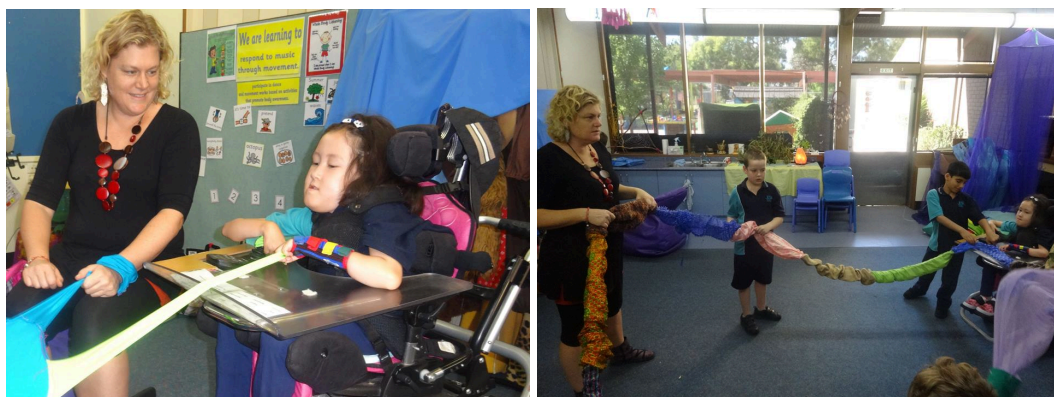


ANNA FOLETTA DMT SNAPSHOT MAY



This is a short interview conducted in May 2016 with Anna, through a project called DMT Snapshots in which short interviews were conducted by Ezme Webb and Tess Hens to be posted on the DTAA Facebook Group to support networking and sharing of experiences between Australasian DMTs. It provides some insight into Anna's DMT work and experiences....

Our Snapshot project has thus far profiled established DMTs, so to mix it up for May we sought an early-career practitioner to explore how their first steps into the DMT field are being made.

After teaching since 2002 Anna Foletta completed the Phoenix Dance-Movement Therapy Diploma in 2015 and has found her educational experience made the transition from student to practitioner relatively easy.

CLIENT GROUPS

Anna's three DMT roles are: Music, Dance and Drama teacher for children with special needs ranging from 5 to 18 years, Group and Private DMT facilitator for people with dementia, and Circle Facilitator for pre-adolescent/adolescent girls.

FINDING WORK...

Anna has sourced her roles from engaging in her Melbourne dance networks and conversing more widely about her DMT work.

Knowing of both her teaching experience and that she was completing the DMT course, Anna's friend approached her to work with children at a Melbourne special needs school.

"I began doing some volunteer work in 2015 and then commenced the position in 2016, as the Music Dance and Drama teacher one day a week.

“My work with people in an aged care facility, particularly with people with dementia, blossomed from conversations about what I do for a living, while visiting a friend in the facility. I created a proposal and spoke to the activities co-ordinator and am now working there on a casual but regular basis as a sub-contractor.

“I created my own work with pre-adolescent girls, combining it with my experience in holding circles for young girls/women. I hold monthly circles with incorporate DMT, while addressing many of the challenges associated with the rites of passage during adolescence.”

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND STRATEGIES...

“Due to my experience teaching, I have found the transition relatively easy. I would have found my job at school very challenging – as there is a lot of classroom management in and amongst the DMT, with many challenging behaviours.”

“I continue to use the same strategies as when I was a teacher – reflection, talking about issues with a mentor at school, laughing about the crazy times and look after myself through my own dance practice, journaling and maintaining positive support networks.”

INFLUENCES

Anna mentions training under Heather Hill and Jane Hardwicke Collings as two key influences on her DMT practice.

“My approach in the aged care facility has been very influenced by my studies with Heather Hill and her associated articles relating to working with people with dementia. I have found Heather to be an inspiration in her enthusiasm and drive to promote and establish person-centered care in aged care, where individual presence in the moment is of key importance.”

“My work with Jane Hardwicke Collings (The School of Shamanic Womancraft) has also allowed me to really ‘trust the process’ every step of the way. The core principles of ‘being with’ someone, bringing real presence to any situation has continued to inform me in every moment of my work as a DMT.”

CHALLENGES

The constructs within aged-care facilities, and the need for flexibility have been Anna’s biggest challenges this year.

“While I understand the need for structure and routine, I have been frustrated by the lack of space to just ‘be’ with people in my sessions. This has been a real challenge, as I negotiate well-meaning carers and staff, and their pre-conceived ideas of DMT and the abilities of the people in the group.

“I have also had to really surrender to the unknown and be super flexible. Working with children with disabilities, there are so many factors at play at any given time. This has been so rewarding, but a very steep learning curve at the same time.”

REWARDS

The recognition of joy and connection is what Anna loves most about her in DMT roles.

“The pure joy of connection. The glint of happiness in a child’s eye that can’t move any other part of their body. The smile in a person’s face when they hear an old song that they remember. The delight in a child’s face when they lose themselves in a movement.”

FUTURE PLANS

Anna is working towards having her own studio space and making her living as a dance therapist, and mentions Amber Gray as someone with whom she’d love to collaborate and “spread her work/findings with children who have experienced trauma. I have been very inspired by her work.”