country town she grew up in to the big city. It's been a hard six years, but she's so close to the success she craves, so close to her dreams of representing her community, so close to being an inspiration to the other girls back home just like her.

However, one girl just like her, her niece Maddie, has just shown up on her doorstep at two in the morning, disillusioned and far away from the same community that Leila left behind, and she's about to make her understand just how far she's strayed from home.

Face to Face is an intimate drama about two women, a generation apart, navigating the complex effects of disconnecting from Country, and criticism from your community, your family, and above all, yourself.

Estimated running time 80 minutes

Suitability Grades 10 – 12

Warnings Contains low-level course language, death, illness, and descriptions of police violence.

Themes

Loss

Relationships

Identity

Culture

Indigenous culture

Family

Powerlessness

Grief

Police Brutality

Discrimination

Oppression

Injustice



Curriculum Links

Dramatic Form and Style

Realism

Contemporary Theatre

Theatre of a Social Comment

Dramatic Conventions

Linear narrative

Fourth wall

Three-dimensional characters

Subtext

Motivated action; objectives; super-objectives;

Cast and Creatives

PLAYWRIGHT	Emily Wells
CULTURAL CONSULTANT	Colleen Wall
CULTURAL DRAMATURGS	Sueanne Hooper Annette Wells Jackie Jones Coral Jones Merle Hurley
CO-DIRECTORS	Nadine McDonald-Dowd Roxanne McDonald
DRAMATURG	Alexander Bayliss
DESIGNER	Bill Haycock
LIGHTING DESIGNER	David Walters
SOUND DESIGNER	Wil Hughes
STAGE MANAGERS	Sophie Watkins Elise Baker
CAST	Lorinda Merrypor Hannah Belanszky



Curriculum Connections

The curriculum connections are provided based on the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) General Drama Senior Syllabus Drama (2019 v1.1).

General Senior Syllabus

Unit 1 — Share

Students explore the importance of drama as a means to tell stories and share understandings of the human experience in a range of cultures, including those of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and/or those from the Asia-Pacific region. Students study this unit with the purposes of celebrating, documenting, empowering and informing audiences through storytelling as a dramatic form. In this unit, students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required to make and respond to dramatic works that use a wide range of dramatic conventions to tell stories in linear and non-linear forms. (Australia. Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority, 2019, p.26)

Inquiry questions

Unit 2:

- How does drama promote shared understandings of the human experience?
- How can we use drama to celebrate, document, empower and share understandings of the human experience?
- How can we recreate people's stories in dramatic linear and non-linear forms?
- How can people's stories be shared through making and responding to drama as ensemble and audience? (Australia. Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority, 2019, p.27)

Unit 3 — Challenge

Students explore how drama can be used to challenge our understanding of humanity over time. Students investigate dramatic styles that are united by social commentary, and that question their world and advocate change. They engage with the purposes of educating, challenging, empowering and informing audiences. In this unit, students develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required to make and respond to dramatic works that aspire to voice the difficult questions of human conscience and challenge our understanding of humanity. (Australia. Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority, 2019, p.34)



Inquiry questions

Unit 3:

- How can we use drama to challenge our understanding of humanity?
- How can drama help to educate, challenge and empower us to question society at this time and advocate change?
- How can we shape dramatic languages to communicate and challenge an understanding of humanity at this time?
- How can we make and respond to dramatic works to explore challenges and demands of the human experience? (Australia. Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority, 2019, p.35)

Taken from QCAA Drama 2019 v1.1 - General Senior Syllabus

ACARA

Year 9 and 10 Band Descriptors

- **Manipulate combinations of the elements of drama to develop and convey the physical and psychological aspects of roles and characters consistent with intentions in dramatic forms and performance styles**
 - Considering viewpoints — contexts: For example — How does the drama relate to its social context in which it was created? What culturally symbolic movements are evident in this drama? What historical influences have impacted on this drama? How are global trends in drama influencing Australian drama?
- **Evaluate how the elements of drama, forms and performance styles in devised and scripted drama convey meaning and aesthetic effect**
 - Considering viewpoints — philosophies and ideologies: For example — How has drama theory been used in creating and performing this text?
 - Considering viewpoints — evaluations: For example — How successful were the actors and director in conveying the playwright's stated intent? How successfully have the design elements been incorporated into the drama?
- **Analyse a range of drama from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their drama making.**



Style and Form

Key theatrical styles, forms and their associated conventions which are evident throughout the play:

Realism

A style of drama crafted to create believable representations of life; roles and characters in Realism drama draw on real-life or life-like motivations (Australia. Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority, 2019, p.74). This style of theatre aims to 'replicate life' onstage. This means that not only is there a focus on shaping three dimensional character portrayals but also authentic costumes, sets and props.

