



It's the excellence that really matters...

I've always liked the philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca because he makes me smile. One of his teaching principles was to expect the worst, and if that doesn't happen, then rejoice! A little extreme, but it does give you a smile doesn't it?

As a Speech and Drama practitioner I can also smile at the view he held that

Life's like a play: it's not the length, but the excellence of the acting that matters.

I've been really fortunate recently to experience that excellence of acting in the lives of some adult students with an incredible passion for acting. They come from diverse backgrounds – law, psychology and there's even an electrician in the mix; yet, they are working for several hours each week to achieve their Associate Diplomas in Drama and Performance. They are skilled and committed performers, willing to take a risk and put it all on the line and play life, with excellence in acting.

There's no doubt that the AMEB Drama and Performance syllabus is one which asks nothing but excellence. Yet, it is an achievable syllabus! Students learn so much about speech, voice, movement, physicality, literature, history and

of course drama! They become excellent at reading prose, verse, drama, essays, diaries and so on. They can show their versatility as an actor and as a person through a great variety of performances, all managed themselves. They become the stage director, set designer, music director and actor in one examination and there is nothing more satisfying in the world for them than to do this with excellence.

At the local branch of Actor's Centre Australia (ACA Adelaide), students are working incredibly hard to also study Speech and Drama. They have spent the last few months working individually and in ensemble performance to learn about drama, characterisation and most importantly, conveying the emotional truth of stories. In collaboration with Adrian Barnes from the ACA Adelaide we have been able to take a chance and give eight students a chance to really demonstrate excellence of performance as they take the 'Next Step' not only within the Actor's Centre course, but

also in doing an AMEB Speech and Drama course, which recognises their skill and prior learning, taking it to a new level, developing talent, fostering talent, watching talent grow and thrive.

It is important to recognise the skills and talents in all our students – to step 'outside the box' and see that all experiences of life can contribute to incredible performances, because Seneca was right when he said Life really is like a play and as Shakespeare says "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players". So we play our own part in helping our candidates achieve excellence and in December at the AMEB Award's Ceremony, I invite you to take the time to celebrate our adventures and successes.

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