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Process Drama in Second- and Foreign-Language Classrooms

In the field of second-/foreign-language teaching, there is a need for us to reflect on what we have accomplished so far in language teaching methods over the last century. Ever since Anthony (1963) proposed to distinguish between approach (something akin to a theory), method (a curriculum, program, or procedure), and technique (any action in the classroom to implement the method), there have been many refinements in terminology and other ways of describing what we do in second-/foreign-language classrooms. A fine-grained, historical analysis has been offered by Strain (1986), in which such terms as Method, method, and methodology are distinguished in subtle ways along with method-procedure, method-technique, design, procedure, presentation, implementation, activity, syllabus, materials, evaluation, tactics, strategies, curriculum, and so forth. All these terms and various arrangements were used in one way or another by Anthony and Norris (1969), Rivers and Temerley (1978), Strevens (1980), Richards (1983), Richards and Rodgers (1986), Strain (1986), Nunan (1991), and Brown (1994).

Despite the general disagreement in terminology for what teachers use to teach a second/foreign language - an approach, method, technique, procedure, or otherwise - there is consensus in identifying the following ways of language teaching, based on a historical perspective: Grammar-Translation (e.g., Darian, 1972; Howatt, 1984), Direct Method (e.g., Hornby, 1950; Jespersen, 1933; Palmer, 1923, 1940), the Audiolingual Method (e.g., Fries, 1945; Lado, 1957, 1977), Total Physical Response (e.g., Asher, 1969,

1977), the Silent Way (Gattegno, 1972, 1976), Community Language Learning (e.g., Curran 1972, 1976; Rardin & Tranel, 1988), Suggestopedia (e.g., Bancroft, 1978; Lozanov, 1978), the Natural Approach (e.g., Krashen, 1981, 1982; Terrell, 1977, 1982), and Communicative Language Teaching (e.g., Brumfit & Johnson, 1979; Canale & Swain, 1980; Widdowson, 1978). Although none of these methods seems to be applicable to all situations given the diverse backgrounds of language learners, different learner needs and various learning contexts, the place effective teaching methods play in language classrooms is undeniable. In fact, language teachers are constantly searching for effective teaching methods to use in their daily classes.

In second-/foreign-language classrooms, there are generally two options in teaching. One option is Focus on Forms, and the other is Focus on Meaning. Focus on Forms is considered a traditional approach in which course design starts with the language to be taught. The teacher and the textbook writer divide the second language into segments (e.g., phonemes, words, collocations, morphemes, or patterns), which are presented in models, initially one item at a time, in a sequence determined by frequency, or difficulty. Learners are to synthesize the parts for use in communication. Synthetic techniques often used include explicit grammar rules, repetition of models, memorization of short dialogues, linguistically simplified texts, transformation exercises, or explicit negative feedback. When the primary focus of teaching a language is on forms, lessons tend to be rather dry, consisting principally of work on linguistic items, which students are expected to master, often to native speaker levels, with anything less treated as "error," and little if any communicative second-language use.

Unlike Focus on Forms, the starting point of Focus on Meaning is not the language but the learner and learning processes. It is the learner, not the teacher or the textbook writer, who must analyze the second or foreign language. Advocates (Krashen, 1981, 1982) believe that much first- and second-language learning is not intentional but incidental (i.e., while doing something else) and implicit (i.e., without awareness). Therefore, grammar is considered to be learned incidentally and implicitly. Second- or foreign-language learning is thought to be essentially similar to first-language acquisition, so that reestablishing of something similar to the conditions for first-language acquisition, which is widely successful, should be necessary and sufficient for learning a second or foreign language. Lessons with focus on meaning, which are often interesting, relevant, and relatively

successful, are purely communicative, and learners are presented with gestalt, comprehensible samples of communicative second-language use.

There are, however, a number of problems with each option. In the first option, Focus on Forms, for instance, there is no needs analysis to identify a particular learner's or group of learners' communicative needs, and no means analysis to ascertain their learning styles and preferences. Second, linguistic grading, both lexical and grammatical, tends to result in pedagogic materials of the basal reader variety, textbook dialogues and classroom language use being artificial and stilted. Moreover, Focus on Forms tends to produce boring lessons, with resulting declines in motivation, attention, and student enrollment despite the best efforts even of highly skilled teachers and textbook writers. Although considerable progress in a second or foreign language is clearly achieved in the second option, Focus on Meaning, studies also show that even after many years of classroom immersion, students' productive skills remain "far from native-like, particularly with respect to grammatical competence" (Swain, 1991), exhibiting, for example, a failure to mark articles for gender. Such items have been in the input all the time, but perhaps not with sufficient salience, and with inadequate sanction (e.g., negative feedback) on their accurate suppliance. Similar findings of premature stabilization have been reported in studies of adult learners with prolonged natural exposure by Pavesi (1986), Schmidt (1983), and others. Therefore, a pure focus on meaning is also insufficient.