Theatre of a Social Comment

Theatre of a Social Comment refers to dramatic styles that are united by social commentary, and that question their world and advocate change. These texts educate, challenge, empower and entertain audiences in specific contexts. (Australia. Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority, 2019, p.78, p.34)

Classroom Links

Style and Form

- Identify examples of conventions used in *Face to Face*.
- How does the use of these conventions heighten the play's narrative?
- Consider a convention that you thought has an unexpected use in the production. How was it used effectively? What impact did it have on your understanding of the meaning?
- Consider the opposing perspectives that *Face to Face* draws upon. How does this change the audience's view of the social comments that the production makes?



Pre-Show Activities

Initial Questions

- What does the title of the play make you think of?
- What excites you about seeing this production?
- Theatre of a Social Comment looks to comment on society and the decisions we make and provoke audience to consider or change their behaviour. Can you think of a play or movie that you have seen that has done this for you? What was the impact?
- The production only has two actors, what do you think are some of the challenges or benefits that come with this?
- Why do you think it's important for theatre to share stories of what is happening in our world now?
- Why is it important to create theatre that educates, challenges and empowers the audience?
- What do you know about First Nation Cultures in Australia?
- Can you name some landmark cases or historical moments which have impacted First Nation peoples history?
- What do you know about the Black Lives Matter movement? Does this movement have any impact or relevance in Australia? If so, how, and why?

Read and Research

Violence against Australian First Nation Peoples and deaths in police custody continue to be an issue. Read the following articles to gain a deeper understanding about this issue and its impact.

- Why Aboriginal people are still dying in police custody <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-56728328>
- Aboriginal people keep dying in police custody. More than half are accused of a minor crime <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/aboriginal-people-keep-dying-in-police-custody-more-than-half-are-accused-of-a-minor-crime/1fc35c73-1b59-4a62-be0c-35ee3900ee7e>
- “The Torment of Our Powerlessness”: Police Violence Against Aboriginal People in Australia <https://hir.harvard.edu/police-violence-australia-aboriginals/>
- ‘Enough is enough’: video of police slamming Indigenous boy face-first to ground rekindles father’s rage <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jan/20/enough-is-enough-video-of-police-slamming-indigenous-boy-face-first-to-ground-rekindles-fathers-rage>



- ‘It does happen here’: Calls to address police brutality in Australia <https://www.smh.com.au/national/it-does-happen-here-calls-to-address-police-brutality-in-australia-20200603-p54z85.html>
- Police violence in Australia <https://othersociologist.com/2020/05/31/police-violence-in-australia/>

The play discusses the idea of defunding the police, but what does that really mean? See the following articles to gain a better understanding.

- Four Aboriginal deaths in custody in three weeks: Is defunding police the answer? <https://probonoaustralia.com.au/news/2021/03/four-aboriginal-deaths-in-custody-in-three-weeks-is-defunding-police-the-answer/>
- Defunding the police could bring positive change in Australia. These communities are showing the way <https://theconversation.com/defunding-the-police-could-bring-positive-change-in-australia-these-communities-are-showing-the-way-140333>

Read about the AFP, their Reconciliation Action Plan and the role of Liaison Officers:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officers <https://www.police.act.gov.au/about-us/programs-and-partners/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-liaison-officers>
- AFP Reconciliation Action Plan 2018 -2020 <https://www.afp.gov.au/about-us/publications-and-reports/reconciliation-action-plan-2018-20>

Watch the ABC News Documentary which examines the barriers Aboriginal Australians face at every level of attempting to be heard on platforms of power including education, access and lifestyle.

- “Will Australia Ever Have a Black Prime Minister?” <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/will-australia-ever-have-a-black-prime-minister>

Indigenous X is a great Indigenous-owned media organisation. Their website features a number of resources by First Nations authors. Be sure to check out their dedicated section to articles on Justice.

- IndigenousX champions voices from our communities through analysis, commentary, and public interest journalism. <https://indigenoux.com.au/newsfeed/>
- Justice Collection — <https://indigenoux.com.au/category/justice/>
- Listen to their podcast Blak Nation <https://indigenoux.com.au/indigenoux-presents-black-nation/>



SBS on demand features the documentary *Our Law* which is about WA's first Indigenous-run police station

- *Our Law* https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/1748101187683/our-law/??cx_cid=od:search:sem:convert:alwayson::prog&gclid=CjwKCAjwzOqKBhAWEiwArQGwaNnrFWrsr3oe-bGd5KzaWen4ihTwbo0AORKEunbM_JS_nXMwxcf14hoC1dAQAvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds
- What we can learn from Australia's only Indigenous-run police station <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/what-we-can-learn-from-australia-s-only-indigenous-run-police-station/4cd698ee-71c7-4b0a-b779-e026ca8756bf>

Watch SBS on demand's documentary *Incarceration Nation* which is an examination of the connection between relentless government intervention since colonisation to the trauma and disadvantage experiences by Australian First Nation Peoples — the two key drivers of incarceration.

