**Jamie Mackay**

Could you introduce yourself and say a little about your arts education context?

**Nikki Doig**

My name is Nikki Doy. I am a lecturer in primary education at the University of Dundee. I'm formerly a primary school teacher, but before that my first degree was in drama from then the RSAMD and as a result of that I deliver all the drama inputs for our undergraduate and postgraduate primary education students.

**Jamie Mackay**

And can you say a little about why you applied for the MEd program?

**Nikki Doig**

Yeah. I already had a master's, nothing to do with education, but because I worked at the University I'd spoken about doing the MEd, not long after I had joined the University, I'd heard about it and I was put off it at the time, and my path was kind of being pushed towards doing a PhD. But being new to higher education, I didn't have any frame of reference in terms of research interests, or what research was, and what I would do a PhD on. But more than that, working in drama education at the University, and being the only drama person, I was very much, I felt very isolated, as we all often do in our specialisms, and I really wanted an opportunity to connect with other people in drama education, and with the arts, and get back to my roots and my arts tribe, and I knew that doing a PhD in my own little box wouldn't allow me to do that. I had spoken to a colleague who was in the middle of her MEd at the time, and she had said that what initially I had wanted, I probably would not find, which was to be taught how to teach people to teach drama, direct kind of teaching me what to do. And so, I was a little bit hesitant when I went into this kind of big void of unknown in terms of where my studies would take me, but it's 100% exceeded actually what my expectations would have been. It it yeah, it was. It felt like stepping into an empty void, almost not knowing what to expect. And yet the journey kind of ended up mapping itself out quite clearly. So yeah, it was connection with other people. To learn about what I teach, to learn more about what I teach, but to connect with folk, and ultimately, is why I did the master’s, and I needed the professional development. Without a carrot on a stick we could sit and try and work away on our own. But I needed to speak to people to get outside my own head, and to challenge myself and my own thinking.

**Jamie Mackay**

And can you say, or could you describe your journey through the MEd?

**Nikki Doig**

Well, probably already said a little bit about the start. I didn't really know what it would entail. And I think for me, I went in when I had to do the presentation to get to get a place on the MEd, I had an idea about what I wanted to do, and that kind of probably was my anchor through it and I had quite a clear vision of how I work with the students and how I want to develop my understanding of how to support them, and that probably guided, because and our journey is self-directed to a certain extent, to a certain extent in terms of what we enquire into, and that was always my kind of anchor point. The bit that I returned to was student teacher confidence, really, and how to build that. And so, the different modules gave me opportunity, starting off with PG Cap, sorry, PG Cert [year 2 module ‘Project PG Cert’ now ‘Teacher as Researcher], it was very scaffolded, in a sense, in terms of, as I said I was new to research, and so, being able to engage in that project initially, I always refer to as the dress rehearsal for the Final Project in terms of introducing us to ethics and walking us through that process, and a small scale study and developing that, I was able to then build on that in the Final Project as well, and even in the middle with Context and Culture and the exploration of our self as artists, which I struggled with, I think, because I always said, ‘Well, I'm a teacher, not an artist’, and of course we're all artists who teach in some respects, and that was, there was a real joy there in being able, ultimately joy, in being able to kind of lose myself in areas that I wanted to inquire into and go down rabbit holes, and things that weren't necessarily directly relevant to what I teach. Still, I can see now, looking back, inform what I teach and inform what I do, and just the process, I think it's so important. I always say, being teachers, to be learners again. And it's really helped me to renew the empathy that I feel with my students. Hopefully, I'm more sympathetic and more empathetic with them. I, to understand that learning process through the eyes of a learner has been really, really important as well.

**Jamie Mackay**

And what did you focus on for your Final Project?

**Nikki Doig**

My Final Project was looking at an approach to dramatic enquiry called Mantle of the Expert, and I had engaged with professional development just before starting on my masters which kind of renewed my interest in Mantle that I’d been introduced to years and years ago in my undergrad. and it really resonated with me in terms of the power that it can bring in terms of pedagogical drama to the classroom. But because we have very limited contact time with our teachers, our student teachers, I needed to be absolutely sure that what I’m teaching has impact, and so I was able to use my Final Project to explore the impact of Mantle of the Expert on drama, and teaching students confidence to teach drama, but also their understanding of interdisciplinary learning, which is a huge part of the curriculum, but students really kind of struggle to get their head around it. And so, my final project evaluated a postgrad elective that I designed around Mantle of the Expert and connections with interdisciplinary learning.

**Jamie Mackay**

Okay? And what impact did this have on your practice as an arts educator?

**Nikki Doig**

The Final Project?

**Jamie Mackay**

Well, maybe the whole thing.

**Nikki Doig**

It's been massive. It's been absolutely huge for me. I've been thinking about this a lot. We came out, not just not just how buoyed up we all were when we finished our masters in that feeling of achievement, but for me it feels like it's just, it's really got the ball rolling in terms of momentum. I understand now my role in the university as an academic. I use that term now. I, it was a horrible term to apply to myself before, but now I feel really comfortable with that term and I understand it, and not in a really ivory tower way, but I understand the importance of researching my practice to ensure impact and kind of future momentum. I've taken my scholarship into conference presentations and started publishing. I'm going through a promotion process just now to move on to senior lecturer and the work that I've done through my MEd, and subsequently, as a result of my MEd's, been really, really fundamental to the strength of my application for that. And motivation, just really reigniting the flame and the passion that sits behind what we do. There is a particular passion behind arts education and that's why it's so important to reconnect with other people that are working in the arts, and my Action Learning Set were folk from all different walks, instrumentalists, and dancers, and at first I was like, ‘Oh, gosh! I want to be my drama people’ and my, and I have learnt so much from them as well, and we've been such a group that, and we continue to be friends and kind of share ideas and support each other. So it's been absolutely, hugely informative to who I am, and motivational to kind of my ongoing future direction.

**Jamie Mackay**

You may well have answered this fully, anyway but what has changed as a result of studying the MEd?

**Nikki Doig**

Me, my personal and my professional identity has evolved. I'm more comfortable, where I am now in higher education, I have the confidence of, more confidence in in feeling like I have a voice, and I have something to contribute in terms of the kind of academic world that I live in, but I also feel much more confident in terms of the work that I do with the students as well. I think.

**Jamie Mackay**

Okay, thank you so much, Nikki.