In order to overcome the pitfalls of both options, a third option, Focus on Form, has been recently advocated (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998), referring to how attentional resources are allocated. The expression could be interpreted as "focus on meaningful form;" the study of the form is based on meaningful contexts rather than a predetermined and decontextualized linguistic form It involves briefly drawing students' attention to linguistic elements (words, collocations, grammatical structures, pragmatic patterns, and so forth), in context, as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning, or communication, the temporary shifts in focal attention being triggered by students' comprehension or production problems (Long & Robinson, 1998). The purpose of Focus on Form is to induce what Schmidt (1983) calls noticing-registering forms in the input so as to store them in memory. In other words, to deal with the limitations of a pure focus on meaning, systematic provision is made in Focus on Form for

attention to language as object. Focus on Form is learner-centered, and it respects the learner's internal syllabus and is under learner control.

Although Focus on Form, as a compromising approach between accuracy and fluency in language teaching, is sound in theory, its implementation in second-/foreign-language classrooms is not an easy task. We need effective teaching methods with concrete techniques and strategies that engage language learners in a variety of communicative activities through which learners' communicative competence is acquired (Savignon, 1983; Ellis, 1985, 1994). Among those environment-enhancing activities, drama has shown itself through many years of research and practice a useful tool in engaging learners in constructing their own language growth, reflecting meaning in the fullest sense of personal and cultural relevance, matching individual levels of ability, and supporting self-initiated activity (Maley & Duff, 1978; Di Pietro 1982; Kao, 1994; Kao & O'Neill, 1998). Though using drama for educational purposes has been widely practiced for years, studies on using drama for second- or foreign-language learners seem to be relatively scarce. From short stories to role-plays, and from simulations to scenarios, the dramatic activities in language classrooms tend to remain "exercisebased, short-term, and teacher-oriented" (Kao & O'Neill, 1998, p. 3). Part of the reason is that language learners, especially those at lower proficiency levels, are still at the stage of developing their basic language skills and are thus limited in expressing their ideas and thoughts in the second language. Another reason is that some language teachers, pressured by school-administered proficiency tests and exams, tend to emphasize too much on the accuracy of the students' output, and jump in too quickly for correction of students' errors in speaking, thus inhibiting their students from entering into "dramatic worlds" (O'Neill, 1995) free of anxiety.

Needless to say, drama worlds uncover a broad spectrum of drama activities useful in classrooms. In fact, dramatic worlds exist anywhere and at any level. Kao and O'Neill (1998) presented available drama activities on a continuum from totally controlled language exercises and scripted role-plays through the semicontrolled activity of the scenario, to the kind of open communication of Process Drama. Although this continuum resembles the first two options in second-/foreign-language teaching discussed earlier with Focus on Forms at one end and Focus on Meaning at the other, Process Drama that starts with communicative activities and ends with reflections on experiences and

linguistic expressions serves the purpose of the third option-Focus on Formattaining to both accuracy and fluency in language learning. In the following sections of this chapter, I am going to explore the meaning of Process Drama, discuss its conceptual framework, synthesize its characteristics, demonstrate its classroom procedures, and speculate on the challenges language teachers often face in using this method.

PROCESS DRAMA: ITS NATURE AND FUNCTIONS

Process Drama, a term widely used in North America (but originally from Australia) and synonymous to "educational drama" or "drama in education" in Britain, is concerned with the development of a dramatic world created by both the teacher and the students working together. Through the exploration of this dramatic world in which active identification with the exploration of fictional roles and situations by the group is the key characteristic, second- and foreign-language learners are able to build their language skills and develop their insights and abilities to understand themselves in the target language. Like theater, it is possible for Process Drama at its best to provide a sustained, intensive, and profoundly satisfying encounter with the dramatic medium and for participants to apprehend the world in a different way (O'Neill, 1995). A fundamental theoretical basis of Process Drama is Strategic Interaction (Di Pietro, 1987), which recognizes that language learning is both a personal and a social behavior. Strategic Interaction includes such essential elements as the ability of language to create and engage students in new roles, situations, and worlds; dynamic tension; the motivating and challenging power of the unexpected; the tactical quality of language acquired under the stress of achieving a goal; the linguistic and psychological ambiguity of human interaction; the group nature of enterprise; and the significance of context. Though all these elements in Strategic Interaction become the core characteristics of Process Drama, Process Drama tends to incorporate these aspects in a more complex, immediate, and flexible format. Process Drama puts more emphasis on immediacy, involvement, student autonomy, and teacher functions. Rather than merely a series of brief exercises, explorations and encounters in Process Drama include a variety of strategies and modes of organization (O'Neill & Lambert, 1982; O'Neill, 1995). As Kao and O'Neill (1998) posit, Process Drama involves "careful sequencing and layering of dramatic units or episodes, often in a non-linear way, to cumulatively extend and enrich the fictional context" (p. 13). The intense series of episodes or scenes bring