- *Incarceration Nation* <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/movie/incarceration-nation/1930938947662>

Consider the follow resources to help you in the classroom to work with Indigenous texts. Teaching Indigenous texts

- Australia Council for the Arts — Indigenous Arts Protocols. The website outlines protocols in Indigenous literature, visual arts and craft, music, performing arts and new media. The guides reflect the complexity of Indigenous Australian culture, and provide information and advice on respecting Indigenous cultural heritage www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_arts
- Drama Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Guidelines for Drama/Theatre Education www.dramaaustralia.org.au/guidelines.html
- "Stepping stones to Australian Indigenous drama" in *Dramatexts: Creative practice for senior drama students* Strube, H, Beh, M, Davis, S, Jones, A, Ryan, S & Yaxley, R 2010, Jacaranda Press, Brisbane.

Motivation/Objective

When taking on a role it is important for every actor to have a clear idea of their character, and their wants and needs. We often refer to this as character objective and motivation.

- Ask students to define Character Motivation/Objective
- Discuss the responses and come up with a class definition. An example has been provided below:



- Motivation is what drives a character to think or behave in a certain way, it is the reason why they do and say things.
- An objective is what a character wants to achieve in any given moment in the play. This is achieved through voice and movement.
- Using this definition ask them to discuss what they think Leila and Maddie's objectives are throughout the play. They might want to focus on a specific scene or moment or a larger life decision such as moving to the city. How is their objective influenced by their motivation?
- Discuss how a different motivation will change the way a character is played, or the way lines are said.

In pairs have students explore the idea of motivation and objective through neutral scripts. Have the whole class perform these simultaneously, then have a few groups perform theirs in front of the class. Discuss how voice, movement and space was used to convey the characters' objective and motivation.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A: Hi! | A: I can't believe this |
| B: Hello. | B: what |
| A: How's everything? | A: This |
| B: Fine. I guess. | B: What |
| A: Do you know what time it is? | A: This. This. I can't believe it |
| B: No, not exactly. | B: Why not |
| A: Don't you have a watch? | A: This can't be happening |
| B: Not on me. | B: Yeah I know |
| A: Well? | A: This is too much |
| B: Well what? | B: What do you mean, too much? |
| A: What did you do last night? | A: We talked about this |
| B: What do you mean? | B: I know, but |
| A: What did you do last night? | A: and you went ahead with it anyway |
| B: Nothing. | B: it's ok |
| A: Nothing? | A: no it's not |
| B: Yep. | B: give it a go |
| A: I'm sorry I asked. | A: but ... |
| B: That's all right. | B: it will be alright, ok |



- Introduce/ revisit the idea of subtext
- Ask students to define subtext and come up with a class definition.
 - Subtext is content “under”, and hence, “sub”, or hidden beneath, the actual dialogue or text. To gather subtext the audience must “read between the lines” (Seger, 2011).
- In groups of four, using the same neutral scripts, act out the scenes. Have two students play the characters in the scene and the other two act as their shadows or ‘subtext translators’. After each line is delivered, the underlying subtext is revealed. This is similar to the gibberish or translator warm up.
- Engage students in a discussion about the importance of subtext in this scene and how it can be revealed through gesture and body language.

Extension

Have students continue to explore the use of subtext and realist acting conventions through the Yes/ No.

Students are given a scenario, for example parent and a child being caught trying to sneak out, a couple arguing etc, where each actor is only allowed to use one word. Start with Yes/ no but if students find this too challenging, they can use words like banana / orange. Have them perform these scenes in front of the class and discuss what was really going on? What was the conversation, what did each character want from the other and how did we know this?

Post-Show Activities

Discussion Questions

- What do you believe was the key message of the play?
- How did the actors communicate changes in scene and action?
- Try to recall the plot. What stages led to the eventual climax?
- Recall the moments of strong emotional connection. What led to these moments? Consider acting techniques as well as plot and design elements.
- What do you believe is the best aspect of *Face to Face*?
- How does the staging contribute to the production? Discuss the use of props, set and costumes.
- Why is this an important story to tell?
- How does *Face to Face* question or make a comment on Australian society and the world? Consider the references to political movements, cultural values, discrimination, loss of culture and police brutality.



- Describe three moments in the performance where you felt strongly about a particular issue or ideal. Why was this the case?
- The play has a very abrupt ending with the reveal of Debbie's death. Why do you think this is the case? How did this impact you or your understanding of the dramatic meaning?
- Predict what you think happens next for these two characters.
- *Face to Face* explores important issues but also examines these struggles on a very personal and family level. How do you think this impacted your view of the issues?
- Do you think there are any light-hearted or humorous moments in the play? Support your answer with reference to the text.

Key Moments

As a class identify 5 key moments from the production. Break students up into smaller groups and assign them each a key moment.

1. Have students recreate this moment as series of freeze frames with no dialogue. The movements should be strong and your emotions evident to effectively convey this to the audience.
2. Students are then to add two words per freeze frame. These can be spoken to the other characters or direct address to the audience.
3. Add additional dialogue so the scene is complete.

OR

2. Have students recreate this moment as series of freeze frames with no dialogue. The movements should be strong and your emotions evident to effectively convey this to the audience.
3. Have them consider this a gallery walk through a museum. Have them add a title to each of these freeze frames to direct dramatic focus.
4. When presenting these, one actor must step out of the freeze frame and explain the title and the image, as if they were a tour guide explaining a painting.
5. Have students extend on this by turning each freeze frame into an abstract representation of that moment, focusing on the mood or character emotions portrayed, rather than the plot. Students can bring these moments to life in a movement sequence.



Timeline

Have students create a timeline of the key events and time periods from the play, including what is seen on stage and what events have taken place and are spoken about. Discuss the impact of the play spanning such a long time and traveling to multiple locations. How does this change our understanding of the characters and their journey?

Character Map

Create a “map” of the main characters. This is useful to do directly after viewing the performance, so students understand the narrative and nature of the work. This can also help later when constructing a response or critique. Consider the experiences within the play that define the characters’ journey, the status shifts through the production and how their actions demonstrate their belief systems.

Key Themes

Engage students in a discussion about the key themes and concepts explored throughout the production. Ask students which themes were most obvious and what their interpretation of them was. Link this to the manipulation of the dramatic elements and the dramatic meaning

Tug of War

Face to Face explores the ethical decisions and tensions that exist within how to approach and combat systemic problems. While the central characters have shared similar experiences and struggles, they approach these and look to solve these in very different ways. To delve into these ideas further, have students complete a ‘Tug of War.’ In this activity they are to put the central question up the top and look at each side of the argument, asking them to consider what is the ‘pull’ or ‘tug’ for supporting that side of the argument. In the middle students are to add any ‘what if’ questions. These are questions, concerns or comments that may help to solve this issue that need to be explored further to solve the issue. Encourage students to remember that there is no correct answer but simply differing of opinions. Visit http://www.pz.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Tug%20of%20War_0.pdf for further instructions for the activity.

- Defunding the police will help solve the problem of police brutality.
- You need to work from the inside, not the outside, to successfully fix a problem.
- Fighting for what you believe in is worth any cost.
- Public action is the best way to solve a systemic problem.

Encourage students to come up with their own.



Script Work

In groups of three have students examine one of the script excerpts. They are to read through the text and decide what each characters' motivation, objective and obstacle is. Also have them discuss key lines where the subtext is important. Students are then to take on the roles of Maddie, Leila and a director. The director will help the actors portray their character's motivations through advice about blocking, and subtext.

After presenting these to the class, discuss how the motivation of each character was portrayed and any improvements.

Monologue

Start a discussion with students about what they think might have happened when Leila and Maddie last saw each other or in the years between that interaction and the start of the play.

- Brainstorm a list of possible events. For example
 - Leila's perspective about events and circumstances that makes her leave and move to the city
 - Maddie finding out about her mum's cancer
 - Leila picking up the phone to call her sister
- What is each characters' motivation, obstacle, and objective in that event?
- Think about the play. What do we already know about their lives?

Introduce the idea of a monologue.

A monologue is simply a character speaking their thoughts aloud for the benefit of the audience. The character can be speaking directly to the audience; however, they may just be speaking to themselves, another character or even to an object. The setting for the speech can be implied or hinted at during the speech itself. The character should move around a little and also gesture to help convey emotions and atmosphere for the audience.

- Using accurate scriptwriting conventions write a missing monologue that provides insight into either Leila or Maddie.
- Consider the characters relationship in the play. What is implied about their past relationship? Use this information to help you create authentic dialogue.
- Ensure that you are developing tension.
- Once you have written these workshop the scene or monologue.

Make sure you

- Establish and maintain a clear character voice



- Create perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places from the play
- Use dramatic languages and scriptwriting conventions
- Include new information. Don't just recount what we already know from the play.
- Only include one complication. It is one moment in time, do not try to include too much.
- Think about why the character is revealing what they are revealing. This will help you to build tension.
- Think about what happened right before this moment and what will happen right after.

Extension:

Ask students to present their monologues as a polished performance.

Consider

- Movement and gesture
- Pace and pause
- Characterisation
- Use of stage space

Identity

Ask students to consider who they are, and how their individual identity has been shaped. Ask them to create a mind map that unpacks their identity. Encourage them to consider how they would describe themselves and put any key information on the mind map. You could also do this activity practically and have students talk to another student about 'who they are'.