about the tension of drama, the motivation to overcome obstacles, and the fluency and accuracy necessary to accomplish the task with both the support and challenge of the teacher who is also a participant in the dramatic world.

According to Kao and O'Neill (1998), Process Drama requires language to be used in meaningful, authentic situations, where the focus is on posing questions and seeking answers to those questions. Teachers and students cocreate the dramatic "elsewhere," a fictional world, for experiences, insights, interpretations, and understandings to occur. Process Drama in language classrooms usually starts with a pre-text to set a theme or situation that will engage and challenge the participants, and then gradually a series of episodes will be improvised or composed and rehearsed over a time span for elaboration. Everyone in class is involved in such an activity, and there is no external audience. While engaging in a role in the event, the teacher will be able to diagnose the students' language skills and understanding, support their communicative efforts, model appropriate behaviors and linguistic expressions within the situation, question their thinking, and extend and challenge their responses in the entire process. Recent research asserts that Process Drama has at least three functions in a language classroom - namely, cognitive, social and affective (O'Neill & Lambert 1982; Di Pietro, 1987; Wagner, 1988; O'Neill, 1992, 1994, 1995; Kao, 1994).

Cognitive Function

All classroom learning can be located along two independent dimensions: the rote-meaningful dimension and the reception-discovering dimension (Ausubel et al., 1978). Although meaningful/discovery learning is believed to be more effective and active than rote/reception learning, it is not synonymous with the learning of meaningful material. First, the learning material is only potentially meaningful. Second, a meaningful learning set must be present. It is the lack of the latter - meaningful set - that accounts for many a failure in language learning and places the language teacher in a situation to search for a better solution. Process Drama, however, can turn such a situation to an advantage by bringing into the language classroom a dramatic world and building pedagogy around it. In order to enhance communicative competence in language learning, Process Drama allows students to work together in large groups, small groups, and in pairs to discuss and improvise possible scenarios or dramatic situations, and construct and explore images,

roles, ideas, and situations while developing their language skills. As such, Process Drama not only strengthens the creativity in the students' meaningful learning set but also helps enable students to be actively involved in acquiring the language skills in a meaningful context. Language instruction is more desirable if language is regarded as a creative process. The cognitive function of Process Drama hence serves this purpose.

Social Function

Process Drama seeks to build communicative competence and confidence among participants through working with others. The social function lies in the cooperative, supportive interaction among peers that eventually prepares them for real-life communication (Nunan, 1992). Moreover, Process Drama can also provide the key to unlock the potential for human expression and communication in a broader social context and thus can serve that purpose in the language learning context (Anderson, 1989). The pragmatic use of language learned through Process Drama over a variety of activities, such as scenarios, improvisations, and meaning-negotiation practiced in the classroom prepares students for better communication in real life. Furthermore, through Process Drama, students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds can build social skills and become more sensitive listeners and more apt and mature conversationalists. They also grow in their capacity to send and receive increasingly complex and mature verbal messages effectively, independently, creatively, and symbolically (Wagner, 1990).

Affective Function

Second- and foreign-language learning is a humanistic understanding (Stevick, 1982). Students who are learning a new language through Process Drama are usually given the opportunity to discuss their options and plan their strategies in group before they act out. Therefore, students are highly motivated and actively involved in participation through risk-taking and practice. One of the unique characteristics of Process Drama is the tension resulting from requiring that the players determine the outcome. This tension allows the players to concentrate on using the target language as strategically as possible as they decide on a position and then act it out. In an important way, the students are playing themselves in exercising their roles. They are free to make decisions through trial

and error, and, in doing so, to find the language needed to express themselves. Through a series of challenging and rewarding activities, Process Drama helps break down inhibition and form a group support network. Students will not feel ridiculous or funny in doing drama, because all of them are active participants, including the teacher.

IMPLEMENTING PROCESS DRAMA IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS

Although Process Drama takes a variety of forms and is determined by a large number of factors, such as the learners' language proficiency levels, the content of teaching, time constraints, and the syllabus, there are a number of techniques/strategies for language teachers that are believed to be essential in characterizing what Process Drama is and how it works. According to the sequence in teaching, these techniques/strategies are:

1. Determine the context in which themes and topics suit the learners' linguistic abilities as well as sociocultural backgrounds, and create a "pre-text" as a starting point.
2. Identify and utilize a variety of roles for students and the teacher.
3. Build different levels of tension to sustain dramatic activities.
4. Utilize body and language in developing communicative competence through both verbal (e.g., questioning, probing, meaning negotiation) and nonverbal channels (e.g., tableau) to express what is beyond their linguistic repertoire to maximize learners' linguistic output in authentic and improvised context.
5. Reflect on the experiences and introduce, reinforce, and explain linguistic expressions, usage, and pragmatics necessitated in the given scenarios.

Pre-Text in Context

Although Process Drama proceeds without a script, and its outcome is unpredictable, it starts with a pre-text in a chosen context. Choosing the right context is therefore the very first step language teachers should take in using Process Drama in their classrooms. The contexts vary from realistic situations (e.g., forest fire, summer camp), to aspirational themes (e.g., NBA players, TV shows such as Survivor and Who Wants to be a Millionaire), to imaginary scenes (e.g., the return of a lost friend, a trip to Mars). The teacher will determine the context based on the learners' linguistic abilities, sociocultural backgrounds and skills, as well as their age levels. As Kao and O'Neill (1998) posit, a

context that is obviously far removed from everyday concerns can "offer a light-hearted, playful atmosphere, in which exploration and enjoyment are the primary purposes and the lack of pressure to produce a 'correct' speech promotes confidence and fluency" (p. 24). Once the context is decided, the teacher will give the class a "pre-text" to unfold the dramatic world. Pre-text, a term coined by O'Neill (1995), refers to the source or impulse for the drama process, and it also carries the meaning of a text that exists before the event. A pre-text gives a linguistically clear and emotionally engaging starting point for students to unfold the dramatic world. For instance, in the context of "the return of a former school principal," the pre-text, told by the teacher who serves in the role of the current principal of the school, could be like this: "My friends, our former principal, Mr. Smith, who disappeared five years ago, is coming back to our school tomorrow. He has lost his ability to speak, but he will be in charge of our school." This pre-text will soon arouse a dozen questions about Mr. Smith over the past five years, his ability to run the school, his intention to return to school, and what would happen to the current principal when Mr. Smith takes her place. As seen, the pre-text immediately plunges the students into in imagined world, the details of which will emerge as the participants contribute to the development of the scene. The pre-text will determine the initial moments of action, establishing location, atmosphere, roles, and situations, providing the arc from which the full circle of action can be anticipated. The students' linguistic output triggered by curiosity and imagination will start from here.

As seen, a pre-text can be initiated by "a word, a gesture, a location, a story, an idea, an object, or an image, as well as by a character or a play script" (O'Neill, 1995, p. 19). As an effective starting point, pre-text will launch the dramatic world in such a way that students will initiate and identify their roles and be responsible for what is going to happen in the development of the drama. Unlike a mere stimulus, pre-text has its function to activate the weaving of the text well before it takes its shape. Functioning as the source of the text generated by the process, pre-text defines the nature and limits of the dramatic world, implies roles for the participants, and switches on expectation and binds the group together in anticipation. In fact, an effective pre-text serves as a preliminary frame for Process Drama, and carries "clearly accessible intentions for the roles it suggests - a will to be read, a task to be undertaken, a decision to be made, a puzzle to be solved, a wrong-doer to be discovered, and a haunted house to be explored" (O'Neill, 1995, p. 20).

Roles in Role

Once the pre-text is given, students will be engaged in different roles from working as a big group, to small groups, and then perhaps to pair work to explore the dramatic world from different perspectives, and to develop their linguistic potentialities. Such roles are spontaneous (Johnson & O'Neill, 1984) and coconstructed as the result of meaning negotiation and dramatic creativity. Moreno (1959) differentiates role-taking from role-creating. The former means the enactment of a situation predetermined by the teacher, which is common in traditional language classrooms; the latter, which is more creative and spontaneous in nature, encourages students to use their own imagination by utilizing both linguistic and nonlinguistic expressions. Once a pre-text is given, the students in a class usually start questioning, as a whole group, until a broad picture is clear to everyone. Then they will form small groups and try to negotiate their own dramatic approach to unfold the situation from their own perspectives. Finally, small groups can be broken down into pairs to offer minisegments of the large picture. The initial purpose of using role is to invite participants to enter the fictional world. Once this invitation has been accepted, participants can respond actively, begin to ask or answer questions, and oppose or transform what is taking place. Meanwhile, the role presented by the teacher is available to be "read" by the whole class, and like spectators at a play, the participants are entangled in a web of contemplation, speculation, and anticipation. The formation of group cohesion and identity is assured as interest, commitment, and appropriate responses to what is being presented are generated.