After this ask students to examine what they have written down or what they said and ask them to consider

- What factors shaped your identity?
- What parts of your identity have been shaped by your family, friends, culture or community?
- What parts of your identity are at odds with those of your family, friends culture or community?



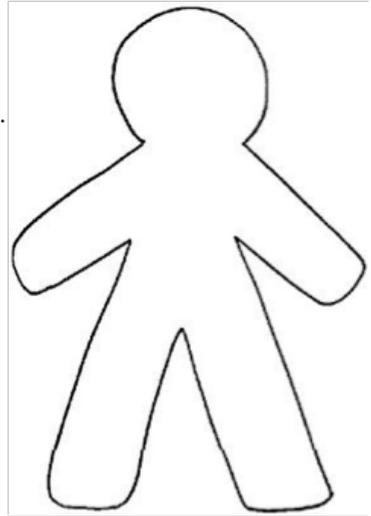
Ask students to draw the outline of a person, similar to the one of the right. You can also find this template online.

Label these and put them around the classroom. Ask student to go around and on the outside of each 'person' they are to write something about that classmate.

Students are to then get their person back and fill in the inside with how they see themselves. Look at the communalities and differences between how their classmates see them, to who they want to be / they are.

Have a discussion about the following questions

- What happens when others view us differently than we view ourselves?
- What parts of your identity do you choose for yourself?
- What parts of your identity do you think are determined by others, by society, or by chance?
- Whose opinions and beliefs have the greatest effect on how you think about your own identity?
- What aspects of your identity do you keep private in order to be accepted?
- What aspects of your identity are you willing to change to fit in?
- How do our identities influence our choices?



Ask students to then consider these questions from the point of view of *Face to Face*.

Shaping Theatre

After viewing *Face to Face*, take a key moment that impacted you and use it as inspiration for a new performance manipulating the convention present within that key moment.

Consider the inquiry questions from Unit 3: Challenge “How can we use drama to challenge our understanding of humanity?”

In 5 minutes, brainstorm

- What it means to be human.
- What we need to question in society at this time?
- What is an issue that needs to be advocated for?



- What do you think needs to be talked about more, in your community, in your school, in your country

After you have your brainstorm go through what you have written and highlight commonalities. Do you see any trends emerging? If not think about what stands out on the list

Alternatively, swap your list with someone else and highlight key ideas that stand out to you from their list.

Read the interview with Emily Wells and consider her statement about her playwrighting process and the importance of finding, “your ‘seed’ — an idea or topic that you really want to explore, highlight, learn more about, or showcase.”

What is your ‘seed’?

Use this as well as the key ideas from your brainstorm to begin to consider a new piece of theatre that:

- Creates a shared understanding of the human experience
- Shares, celebrates, documents, empowers or informs audiences

Consider how you may explore this issue in a new context.

- An outline of the theme / issue to explore
- Brainstorm dramatic conventions you could use
- The dramatic meaning you want to convey to your audience.

Workshop these.

You may then want to

- Write key dialogue that represents your idea
- Create a storyboard with moments of key action
- Continue to workshop these in the class to create a short scene



Scene Excerpt 1

MADDIE

I wish Mum could have come with me.

Beat.

But I just had to come myself.

MADDIE notices the tea cup and assumes it's for her. She moves to the couch, puts her feet and pinkie up, and takes a sip.

Mmm.

Beat.

Mum always wanted me to come see you in the city. Said it'd make me appreciate home more. Or that I'd fall in love with it and then she'd have a place to come and stay when she needed to time out from the country.

Beat.

When you left home you said I should visit too.

LEILA

Yeah, I just wish it wasn't such late notice, that's all.

MADDIE

Pretty sure us blakfullas invented late notice. Wait! Is murri time still a thing in the city? — You sure you're still murri?

LEILA

Excuse me? Yes!

MADDIE

Mmm, suuuure. [*Stirring*]

LEILA

I just ordered a new pair of Haus of Dizzy earrings, thank you very much.

MADDIE

Well sor-ry Miss NAIDOC.

LEILA

And I got everyone at my work onto them as well. Well some of them.

MADDIE

Yeah yeah. You wanna know what my real question is? How are you sitting here serving tea with no milk?



MADDIE struts to the kitchen to get more milk. Before LEILA can stop her, Maddie opens the fridge, grabs the milk and notices it is off. MADDIE's jaw drops.

LEILA

It's been a big week.

MADDIE takes the lid off and dry retches.

Month.

MADDIE takes another whiff and dry retches again.

Stop sniffing it!

MADDIE

Ugh, that is so foul.

LEILA

I know.

MADDIE

Like so wrong.

LEILA

I know!

MADDIE

I think something's growing in there.

LEILA

Drop it Maddie!

MADDIE

Is everything okay?