To illustrate this process, let's return to the example of "the return of the former principal." Once the pre-text is given, all the students will be curious about this person and start asking questions, such as "Where did he go for the past five years?" "How come he is unable to speak?" "Why should we let someone who is unable to speak be in charge of our school?" In small group activities, some possibilities exist. One group might act out a scene as a news conference in which group members will play the role of news reporters asking questions about the former principal who is assisted by an interpreter. Another group might act out a scene of the former principal's daily life in the past five years, perhaps in the hospital, or another place. And another group might choose to use a tableau, a series of frozen pictures, to depict how he was before, how he lost his speaking

ability, and what made him return to the school. In pair work, students can choose one-on-one conversation between two school kids, a teacher and a student, a seasoned teacher who used to work with the principal and a newly hired teacher who has not met the former principal before, two neighbors in the school district, the current school principal and her superintendent, and so forth, to reflect various sorts of reactions toward the return of the former school principal.

It needs to be pointed out that in the entire process of these dramatic activities, the teacher is always in role. Rather than being an external facilitator, or a side coach, the teacher takes on a role and enters the developing action of the drama together with the students. In this way, the traditional teacher-student power relationship is broken, and the students are empowered to enter the dramatic world to maximize their linguistic output through creative dramatic activities. As Kao and O'Neill (1998) state, when the teacher takes on a role in the interaction, "it is an act of conscious self-presentation, and one that invites the students to respond actively, to join in and to extend, oppose or transform what is happening" (p. 26). When the teacher takes a role, the students are immediately drawn together in listening, thinking, and building the event with speculation and anticipation as they look for clues to the emerging dramatic world in which they participate.

To revisit our example of the return of the former principal, the teacher can play the role of a news reporter, the former principal's relative or close friend, or the superintendent. Thus, the teacher in role will be able to give enough information to answer dozens of questions from the students to get the ball rolling. As a leader or a character in the soon-to-happen event, the teacher in role can initiate a piece of work through a dramatic and economic pre-text, establish atmosphere, model appropriate behaviors, move the action forward, and challenge the participants from within (O'Neill, 1995). Indeed, the teacher in role has a double function. The teacher in role is "to attack and yield, provoke and withdraw" (Brook, 1968, p. 122) from inside. From outside, the leader seems to be in complete control of the action although the developing logic of the piece needs to be obeyed, and arbitrary and individual decisions need to be avoided. The role of the teacher in role is, after all, participant facilitator.

Tension in Extension

The key element that sustains Process Drama at various stages is tension originated by the pre-text and developed throughout the entire dramatic process. Tension can be interpreted as "mental excitement" and "intellectual and emotional engagement" (Morgan & Saxton, 1987), "conflict" (Spolin, 1963), or "essential aesthetic element, and essential structural principle in generating dramatic worlds" (Kao & O'Neill, 1998). Tension exists within the situation and between situations across time. It is the result between what is known and what is unknown, between what is anticipated and what actually happens. For example, we know that the former principal is to return, but we do not know what has happened to him over the past five years. We know that he is going to be in charge of the school, but we do not know whether he is capable of doing so as he has lost his ability to speak. We anticipate that the school will continue under the current administrative system, but the return of the former principal might change the course of action. As seen, the very topic chosen for the Process Drama is full of tension. The initial tension is triggered by the teacher's pre-text creating a knowledge gap for the students, and the initial tension is extended to lead to subsequent tensions as the drama unfolds. Effective questioning from both the teacher in role and the students will lead to the emergence of different levels of tension depending on the context and the teacher's purposes. These levels of tension include direct confrontation, dilemma, or time pressure. Students need to work out the solutions through obtaining information, exchanging ideas, argumentation and persuasion, and rapid response as the drama extends through the entire learning process.