LEILA

Look. Sometimes ... Okay all the time, you don't leave the office til late. You plan to get milk on the way home but then your client calls with something that is somehow always urgent. So you take the call while you furiously type an email while you wait for the train, then before you even get off the train you're furiously typing another email, while you're on another call. Then before you know it you're walking in your front door, you don't have any damn milk and you're still on the phone.

MADDIE

That must be why it always goes to voicemail when we call.



Classroom Links

Performance

- In groups read the scene aloud.
- Try out extreme possibilities as actors might do during rehearsals such as one actor not moving and one continually moving, using extremes of volumes or emotions etc.
- Go through the scene twice, trying out two contrasting sets of desires/movement/intentions and share their work.
- How do the circumstances and surroundings affect what is being said? Does the audience pick up on different agendas or attitudes when the surroundings change?
- This scene sets up the relationships for the rest of the play. Consider how to best convey these through movement and dialogue.
- Layer in the identified conventions. How does this change the meaning of the scene?
- Play the scene using a heightened or vaudeville style vs Realism conventions. How does this change the meaning?

Scene Excerpt 2

- MADDIE Well then who do you work for?
- LEILA I work for ECF.
- Maddie Endigenous ... Communities ... Forever?
- LEILA Elite ... Consultancy Firm.
- MADDIE What the heck does that mean.
- LEILA It means I work really closely, in partnership, with organisations like Blak on Trak.
- MADDIE Yeah, so you basically work for them.
- LEILA Kind of, but no. I work for ECF.
- MADDIE So why couldn't you just say that?



LEILA It's complicated.

MADDIE I'm not that dumb. You work for some firm, and work with mob. That's it right?

LEILA Well, yeah. But I also work with the policy makers, the big hitters, you know. Like ... AFP for example.

MADDIE Aboriginal ... Family ... Protection?

LEILA Australian ... Federal ... Police.

MADDIE Wait, what?!

LEILA Yes, AFP.

Beat.

MADDIE You lied to me.

LEILA No —

MADDIE You told me you work for Blak on Track.

LEILA No, I never said that. I said I do similar work.

MADDIE Wow ... that's fucked Auntie Leila.

LEILA The work I do is similar.

MADDIE I'm not talking about your work just yet. I'm talking about you flat out lying to me.

LEILA I never lied.

MADDIE Oh sorry, flat out deceiving me. That better?

LEILA That's not important right now. What's important is what we do about your role in the incident.

MADDIE Oh my god. That wasn't a confession! You can't take what I just said as a confession! You can't take that to them to use against me!



LEILA Maddie, I'm not going to use it against you.

MADDIE Fuck! Blak on Trak said to always be careful what you say in front of cops. Don't say anything you don't want on the record.

LEILA I know their programs well, Maddie.

MADDIE Bullshit.

LEILA My team and Blak on Trak have the same end goal. And are doing similar work to make sure we all get there.

MADDIE How the fuck do you do 'similar work'?

LEILA We develop programs for the AFP that support young ones to understand the legal system.

MADDIE And how's that going for you?

LEILA Well, Blak on Trak are making a real name for themselves in that space. So we're currently advising that AFP fund some of their programs.

MADDIE Fuck off. So another community org does all the grunt work and your crew of cops can come in, slap a logo on it and act like it was all them.

LEILA No, the AFP are going to —

MADDIE Fuck the acronyms. Call them what they are.

LEILA The department I'm working with is actually going to fund —

MADDIE Oh your department? What exactly is your department?

LEILA I work with —

MADDIE Are you an officer? Please don't tell me you are an officer.

LEILA I'm not an officer.

MADDIE Oh god, you're even higher up than that? Fuck Aunty Leila.



- LEILA No, okay, I am a Project Manager. Which means I work with ECF's clients like the AFP to research strategies and implement programs that actually work. I am a conduit —
- MADDIE What the fuck is a conduit?!
- LEILA I put myself in the middle, between the AF- Australian Federal Police and mob —
- MADDIE Ohhh finally a word this little country bumpkin can understand! Mob!
- You think you're real woke because you use the word mob? *[Mocking, like a white person]* Oh Leila, please tell me more about your 'mob'. Do your 'mob' know what you do? Do your 'mob' know what you moved all the way to the big city for?
- LEILA I'm allowed to say mob Maddie.
- MADDIE The word doesn't hit the same when it comes out of the cops. Sounds exactly like when they came to see us after the 'incident'. Fuck, that's it! How'd I not see all those times you called it an incident too?
- LEILA Maddie, I am the link between the police and the community.
- MADDIE There it is. Finally. Was that so hard?
- LEILA My job is to advise and educate the police force on how they can do better.
- MADDIE Well fuck me, where do I start?