Body and Language

While Process Drama maximizes learners' linguistic output through tension, it also encourages learners to utilize their nonverbal communication strategies to compensate for their linguistic deficiencies. As language learners are learning the language through dramatic activities, it is assumed that their creative ideas and thoughts are sometimes inhibited by their lack of linguistic expressions, and therefore, utilizing their body language stretches their imagination out of their linguistic boundaries. In traditional language classrooms, learners are often challenged with a lot of questions from the teacher, and their speaking abilities tend to focus on answering questions. As communication is a two-way interaction, students are greatly encouraged to ask questions prompted by the pre-

text at the initial stage of Process Drama. Practicing questioning strategies can immediately benefit our students as they will rely on questioning to obtain information in the real world. Skillful questioning within Process Drama can "strengthen students' commitment to their roles, supply information indirectly, model the appropriate language register, focus their linguistic efforts, remodel inaccurate responses, and deepen students' thinking about the issues involved in the drama" (Kao & O'Neill, 1998, p. 31). Through questioning, students can negotiate their meaning and make informed decisions as to what they will do as a group in unfolding the dramatic world. On the other hand, students, especially those at beginning or lower-intermediate levels of language proficiency, will need to rely on their body language to express their thoughts and ideas and also to allow other students opportunities for meaning interpretation. One of the most common forms of body language in Process Drama is called "tableau," or "frozen picture," or "freeze frame" created by students to show a series of segmentations each of which has a sufficient demonstrative power. Tableau is a very useful dramatic tool that enables students to strengthen the reflective elements of their work in Process Drama. According to O'Neill (1995), the function of a tableau is "to arrest attention, to detain the viewers, to impede their perception" (p. 127). It increases the creativity of the mind and allows the participants in class to perceive, analyze, and interpret its meaning in the sequential artistic framework. The stillness of tableaux "suspends time, causing the eye to focus on an image and slows down the process of input" (Marranca, 1977, p. xii). For instance, in the return of the former principal, students in a group can perform a scene of an accident suggesting the cause of the speech loss of the former principal, and a scene of a doctor at a hospital showing an X-ray screen to his family members, and a scene of his desire to return to his old school, and so forth. Tableau is a great body language for open interpretation and meaning negotiation. The group members can also explain what is intended as compared with what is interpreted by other group members to allow modification to occur. As a frozen image will compel the observers to come up with informed guesses and multiple possible meaning interpretations, it encourages students' linguistic output to be free from anxiety, and thus allows the teacher to identify the forms the students have already mastered as well as those they still need to learn in order to convey their thoughts and ideas appropriately and idiomatically, and to introduce and reinforce these forms based on the needs of communication.

Reflective Learning

Reflecting on what has happened at different phases of Process Drama in the language classroom is an effective way of understanding students' learning and diagnosing what forms students need to enhance their communication. As reflection usually takes place immediately after dramatic events, it facilitates meaning negotiation, and form-function alignment. Reflection can also be used to review progress, understand the thought processes, prepare for the next stages of drama, and resolve problems. All the students and the teacher in the class are drawn together reflecting on the event they built together and looking for clues about the imagined world that is unfolding before them, as well as finding their place within it. They will discover from within the action and the nature of the roles with which they have been endowed or have adopted, and the relationships of the roles, and communicative competence they have acquired through their active participation.

In second- or foreign-language classrooms, Process Drama takes two kinds of reflection. One is experience reflection, and the other is linguistic reflection. However, these two kinds of reflection are not separate and distinct from one another. They are interrelated and influence each other. In experience reflection, the central purpose is to give learners the opportunity to focus on themselves and their reactions and feelings in different phases of learning through Process Drama. In linguistic reflection, the focus is on whether the learner uses appropriate linguistic means to perform the social functions necessitated in the Process Drama. It is through reflection that much can be learned about learning. For many language learners, the only source of feedback on their learning is their teacher. Even though the teacher's feedback is a useful source of information about students' learning, learners themselves are in the best position to examine their own learning through self-reflecting, peer-commenting, and discovering what happens in learning that might be unknown to the learner in the process. Although gaining experiences of learning through Process Drama is important, deeper learning occurs only when such experiences are critically examined and reflected.

Students' reflections can also trigger a deeper understanding of teaching. Such reflections involve examining teaching experiences as a basis for evaluation and decision-making and as a source for change (Bartlett, 1990; Wallace, 1991). Through reflections, teachers can understand why and how things are the way they are, what value systems they

represent, what alternatives might be available, and what the limitations are of doing things one way as opposed to another. Reflection enables the teacher to be more confident in leading students to try different things in the Process Drama and assess their effects on learning, taking into consideration students' linguistic abilities and developmental stages (Pienemann, 1984).