Classroom Links

Directing

Imagine you are directing *Face to Face* and use the script excerpt to create a vision for the production. Consider:

- The conventions used in the production
- What message / idea you want to convey to the audience and how you will achieve this.
- The conventions and styles you would use to convey this piece. What are the differences in having actors play multiple characters? How would the scene be different if using realism conventions versus Epic Theatre or movement conventions? Experiment with a range of conventions and styles.
- Block your scene with other students, however, experiment with objectives, motivations and subtext for the characters. Which one more closely matches your initial vision and interpretation, and why?
- Play the scene using a heightened or vaudeville style vs Realism conventions. How does this change the meaning?

Meet the Writer

Interview with Emily Wells

How do you begin the playwriting process?

You find your 'seed' — an idea or topic that you really want to explore, highlight, learn more about, or showcase. Sometimes it can be really clear, like I want to showcase various perspectives of Indigenous women or I want to explore grief or I want to learn more about how different generations approach loss. You don't have to have the answer (and sometimes there isn't one clear answer anyway!), but it's important to have something to pull apart. Then I start dreaming up scenarios that could explore this, which is when I start to think of how characters could interact with the idea/topic I'm exploring.

What inspired you to write this play? Why this play? Why now?

Face to Face is built out of the frustration that as First Nations women, we are expected to hold the same opinion on everything. Then depending on our opinion or lived experience, others feel they can decide how 'blak' we are. I wanted to write a play that showcased and celebrated two blak women with different perspectives



to highlight how many of us have the same drive or end goal, but have different approaches or beliefs on how to get there. I wanted to combat the idea that we have to achieve absolute consensus to move forward, when in fact we're all trying to move forward already, and we need to celebrate the multiple approaches to that. Ultimately, consensus shouldn't stand in the way of needed change.

The two central characters approach the issues they both face very differently, yet there is no clear 'right way' highlighted in the text. Is this done on purpose?

Absolutely! I wanted to highlight that Indigenous women are complex, constellated — we aren't a singular identity or way of being or way of thinking — and neither one of the central characters is more or less Black than the other. Through the play I interrogate the many ways we learn, relearn and adapt how we connect to our culture and our people, and how these two women are both navigating the complex effects of disconnecting from Country, and criticism from your community, your family, and above all, yourself.

Can you explain the importance of the title?

On one hand, it is literal — Leila comes face to face with her niece Maddie, who she hasn't seen in years. On the other hand, it translates to the characters coming face to face with something they're trying to escape. For Leila, it is coming face to face with her community back home (embodied through Maddie), and having to face the questions, complexities and sacrifices of her job. For Maddie, it is facing the image of Aunty Leila and her big city life that she had built up vs. the reality of her Aunty's politic and living situation, and most notably being forced to face her grief.

What do you see is at the heart of *Face to Face*?

Consensus shouldn't stand in the way of change. We can interrogate one another's actions, but we need to ensure we don't stifle ourselves by using energy on derailing the work of others with a different approach in the name of chasing consensus. We need to challenge *and* celebrate diverse viewpoints and varied approaches to change, and honour that we all are fighting for the same thing — our culture, our people.

Theatre of a Social Comment challenges our understanding of humanity and expresses views about society. How did you highlight the important messages and social comments in the play, while ensuring that the audience still feels that they are creating meaning and not being 'preached' to?

At the end of the day, this play is about the journey of two women. The situations, the characters in it, are fictional, but absolutely realistic and relatable (I know this from my own lived experience and that of friends, family and



peers). By demonstrating the genuine, painful, tangible impact of ‘society’ (societal issues, pressures, ideas) on two people, particularly a young woman, audiences see the reality of these pressures playing out on real people, rather than the theoretical idea of them.

What do you see as being the role of playwrights in our society?

At the end of the day, to make people feel *something*. There is growing pressure to spark radical change with theatre — which is what we all want! However, there is great opportunity and importance for playwrights to spark change on multiple levels. Some playwrights take it upon themselves to spark radical societal change on a mass scale, and some playwrights aim to spark change on a more personal, micro level with the audience.

For young people wanting to create theatre or start writing scripts what advice would you give them?

Do it! Don’t wait for an external opportunity to find you or encourage you to write, just start creating in whatever way you can. You are what you surround yourself with — read plays, watch plays, research playwrights.

What are your ‘go to’ methods or techniques for creating a believable, three dimensional character?

Alex Bayliss from Playlab taught me to create and know all the parts of your character. Not just the characteristics, history and relationships of your character that is mentioned in the play, but create the characteristics, history and relationships that sit outside the play. Not every characteristic you create needs to be mentioned or seen in the play, but it will help you know the character more deeply. So much so, that you know the character so deeply that you know exactly how they would react to any situation at any moment.

You were one of three playwrights selected for Playlab’s year-long development program Alpha Processing. What is this program and what have you gained from it?

Alpha Processing includes dedicated dramaturgy, which helped to deeply interrogate the central idea of my play and solidify the plot. Through the program I gained a lot of clarity on exactly what I want to say with this play, and drilled into the specifics of how the play and characters can best orchestrate that.