CHALLENGES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS

It has been claimed that the use of Process Drama offers new dimensions of learning for students in second- or foreign-language classrooms. However, there are many challenges that both teachers and students may face when these active, collaborative, and essentially dialogic approaches are introduced in a previously traditional language classroom. Language learners, on the other hand, who have been accustomed to traditional teaching methods sometimes find it hard to accept this innovative way of learning. In her teacher-as-researcher study of using educational drama in an English class to thirty-three Taiwanese college students, Kao (1994) reported that her students demonstrated high interest in contributing to conversation in terms of speech turn-taking, topic-initiation and sequencing, effective activation of the previous acquired knowledge, significant progress in communication, and positive perceptions about language proficiency. However, Kao also pointed out some negative attitudes and peer pressure among some students in using drama in class. As a language teacher, she encountered constant challenges in the negotiation of classroom organization, teacher-student and student-student relationships, and varying and integrating teaching-learning resources (Kao, personal communication). To Kao, drama means much more than entertaining her students. It requires thorough preparation before, careful observation during, and constant evaluation after the practice.

Organizing a language classroom while keeping in mind how students learn effectively, what problems they need and want to solve, and what learning skills produce optimum learning places the management of the classroom into a collaborative arena. Few would disagree that the use of Process Drama has established itself as a means of providing such a collaborative language-learning environment in which resources, activities, and behaviors directly influence the learning outcome. Designing and organizing such a

collaborative language-learning environment itself is a big challenge for the language teacher. The teacher has to not only manage the physical settings of the classroom in terms of the furniture placement but also control the pace and mood of the class in terms of what, when, and how to present the pre-text and guide the students through various phases of dramatic activities to enhance effective learning. In addition, language teachers often face some other challenges as follows:

Do We Have Sufficient Time to Use Process Drama in Language Classrooms?

Limited amount of instructional time is always a big concern for teachers in using Process Drama in second-/foreign-language classrooms. In many countries, such as China, Taiwan, and Japan, where the centralized educational system, the college entrance exams, and the textbook-oriented teaching prevails, the use of creative methods and innovative techniques such as Process Drama have to take into consideration time-effectiveness. Whereas using Process Drama could be time-consuming both in teacher preparation and classroom organization, in spite of its effectiveness, many teachers prefer to stay within their safe zone by carefully planning in their language syllabi the instructional time for the introduction, reinforcement, as well as review of linguistic items. It needs to be pointed out that Process Drama as an effective teaching tool is not to replace what has already been useful in language classrooms. As an additive tool for teaching communicative skills, it can work equally well if only part of the phases are used together with other commonly used teaching procedures. Besides, under time constraints, some of the phases in Process Drama-such as pre-text, tableau, or reflection-can be short, in process, and be used alternatively.

Is Enjoyable Environment Synonymous to Effective Learning?

Educational drama as a version of communicative language teaching creates an environment for the students to use the target language communicatively and enjoyably. In a survey of student attitudes toward communicative and noncommunicative activities, Green and Harker (1988) raised a basic question: "Do enjoyment and effectiveness go together?" While activities like using Process Drama in the language classroom are certainly an enjoyable experience for students, the survey results did not indicate whether

or to what extent students believe that enjoyment contributes to effectiveness, or the extent to which perceived effectiveness helps make activities enjoyable (Green & Harker, 1988). As Kao's study (1994) indicates, although drama activities can create a nonthreatening and comfortable environment for language learning to take place, both language teachers and researchers should not overlook some possible negative effects of a "light classroom atmosphere." Students who have extremely weak confidence in themselves as language learners may feel even more frustrated when other students are actively involved in participation (Liu, 2000). Also, some students who show no concern about the course may take advantage of the flexible and light atmosphere created by Process Drama. This is also a challenge language teachers will face in creating a lively classroom atmosphere.

Do Language Teachers Need Special Training in Process Drama?

Furthermore, many teachers believe in the effectiveness of using drama in language classrooms, but they have not received special training and they do not know how to use it appropriately and skillfully. According to Heathcote (1978), the skills of teaching lie in making time slow enough for inquiry, interesting enough to loiter along the way, and rigorous enough to bring new thought processes into understanding. Hence the techniques of the proper use of Process Drama activities are very important. For instance, without proper management of intonation, the pitch of the sound, proper body language, and the necessary emotion, the pre-text, no matter how intriguing it is, cannot achieve its most expected result, and therefore the power of Process Drama will be seriously diminished. This cautions many an ambitious teacher ready to employ Process Drama in their language classrooms that a thorough understanding of the theory and a reasonable amount of practice is always a welcome preparation to ensure when, where, and how to maximize the potentials of Process Drama in language classrooms.