Elements of Drama Discussion

ROLE RELATIONSHIP CHARACTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose a specific moment of dramatic action that exemplifies one of the characters. How? Why? What dramatic meaning did this communicate to the audience?• How would you describe each character? How are their characters portrayed through the voice and movement of the actors?• How does Leila and Maddie's relationship change over the course of the play?• How would you describe Maddie's relationship with Debbie?• What do you think has motivated Leila to reach out to her aunt?• Leila comments that she and Maddie are very similar. Do you agree with this? Why / why not?• Think about the start of the play, how did this set up the relationships between each of the characters?• How were the relationships shown through body language and movement?
TENSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were some of the key examples of tension during the production?• How did the tension engage you?• What were you invested in?• How did the lack of changes in time and place impact the development of tension?• Consider the use of heightened emotions and performance. How did this create or break the tension?• Describe moments of tension of task.• Tension of relationship is present throughout the play. What are the most obvious examples of this? Why does the tension develop?• The tension is left unresolved at the end of the play. Why do you think the playwright has decided to end it like this?



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tension is broken through moments of humour throughout. What impact did this have on the audience?
FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think about the moments onstage where dramatic focus shifted. What happened onstage to facilitate this change?• How were the design elements used to shift the dramatic focus?• How has dramatic focus been used to convey the characters' relationship with each other?• How has dramatic focus been used to remind the audience that the play is not only about these characters but about the wider issues that impact them?
TIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When is the play set?• Consider the intertextual references, how is time relevant in relation to these?• Could this play be set 5 years ago? Why/ why not?
PLACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is place communicated to the audience?• How does Leila interact with the set? What does this communicate to the audience?
SPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyse the different ways that the stage was used throughout the production.• How did the use of the space help to convey the characters' relationship?• How did the lighting enhance the different use of the space?• Consider when there was an extreme use of space used. How did this impact you as an audience member?
MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider how relationships in the play are communicated through body language and movement. Consider how you can show a relationship without "explaining" it.• Was the movement symbolic in anyway?• How was movement contrasted by stillness? What effect did this have?



LANGUAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How were words used to create power?• Consider the language used in the opening monologue. How does this set up time and place?• What was the subtext behind some of the memorable lines?• How was language used to shape character? Consider the different ways each character speaks / uses language.
CONTRAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe two contrasting moments in <i>Face to Face</i>. How were these moments created through sound, lighting, voice and movement?• Analyse the ways in which contrast is used throughout the play in relation to the range of moods.• Leila and Maddie have contrasting opinions on how to solve the problems they both encounter. Examine how this is communicated and how it impacts their relationship.• What other elements of contrast did you see throughout the production?• Contrast the characters at the start of the play to end. How have they changed?• How did the actors change their voice and movement to portray a range of contrasting characters?
MOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the impact of the sound design and music used to create specific moods. Use specific moments of dramatic action from the show and discuss how they made the audience feel.• Consider how they would've been different if different artistic choices were made, such as alternative lighting or sound.• How would you describe the mood when it is revealed what happened to Debbie? How was this mood created?• Consider the mood at the start of the play. How does this contrast with the end of the play?• Consider a moment of intense mood. What performance techniques and skills of the actors were utilised to make you feel this way?



SYMBOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss the impact of the use of symbol throughout. How did this impact your understanding of the production and the narrative?• Consider the title of the play. What do you think it means and how does it change your understanding of the play?
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Assessment Ideas

Extended Response

Task 1

“Some playwrights take it upon themselves to spark radical societal change on a mass scale, and some playwrights aim to spark change on a more personal, micro level with the audience.” Emily Wells

After viewing *Face to Face* evaluate the effectiveness of the production by analysing the on-stage dramatic action and how the use of the dramatic languages created dramatic meaning. In your response consider how the play challenges the audience to make a societal change. Explores two opposing views. Support your statements with perceptive and thorough evaluation and supporting evidence from key moments in the production. Use appropriate drama terminology throughout your essay.

Task 2

“We need to challenge and celebrate diverse viewpoints and varied approaches to change, and honour that we all are fighting for the same thing — our culture, our people.” Emily Wells

In response to the above quote, you are to write an analytical essay evaluating how the production works to challenge and celebrate diverse viewpoints. You are to evaluate the success of the production to share understandings of the human experience and how it created dramatic meaning through the manipulation of the two elements of drama and one key convention.

Task 3

“I wanted to highlight that Indigenous women are complex, constellated — we aren’t a singular identity or way of being or way of thinking — and neither one of the central characters is more or less black than the other.” Emily Wells

In response to the above quote, you are to write an analytical essay evaluating how the audience has been positioned to view identity in *Face to Face*. You are to evaluate the success of the production and how it created dramatic meaning through the manipulation of the elements of character, symbol, tension and mood. You may want to consider the use of the conventions in your response.