Process Drama seems to be able to shorten the distance between the teacher and students in talking but is not powerful enough to completely break the conversational rules in the traditional classroom (Kao, 1994). This is a big challenge language teachers should work at with effort. In traditional language classrooms as in China, Japan, and Korea, the big size of the class as well as the emphasis on grammatical forms in a lecture type of class place the teacher in a high status with dominating power. Even though using

Process Drama techniques in language teaching can help break this power relationship, the traditional stereotype of the teacher as an authority in the eyes of the learner is deeply rooted and has always been an obstacle in maximizing the effectiveness of using Process Drama in language classrooms (Liu, 2000). As Kao (1994) stated in her data analysis, although she tried very hard to create a more authentic and natural setting for making a conversation, the social rules of making classroom discourse still dominated the procedures of the students' oral interaction most of the time. Therefore, language teachers, in order to make the best use of Process Drama, should try hard to transact status in dealing with the relationship between dominance and submission, superiority and inferiority, and being active and passive (Johnstone, 1981). The teacher should set things in motion by ensuring that the students understand what they are supposed to do and then step back as far as possible from what is happening, controlling but not directing (Maley & Duff, 1978). It is tempting, however, for the teacher to intervene when there is something "wrong" or there is silence awaiting to be broken up, but the teacher should learn to withdraw while making it clear that s/he is there only when s/he is needed (Maley & Duff, 1978). Interestingly, Kao (1994) found in her study that there is a subtle relationship between the level of the teacher's control of the activity and the students' involvement. It seemed that the students could play a more active role in participation when the teacher had less control of the topics and procedures. But the activity might lose its original purposes and become disorganized when it is out of control. How to encourage the active participation on the part of the students in dramatic activities without losing control is therefore a great challenge to the teacher. How to handle "unknown elements" and find the balance between the teacher's and the students' roles in drama are crucial to the students' interest and level of participation (Kao, 1994).

How to Select Resources That Are Conducive to Process Drama Activities?

Dramatic worlds that arise in the classroom are not necessarily defined in advance, and they will not always develop in terms of a linear narrative (O'Neill, 1992). Language teachers often encounter difficulties in selecting resources: the kinds of scenes or episodes during the process to produce the most satisfactory development of the dramatic world, which will lead to some kind of completion and fulfillment. The important point here is, as O'Neill (1992) posits, that the selection itself is not a question of deciding in advance

on a sequence of episodes, so that there is in effect a fixed scenario within which students improvise. The challenge for the teacher is how to remain genuinely improvisatory to allow for spontaneity, uncertainty, ingenuity, exploration, and discovery to occur. When the teacher chooses a "pre-text" as a starting point, she needs to plan carefully the encounters or episodes that will launch the dramatic world. But such a dramatic world will be explored and discovered improvisationally along the process instead of being predetermined. This is a real challenge for the teacher and an inspiring experience for the language learner.

To remain genuinely improvisatory, however, does not assume that the language teacher has no clear idea of what to teach and how to teach effectively each time before she enters into the classroom. How to select appropriate topics and design various dramatic activities compromising linguistic and communicative needs to cater to the majority of linguistically and culturally diverse students is always a concern for language teachers. The dilemma for language teachers in using Process Drama is how to strike a balance between the notion that controlling linguistic elements will hinder students' expression on the one hand, and the notion that liberating students' responses will result in the difficulty to organize a clear and orderly structured teaching on the other hand. That is to say, teachers in using Process Drama should be able to strike a balance between meaning and form and between fluency and accuracy to assure students of the effectiveness of learning. In a two-year research project in French Immersion Programs, O'Neill (1994) found that teachers in immersion classroom face a special difficulty. Where the teacher is the only proficient target language speaker within the child's world of school, home, and community, the teacher's input should be responsible for the child's development of language learned, for the environment created to reflect the French-speaking world in which the cultural values are reflected. Likewise, using Process Drama is also challenging for language learners. In language classrooms, students have to utilize what they have learned, such as vocabulary, grammar, or nonverbal cues, to describe or act with the events they have seen or heard. Needless to say, concentration and enthusiasm are indispensable in participation in these activities.

In sum, Process Drama, as a useful activity, will become a welcome method in balancing learners' accuracy and fluency in second-/foreign-language classrooms. Its major power lies in its concordance with communicative competence as a purpose, and interaction as a

focus in language learning and teaching. Though some difficulty still remains in regard to its integration into the curriculum to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students, the advantages of using Process Drama in combining the important elements of linguistic accuracy, cultural appropriateness, emotional involvement, active, physical participation, and the language class as a community are obvious as discussed in this chapter. What needs to be done is the joint effort of both researchers and classroom teacher in designing and implementing more classroom research to substantiate the role and function of Process Drama in different language classrooms at different levels in different teaching and learning contexts.

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